

A PSYCHOBIOGRAPHICAL STUDY OF CHARLIZE THERON

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Magister Artium in Clinical Psychology

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ABSTRACT

Psychobiographers study the lives of extraordinary, prominent, and enigmatic individuals. Psychobiographical research advances our insight into the uniqueness and complexity of the human personality and therefore makes a substantial contribution towards one of the major objectives of the field of psychology. Purposive sampling was employed to select Charlize Theron as the subject of this psychobiographical study. As the only South African who has won an Oscar, Theron is an exceptional individual who demonstrates tenacity and a will to succeed despite significant traumatic events in her childhood. The case study data was organised and analysed according to the general analytic approach developed by Huberman and Miles (2002) and one of Alexander's (1990) strategies, namely questioning the data. Erikson's psychosocial theory (1950, 1963, 1995) was selected to guide this study because it recognises the impact of socio-cultural influences on developmental processes and provides a comprehensive, staged framework for studying Theron's personality development. This study contributes to the development of psychobiographical research in South Africa.

Keywords: Psychobiography, Charlize Theron, Erikson, personality development

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Chapter Preview

A general orientation to the research study is presented in this introductory chapter. The psychobiographical subject is introduced and the aims of the study are outlined. Next, the context of the study is discussed in terms of the psychobiographical approach and the theoretical framework. Lastly, an overview of the chapters in the manuscript is provided.

1.2 The Psychobiographical Subject: Charlize Theron

Psychobiographers study the lives of extraordinary, prominent, and enigmatic individuals (Runyan, 1988; Simonton, 2003). In purposive sampling, researchers use their own judgement to select participants who best meet the purposes of their study (Swartz, De la Rey, Duncan, & Townsend, 2008). Purposive sampling was employed to select Charlize Theron as the subject of this study on the basis of the interest value, uniqueness and significance of her life. Theron is one of four South Africans who have been awarded a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame since its inception in 1960 (Karsten, 2009). Thousands of young girls with similar qualities and dreams as Theron arrive in Hollywood every year, and few of them succeed (Karsten, 2009). As the only South African who has won an Oscar, Theron is an exceptional individual who demonstrates tenacity and a will to succeed despite significant traumatic events in her childhood.

Charlize Theron, the only child of Charles and Gerda Theron, was born on 7 August, 1975. The Afrikaans-speaking Theron family lived on a smallholding outside Benoni, South Africa (Karsten, 2009). Despite the rural setting, Theron's resourceful mother fostered her artistic leanings. She showed an aptitude for dance and was trained as a classical ballet dancer (Karsten, 2009). Theron attended Putfontein Primary School (Laerskool Putfontein) and was sent to boarding school at the age of 12 to begin her studies at the National School of the Arts in Johannesburg (Green, 2014). Her parents had a conflictual relationship and according to reports her father struggled with alcoholism (Green, 2014). On 21 June 1991, when Theron was 15 years old, her mother shot and fatally wounded her father after he had threatened their lives during an alleged drunken rage. The act was legally adjudged to have been self-defence and no charges were brought against her mother (Karsten, 2009). Shortly after her father's death in 1991, Theron won the International *New Model Today* competition and moved to

Italy. Two years later, she relocated to New York and joined the Joffrey Ballet School. Her dance career was curtailed by a severe knee injury and she decided to pursue an acting career instead (Karsten, 2009). When 18-year-old Theron arrived in Hollywood in 1994, she had \$400 and a sense of determination to find her way in the film industry (Green, 2014).

After appearing in various films (refer to Appendix A for a list of her film appearances), Theron became the first South African to win an Oscar for Best Actress at the 76th Academy Awards in 2004. Film critic Roger Ebert described her portrayal of serial killer Aileen Wuornos in *Monster* as "one of the greatest performances in the history of the cinema" (Ebert, 2004, p.2). Her exceptional achievement was further acknowledged when she received a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame in 2005 (Karsten, 2009). In addition, Theron has received critical acclaim for her performances over the past decade (refer to Appendix B for a list of Theron's nominations and awards to date).

Theron has used her celebrity status to promote her philanthropic pursuits. She was honoured by the United Nations in 2008, when she became the organisation's tenth Messenger of Peace with a special focus on eliminating violence against women (Heilprin, 2008). In 2013 Theron was awarded the World Economic Forum's Crystal Award for her commitment to improving the lives of African youth with HIV and AIDS (Ewing, 2013). She continues to promote women's rights and frequently acts as an unofficial, but effective ambassador for South Africa. According to Karsten (2009), Theron has been committed to raising important social and political issues on screen and off. Since 2000, Theron has been involved in television and film production, with the aim of providing social commentary on human weakness and relationships. However, her small independent films have not been well received by the American public (Karsten, 2009).

In March 2012, Theron announced her adoption of a six-month-old boy, called Jackson. She added, "Motherhood was something I always knew I wanted to experience; what a great opportunity for someone like me who wants to have a family" (Green, 2014, p. 153). Theron cites her own mother as a major inspiration in her life and the driving force behind her success. According to Karsten (2009), the two women have had a special relationship since Theron's birth and continue to be close. Currently, Theron's time is spent taking care of her son, furthering her film career, speaking out against social injustices, and contributing to relief efforts globally (Green, 2014).

The existing literature on Theron does not have a formal psychological focus and this prompted the current study. Erikson's theory of psychosocial development (1950, 1963, 1995) was employed as a theoretical framework to conceptualise the personality development of this exceptional individual.

1.3 Aims of the Study

The aims of this psychobiographical study were four-fold:

1. To formulate an accurate, detailed, and coherent biographical description of Theron.
2. To explore, describe and interpret Theron's personality development in terms of Erikson's theory of psychosocial development (1950, 1963, 1995).
3. To informally evaluate the applicability of aspects of Erikson's theory of psychosocial development (1950, 1963, 1995) to Theron's personality development.
4. To contribute towards psychobiographical research focusing on extraordinary South Africans.

1.4 Context of the Study

1.4.1 The psychobiographical approach

Psychobiographical research represents a multidisciplinary research approach (Cara, 2007) that comprises a systematic, descriptive, longitudinal, and in-depth study of extraordinary people situated in unique social, cultural and historical contexts (Fouché & Van Niekerk, 2010). This type of research employs psychological theory to examine, describe, structure and interpret the biographical data of exceptional individuals' lives (McAdams, 2006). Although the psychobiographical approach has recently attracted growing interest, it was a neglected research genre in the past (Fouché & Van Niekerk, 2010; Roberts, 2002).

Criticisms have been levelled at this single-case study method for its restricted focus, tendency to be reductionistic (Anderson, 1981; Schultz, 2005), increased levels of subjectivity due to researcher bias (Anderson, 1981), and lack of generalisability (Roberts, 2002; Runyan, 1984). Despite these limitations, psychobiographical case studies have the potential to make a significant and meaningful contribution to the study of human development over the lifespan. Runyan (1984) describes psychobiography as a morphogenic, holistic approach that appreciates individual uniqueness within the context of the whole person. Personality development and patterns of behaviour are studied over the entire life course, thus facilitating a comprehensive understanding of the "personality in action" (Fiske,

1988, p. 820). In addition, psychobiography is theory-driven research that provides a useful means for testing, developing and refining existing psychological theories (Carlson, 1988; Roberts, 2002). According to Yin (2003), this research method strives to make analytical generalisations; it seeks to generalise findings to the psychological theory used, rather than to a larger population. Fouché and Van Niekerk (2005) promote the use of the psychobiographical approach in South African academic institutions for the study of individual lives. Furthermore, they encourage South African researchers to conduct psychobiographical studies that acknowledge the contributions made by extraordinary South Africans (Fouché & Van Niekerk, 2010). Charlize Theron fits this profile.

1.4.2 Theoretical framework

Erik Erikson's (1950, 1963, 1995) theory offers a comprehensive lifespan approach to personality development. He proposes eight sequential, age-graded stages of psychosocial development that occur over the life course. Erikson's theory holds that individual personality characteristics emerge as a result of the interplay between genetic and social factors (Meyer, Moore, & Viljoen, 2008). More specifically, human development follows a genetically determined sequence while being influenced by societal demands placed on the individual over the life cycle.

The individual is continually tasked with negotiating a balance between the self and the social world (Swartz et al., 2008). Each stage focuses on a specific aspect of personality and incorporates a developmental task or crisis that results in a choice between two opposing attitudes (Swartz et al., 2008). The solution to these crises is achieved through a synthesis that includes both opposing poles presented at each psychosocial stage (Louw & Louw, 2009). All the psychosocial stages are interrelated; they are impacted by previous stages and will continue to affect future stages. New ego strengths emerge after the successful resolution of each crisis (Meyer et al., 2008). According to Erikson (1995), the various components that comprise an individual's personality are determined by the manner in which psychosocial conflicts are resolved.

Although Erikson's theory has been criticised on account of a lack of scientific and experimental foundation (Meyer et al., 2008), it provides a comprehensive description of universal age-related concerns related to the tasks of life. His theory of psychosocial development was selected to guide this study because it recognises the impact of socio-

cultural influences on developmental processes and provides a staged framework for studying Charlize Theron's personality development.

1.5 Overview of Chapters

This manuscript comprises six chapters. *Chapter 1* is the introductory chapter and provides a brief orientation to the research study. The second and third chapters form the literature review. Previously many psychobiographies have included a third literature review chapter which provides an overview of the life of the research subject. To avoid unnecessary repetition, all relevant biographical data has been integrated into Chapters 1 and 5.

Chapter 2 provides a theoretical overview of the psychobiographical approach and highlights the relationship that exists between psychology and biography. A critical discussion regarding the value and limitations of the psychobiographical method is included in the chapter. *Chapter 3* focuses on the description and critical evaluation of Erikson's theory of psychosocial development (1950, 1963, 1995). The methodological considerations, research design, and methodology are discussed in *Chapter 4*. The study findings and discussion are presented in *Chapter 5*. *Chapter 6* concludes the study with a discussion of the value and limitations of this research, in addition to providing recommendations for further research.

1.6 Chapter Summary

This introductory chapter provided a general orientation to the research study. The study aims and context were outlined and the research subject, Charlize Theron, was introduced to the reader. Lastly, a brief overview of the chapter organisation was presented.

CHAPTER 2

PSYCHOBIOGRAPHY AS CASE STUDY RESEARCH

2.1 Chapter Preview

This chapter aims to provide a descriptive and historical overview of the psychobiographical approach, and to highlight the relationship that exists between psychology and biography. The developmental trends of psychobiographical research in South Africa are outlined, and the chapter concludes with a discussion of the criticisms and value of the case study research method.

2.2 Psychobiography: Definition and Description

The psychobiographical research method is situated within the broader qualitative paradigm. Qualitative research practices, as discussed in Section 4.3, focus on understanding the pattern of relationships between people, objects and situations with the purpose of eliciting the personal meanings attributed to them (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Furthermore, qualitative methodologies utilise inductive strategies and are thus suited to the holistic analysis of complex and exceptional phenomena, such as the life stories of remarkable people (Camic, Rhodes, & Yardley, 2003).

The word *psychobiography* is a derivative of two distinct terms, namely *psychology* and *biography* (Fouché & Van Niekerk, 2010). Academics in the disciplines of psychology and biography have long studied the life stories of extraordinary individuals in an attempt to understand the qualities or circumstances that set them apart from their more ordinary counterparts (Howe, 1997). For the purpose of clarity in this discussion, a distinction will be made between the practices of psychologists and biographers. Developmental psychologists tend to adopt a broad scientific approach in their efforts to identify and explain adherence to or deviation from typical patterns of human development as outlined in psychological theories. In contrast, biographers rely predominantly on literature, history and the arts to track an individual's progression through life (Howe, 1997). However, psychological researchers have made considerable use of biographical material to study individual development and biographers have drawn on psychological constructs to achieve a greater degree of insight into their subjects (Howe, 1997). The difference lies in the extent to which these two disciplines apply formal psychological theories in the interpretation of biographical data (Fouché & Van Niekerk, 2010). Nonetheless, both biographical insight and psychological

inquiry complement each other and may occupy the same interpretive sphere. Furthermore, recognition of the respective contributions that biographers and psychologists make to the understanding of human lives has led to a mutually beneficial alliance between literary biography and psychology. Psychobiography emerged from this affiliation (Fouché & Van Niekerk, 2005).

Psychobiographical research represents a multidisciplinary approach (Cara, 2007) that comprises a systematic, descriptive, longitudinal, and in-depth study of extraordinary people situated in unique social, cultural and historical contexts (Fouché & Van Niekerk, 2010). This type of research employs psychological theory to examine, describe, organise and interpret the biographical data of exceptional individuals (McAdams, 2006). According to White (2007), life experiences assume meaning when they are structured and connected across time in narrative form. Psychobiographical research facilitates the detailed study of the whole person in time and context through the narrative of individual experiences guided by a psychological framework (Howe, 1997). McAdams (2006) asserts that psychobiographical case studies aim to produce a comprehensive reconstruction and insightful interpretation of personality development through the methodical application of psychological theory to structure life stories.

William Todd Schultz (2015), a leading contemporary psychobiographer, defines psychobiography as the analysis of the lives of significant individuals through the application of psychological theory and research. The same author proposes that psychobiographical studies aim to achieve a deeper understanding of individuals and to explore the private motives underlying their public acts. In addition, Schultz (2005) has identified several features that characterise good psychobiography. These include: cogency, coherence, sound and logical narrative structure, comprehensiveness, data convergence, consistency, and viability.

Runyan (1982, p. 202) fittingly describes psychobiography as “the explicit use of systematic or formal psychology in biography”. This is echoed by Elms (1994), who refers to psychobiographical studies as biographies wherein psychological knowledge and theory play a major role. Glad (1973, p. 176) defines psychobiography as “essentially any life history which employs an explicit personality theory, that is, a perception that individual behaviour has an internal locus of causation as well as some degree of structure and organisation”.

Similarly, Cara (2007) refers to psychobiographical studies as retrospective life narratives that focus on the psychological background, motivations and behaviour of an individual. In short, most definitions acknowledge that the psychobiographical method comprises both a psychological analysis of an individual's personality development and a biographical account of his or her life story and accomplishments.

Furthermore, psychobiographical studies share several universal characteristics, namely: (a) qualitative data is utilised (Van Niekerk, 2007), (b) indirect methods are employed by psychobiographers to analyse the psychological characteristics of their subjects (Simonton, 1999), (c) extensive use is made of biographical data compiled by other researchers and freely available in the public domain (Van Niekerk, 2007), (d) a comprehensive, full-life review of the psychobiographical subject is usually conducted (Van Niekerk, 2007), (e) the subjects of psychobiographies are usually inaccessible (Simonton, 1999), (f) psychobiographical subjects are always named (Van Niekerk, 2007), (g) the choice of subject is based on interest value, historical and psychological significance, and special status as a notable individual (Simonton, 1999; Van Niekerk, 2007), and (h) the data collected by psychobiographers also has inherent interest value, historical significance and psychological importance. Data is not collected with the sole intention of solving specific, predetermined research problems (Van Niekerk, 2007).

The psychobiographical research method has been defined and described in the section above. As with any research method, it is important to understand how psychobiography is historically and epistemologically situated.

2.3 A Brief History of Psychobiography

Prior to the twentieth century, biographies of remarkable historical figures were merely structured accounts of an individual's life that did not include rigorous psychological examination (Espinosa, 2006). Phrased differently, early biography described what people did rather than who they were. According to Scalapino (1999), the emergence of psychoanalysis led to two new forms of biographical studies, namely pathography and psychobiography. Schioldann (2003) defines pathography as a historical biography that incorporates medical, psychological and psychiatric perspectives. Pathographies focus on psychopathology and aim to expose the neurotic drives underlying the behaviour of famous individuals (Müller, 2010).

Lytton Strachey was an influential proponent of pathography and he is credited with being the first biographer to include psychological examinations in his biographies of celebrated Victorians (McAdams, 1988). Strachey's texts, which included biographies of Cardinal Manning and Florence Nightingale, generated considerable furore and controversy. According to McAdams (1988, p. 4), Strachey was rebelling against the "dispassionate" and "artless" form of biography that prevailed during the 19th century but his reaction was overzealous and he received criticism for pathologising his subjects in a way that "bordered on character assassination".

Freud argued that pathography was unable to provide any new evidence about the person studied. He was more interested in exploring the origin of creativity in famous artists and thus replacing pathography with psychobiography (Kőváry, 2011). Runyan (2005) cites Freud's contentious paper, *Leonardo da Vinci and a Memory of his Childhood* (1910), as the formal beginning of the field of psychobiography. Freud systematically applied a theory of personality to Leonardo da Vinci's entire life span in an attempt to explain his achievements and failures (Elms, 2005). Although a number of psychoanalytic psychobiographies were written prior to the Da Vinci study, they did not carry as much influence or receive the attention that Freud did (Runyan, 2005).

According to Elms (2005), Freud's psychological analysis of Da Vinci is flawed because he over-identified with his subject and drew strong conclusions from a single event (Leonardo's autobiographical memory of the vulture dream) which had been incorrectly translated from the original French text (the vulture was actually a kite), creating an inferential blunder. This error provided a point of departure for the heated debates that ensued; debates which drew attention to psychobiography and inadvertently aided its development. More importantly, though, Freud introduced several new psychological concepts and themes in his study of Leonardo da Vinci that were central to the development of psychoanalytic theory (Kőváry, 2011).

After Freud's initial ground-breaking psychobiography, psychoanalysts made widespread use of this method to study the personality of artists. According to Kőváry (2011), the majority of psychobiographies continued to have a pathographical focus until the 1950s, when psychobiography lost substantial credibility and popularity. In a related development, Henry Murray and Gordon Allport were pioneers who contributed significantly

to the establishment of the personality research approach known as *personology* in the 1930s (Clark, 2007). Personology may be defined as the “science of persons” (Barresi & Juckes, 1997, p. 693). This sub-discipline of psychology is focused on organising and interpreting the lives of individuals in narrative form because life experiences have a temporal component and are structured in a storied manner (Barresi & Juckes, 1997). Allport claimed that individuality and personality could only be explored through life stories (Kőváry, 2011).

Similarly, Murray called for the biographical study of individuals across the life cycle using theories other than psychoanalysis and thus assisted in the development of psychobiography, particularly between 1930 and 1950 (Barresi & Juckes, 1997). However, the end of World War II marked a shift away from narrative methods in favour of experimental studies for personality research (Kőváry, 2011). Social scientists focused on quantitative research projects that were considered more objective and empirical. Apart from Erikson’s contributions, psychobiography became a marginalised research method between 1950–1980 (Runyan, 2005).

Clark (2007, p. 558) argues that the entire field of psychobiography emerged from a “series of rebellious excursions against established forms of theorising”. For instance, Erikson’s move towards psychobiography can be viewed as a rebellion against the psychoanalytic tradition that rejected his theoretical stance as heretical (Clark, 2007). Furthermore, Erikson’s psychobiographical studies allowed him the freedom to explore and test his psychosocial theory of human development beyond the perimeter and restriction of the mainstream psychoanalytic establishment. Erikson’s comprehensive analyses of Martin Luther (1958) and Mahatma Gandhi (1969) demonstrated that psychobiography can test psychological constructs and theories through detailed individual case studies that do not focus on psychopathology (Clark, 2007).

Although Erikson’s book on Martin Luther was generally regarded as a success, he was criticised for creating a hypothetical infancy for his subject. This reconstruction led to controversy over the validity of psychobiography while simultaneously promoting its development, as there was an increase in narrative accounts of individual lives after the study was published (Barresi & Juckes, 1997). It is important to note that these narrative accounts emanated mainly from historians, literary scholars and political scientists, because personality psychologists were focused on experimental methods at the time. Erikson responded to the

critique he received after his study of Luther by restricting the scope of his subsequent psychobiography of Gandhi (1969) and demonstrating a greater reliance on historical data (Baressi & Juckes, 1997).

The 1980s brought a renewed interest in the psychological study of individual lives (Roberts, 2002; Runyan, 2005) and psychobiography was promoted as a “partial cure for psychology’s sickness of reductionism, scientism, trivialness and irrelevance” (Schultz, 2005, p. 3). This shift coincided with the availability of a broad range of theoretical perspectives on human development (McAdams, 1988), the growing recognition of the importance of lived experiences (Roberts, 2002), the development of narrative analysis (Kőváry, 2011), and the acceptance of biographical case study methods among research psychologists (Edwards, 1990; Fouché & Van Niekerk, 2005; Kőváry, 2011).

Recent evidence indicates that psychobiographical research has gained interest and momentum over the last 25–30 years across multiple specialities in the field of psychology (Fouché & Van Niekerk, 2010; Ponterotto, 2014; Schultz, 2005). According to Simonton (1999), a review of journal publications indicates that psychobiography is the most popular method of conducting psychological analyses of eminent persons. Current global trends therefore suggest that the field of psychology is expanding its scope and that in-depth studies of outstanding individuals have become more common. It is interesting to note that psychobiography has broader practical applications that extend beyond academia and the field of psychology. The United States Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) employs a staff of psychobiographers to produce data used in developing foreign policy, “including the decision to go to war” (Clarke, 2007, p. 563). Having outlined a brief history of psychobiography abroad, local developmental trends warrant a brief discussion.

2.4 The Development of Psychobiographical Research in South Africa

The first psychobiographical studies of extraordinary South Africans, namely Cornelis Jacobus Langenhoven and Louis Leipoldt, were completed by Burgers in 1939 and 1960 respectively (Fouché & Van Niekerk, 2010). Only three other psychobiographies of famous South Africans were written between 1960 and 1999, namely studies of the lives of Ingrid Jonker (Van der Merwe, 1978), Gerard Sekoto (Manganyi, 1996), and General Jan Smuts (Fouché, 1999).

A systematic review of psychobiographical research by South African authors from 1995 to 2004 revealed that the majority of studies were conducted after 1999 (Fouché, Smit, Watson, & Van Niekerk, 2007) by researchers from Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University in Port Elizabeth, Rhodes University in Grahamstown, the University of Johannesburg and the University of the Free State in Bloemfontein (Fouché & Van Niekerk, 2010). Appendix C provides a list of master's and doctoral psychobiographical theses presented at these South African universities. The review conducted by Fouché et al. (2007) also revealed several trends in the psychobiographical studies undertaken by South African researchers. The most notable trends are as follows: Levinson's model was the most widely used theory, the majority of psychobiographical subjects were white males from a political background, the bulk of the psychobiographies comprised postgraduate theses, and the field of psychobiography experienced a boom in South Africa after 2004 (Fouché et al., 2007). This survey highlighted the need for more psychobiographical studies on female and black personalities, using a wide variety of psychological theories.

The status of psychobiography as an established research genre in South Africa is reflected in the growing number of completed postgraduate degrees in the research focus area of psychobiographical research since the early 2000s. Fouché and Van Niekerk (2010) have called on South African researchers to advance the local relevance of psychobiography by undertaking studies that acknowledge the diverse contributions made by extraordinary South Africans. The same authors suggest that the remarkable individuals listed in South Africa's hall of fame would make "ideal case studies" (Fouché & Van Niekerk, 2010, p. 495). Examples from the South African hall of fame include Nelson Mandela, Jan Smuts, Chris Barnard, Steve Biko, Desmond Tutu, Nadine Gordimer, Charlize Theron, Albert Luthuli, and Olive Schreiner (ZAR.co.za, 2007).

In addition, Fouché and Van Niekerk (2010) recommend that more celebrity psychobiographies be written to increase academic psychobiography's topicality and attract young academics into the field. Similarly, Simonton (1999, p. 442) argues that one of the most effective ways of demonstrating the broader relevance of psychology is to show that it helps to "explain the big events and important people of the real world, including leaders, creators, champions, saints, sages, and celebrities". The current study of Charlize Theron, a local female celebrity, aims to contribute to psychobiography's topicality and relevance in South Africa.

Psychobiography's development and trends within the South African context have been outlined in the section above. As with any research method, psychobiographical case studies have attracted mixed reviews. The relevant criticisms and methodological challenges briefly outlined in the section below, as well as the strategies implemented to circumvent them, are discussed in greater detail in Chapter 4 (Section 4.7. Limitations of the Psychobiographical Method).

2.5 Criticisms of Psychobiographical Research

Critics of the psychobiographical method have claimed that personality is too complex to be studied in its entirety (Alexander, 1990). Criticisms have been levelled at this single-case study method for its restricted focus and tendency to be reductionistic (Anderson, 1981; Schultz, 2005). Schultz (2005) describes reductionism as the practice of explaining adult personality exclusively in terms of early childhood experiences. A related criticism is concerned with excessive reliance on a single event when interpreting an individual's life story (Schultz, 2005). According to Runyan (1982), the most pervasive criticism is that psychobiographical interpretations are based on inadequate facts. The dearth of available information is often attributed to the researchers' lack of access to their absent subjects. Linked to this is the potential shortcoming of reconstruction or formulating psychological facts which are unverifiable, especially regarding childhood history (Schultz, 2005). In addition, psychobiographers have been criticised for making individuals fit into their chosen theories and distorting biographical data to support their claims (Clark, 2007). Other common criticisms of psychobiographical research include: a lack of generalisability (Roberts, 2002; Runyan, 1984), increased levels of subjectivity due to researcher bias (Anderson, 1981), pathologising or idealising subjects (Clark, 2007), and questionable reliability and validity (Edwards, 1990).

It is important to note that critics have become less vocal in recent years. Researchers have begun to recognise the importance of the individual case study approach for generating knowledge that cannot be obtained through traditional group research designs (Edwards, 1990). In sum, despite the methodological challenges outlined in this section, psychobiographical case studies have the potential to make a significant and meaningful contribution to the study of human development over the lifespan.

2.6 The Value of Psychobiographical Life History Research

The importance of psychobiographical case studies in relation to theories of human development has been highlighted by numerous academics in the field of life history research (Alexander, 1988; Carlson, 1988; Fouché & Van Niekerk, 2005; McAdams, 2006; Runyan, 1988). The value and advantages of psychobiographical research can be divided into the following seven areas:

2.6.1 The idiographic lens

Runyan (1984) describes psychobiography as a morphogenic, holistic approach that appreciates individual uniqueness within the context of the whole person. Psychobiographers investigate how people differ from one another and how they function regardless of any reference group (Schultz, 2005). According to Clark (2007, p. 564), psychobiographical studies place the person at the centre of theoretical analysis and this serves as a reminder that human individuality is a vital part of the “psychosocial explanation”. Psychobiographical research advances our insight into the uniqueness and complexity of the human personality and therefore makes a substantial contribution towards one of the major objectives of the field of psychology (Runyan, 2005).

2.6.2 Socio-cultural and historical variables

Ecosystemic theory argues that ‘no man is an island’ and behaviour should not be studied in isolation from the larger system in which human development occurs (Visser & Routledge, 2007). More specifically, individuals and the social context are interconnected, interdependent and dynamic parts that act on one another. The impact of socio-cultural influences on human development has been emphasised by many personality theorists, including Erikson, who demonstrated in his own psychobiographical works that individuals both affect and are affected by their environment (McAdams, 1988).

Socio-cultural and historical contextualisation constitutes another advantage of the psychobiographical approach because it allows for a rich and comprehensive understanding of the personality under study. Additionally, Simonton (2003) argues that the results of psychobiographical studies have real-world applicability because the person’s social, historical and cultural aspects have been included.

2.6.3 Longitudinal phenomenology

Psychobiographical studies have value because they focus on personality development and patterns of behaviour over the entire life course, thus facilitating an in-depth understanding of the “personality in action” (Fiske, 1988, p. 820). Fiske (1988) argues that the study of individuals over a period of time reveals dynamic changes in personality and the possible reasons for those changes. Psychobiographical research is longitudinal in nature and this allows for a detailed examination of life events as they unfold across time and situations, as opposed to a snapshot of a person’s life at a specific point in time (Edwards, Dattilio, & Bromley, 2004). Longitudinal research thus facilitates a more integrated and complete description of human development and functioning across the life cycle.

2.6.4 Subjective reality

Carlson (1971) emphatically declared that researchers are able to study persons under experimental conditions, but they are unable to study personality experimentally. Schultz (2005, p. 5) expanded on this by stating that “to know a person requires interpretation not variable manipulation”. It follows that the interpretation of an individual’s life story requires a measure of subjectivity and empathy from the researcher.

Life stories are subjective and psychosocially constructed over time, so researchers must strive to understand life stories from a subjective perspective because all individuals co-author their identity (Schultz, 2005). Psychobiographical studies facilitate the development of empathy within researchers because they obtain an understanding of the subjective reality of the subject through biographical data that describes the thoughts, feelings, behaviour, and lived experiences of the person being studied (Kőváry, 2011; Runyan, 1984). Life history research, such as psychobiography, has received praise for providing information on the subjective aspect of social experience (Runyan, 1982).

2.6.5 Creativity research

Blum (2001) suggests that the field of psychobiography emerged from psychoanalytic exploration into artistic creativity. Since the 1950s, many psychologists have linked creativity to normal personality functioning and propose that the study of creativity would reveal the conditions required for healthy functioning (Kőváry, 2011). Similarly, Clark (2007, p. 560) argues that psychobiographical studies of creative individuals benefit psychology because they shed light on the “outlier of artistic personality”, which may represent high levels of creativity and psychological health. In short, Clark (2007) describes the psychobiographical

method as essential for understanding the process of artistic creativity and the impact that creativity has on artists' lives. Simonton (1999) claims that psychologists are increasingly interested in the study of optimal functioning and positive psychology. The same author states that this shift necessitates careful study of the lives of those outstanding individuals who embody positive traits, such as charisma, spirituality, wisdom, talent, or creativity. Fouché and Van Niekerk (2010) agree that psychobiographical studies on extraordinary individuals may reveal how psychosocial variables influence the development of psychological strengths and greatness. Furthermore, psychobiography is a valuable research method as it allows for the psychological analysis of prominent creative individuals by indirect and non-invasive means, that is, without the use of experiments or psychological tests (Simonton, 1999).

2.6.6 Theory testing and development

One of the major advantages of psychobiography is that it is theory-driven research which provides a useful means for testing, developing and refining existing psychological theories (Carlson, 1988; Roberts, 2002; Schultz, 2005). According to Carlson (1988), Edwards (1998) and Roberts (2002), psychobiographical research contributes to the development of existing psychological theories through the confirmation or refutation of theoretical constructs and hypotheses. Fouché and Van Niekerk (2010) propose that the psychobiographical method is ideally suited to theory refinement in the following fields: developmental psychology, positive psychology, health psychology, career psychology, and personology.

Edwards et al. (2014) argue that the richness and complexity of human life creates room for new observations and insights within individual case studies that will contribute to theory development. According to Elms (1994), psychologists have recognised the value of studying one human life at a time in great detail. Similarly, Kőváry (2011) proposes that, at times, it is more valuable to investigate the personally significant as opposed to the statistically significant. Single lives are powerful stimuli that drive inquiry. It is noteworthy that several prominent personality theorists (including Freud, Jung, Maslow, Piaget, Erikson, Laing, Murray, and Allport) developed their influential models by analysing single cases or by studying only a few individuals (Schultz, 2005).

2.6.7 Significance within academic institutions

Fouché and Van Niekerk (2005) promote the use of the psychobiographical approach in South African academic institutions for the study of individual lives. According to Kőváry (2011), psychobiographical studies can be valuable educational tools. More specifically, detailed life story analyses can facilitate the development of empathic skills in psychology students and deepen their understanding of the human mind and behaviour. Research supervisors and psychology students have started to recognise the value of psychobiographical case studies in postgraduate research, namely “administrative, logistical and theoretical user-friendliness” (Fouché & Van Niekerk, 2010, p. 500). Psychobiographers are able to gather, organise and analyse existing biographical data on their subjects more expediently than researchers undertaking studies on live participants.

Furthermore, quantitative research results or statistical analyses may be difficult to understand and assimilate; they do not engage readers in the same way that narrative case studies do. In other words, psychobiographies have intrinsic appeal and are valuable in communicating psychological knowledge in an easily digestible format (Edwards et al., 2004).

2.7 Chapter Summary

In this chapter the psychobiographical method was defined and described. A broad history of psychobiography and local developmental trends were outlined. In addition, the criticisms and value of the psychobiographical approach were discussed. The next chapter focuses on Erikson’s theory of psychosocial development (1950, 1975).

CHAPTER 3

PSYCHOSOCIAL PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT

3.1 Chapter Preview

This chapter focuses on the theoretical framework guiding the current study, namely Erikson's theory of psychosocial development (1950, 1963, 1995). The chapter commences with a brief outline of Erikson's life history, followed by a discussion of his theoretical departures from the psychoanalytic tradition. Next, relevant concepts are explained and a comprehensive description of each psychosocial developmental stage is provided. The chapter concludes with a discussion of Erikson's contribution to psychobiography and a critique of his theory of psychosocial development.

3.2 Erik H. Erikson: The Man Behind the Theory

A brief outline of Erikson's life history seems appropriate at this point as many academics have suggested a connection between Erikson's childhood experiences and the personality theory he developed as an adult (Schultz & Schultz, 2013).

Erikson was born of Danish parents on 15 June 1902 near Frankfurt, in Germany. He was an illegitimate child and his birth was the result of a secret romance between his mother and an unknown Danish man (Flemming, 2004). Erikson's mother married his paediatrician, Dr Theodor Homberger, when he was three years old. Erikson adopted his Jewish stepfather's surname but retained his biological father's Nordic appearance. According to Allen (2006), Erikson was taunted by the Jewish children at his father's synagogue because of his blond hair and tall stature – “an ideal Aryan in appearance” (p. 150). Yet, he was shunned by many of his German peers at school because of his stepfather's religion.

Responding to enquiries about his adolescence, Erikson made the following remarks: “Yes, if ever an identity crisis was central and drawn out in somebody's life, it was so in mine” (Douvan, 1997, p. 16). This identity crisis influenced his psychosocial development and ideas about personality development in general (Flemming, 2004). Erikson (1975, p. 25) wrote: “No doubt, my best friends will insist that I needed to name this crisis and to see it in everybody else in order to really come to terms with it in myself.” Erikson graduated from school with mediocre grades and travelled throughout Europe pursuing a career as an artist (Schultz & Schultz, 2013). Erikson joined Freud's psychoanalytic circle in Vienna in 1927

and later confessed that he was partly drawn to Freud because he was searching for a father figure with whom he could identify (Schultz & Schultz, 2013). He underwent and completed psychoanalytic training with Anna Freud almost daily for three years, while simultaneously training as a Montessori teacher (Allen, 2006). During his six-year stay in Vienna, Erikson met and married a Canadian-born artist, Joan Serson. In 1933, Erikson and his wife migrated to America with their young children in response to the growing threat of Nazism in Germany. Erikson was welcomed as the first child psychoanalyst in the Boston area (Allen, 2006). During the 1930s and 1940s, he conducted anthropological fieldwork with the Sioux in South Dakota and the Yurok in Northern California (Sadock & Sadock, 2007). While working on the Indian reservations, Erikson noted psychological syndromes that could not be explained by traditional psychoanalytic theory alone. More specifically, the symptoms that he observed appeared to be related to a sense of isolation or alienation from cultural traditions and poorly defined self-identity (Schultz & Schultz, 2013).

It is worth noting that Erikson was still addressing his own form of identity crisis at the age of 37, when he became a US citizen and changed his name from Erik Homburger to Erik H. Erikson. His new name meant “Erik son of Erik”, which is ironic because he never knew the identity of his biological father (Allen, 2006, p. 150). Some academics have proposed that his new name symbolised a personal transformation, in that “he literally created himself or gave himself his own identity as Erik’s son, suggesting that he was the son of himself” (Flemming, 2004, p. 2).

Over the course of his career, Erikson maintained a clinical practice and held academic appointments at Harvard, Yale and Berkley. He was also a prolific writer who produced numerous articles and 14 books (Kivnic & Wells, 2013). Of particular importance was the publication of his book *Childhood and Society* in 1950. In this book, Erikson presented his psychosocial theory of development across the life span by detailing a gradual progression through stages of identity acquisition (Allen, 2006). Erikson’s developmental theory grew out of his personal life experiences and his work as artist, teacher, child psychoanalyst, anthropological fieldworker, lecturer, and biographer (Sadock & Sadock, 2007). His work in these diverse disciplines, particularly his anthropological fieldwork, convinced him that Freud’s psychosexual theory of development could not be applied universally. Erikson’s theoretical departures from Freud’s traditional psychoanalytic theory are discussed next.

3.3 Theoretical Departures from Freud

Erikson was trained by Sigmund Freud's daughter and his theory is rooted in the psychoanalytic tradition (Schultz & Schultz, 2013). However, as Erikson gained experience in his professional life, he increasingly began to view Freud's psychosexual theory as mechanistic, reductionistic and negative (Hoare, 2005). While he accepted the core tenets of Freudian theory, Erikson gradually developed an approach to human development that broadened the scope of Freud's work (Schultz & Schultz, 2013).

Erikson is considered to be a neo-Freudian and an ego psychologist who elaborated on the role of the ego in personality functioning (Allen, 2006). Erikson (1975, p. 37) concisely summarised Freudian thought as "backward", "downward" and "inward" because Freud focused on early childhood, instincts, and pathology arising from intrapsychic conflict. In contrast, Erikson described his theoretical focus using the following terms: "Outward, forward and upward" (Erikson, 1975, p. 39). More specifically, Erikson departed from Freudian thought because he moved *upward* in consciousness, *forward* throughout the entire life span, and *outward* in recognition of the importance of social influences (Hoare, 2005). Erikson therefore extended Freud's theory in three main ways:

3.3.1 Upward in consciousness

Freud theorised that personality has three key components, namely the id, the ego and the superego. According to Freud, instinctual drives originate in the id, which functions almost exclusively on the unconscious level. In its capacity as the executive of the personality, the ego mediates the demands of the id and superego, which contains society's moral codes (Meyer & Viljoen, 2008). Furthermore, Freud emphasised the role of the unconscious in determining behaviour and argued that instincts are motivational drives that form the basis of personality (Swartz et al., 2008). He viewed humans as biological creatures driven by irrational instincts and forces (Hoare, 2005).

In contrast, Erikson placed greater emphasis on the conscious self and the adaptive abilities of the rational ego; he seldom referred to the id or superego. In Erikson's view, the ego is an independent part of the personality which can make choices and initiate action to resolve developmental crises in a creative way. The ego presented in Erikson's theory has agency and chooses between different developmental possibilities at each stage of the developmental process (Meyer & Viljoen, 2008).

3.3.2 Forward throughout the life span

Freud's psychosexual theory places particular emphasis on the development of the sex drive from infancy to adolescence (Meyer & Viljoen, 2008). He held that personality characteristics are "permanently fixed" during the first six years of life and had little to say about development beyond adolescence (Meyer & Viljoen, 2008, p. 72). Furthermore, Freud proposed that early experiences are deterministic and that all neurotic disorders can be traced back to infancy (Hoare, 2005). Although Erikson mapped his theory of psychosocial development onto Freud's psychosexual stages, he extended Freud's model beyond adolescence to include adult development. Erikson theorised that the personality continues to develop in a succession of eight stages over the entire lifespan (Swartz et al., 2008). He therefore rejected the notion that conditions in infancy are prescriptively deterministic and promoted an optimistic view of development with a focus on psychosocial health rather than psychopathology (Hoare, 2005). According to Erikson's psychosocial theory, the ways in which crises are resolved during particular developmental stages are not fixed or immutable and individuals can rework them in subsequent stages (Swartz et al., 2008).

3.3.3 Outward to the social world

Freud based his theory of psychosexual development on the assumption of psychic and biological determinism. In other words, Freud assumed that all human behaviour is determined by forces within the psyche and by physiological drives within the body (Meyer & Viljoen, 2008). Freud therefore viewed individuals as intact but closed systems that are largely impermeable to environmental influences (Hoare, 2005). In contrast, Erikson argued that innate psychological and biological factors do not provide a complete explanation for personality development (Schultz & Schultz, 2013). He recognised the impact of socio-cultural and historical contexts on human development. More specifically, Erikson viewed persons as open systems and contended that socio-cultural phenomena are internalised within the developing ego through the mediation of cultural institutions such as the family, school and church (Hoare, 2002).

3.4 Description of Relevant Concepts

3.4.1 Personality

Meyer, Moore and Viljoen (2008) define personality as the constantly changing yet relatively stable organisation of all the psychological, spiritual, and physical characteristics that determine the behaviour of an individual. In other words, human beings have enduring

qualities that make them unique and recognisable but they are capable of change in response to their changing environments (Louw & Louw, 2009).

3.4.2 Epigenetic principle

Epigenesis refers to the step-by-step unfolding of development in an organism according to a genetically determined sequence (Peedicayil, 2012). Erikson applied the epigenetic principle to personality development and theorised that individual characteristics emerge in accordance with a predetermined timetable resulting from the interplay between genetic and social factors (Meyer & Viljoen, 2008). More specifically, aspects of each stage of personality development are present from birth and differentiate over time according to a biologically determined sequence mediated by societal demands placed on the individual across the life cycle (Peedicayil, 2012).

3.4.3 Crisis

Atalay (2007, p. 15) argues that Erikson's psychosocial developmental theory is a "psychology of crisis". The same author contends that Erikson regarded a *crisis* as a positive phenomenon: a turning point in the life of an individual, when a new task or challenge must be confronted and addressed. Human beings are continually tasked with negotiating a balance between the self and the demands of the social world and crises are catalysts that drive them towards psychosocial maturation (Swartz et al., 2008). Each of Erikson's stages incorporates a developmental task or crisis that results in a choice between two opposing attitudes or developmental possibilities (Erikson, 1995; Swartz et al., 2008).

3.4.4 Crisis resolution

According to Erikson (1995), the resolution of crises is achieved through a synthesis that includes a favourable ratio of both positive and negative developmental aspects presented at each psychosocial stage (Louw & Louw, 2009). New ego strengths emerge after the successful resolution of each crisis (Meyer & Viljoen, 2008). All the stages are interrelated; they are impacted by previous stages and will continue to affect future stages. However, a failure to adequately resolve a crisis in a specific stage does not necessarily result in a failure in subsequent stages. Rather, it increases the intensity of the challenge of the next crisis. Furthermore, individuals have the opportunity to revisit and rework crises in future stages (Atalay, 2007).

3.4.5 Ego strengths

In Erikson's view, *ego strengths* or virtues are positive psychological characteristics that prepare individuals for their role in the ongoing development of society (Meyer & Viljoen, 2008). His psychosocial theory aimed to explain ego development and the emergence of different ego strengths in a predetermined sequence during crises or critical periods of the life cycle. The successful resolution of each psychosocial crisis leads to the emergence of a new ego strength or developmental gain. Erikson identified eight ego strengths, namely hope, will, purpose, competence, fidelity, love, care and wisdom (refer to Table 1 below).

Table 1

Defining the Ego Strengths (adapted from Capps, 2012, pp. 272-273).

Ego Strength	Definition
1. Hope	The enduring belief in the attainability of fervent wishes, in spite of the dark urges and rages which mark the beginning of existence.
2. Willpower	The unbroken determination to exercise free choice as well as self-restraint, in spite of the unavoidable experience of shame and doubt in infancy.
3. Purpose	The courage to envision and pursue valued goals uninhibited by the defeat of infantile fantasies, by guilt and by the foiling fear of punishment.
4. Competence	The free exercise of dexterity and intelligence in the completion of tasks, unimpaired by infantile inferiority.
5. Fidelity	The ability to sustain loyalties freely pledged in spite of the inevitable contradictions of value systems.
6. Love	Mutuality of devotion forever subduing the antagonisms inherent in divided function.
7. Care	The widening concern for what has been generated by love, necessity, or accident. It overcomes the ambivalence adhering to irreversible obligation.
8. Wisdom	Detached concern with life itself, in the face of death itself.

3.4.6 Maladaptive and malignant tendencies

As mentioned previously, each psychosocial crisis results in a choice between two opposing developmental possibilities, that is, between a positive and a negative pole. Erikson (1963) repeatedly emphasised that the 'ideal' resolution is a ratio between the two poles that favours the positive pole, rather than a developmental process in which the negative pole is

completely eliminated. He extended his theory to include descriptions of the possible consequences of an excess of either pole (Capps, 2004). *Maladaptive tendencies* are excessive expressions of the positive dimension of each stage and *malignant tendencies* result from an excess of the negative dimension (Capps, 2004). Erikson assigned a maladaptation and a malignancy to each of the psychosocial stages (refer to Table 2 below).

Table 2

Maladaptive and Malignant Tendencies (adapted from Capps, 2004).

Maladaptation	Ego Strength	Psychosocial Crisis	Malignancy
Sensory distortion	Hope	<i>Trust versus Mistrust</i>	Withdrawal
Impulsiveness	Willpower	<i>Autonomy versus Shame and Doubt</i>	Compulsion
Ruthlessness	Purpose	<i>Initiative versus Guilt</i>	Inhibition
Narrow virtuosity	Competence	<i>Industry versus Inferiority</i>	Inertia
Fanaticism	Fidelity	<i>Ego Identity versus Role Confusion</i>	Repudiation
Promiscuity	Love	<i>Intimacy versus Isolation</i>	Exclusion
Over-extension	Care	<i>Generativity versus Stagnation</i>	Rejectivity
Presumption	Wisdom	<i>Integrity versus Despair</i>	Disdain

3.4.7 Modes and social modalities

A *mode* may be defined as a pattern of behaviour (Sadock & Sadock, 2007). The concept of modes is central to Erikson's theory and he described three physical modes of approach towards the environment that largely correspond to Freud's first three psychosexual stages (Meyer & Viljoen, 2008). The *mode of incorporation* predominates during the first year of life and parallels Freud's oral stage. The *mode of expulsion* emerges during the second year of life and corresponds to Freud's anal stage. The *mode of inclusion and intrusion* becomes evident in the third year of life and is associated with Freud's phallic stage (Meyer and Viljoen, 2008). In addition, each physical mode of approach has a corresponding *social modality*, which is regarded as the personally and culturally significant expression of each physical mode (Meyer & Viljoen, 2008).

3.4.8 Ritualisation

A ritual may be defined as a pattern of actions repeated in certain situations (Meyer & Viljoen, 2008). Erikson (1966) referred to human rituals as *ritualisations* because they are

largely determined by culture and often have a playful aspect. Ritualisation allows the expression of feelings in a socially acceptable way, while providing a measure of security in an unpredictable world (Meyer & Viljoen, 2008). However, *ritualisms* are inappropriate or excessive ritualisations that result in thoughtless and stereotypical behaviour (Fromme, 2010). Each of Erikson's stages are characterised by a ritualism and ritualisations stemming from a particular ritual element (refer to Table 3 below).

Table 3

Ritual Elements in Erikson's Model (adapted from Rook, 1985).

Age	Psychosocial Crisis	Ritual Element	Ritualism
0–1 years	<i>Trust versus Mistrust</i>	Numinous	Idolism
1–3 years	<i>Autonomy versus Shame and Doubt</i>	Judicious	Legalism
3–6 years	<i>Initiative versus Guilt</i>	Dramatic	Impersonation
6–12 years	<i>Industry versus Inferiority</i>	Formal	Formalism
12–18 years	<i>Ego Identity versus Role Confusion</i>	Ideological	Totalism
18–40 years	<i>Intimacy versus Isolation</i>	Affiliative	Elitism
40–65 years	<i>Generativity versus Stagnation</i>	Generational	Authoritism
65 years +	<i>Integrity versus Despair</i>	Philosophical	Sapientism

3.4.9 Optimal development

Erikson regards an *optimally developed* person as someone who has successfully resolved all eight developmental crises and acquired all the ego strengths (Meyer & Viljoen, 2008). However, development occurs according to the epigenetic principle of maturation, so aspects of all other crises are present and must be reworked at each stage. Therefore, one can speak of optimal development during each psychosocial stage (Meyer & Viljoen, 2008).

3.5 Psychosocial Stages of Developmental Crises

Erikson's psychosocial theory offers a comprehensive lifespan approach to personality development. He proposes eight discrete and sequential stages of psychosocial evolution that occur over the entire life course (Meyer & Viljoen, 2008; Swartz et al., 2008). These psychosocial stages reflect age-related patterns of personality development that are common to most individuals. Erikson proposed that psychosocial maturation becomes progressively more complex with each stage, owing to an escalation in societal demands that

accompanies an increase in the number of people actively engaged in the spheres of influence, namely family, school, peer group, community, workplace and society at large (Batra, 2013). An explanation of each psychosocial stage follows.

3.5.1 Basic trust versus mistrust: Hope (Age 0 – 1)

During the first year of life, infants are faced with the crisis of *basic trust versus mistrust*. They are tasked with developing a sense that the world is a safe place (Louw & Louw, 2009). The quality of the primary caregiver-infant relationship or attachment bond plays an important role in the resolution of this psychosocial crisis (Swartz et al., 2008). If caregivers respond to their infant's needs in a consistent and predictable way, the infant develops a sense of basic trust and this lays the foundation for the capacity to have hope in the face of adversity (Carr & McNulty, 2006). If caregivers reject the infant or provide inconsistent care, the infant may view the world as unsafe and become mistrustful (Swartz et al., 2008). Physical threats, such as violence in the home, also pose a threat to the infant's ability to resolve this crisis. Children who have been exposed to domestic violence often exhibit anxiety symptoms, somatic complaints and feelings of guilt (Hook, 2002).

Human rituals are an important part of psychosocial development. The most prominent *numinous ritualisation* in infancy is the morning greeting ceremony between a mother and her infant, which is characterised by eye contact, smiling, kissing, hugging and repetition of the baby's name (Meyer & Viljoen, 2008). The *ritualism of idolism*, an exaggeration of the numinous ritualisation, may occur when the infant idealises the mother (Austrian, 2008). Various modes or patterns of behaviour emerge at different stages. The *mode of incorporation* is dominant during this psychosocial stage and parallels Freud's oral stage. Infants incorporate or take in the world through their five senses, particularly their mouths (Erikson, 1959). According to Erikson (1968), the social modality associated with the incorporative mode is *to get*, which essentially means "receiving and accepting what is given", so that one can later become "the giver" (p. 99).

The maladaptive tendency of this psychosocial stage is *sensory distortion* or gullibility. Conversely, the malignant tendency is an excess of mistrust manifested as *withdrawal* (Capps, 2004). Erikson (1963) proposes that several psychopathologies result from the unsuccessful resolution of this developmental crisis, namely psychosis, masochism, depression and schizoid behaviour. Erikson (1963) argues that these disorders are linked to

the absence of a basic sense of trust in the self and the world. However, Erikson (1963, p. 249) is optimistic about infants' ability to learn to trust and claims that "there are very few frustrations that the child cannot endure". The favourable outcome of this psychosocial crisis is a healthy sense of trust that is moderated by a degree of mistrust, resulting in caution (Meyer & Viljoen, 2008). A healthy synthesis between basic trust and mistrust will lead to the emergence of the ego strength of *hope* and the positive self-description: "I can attain my wishes" (Carr & McNulty, 2006, p. 32). With the conviction "I am what I am given" and the emerging ability to trust oneself and caregivers, the infant is ready to develop a measure of autonomy (Erikson, 1959, p. 82).

3.5.2 Autonomy versus shame and doubt: Willpower (Age 1 – 3)

During the second and third year of life, toddlers have to resolve the crisis of *autonomy versus shame and doubt*. They are tasked with developing a sense of themselves as independent persons who can exercise self-control and make their own decisions (Erikson, 1968). This developmental stage is characterised by rapid physical maturation and increased societal demands. For instance, toddlers are expected to learn to walk, talk and achieve control over their excretory functions (Louw, Van Ede, & Louw, 1999).

Ideally, the social environment should encourage them to 'stand on their own feet', whilst protecting them from unnecessary experiences of shame and doubt (Erikson, 1995). In other words, caregivers should allow toddlers to exercise autonomy and help them to deal with any failures in a sympathetic way, while maintaining firm limits. Young children who are punished, constantly criticised and made to feel inadequate may experience a sense of shame and doubt concerning their abilities (Erikson, 1963; Swartz et al., 2008). Erikson (1963) describes shame as an extreme form of self-consciousness.

Judicious ritualisation becomes prominent during the second year of life because toddlers are increasingly exposed to social rules. Judicious concepts (such as good, bad, reward, and punishment) are ritualised in a non-threatening manner during play. For example, a parent and child may playfully scold one another (Meyer & Viljoen, 2008). The ritualism of this stage is *legalism* or an inflexible attitude towards the law for one's own gain (Austrian, 2008). The *mode of expulsion* emerges at this time and has some similarities with Freud's anal stage. Children begin to develop a measure of control over their muscles and this allows them to experience more control over their lives. They also experiment with two associated

social modalities, namely *holding on to* and *letting go of* people and things (Erikson, 1995). The favourable outcome of this psychosocial crisis is a sense of personal agency which is tempered by an appropriate degree of doubt, to prevent the maladaptive tendency of *impulsiveness* and the malignant tendency of *compulsion* (Capps, 2004). *Impulsiveness* refers to action without proper consideration of one's abilities and *compulsion* is characterised by the urge to follow rules and complete tasks perfectly at all costs to avoid making mistakes (Boeree, 2006). Other possible developmental problems include: aggression, cruelty, intolerance, and Antisocial Personality Disorder (Hook, 2002). A healthy resolution of the crisis will lead to the emergence of the ego strength of *willpower* and the positive self-description: "I can control events" (Carr & McNulty, 2006, p. 32). The child believes "I am what I will" and is equipped to tackle the next developmental phase (Erikson, 1959, p. 82).

3.5.3 Initiative versus guilt: Purpose (Age 3 – 6)

Children are in the play age during this psychosocial stage and face the crisis of *initiative versus guilt* (Erikson, 1995). They are able to move independently and explore their world more vigorously but they experience conflict between their ability to intrude into others' lives and moral rules (Erikson, 1963; Meyer & Viljoen, 2008). Caregivers have usually put certain boundaries in place by this developmental phase and children have to decide for themselves whether to accept these restrictions or not (Hook, 2002). In other words, children in this psychosocial stage are able to act on their own initiative and may therefore feel guilty about their behaviour if they violate social rules or trespass on other people's domain. The challenge is to strike a balance between taking initiative and respecting boundaries. If children are criticised for expressing their plans or punished for taking initiative, they may develop fear and a sense of guilt (Swartz et al., 2008).

Children employ *dramatic ritualisation* during the play age; they tackle new challenges and make the imagined real through play-acting (Meyer & Viljoen, 2008). Youngsters enjoy dressing up in adult clothing, acting out different social roles, and applying moral rules to establish right from wrong. They explore the social environment and discover how they affect it. This type of fantasy play is vital for the development of empathy, conscience, realistic ambition, purpose, and identification with the same-sex parent (Fromme, 2010). Erikson (1963) theorised that this particular psychosocial stage "sets the direction towards the possible and the tangible, which permits the dreams of early childhood to be attached to the goals of an active adult life" (p. 258). It is interesting to note that the

development of acting talent during childhood has been linked to imaginative play, high levels of empathy and good emotional regulation (Goldstein, 2009). In other words, successful actors are adept at reading the mental states of others and experiencing others' feelings, while regulating their own emotions in an adaptive way (Goldstein, 2009).

The ritualism of *impersonation* results when a child does not commit to any social role (Austrian, 2008). The *mode of inclusion and intrusion* becomes evident in the third year of life and parallels Freud's phallic stage (Meyer & Viljoen, 2008). Young children are eager to explore and interact with others and the social modality of this stage is *to make*. There is a strong sense of the child's being "on the make", a phrase that conveys the notion of "pleasure in attack and conquest" (Erikson, 1995, p. 229). A child who consistently takes too much initiative and experiences too little guilt may develop the maladaptive tendency of *ruthlessness*, which refers to the use of initiative to achieve one's goals at the expense of others (Boeree, 2006; Capps, 2004). On the contrary, a child who takes too little initiative and experiences too much guilt may develop the malignant tendency of *inhibition*. The inhibition of spontaneous action is aimed at avoiding feelings of guilt (Boeree, 2006; Capps, 2004).

The favoured outcome of this psychosocial crisis is a synthesis or ego strength called *purpose*, which may be described as the ability to strive for goals in a confident and purposeful way, without feeling excessive guilt or taking initiative that could offend others (Louw et al., 1999). The associated positive self-description is: "I can plan and achieve goals" (Carr & McNulty, 2006, p.32) and the conviction "I am what I can imagine I will be" underpins the development of competence in the next stage (Erikson, 1959, p.82).

3.5.4 Industry versus inferiority: Competence (Age 6 – 12)

During the fourth psychosocial stage, children begin formal schooling and are confronted with the developmental crisis of *industry versus inferiority* (Erikson, 1995). They are tasked with learning to work with others and mastering the basic skills required for adult life (Louw & Louw, 2009). The school age is characterised by a desire for success and recognition by producing things, to avoid feelings of inferiority and inadequacy (Erikson, 1995). Teachers and peers become influential social agents throughout this stage because children begin to evaluate themselves in relation to their peers' abilities and teachers' feedback (Swartz et al., 2008). Youngsters develop a sense of industry if they have the ability to master the skills taught at school and their efforts are rewarded by their parents, teachers

and peers. However, children who are humiliated or ridiculed for poor performance at school may develop feelings of inferiority and lack the motivation to achieve in adulthood (Carr & McNulty, 2006). Youngsters learn how to perform methodically through *formal ritualisation* during the school age (Erikson, 1995). Children watch and learn so that they are able to perform activities in the proper way. School is the first productive situation that allows children to relate to one of larger society's core elements, namely work. In other words, school performance is a child's equivalent of work (Allen, 2006). *Formalism* is the associated ritualism in which work becomes meaningless and routine for the child (Fromme, 2010). Erikson's fourth psychosocial stage parallels Freud's latency period; however, Erikson does not assign modes of approach beyond his third psychosocial stage.

The maladaptive tendency of this psychosocial stage is *narrow virtuosity*, a term which essentially describes a workaholic. On the opposite end of the spectrum is the malignancy called *inertia* or apathy resulting from excessive feelings of inferiority and inadequacy (Boeree, 2006). A healthy resolution to this psychosocial crisis is achieved through the favourable ratio of industry and inferiority, that is, mostly industry with a small degree of inferiority to ensure sensible humility (Boeree, 2006). This leads to the emergence of the ego strength of *competence*, which is necessary for future collaboration in productive work and family life. This stage is characterised by the conviction "I am what I learn" (Erikson, 1959, p. 82) and the positive self-description: "I can use skills to achieve goals" (Carr & McNulty, 2006, p. 32). At this point childhood ends and adolescence begins.

3.5.5 Ego identity versus role confusion: Fidelity (Age 12 – 18)

The adolescent search for self is the focus of the fifth psychosocial crisis, namely *ego identity versus role confusion* (Allen, 2006). This psychosocial stage is the equivalent of Freud's genital stage and adolescents are confronted with an identity crisis which is resolved by the development of an integrated and stable sense of self (Louw & Louw, 2009). Continuity is an important theme in Erikson's (1959) understanding of identity as an integration of all earlier identifications. More specifically, Erikson (1959) defines ego identity as the "accrued confidence that one's ability to maintain inner sameness and continuity is matched by the sameness and continuity of one's meaning for others" (p. 89). Hook (2002) proposes that the stability of the identity and social role of adolescents may be facilitated by key relationships with significant adults.

Adolescence is a turbulent developmental period and teenagers strive for continuity of identity while negotiating the many psychological, physical and social changes that accompany the onset of puberty (Sadock & Sadock, 2007). Society therefore extends tolerance, known as a psychosocial moratorium, and allows adolescents a degree of freedom in their search for individual identity (Louw et al., 1999). In other words, adolescence is usually a socially sanctioned period of experimentation with different ideologies and careers, which encompasses the merging of all previous social roles into a firm identity (Fromme, 2010). The skills and technical competencies developed in previous stages are also assimilated into the adolescent's developing sense of identity. Furthermore, these abilities should be cultivated for possible use in future occupations (Hook, 2002). Carr and McNulty (2006) argue that adolescents are able to achieve a clear sense of individual identity when they experience a moratorium in which they explore many new roles and consolidate the social roles learned in earlier stages. Conversely, role confusion and identity diffusion occur when adolescents do not experience a moratorium and fail to experiment with new social roles (Carr & McNulty, 2006).

The *ritualization of ideology* during adolescence involves finding and adapting to an ideology without losing one's individuality (Fromme, 2010). Graduation ceremonies and other rites of passage (such as Bar Mitzvahs) help adolescents commit to a worldview or ideology. However, the ritualism of *totalism* results when adolescents engage in excessive emulation of their heroes (Hook, 2002) or over-identify with and adopt another's ideology instead of achieving an individual sense of identity (Austrian, 2008). The maladaptive tendency of this stage is *fanaticism*, which Boeree (2006) describes as over-involvement in a particular social role leading to intolerance.

The associated malignancy is *repudiation*, which involves rejection of the need for individual identity. Some adolescents may join gangs or religious cults and assume the identity they provide (Boeree, 2006). Other possible maladaptive behaviours and psychopathologies that stem from the unsuccessful resolution of this developmental crisis include social withdrawal and isolation, psychotic episodes, delinquency, substance abuse, and Antisocial Personality Disorder (Hook, 2002). A satisfactory resolution of the adolescent identity crisis leads to the ego strength called *fidelity*. This virtue is characterised by a clear sense of individual identity, the embracing of a philosophy of life, and a capacity for loyalty towards one's social roles (Meyer & Viljoen, 2008). The accompanying positive self-

description is: “I can be true to my values” (Carr & McNulty, 2006, p. 32). Having emerged from the search for personal identity, the young adult is keen to establish psychological intimacy with others through partnerships in the next developmental phase (Erikson, 1995).

3.5.6 Intimacy versus isolation: Love (Age 18 – 40)

The developmental crisis of young adulthood is *intimacy versus isolation* and the challenge is to commit to another individual in a loving relationship, without the fear of losing one’s own identity (Louw & Louw, 2009). Individuals who do not manage to achieve this kind of intimacy experience a sense of isolation. Erikson (1995) maintains that the achievement of ego identity in the previous stage enables young adults to share their identity with another and to make the compromises that may be required for an intimate partnership. Furthermore, Batra (2013) proposes that the likelihood of sustaining meaningful, long-term relationships is greater in instances where psychosocial development has been relatively smooth. Previous crises tend to reoccur in this developmental phase if they have not been adequately resolved during preceding stages (Hook, 2002).

The intimacy stage is characterised by *affiliative ritualisation* or productive affiliation with others in work, friendship and love. Young adults engage in rituals that promote caring adult relationships, such as marriage. The corresponding ritualism is *elitism*, which entails connecting superficially only with a small exclusive group (Fromme, 2010). Erikson calls the maladaptation of this stage *promiscuity*, referring to the inability to commit to another person and the tendency to become intimate too freely in the absence of a meaningful relationship. The malignancy is known as *exclusion*, which is characterised by the tendency to isolate oneself from others and behave in a spiteful way (Boeree, 2006).

The attainment of true geniality or love is the synthesis between intimacy and isolation. Erikson (1995) defines the ego strength of *love* as incorporating: mutual orgasm with a partner of the opposite sex whom one loves and trusts, and with whom one is willing to work, play and procreate. The conviction underlying the intimacy stage can be summarised by the phrase “we are what we love” (Erikson, 1968, p. 138) and the positive self-description is “I can be intimate with another” (Carr & McNulty, 2006, p. 32). It is important to note that Charlize Theron is currently 39 years old and has not yet reached the chronological age of Erikson’s next psychosocial stage. Consequently, the last two stages have limited, if any, applicability in this treatise and will be discussed only briefly.

3.5.7 Generativity versus stagnation: Care (Age 40 – 65)

The psychosocial crisis of mid-life is *generativity versus stagnation* and the primary developmental task is to strike a balance between generativity and self-absorption (Erikson, 1995). Generative personalities find fulfilment in contributing to the younger generation by means of guidance, productive work, procreation or childcare (Louw & Louw, 2009). *Generativity* may be described as concern for the next generation leading to a productive focus on making the world a better place for those who will follow (Carr & McNulty, 2006; Erikson, 1995). Individuals who do not have children may decide to contribute to society through institutionalised arrangements (such as adoption) that facilitate intergenerational bonding and the transfer of knowledge, aspirations, and cultural traditions (Batra, 2013). Stagnation occurs when individuals are unable to develop a sense of generativity; they turn their energy inward and become self-absorbed (Swartz et al., 2008).

Middle-aged adults employ *generational ritualisation* (such as family traditions and mentoring practices at work) to transmit important aspects of culture to the younger generation. The associated ritualism is *authoritism* or the selfish use of power (Fromme, 2010). The maladaptive tendency of this stage is *over-extension* due to an excess of generativity. The corresponding malignancy is *rejectivity*, which refers to a lack of participation in society (Boeree, 2006). However, a healthy balance between generativity and stagnation leads to the ego strength of *care* and the positive self-description: “I am committed to making the world a better place” (Carr & McNulty, 2006, p. 32), which is underpinned by the conviction “I am what I create” (Aiken, 1998, p. 112).

3.5.8 Integrity versus despair: Wisdom (Age 65 onwards)

The final developmental crisis is *integrity versus despair* and the challenge is to view one’s life as worthwhile (Louw & Louw, 2009). Late adulthood is typically characterised by a re-examination and integration of past events. A sense of personal integrity is achieved by those who are able to accept both the positive and negative experiences of their lives, and integrate these into a meaningful personal narrative that enables them to face death without fear. Individuals who are unable to do this experience fear of death and a sense of despair over past failures and current frailties (Carr & McNulty, 2006). *Philosophical ritualisation* is dominant during late adulthood and may be described as an integration of all other ritualisations. The associated ritualism is *sapientism* which manifests as the pretence of wisdom (Fromme, 2010). Furthermore, the false *presumption* of ego identity is the

maladaptive tendency of stage eight and the malignancy is *disdain* or contempt of life (Boeree, 2006). The successful resolution of this psychosocial crisis leads to the ego strength of *wisdom*, with the underlying conviction “I am what survives of me” (Erikson, 1995, p. 141) and the positive self-description: “I am committed to life. I accept myself and my life but I know I will die soon” (Carr & McNulty, 2006, p. 32).

3.6 Erikson’s Psychobiographies

Although Erikson primarily drew on clinical experience while developing his theory of personality development, he also made use of psychobiography to elaborate his descriptions of psychosocial phenomena and deepen his understanding of the influence of socio-cultural factors on personality development (Barresi & Juckes, 1997).

Erikson wrote full psychobiographies on two revolutionary figures who initiated important social change, namely Martin Luther (1958) and Mahatma Gandhi (1969). The study of Luther focused on the young leader’s identity crisis and showed that “social history and personal psychology converge in the concrete behaviour of great individuals” (Barresi & Juckes, 1997, p. 709). However, Erikson was criticised for making strong inferences about Luther’s childhood in the absence of verifiable facts. His work *Young Man Luther* (1958) thus served as a catalyst for debate about the usefulness of psychobiography, while stimulating its development (Barresi & Juckes, 1997). Erikson responded to the critique he received by demonstrating a greater reliance on historical data and restricting the scope of his next psychobiography, *Gandhi’s Truth: On the Origins of Militant Nonviolence* (1969).

In his study of Gandhi (1969), Erikson paid special attention to the psychological factors that influenced the development of Gandhi’s personality and philosophy (Baressi & Juckes, 1997). McAdams (1988) argues that Freud’s Leonardo may be regarded as the first formal psychobiography but Erikson’s psychological analyses of Luther and Gandhi represent psychobiography’s maturation. In addition, Erikson’s psychosocial theory has been utilised in a number of psychobiographical studies completed by South African researchers (Fouché & Van Niekerk, 2010) because it provides a staged, comprehensive, and complex but intuitively appealing framework for studying personality development (Swartz et al., 2008).

3.7 Criticisms of Erikson's Psychosocial Theory of Development

Erikson's theory has attracted criticism even though it is widely recognised and generally accepted by the psychological community (Matija, 2014). Critics have pointed out that Erikson gives a thorough description of psychosocial development but neglects to provide an adequate explanation for how or why this development occurs (Swartz et al., 2008). His theory lacks specific mechanisms of development because he does not explain in any detail how individuals move from stage to stage or how they actually resolve the psychosocial crisis within a particular stage (Miller, 2011).

In addition, Erikson's psychosocial theory has been criticised for its male bias and inadequate account of female development. Erikson's stages of development are based on studies of white, middle-class males and yet his androcentric model is universally applied to women (Swartz et al., 2008). Furthermore, Erikson used the male pronoun in his writing and often framed his assertions in masculine terms, which was common practice in his time (Douvan, 1997). However, Allen (2006) argues that Erikson was influenced by the women's movement and his view of female development had evolved by the mid-1970s.

Erikson's theory has also received criticism for demonstrating cultural bias. Carr and McNulty (2006, p. 35) maintain that Erikson's model was informed by a "predominantly Western, white, middle-class, Judeo-Christian, socio-cultural tradition". The same authors question whether his theory applies to individuals from other ethnic groups or to those who live in abject poverty because they may not adopt the values and norms of a white, middle-class community and are therefore unlikely to progress through the psychosocial stages in the way that Erikson theorised. Results from a research study conducted by Ochse and Plug (1986) confirm certain of Carr and McNulty's (2006) assertions.

Ochse and Plug (1986) investigated six of Erikson's constructs (namely *trust*, *autonomy*, *initiative*, *industry*, *intimacy*, and *generativity*) among black and white South Africans aged 15 to 60. Results differed for the black and white participants, with only the white participants' responses confirming the predictions for Erikson's psychosocial theory (Allen, 2006). This suggests that psychological theories formulated by people of one culture may not apply to people from another culture. In this instance, Erikson's theory appears to be more applicable to white South Africans than black South Africans. However, Allen (2006) argues that Erikson acknowledged cultural diversity and believed that, while people from

different cultures all pass through the same eight developmental stages, the stages are manifested differently for different cultures. For example, Erikson recognised that it was more difficult for children of oppressed social and ethnic groups to develop feelings of competency during the school age (Allen, 2006).

Lastly, critics have argued that Erikson's constructs are difficult to measure and his theory lacks sufficient empirical evidence (Weizman, 2009; Matija, 2014). Weizman (2009, p. 79) argues that Erikson's language is "rich, often imprecise and sometimes ambiguous" resulting in the development of theoretical concepts that are difficult to operationalise. Erikson (1995) responded to this critique by stating that the idiosyncratic nature of personality development prevented rigid descriptions of theoretical constructs. However, it must be pointed out that several instruments have been developed for measuring Erikson's constructs: the Ego-Identity Scale (Dignan, 1965), the Inventory of Psychosocial Development (Constantinople, 1969), and a South African questionnaire for the evaluation of development during the first seven stages (Ochse & Plug, 1986).

Furthermore, there is a fair body of research in support of Erikson's ideas. Kowaz and Marcia (1991) developed a measure of *industry* and administered it to school children, their parents and teachers. Results demonstrated convincing evidence for the validity of the concept of *industry*, in addition to showing that this concept strongly applies to children aged 6 to 12 years. In addition, Erikson's concept of *identity* has stimulated much research and studies have produced results that largely support his theory of identity formation (Meyer & Viljoen, 2008). James Marcia's research (1976; 1980) and consequent broadening of Erikson's concept of *identity* to include four identity statuses has generated further identity research (Meyer & Viljoen, 2008). For reviews of empirical research on the identity statuses consult: Marcia, Waterman, Matteson, Archer, and Orlofsky (1993), and Schwartz, Luyckx, and Vignoles (2011). Research conducted by McAdams (2000) suggests that Erikson's concept of *care* is associated with mature adulthood and encompasses family concerns, volunteer activities and civic obligations.

In addition, Peterson, Smirles, and Wentworth (1997) investigated the concept of *generativity* and study results show that generative individuals tend to be open, conscientious and extraverted (Allen, 2006). Peterson and Stewart (1993) also conducted research on *generativity* and results indicate that individuals begin to develop generativity well before

middle age. However, Erikson does acknowledge that all the components of personality develop to some extent throughout life, even prior to their critical stages (Allen, 2006). Results from a study conducted by Franz, McClelland, and Weinberger (1991) show that *generativity* is positively related to psychosocial maturity.

There have been many other studies on *generativity*, including those conducted by McAdams, Ruetzel, and Foley (1986), Mansfield and McAdams (1996), McAdams, Reynolds, Lewis, Patten, and Bowman (2001), and Pratt, Danso, Arnold, Norris, and Filyer (2001), but a detailed discussion of the results is beyond the scope of this study. It is sufficient to state that these studies show that Erikson's concept of *generativity* is positively related to communion, moral steadfastness, redemption, pro-social future goals, and early family advantage (Allen, 2006). A brief discussion of Erikson's major contributions concludes the chapter.

3.8 Erikson's Contributions

Erikson is regarded as a major thinker of the 20th century and the most influential modern psychoanalyst (Hoare, 2002). He formulated a psychosocial theory that has had a substantial impact on: psychologists' understanding of personality development over the life cycle, research agendas, social policies, and therapeutic approaches (Swartz et al., 2008). In addition, Erikson has been described as an evocative author (Douvan, 1997) who wrote for academic audiences and the general public (Kivnick & Wells, 2013). Douvan (1997) claims that Erikson is one of a few theorists who have had a direct impact on human culture. Several of his concepts (such as *identity* and *psychosocial moratorium*) are part of our everyday vocabulary and he is perhaps most famous for coining the term *identity crisis* (Benveniste, 2000).

Erikson was a pioneer in developmental psychology and his work has stimulated more research than any other psychoanalytical approach (Meyer & Viljoen, 2008). According to Marcia and Josselson (2013), Erikson's psychosocial model is the most comprehensive and empirically validated theory of personality development. Swartz et al. (2008) propose that Erikson's most important contribution was his consideration of developmental issues across the entire life span, a strong area of research today. It was largely as a result of Erikson's influence that psychologists started to study development in adulthood (Miller, 2011). His stages of adult development are comprehensive and offer many insights into the tasks faced

by individuals as they mature. As the number of ageing adults has gradually increased, contemporary researchers have placed greater focus on the final stages of the human life cycle, particularly on Erikson's concept of *generativity* (Miller, 2011). Other active areas of contemporary research are ego development and the search for individual identity during adolescence and early adulthood (Miller, 2011). Erikson drew attention to the importance of the contextual dimensions of human existence and the influence of socio-cultural factors on identity and personality development (Batra, 2013). According to Miller (2011), current research on identity has focused on the impact of cultural variables on the development of individual identity.

In addition, Marcia and Josselson (2013) claim that Erikson's psychosocial theory of development is a valuable framework for clinical assessment, case formulation and therapeutic intervention. His theory covers the entire life span and outlines probable psychosocial crises and outcomes during the different stages of life. Moreover, it provides realistic developmental goals, a way of locating individuals on their developmental path, and an indication of the ego skills or strengths needed to move forward (Marcia & Josselson, 2013). Miller (2011) maintains that many counsellors continue to draw on Erikson's work today, particularly those who assist adolescents in making personal and occupational decisions.

Erikson's psychosocial theory (1950, 1963, 1995) remains relevant to developmental psychology and was selected to guide this study because it recognises the impact of socio-cultural influences on developmental processes and provides a comprehensive, staged framework for studying Charlize Theron's personality development (Swartz et al., 2008).

3.9 Chapter Summary

The chapter commenced with an outline of Erikson's life history, followed by a discussion of his theoretical departures from the psychoanalytic tradition. Relevant concepts were explained and a comprehensive description of each psychosocial developmental stage was provided. The chapter concluded with a critique of Erikson's theory of psychosocial development (1950, 1975) and a discussion of his contribution to psychobiography and the field of psychology.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

4.1 Chapter Preview

Chapter 4 offers an account of the methodological framework utilised for this qualitative study. The research objectives, research design and psychobiographical subject selection process are presented. Thereafter, the data collection and analysis procedures are described. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the potential methodological weaknesses, the relevant ethical considerations, and the value of reflexivity in psychobiographical research.

4.2 Research Objectives

The objectives of this qualitative study are four-fold:

1. To formulate an accurate, detailed, and coherent biographical description of Theron.
2. To explore, describe and interpret Theron's personality development in terms of Erikson's theory of psychosocial development (1950, 1963, 1995).
3. To informally evaluate the applicability of Erikson's theory of psychosocial development (1950, 1963, 1995) to Theron's personality development.
4. To contribute towards psychobiographical research focusing on extraordinary South Africans.

The first and second objectives reflect the exploratory-descriptive nature of psychobiographical research, which aims to provide a holistic and comprehensive understanding of the chosen individual within a particular social context (Edwards, 1998). The third objective depicts the descriptive-dialogic nature of psychobiographical research, which aims to confirm, refute, refine, or expand on aspects of the theoretical framework within which the study is situated (Edwards, Dattilio & Bromley, 2004). This is achieved by establishing a dialogue between the exploratory-descriptive findings and the constructs, assumptions and propositions of Erikson's theory.

4.3 The Research Design

Qualitative inquiry aims to explore and understand the pattern of relationships between people, objects and situations with the purpose of eliciting the personal meanings attributed to them (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). This psychobiographical study was situated

within a qualitative paradigm (Yin, 2003) and may be described as longitudinal life history research with a single-case design (Flick, 2006; Runyan, 1984). The psychobiographical method is regarded as idiographic because it involves the disciplined and systematic investigation of a singular case within its real-life setting. Psychobiographies are typically aimed at gaining an in-depth understanding of the uniqueness, idiosyncrasies and complexity of an individual (Howe, 1997). Furthermore, Runyan (1983) describes psychobiography as a morphogenic, holistic approach that appreciates individual uniqueness within the context of the whole person. Personality development and patterns of behaviour are studied over the entire life course, thus facilitating a comprehensive understanding of the “personality in action” (Fiske, 1988, p. 820). Psychobiographers employ psychological theory to describe and interpret the biographical data of extraordinary individuals into coherent psychological narratives (McAdams, 2006). Psychobiography is thus theory-driven research that provides a useful means for testing, developing and refining aspects of existing psychological theories (Carlson, 1988; Roberts, 2002).

4.4 The Psychobiographical Subject

Psychobiographers study the lives of remarkable, prominent, illustrious, and enigmatic individuals (Runyan, 1988; Simonton, 2003). According to Howe (1997), many scholars are drawn to the psychological study of extraordinariness because they are intrigued by the question of why and how certain children develop into exceptionally competent, creative or productive adults. A systematic review of psychobiographical research written by South African authors from 1995 to 2004 highlighted the need for more psychobiographical studies on women (Fouché et al., 2007).

In addition, Fouché and Van Niekerk (2010) have called on local researchers to conduct psychobiographical studies that acknowledge the diverse contributions made by extraordinary South Africans. The same authors suggest that the remarkable individuals listed in South Africa’s hall of fame would make “ideal case studies” (Fouché & Van Niekerk, 2010, p. 495). Examples from the South African hall of fame include Nelson Mandela, Jan Smuts, Chris Barnard, Steve Biko, Desmond Tutu, Nadine Gordimer, Charlize Theron, Albert Luthuli, and Olive Schreiner (ZAR.co.za, 2007). Furthermore, Fouché and Van Niekerk (2010) recommend that more celebrity psychobiographies be written to increase academic psychobiography’s topicality and attract young academics into the field.

A non-probability, purposive sampling procedure was employed to select Charlize Theron as the psychobiographical subject for this study. In purposive sampling researchers use their own judgement to select participants who best meet the purposes of their study (Swartz et al., 2008). Theron was chosen on the basis of the interest value, uniqueness and significance of her life. She is one of four South Africans (the other three are John Daly, Basil Rathbone and Louis Hayward) to be awarded a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame since its inception in 1960 (Hollywood Walk of Fame, 2013). Thousands of young girls with similar qualities and dreams as Theron arrive in Hollywood every year, and few of them succeed (Karsten, 2009). As the only South African who has been awarded an Oscar, Theron is an exceptional individual who demonstrates tenacity and a will to succeed, despite significant traumatic events in her childhood (Karsten, 2009).

A preliminary review of the available literature suggests that Theron possesses a high degree of creativity, productivity, and resilience. In addition, the literature review revealed an absence of psychobiographical research on Theron's personality development. Furthermore, her life story appears to have theoretical significance and applicability regarding Erikson's theory of psychosocial development (1950, 1963, 1995).

4.5 Data Collection Procedures

Biographical material on Theron was collected from primary (written documents and audio-visual media produced by the subject herself) and secondary sources (written documents and audio-visual media produced by others) that were freely available in the public domain (Simonton, 2003). The data sources include biographies, excerpts from interviews, newspaper articles, magazine articles, court transcripts and internet sources. These are recorded in the Reference List of the study. The search for data sources was conducted via the World Wide Web and information system services available at the library of Rhodes University in Grahamstown, South Africa. All data sources were carefully documented as a means of providing a database that can be reviewed by other researchers at a later stage (Fouché, 1999; Yin, 2003).

Yin (2003) promoted the use of published materials in psychobiographical studies as they are considered to be: a) a stable and convenient database that can be repeatedly viewed over a prolonged period of time, b) useful for corroborating dates and biographical data, c) relatively accessible, and d) a means of verifying the accuracy of information obtained from

other data sources. However, Yin (2003) cautioned that published materials may not be sufficiently objective as a result of author bias. Numerous data sources were consulted to minimise the potential impact of author bias, which occurs when an author compromises the credibility of the published material by not reporting all the relevant information and using text that supports his or her point of view (Henning, Van Rensburg, & Smit, 2004). More specifically, the use of multiple sources allowed for data triangulation, thereby enhancing the internal validity of the data collected (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). Data triangulation is an effective means of eliciting divergent constructions of the variable, event or individual being investigated (Babbie & Mouton, 2001) and ensuring that the case study data has been supported by more than one source of evidence (Yin, 2003). In addition, reflexivity and verbatim quotes were employed to further minimise the possibility of distorted interpretations of the literature on Theron.

Once the data had been gathered, the researcher was faced with the difficult task of ordering the salient biopsychosocial information pertinent to achieving the research objectives (Schultz, 2005). The data extraction and analysis procedures utilised in this study are discussed in the next section.

4.6 Data Analysis Procedures

The basic unit of analysis is Theron's lifespan to date (Yin, 2003). The researcher was therefore tasked with examining a large volume of biographical material of varying quality. Strategies were employed to clearly identify data that could safely be disregarded and content that needed to be prioritised as psychologically significant (Schultz, 2005). More specifically, the case study data was organised and analysed according to the general analytic approach developed by Huberman and Miles (2002) and one of Alexander's (1990) strategies, namely questioning the data.

4.6.1 Huberman and Miles's approach

The general approach developed by Huberman and Miles (2002) involves the application of a predetermined analytical strategy to enhance the reliability of the study's findings. These authors propose that data analysis consists of three interrelated processes, namely data reduction or condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing or verification. It is important to note that these processes interact reciprocally during all stages of the research to enhance the trustworthiness of study findings (Huberman & Miles, 2002).

4.6.1.1 Data reduction

A conceptual framework was used to condense the data and guide the extraction and ordering of relevant information. Erikson's theory of psychosocial development (1950, 1963, 1995) offers a comprehensive lifespan approach to personality development and provided the theoretical framework for this study. During data extraction and analysis procedures, the researcher focused on biographical data related to Theron's personality development that corresponded to the eight developmental stages as proposed by Erikson (1950, 1963, 1995). Alexander's (1990) strategy of questioning the data was utilised in selecting these core units of data. The researcher approached the study data with the following questions in mind:

1. Which units of data facilitate an in-depth exploration, description and interpretation of Theron's personality development?
2. How applicable is Erikson's theory of psychosocial development (1950, 1963, 1995) to the various stages of Theron's personality development?

Furthermore, the researcher was simultaneously engaged in the processes of data reduction and data analysis, whilst extracting the data to be examined further. Huberman and Miles (2002, p. 11) explain that data reduction is more than data condensation:

Data reduction is not something separate from analysis. It is part of analysis. The researcher's decisions – which data chunks to code and which to pull out, which evolving story to tell – are all analytic choices. Data reduction is a form of analysis that sharpens, sorts, focuses, discards, and organizes data in such a way that final conclusions can be drawn and verified.

4.6.1.2 Data display

According to Huberman and Miles (2002), data displays are visual formats that allow a full data set to be viewed in a single location. They advocate the use of matrices to facilitate the accurate and concise display of data. A matrix is a tabular format that permits the collection, systematic ordering, and easy viewing of data to facilitate a detailed analysis and answer to the study's research questions (Huberman & Miles, 2002). Analytic matrices developed during the data collection phase can provide the researcher with a focus, suggest preliminary study findings, and highlight gaps in the existing data (Huberman & Miles, 2002). The integration and analysis of the data were guided by a matrix (refer to Table 4) comprising Erikson's psychosocial stages (on the x-axis) and Theron's biographical data (on the y-axis). Erikson's theory of psychosocial development (1950, 1963, 1995) provided a

blueprint for collecting, conceptualising, structuring, and presenting the data. It is important to note that Erikson's stages 1–6 apply to Theron's life as she is currently only 39 years old.

Table 4

Data Analysis Matrix

	ERIKSON'S STAGES OF PSYCHOSOCIAL DEVELOPMENT							
CHARLIZE THERON'S LIFE: Historical Periods	Basic Trust vs Mistrust Age 0-1	Autonomy vs Shame and Doubt Age 1-3	Initiative vs Guilt Age 3-6	Industry vs Inferiority Age 6-12	Identity vs Role Confusion Age 12-18	Intimacy vs Isolation Age 18-40	Generativity vs Stagnation Age 40-65	Integrity vs Despair Age 65 +
Childhood (1975–1992)								
The Developing Actress (1993–2003)								
The Established Actress and Producer (2004–2015)								

Matrices facilitate the drawing and verifying of conclusions because the condensed study data is arranged coherently to enable the researcher to discern themes and patterns, detect differences, and make careful comparisons (Huberman & Miles, 2002).

4.6.1.3 Conclusion drawing and verification

Although interpretation and conclusion drawing may begin early in the data collection phase, the researcher should strive to keep an open attitude throughout the research process and avoid drawing final conclusions prematurely (Green, 2006). Psychobiographers are expected to triangulate study data, follow up on surprises, investigate discrepancies, consider rival explanations, and verify data during the data analysis process (Huberman & Miles, 2002). A lack of data verification may result in serious consequences, such as: (a) information overload, (b) the salience of first impressions or dramatic events, (c) co-occurrences construed as causal relationships, and (d) the use of unreliable data in the study (Huberman & Miles, 2002).

4.7. Limitations of the Psychobiographical Method

Valid criticisms have been levelled at the psychobiographical method (Anderson, 1981; Fouché, 1999). These methodological challenges and the strategies used to circumvent them are discussed below.

4.7.1 Reliability and validity: Ensuring trustworthiness

Validity, reliability, objectivity and generalisability are significant issues for quantitative researchers (Sinkovics, Penz, & Ghauri, 2008). However, these criteria are not considered to be directly applicable to qualitative inquiry (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Instead, the trustworthiness of a qualitative research study is evaluated to establish its quality and worth. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985, p. 290), the aim of trustworthiness in a qualitative inquiry is to support the argument that a study's findings are "worth paying attention to". Trustworthiness is assessed by the following criteria (Shenton, 2004): *credibility* (in preference to internal validity), *transferability* (in preference to generalisability), *dependability* (in preference to reliability) and *confirmability* (in preference to objectivity).

4.7.1.1 Credibility

Lincoln and Guba (1985) argue that ensuring credibility is one of the key factors in establishing trustworthiness. Credibility refers to: (a) the quality of the research process, (b) how well the research question is addressed, and (c) the believability of the study findings (Graneheim & Lundman, 2004). The researcher strove for procedural rigour and credibility through the systematic application of psychological theory to the study data. In addition, a lifespan approach was employed to ensure that all the historical periods of Theron's life were included. Reflexivity was used as a means of monitoring and exploring the researcher's reactions to the psychobiographical subject and reducing the possible impact of author bias. To enhance credibility further, multiple data sources were triangulated and a form of investigator triangulation was utilised as the results of the study were submitted to the supervisor for review and feedback.

4.7.1.2 Transferability

Transferability indicates whether or not the research findings can be generalised beyond the case being researched (Graneheim & Lundman, 2004). Transferability is not a significant consideration in psychobiographical studies. Psychobiographical research is

theory-driven and provides a useful means for testing, developing and refining existing psychological theories (Carlson, 1988; Roberts, 2002). According to Yin (2003), this research method strives to make analytical generalisations; it seeks to generalise study findings to the psychological theory used, rather than to a larger population. The researcher has provided a thorough description of the research process and acknowledged that the study findings are speculative. This should enable the reader to judge the appropriateness of applying any of the research findings to other contexts.

4.7.1.3 Dependability

Dependability describes the consistency between the research question, the data collection procedures, and the data analysis techniques (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Dependability means that if the methodological steps are replicated, the new study will yield the same results (Yin, 2003). The researcher enhanced the dependability of the findings by making and reviewing comprehensive process notes throughout the research process to ensure that the research question, data collection procedures and data analysis techniques were aligned. Furthermore, the in-depth methodological description allows the study to be repeated by other researchers.

4.7.1.4 Confirmability

This construct refers to the degree to which the study findings (a) are supported by the data collected, (b) can be viewed as neutral (free from researcher bias), and (c) can be substantiated by others (Graneheim & Lundman, 2004). Strategies that were employed to reduce author bias include data triangulation, the use of verbatim quotes, and researcher reflexivity. In addition, the collected data was carefully reviewed by the supervisor of this study as a form of analyst triangulation. Lastly, all data sources were meticulously documented as a means of providing a database that could be reviewed by other researchers at a later stage.

4.7.2 Researcher bias

Ponterotto (2014, p. 82) describes psychobiography as a “highly personal endeavour” for the researcher. Psychobiographers engage closely with the biographical information of a single individual over an extended period of time. Complete impartiality and a detached attitude towards the psychobiographical subject are difficult to achieve with this type of in-depth engagement (Anderson, 1981; Schultz, 2005). The researcher may develop intense

countertransference reactions towards the subject, resulting in the idealisation or devaluation of the individual (Anderson, 1981; Elms, 1988). In addition, a researcher may omit data that contradicts his or her assumptions and preliminary conclusions regarding the subject. This data omission may compromise the trustworthiness of the study and result in a distortion of the findings (Edwards, 1998). Researchers are, however, expected to strive for an accurate and balanced description when constructing the psychological profiles of their psychobiographical subjects (Ponterotto, 2014). Reflexivity was regularly employed to address researcher bias in this study. Particular attention was paid to any assumptions and personal feelings that the researcher may have had about Theron, by noting them and examining related thoughts (Anderson, 1981). Furthermore, these attitudes and feelings were discussed during supervision and feedback was obtained to improve the researcher's objectivity. In addition, the researcher made use of Theron's verbatim quotes in Chapter 5 to minimise the impact of researcher interpretive bias on the credibility of the research.

4.7.3 Analysing an absent subject

Psychobiographical research is characterised by an absence of personal contact with the subject and this may restrict the information gathered when compared with a therapeutic context. However, Runyan (1988) cites several advantages of analysing an absent subject. Firstly, numerous data sources are consulted and analysed. Secondly, biographical data is obtained across the lifespan, resulting in a balanced description of the subject based on a broad range of behaviour over an extended time period. Thirdly, the researcher is not limited to a potentially biased, narrow biographical narrative elicited during a therapeutic encounter. Lastly, life events are analysed retrospectively and their subsequent effects are considered.

4.7.4 Cross-cultural differences

Ponterotto (2014) proposes that psychobiography may be viewed as a type of cross-cultural, trans-historical research. It follows that the psychobiographer's socio-cultural context may vary considerably from that of the research subject (Anderson, 1981; Fouché, 1999; Runyan, 1984). Particular attention should thus be paid to these historical and cultural differences. The researcher recognises that her socio-cultural context differs significantly from Theron's in terms of home language, geographical location, economic power, occupation, celebrity status, social influence, political affiliation, and political context. These variances were reflected upon, acknowledged and treated with sensitivity in an attempt to develop empathy with Theron and reduce cultural bias.

4.7.5 Reductionism

Reductionism occurs when a single factor or inadequate information is used to describe complex, multi-faceted processes (Schultz, 2005). Psychobiographies have received criticism for being reductionistic, owing to the tendency of researchers to (a) primarily explain adult behaviour in terms of childhood experiences (Capps, 2004; Runyan, 1988); (b) apply psychological concepts, principles and theories in a rigid and formulaic manner (Anderson, 1981; Capps, 2004; Runyan, 1988); and (c) overlook the socio-cultural context of the subject (Capps, 2004; Runyan, 1988). To reduce the potential for reductionism, the researcher refrained from imposing her chosen psychological framework on Theron's biographical data. In addition, the researcher avoided attributing too much importance to single events that took place in Theron's childhood, particularly her father's sudden and violent death. Lastly, Theron was viewed holistically as a unique person within her socio-cultural context, both in South Africa and abroad (Anderson, 1981; Howe, 1997). It is important to consider the whole person, because creative achievements, such as Theron's, often depend on a range of different but interrelated qualities (Howe, 1997).

4.7.6 Elitism and easy genre

Another criticism relates to the notion that psychobiographies are only conducted on the socially elite and privileged, thus excluding individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds (Simonton, 2003). In response to this criticism, Runyan (1988) recommends that psychobiographical research should focus on exceptional individuals across all social strata. In addition, some critics have argued that psychobiography is an easy genre because a subject's life is investigated superficially in relation to a predictable developmental timeline (Runyan, 1988). However, Elms (1994) and Runyan (1988) counter that a well-written psychobiography requires the in-depth consultation of numerous sources, the application of sound psychological theories, careful consideration of the subject's socio-cultural context, and substantial literary skill. The researcher strove to produce a comprehensive psychobiography consistent with Elms (1994) and Runyan's (1988) guidelines.

4.7.7 Inflated expectations

This criticism has arisen in response to the view held by certain researchers that a wide range of psychological issues can be addressed by means of psychobiographical studies (Anderson, 1981). The researcher is aware of the limitations of this approach and recognises that psychobiographical studies are unable to fully explain or capture the complexity of

human psychosocial development. To avoid setting unrealistic expectations, the researcher acknowledges the methodological shortcomings of the psychobiographical method and explicitly states that her findings are both speculative and complementary to existing explanations (Anderson, 1981).

4.7.8 Infinite amount of biographical data

There is often a vast amount of biographical data available to psychobiographers. Consequently, researchers face the difficult task of systematically ordering the salient biopsychosocial information, once data collection has been completed (Schultz, 2005). Erikson's theory of psychosocial development (1950, 1963, 1995) was utilised as a conceptual framework in this study to condense the data and guide the extraction and ordering of relevant information. Furthermore, there is a limited amount of biographical information available on Theron, thus reducing the quantity of data that had to be managed. It is important to note that the lack of biographical data pertaining to Theron's infancy and early childhood was an additional limitation that hampered the researcher's ability to provide a comprehensive psychological analysis of her early life.

4.8 Ethical Considerations

Psychobiographers are required to conduct research in an ethical manner despite the lack of specific rules, standards and guidelines for psychobiographical studies (Elms, 1994). According to Elms (1994), several ethical issues require consideration when conducting a psychobiography. Firstly, psychobiographies may only be conducted on living persons who have voluntarily consented to participation in the study and the subsequent publication of study findings (American Psychiatric Association, 1976). Written informed consent was sought from Theron via her publicist (refer to Appendix D). Secondly, there was a potential risk for the invasion of privacy and embarrassment to Theron, her relatives and associates (Runyan, 1983). Therefore, the data was treated respectfully by the researcher, who strove to remain as objective as possible throughout the study. Lastly, only published documents and publicised interviews were analysed to minimise the potential risk of embarrassment and ensure that Theron's reputation was not undermined.

4.9 Reflexivity

Research methods are frequently presented as a series of mechanical procedures that are employed in a social vacuum. Data analysis is typically described as a range of techniques

for sorting and organizing qualitative data (Mason, 1996). However, data analysis procedures are not neutral techniques; they contain the epistemological assumptions of the researchers who developed them and are imbued with the personal assumptions of the researchers who use them (Doucet & Mauthner, 2008). The researcher, methodology, study participants, and data are interdependent and interconnected entities that influence one another. The researcher and the research subject may be viewed as collaborators who co-construct knowledge and meaning (Willig, 2001). The credibility of research findings may be undermined if researchers are unaware of the central role they play in knowledge construction. Since the researcher is the primary ‘instrument’ of data collection and analysis procedures, personal and epistemological reflexivity are considered to be essential components of the research process (Glesne, 1999). According to Willig (2001), personal reflexivity refers to the researcher’s thoughtful analysis of the possible ways in which his or her beliefs, values, assumptions, interests and social identities may have influenced the research study and informed the findings.

Reflexivity can be encouraged by creating appropriate times and spaces for reflection. The researcher incorporated reflexive practice into the methodological approach by keeping a process journal and continuously reviewing her role in this psychobiographical study. For example, the researcher and subject are both white South African women of a similar age and the researcher had to guard against over-identifying with Theron and projecting aspects of her own worldview and experiences into the analysis of the data. The researcher therefore carefully examined her decisions, assumptions, experiences, feelings and interpretations to minimise author bias and enhance the credibility of the study. This critical reflection allowed the researcher to adopt a flexible attitude towards the research study and to modify her approach as she gained experience and insight. However, Doucet and Mauthner (2008) caution that there is a limit to how far we can know and understand what shapes our research at the time of conducting it.

4.10 Chapter Summary

This chapter offered a systematic account of the research methodology employed in the current study. Special attention was given to the data collection methods, data analysis procedures and methodological limitations. The importance of researcher reflexivity and the relevant ethical considerations were also discussed. The findings of this psychobiographical study are presented and discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

5.1 Chapter Preview

The psychosocial personality development of Charlize Theron is presented and discussed in this chapter. The chapter commences with a brief description of the format guiding the presentation and discussion of the study findings. Next, Theron's biographical data are discussed in accordance with Erikson's theory of psychosocial development (1950, 1963, 1995). Lastly, a summary of the key findings concludes the chapter.

5.2 Format for the Presentation and Discussion of Findings

The integration and analysis of the data was guided by a matrix comprised of Erikson's (1950, 1963, 1995) psychosocial stages and Theron's biographical data (refer to Table 4 in Chapter 4). Erikson's theory of psychosocial development (1950, 1963, 1995) provided a blueprint for collecting, conceptualising, structuring, and presenting the data. Theron is currently 39 years old; therefore Erikson's first six developmental stages apply to her life and will be discussed within the three major historical periods that characterise her lifespan thus far (refer to Appendix E). It is important to note that the contents of this section are presented as tentative hypotheses and not conclusions.

Furthermore, the data is discussed in relation to the Eriksonian concepts outlined in Chapter 3, including developmental crises, ritualisations, ritualisms, maladaptive tendencies, malignancies, and ego strengths. Since Theron is a relatively young individual, whose life has not been well documented to date, the seminal literature on Theron provided little information pertaining to her personality development during early childhood. Therefore, relevant examples from Theron's later life stages have been introduced in the early stages to augment the existing information and provide a more holistic view of her personality development.

Please note that use will be made of verbatim quotes to allow Theron's voice to be heard and to minimise the impact of researcher interpretive bias on the credibility of the research. However, a few quotations contain explicit language and their inclusion in this treatise is aimed at conveying a sense of her personality in her interactions with others.

5.3. The Childhood of Charlize Theron (1975 – 1992): The South African Years

This historical period spans Erikson’s stages 1–5 and covers the first 16 years of Theron’s life in South Africa (refer to Table 5).

Table 5

Timeline for the First Historical Period

Year	Significant Experiences
1975	Born on 7 August 1975
1980	Allegedly witnessed a man, trapped in a blazing fire in his truck, being shot to death
1981	Started school career at the Putfontein Primary School
1981	Began ballet lessons
1986	Was thrown from a horse
1987	Won several dance competitions
1987	Began her studies at the National School of the Arts in Johannesburg
1991	Father fatally wounded when shot by spouse
1991	Left school and travelled to Milan on a one-year modelling contract

5.3.1 Stage 1: Basic trust versus mistrust (Age 0 – 1)

This psychosocial stage spans the first year of life and is characterised by the developmental crisis of *basic trust versus mistrust*. The quality of the primary caregiver-infant relationship (in this case, between Theron and her mother) plays an important role in the resolution of this crisis (Swartz et al., 2008). Infants develop a sense of basic trust if caregivers respond to their needs in a consistent and predictable way (Carr & McNulty, 2006). If caregivers reject the infant or provide inconsistent care, the infant may view the world as unsafe and become mistrustful (Swartz et al., 2008). The desired outcome of this crisis is a basic sense of trust, which is moderated by a degree of mistrust, resulting in caution (Meyer & Viljoen, 2008). The ego strength of *hope* emerges if this crisis is successfully resolved. *Hope* is defined by Capps (2012, p. 272) as the persistent belief in the attainability of wishes, in spite of the “dark urges and rages which mark the beginning of existence”.

5.3.1.1 Findings

The Afrikaans-speaking Theron family lived on Plot 56, a smallholding at Putfontein, near Benoni in Gauteng, South Africa (Karsten, 2009). Charlize Theron was born on 7 August 1975, the only child of Charles and Gerda Theron. She was a healthy newborn baby and there were no reported birth complications, significant areas of concern or developmental

deficits related to her infancy (Karsten, 2009). However, Theron was born into a household that was characterised by marital discord. According to Karsten (2009), her father, Charles Theron, was reportedly a sociable individual who enjoyed company and frequently welcomed others into his home. On the contrary, her mother, Gerda Theron (née Maritz), was ostensibly a private person who appeared sullen and unfriendly towards uninvited guests (Karsten, 2009). Although Charles initially stopped drinking alcohol after his marriage to Gerda in 1971, he allegedly became an abusive alcoholic who was unfaithful to his wife (Karsten, 2009). Since 1999, Theron has repeatedly described her mother as a victim of domestic abuse (Bevan & Johnson, 2008; Green, 2014; Karsten, 2009). However, there have been inconsistencies regarding the type of abuse that Gerda experienced during her marriage to Charles. In March 1999, Theron stated that her father was “an alcoholic who assaulted [them] when he was drunk”, whereas in 2004, she amended her statement and claimed that he had never assaulted her, as he was “only a verbal abuser” (Karsten, 2007, p. 20).

In addition, there is a lack of consensus regarding the extent of Charles’s alcohol abuse. Karsten (2009) raises an interesting point when he states that Charles’s immaculate grooming, astute business sense and the orderly way in which he ran his companies were not consistent with chronic alcoholism. Furthermore, Charles’s sister, Elsa Malan, has publically disputed his alcoholism and claimed that he was a dedicated family man who adored his only daughter. During an interview in 2008, Elsa stated that Charles drank alcohol but she claimed that she had never seen him intoxicated (Bevan & Johnson, 2008).

Nevertheless, Elsa conceded that there was considerable tension between Charles and Gerda. The couple had numerous arguments, and when Charles arrived home late at night, Karsten (2009) reports that Gerda would sometimes lock the doors so that he was forced to sleep outside in their caravan. In addition to the marital conflict, the years following their daughter’s birth were difficult for Charles and Gerda because they worked long hours at their road construction business (Karsten, 2009, p. 20). Gerda’s time was therefore divided between work and her daughter. According to Green (2014), Theron was partially raised by the family nanny during her younger years, as her mother spent time away from home overseeing the family businesses. There is, however, no information pertaining to Theron’s relationship with her nanny or the amount of time that her mother spent away on business. Conversely, Theron’s close relationship with her mother since childhood is evident in the majority of her interviews and she seldom misses an opportunity to praise the woman she

refers to as her best friend and role model (Karsten, 2009). In an interview in 1998, Theron attempted to explain her relationship with her mother:

I look upon myself as one of those little ducklings that follow the first thing they see – and for me that was my mother. My mother represents the true South African woman. She would not let anything bring her down ... And that's how I see myself. I hated to sleep over at a friend's. This is supposed to be fun? Why do I have to leave my mother? Being around her made me feel protected ... She became someone I wanted to mould myself after (Karsten, 2009, p. 168).

In 2002, Theron told a reporter that her mother placed her interests above her work commitments. She claimed that her mother made time to take her to museums, music lessons and ballet classes, despite working 18-hour days (Passero, 2002). When discussing her adopted son, Jackson, during an interview in 2012, Theron stated that she hoped to be a similar parent to her own mother, who encouraged her to be confident and enjoy life (Hoffman, 2012). In contrast, Theron has had little to say about her father, except that he was seldom present and they had a conflictual relationship in adolescence. According to Karsten (2009), Theron's father was proud of his baby daughter and behaved in an affectionate manner towards her. Theron was a hairless infant and her father often used to stroke her head with the palm of his hand. He gave her the Afrikaans nickname "Kieriekoppie" because her bald head reminded him of the smooth knob of a walking stick (Karsten, 2009, p. 19).

5.3.1.2 Discussion

As previously mentioned, the seminal literature on Theron provided little information pertaining to her infancy. This has hampered the depth of the psychological analysis of her early life. Therefore, it is important to note that the inferences drawn by the researcher during the first three psychosocial stages are speculative. When considering the available (and at times contradictory) information, it cannot be stated with certainty that Theron acquired the ego strength of *hope* during her first year of life. Nonetheless, the findings will be analysed in accordance with Erikson's (1950, 1963, 1995) first stage of psychosocial development and a tentative analysis provided. During this stage, infants face the developmental challenge of learning to trust the external world. In other words, they are tasked with developing a sense that the world is a safe place (Erikson, 1995; Louw & Louw, 2009). Theron was born into a household that, on the surface, can best be described as conflictual. Her father was allegedly a verbally abusive alcoholic, whose infidelities led to

numerous arguments with her mother (Karsten, 2009). It is plausible that Theron's conflictual home environment may have posed a threat to her ability to resolve the *trust versus mistrust* developmental crisis. More specifically, her father's alleged verbal abuse may have made it difficult for her to form a strong sense of trust in him (Hook, 2002).

There have, however, been conflicting reports concerning the degree of his abusive behaviour and alcohol abuse. Furthermore, the severity of the marital conflict during Theron's infancy is unknown and there is no mention in the literature of when the alleged alcoholism and infidelities actually began. According to Karsten (2009), Theron's father attempted to remain sober during his early marriage. There is a possibility that their marital discord was less evident during Theron's infancy than in later years, as her father's infidelities and alcohol abuse may only have started after this developmental stage.

Although the presence or absence of severe marital conflict is a factor that may have impacted on Theron's ability to successfully resolve this psychosocial crisis, Erikson (1963) proposes that it is largely mothers (primary caregivers) who create a sense of trust in their infants by responding to their needs in a reliable and consistent manner. Responsive and dependable maternal care thus develops a sense of basic trust and lays the foundation for the capacity to have hope during times of hardship (Carr & McNulty, 2006; Erikson, 1995).

The researcher was unable to retrieve any information relating to Theron's feeding and sleeping patterns, or the quality of her relationship with her mother during infancy. However, information from later stages (quoted under the findings section above) seems to suggest that Theron developed a secure maternal attachment bond. Her mother, in turn, appears to have been a reliable caregiver who remains responsive to her daughter's needs. Theron has repeatedly told interviewers that her mother has made many sacrifices for her and tended to place her daughter's needs above her own (Sawyer, 2004). For example, shortly after Theron moved abroad, her mother abandoned the family business to focus on her daughter's wellbeing and career (Green, 2014). In addition, Theron's statement in the findings section, that she felt secure in her mother's presence, indicates a sense of trust in her mother (Karsten, 2009). Moreover, Theron's adventurous behaviour in later stages suggests that she views the external world as a relatively safe place to be explored (Erikson, 1995). For instance, during an interview in 2005, Theron spoke about her move to Los Angeles when she was 18 years old:

I didn't know anybody in LA. Nobody. Not a soul ... So if this didn't work, it would be just another adventure for me in a new place. I'd been modelling all over Europe – Milan, Paris, London. Before I left South Africa, my whole theory was this: If everything falls apart, then at least I got to see the world ... Once I say yes to something, I dive into that world (Winfrey, 2005).

Theron's outlook on life gives the impression that she has *hope* in the face of adversity, and this has equipped her to deal with stressful situations. When asked how she would manage the challenges of competing and travelling abroad as an adolescent model shortly after her father's death, Theron replied that she felt certain she would be able to deal with any obstacles she encountered. She expressed confidence in herself and hope for the future in that interview (Karsten, 2009).

Theron's positive outlook and adventurous nature do, however, seem to be tempered by an appropriate degree of mistrust resulting in cautious behaviour (Meyer & Viljoen, 2008). According to Karsten (2009), 16-year-old Theron was careful not to allow modelling agents to exploit her and refused to pose topless or in the nude. She has been equally prudent in selecting casting agents and film directors who have furthered her career interests (Karsten, 2009). This would suggest that she is not gullible and has not developed the maladaptive tendency associated with this psychosocial stage, namely *sensory distortion* (Capps, 2004).

Furthermore, there is no evidence in the literature to suggest the presence of this stage's malignant tendency, namely *withdrawal* (Capps, 2004). There is also no evidence to suggest that she has been formally diagnosed with any of the psychopathologies that Erikson (1963) claims stem from the unsuccessful resolution of this crisis, namely psychosis, masochism, depression and schizoid behaviour. Although Theron reported that she felt "depressed" (Karsten, 2009, p. 68) after an injury prematurely ended her dancing career, there is no indication that she met the criteria for Major Depressive Disorder or received any professional treatment. The lack of evidence of these maladaptive and malignant tendencies and lack of the associated psychopathologies are indicative of an overall resolution of this developmental crisis. However, the ritualism of *idolism* warrants further consideration, as Theron has an unusually close bond with her mother and praises her excessively. *Ritualisms* are extreme ritualisations that result in thoughtless and stereotypical behaviour (Fromme, 2010) and *idolism* occurs when the infant idealises or venerates the mother (Austrian, 2008). The following quotation conveys a sense of Theron's idealisation of her mother in later years:

There was something about my mother that I wanted to be so badly. Everything from how she dressed, to how she got up in the morning and presented herself to the world and dealt with shit you cannot imagine. Everything, the way she brushed her teeth, put soap on her cloth, the clothes she wore, her perfume, the way she smoked her cigarettes, the way she drove her car. I was the biggest copycat. I was always so proud to say, “That’s my mom” ... I was mama’s girl ... We were friends from way back. We had to be. We were the only ones there for each other. I felt like her protector for those years she was in her first marriage, and then when she was single. When she met my stepfather, it wasn’t like he was trying to take my dad’s place. It was like he was trying to take mine. I became really evil. I tried to sabotage their relationship (Karsten, 2009, pp. 169-170).

The researcher is not certain whether the ritualism of *idolism* occurred during infancy but there is a possibility that Theron’s first psychosocial crisis was resolved with an element of idealisation of her mother. This could be viewed as a developmental maladaptation or a protective factor against Theron’s reported volatile home environment which facilitated her development of trust in her primary caregiver.

In conclusion, Erikson (1963) is optimistic about infants’ ability to learn to trust and argues that there are few frustrations that young children are unable to tolerate. Furthermore, the potentially harmful effects of Theron’s parents’ reported marital discord may have been mitigated by her close attachment bond with her mother. Therefore, the researcher tentatively hypothesises that Theron has adequately resolved the *trust versus mistrust* developmental crisis and acquired the ego strength of *hope*. However, according to Erikson’s (1963) epigenetic principle, aspects of each stage of personality development are present from birth and individuals can revisit and rework crises in future stages (Peedicayil, 2012). Therefore, it is not clear whether she resolved this particular crisis during infancy or at a later stage.

5.3.2 Stage 2: Autonomy versus shame and doubt (Age 1 – 3)

Toddlers have to resolve the crisis of *autonomy versus shame and doubt* during their second and third years of life (Erikson, 1963). Although toddlers are still fairly dependent on their caregivers, they are required to develop a sense of independence and minimise feelings of shame and doubt. The social environment should encourage them to be autonomous, while shielding them from unnecessary experiences of humiliation (Erikson, 1995). Youngsters may experience shame and doubt concerning their abilities if they are punished, constantly criticised and made to feel inadequate (Erikson, 1963; Swartz et al., 2008). The favourable

outcome of this psychosocial crisis is a sense of personal agency which is tempered by an appropriate degree of doubt (Capps, 2004; Erikson, 1995). Successful resolution of this crisis leads to the emergence of the ego strength of *willpower* (Erikson, 1995), which has been defined by Capps (2012) as the determination to exercise free choice and self-restraint, despite of the unavoidable experience of shame and doubt in infancy.

5.3.2.1 Findings

Theron spent her second and third year of life on the family's smallholding in Putfontein. She was taken care of by the family nanny when her mother was working or away from home overseeing the family construction businesses. Theron was an only child who did not have siblings to play with, but she was surrounded by animals, as her parents kept chickens, cows, goats, sheep, ostriches and dogs (Green, 2014). Although Theron's mother sewed most of her girlhood clothes, she often played naked outdoors as a toddler and enjoyed the space the plot had to offer (Karsten, 2009). Theron had the following to say about her nudity during childhood:

All of my baby photos, even those when I was seven, are of me naked. Also, I didn't grow up in a restrictive religion that views the naked body as sinful or wrong. My mom gave me the ego boost of, "You're naked! That's great!" Still today, I love having naked time in my house (Karsten, 2009, p. 210).

Throughout this developmental phase, parents play a vital role in affirming certain accomplishments, and in modifying socially unacceptable behaviour (Erikson, 1995; Hook, 2002). Karsten (2009) claims that Theron's father was a permissive parent and her mother therefore took responsibility for discipline in the home. Her mother's discipline often took the form of physical punishment, as is evident in Theron's statement: "I got spanked hard on the butt ... She'd hit me with anything that was around: a hairbrush, a shoe – the shoe was a big one" (Karsten, 2009, p. 21).

Yet Theron insists that she is grateful for her mother's discipline and maintains that she usually deserved the punishment she received (Karsten, 2009). Furthermore, Karsten (2009) claims that Theron's mother raised her to be an independent thinker who formulated her own conclusions. During a television interview in 2012, Theron reflected on her mother's parenting skills and stated that she was encouraged to be her own person and to discover the world through her own eyes (Curry, 2012).

5.3.2.2 Discussion

This psychosocial stage was also particularly difficult to analyse as there was little information available on Theron's second and third year of life. The seminal literature did not provide any specific information pertaining to her physical development during this stage. The researcher is therefore unable to comment on Theron's developmental milestones or her experiences while learning to walk, talk, and gain control over her excretory functions. From what little is known of Theron during this time, it cannot be stated with certainty that she acquired the ego strength of *willpower* in this stage. Nevertheless, the findings will be analysed in terms of Erikson's (1950, 1963, 1995) second psychosocial stage and a tentative analysis provided.

Primary caregivers play an important role in teaching children right from wrong during this developmental period (Erikson, 1995). Pro-social behaviours are affirmed, while failures or undesirable behaviours are corrected (Erikson, 1995; Hook, 2002). Theron's parents seem to have adopted different disciplinary styles, with her father being more lenient than her mother, as he reportedly spoilt her during her early childhood (Karsten, 2009). In contrast, Theron's mother disciplined her in a manner that could be interpreted as punitive. Although Theron has expressed gratitude for her mother's discipline in adulthood, she may have been afraid of the physical punishment as a toddler. Furthermore, Erikson's (1963) theory suggests that Theron may have been at greater risk of developing a sense of shame and doubt in her abilities as a result of the punishment she received.

While the experiences of shame and doubt are unavoidable in early childhood, Erikson (1995) argues that toddlers should be protected from experiencing them unnecessarily. Erikson (1963) characterises shame as an extreme form of self-consciousness. Self-consciousness, in turn, is described as being highly visible without wanting to be visible (Erikson, 1963). Theron often wandered around in the nude during childhood, without her nakedness being labelled as sinful or wrong (Karsten, 2009). Her childhood and present lack of self-consciousness regarding her nudity suggest that she does not feel a sense of shame related to her body. In addition, Theron has chosen to be highly visible by entertaining others since childhood (Karsten, 2009), which is in contrast to the self-consciousness that is characteristic of a sense of shame (Erikson, 1963).

During this stage, parental figures should help their toddlers to deal with any failures in a sympathetic way to avoid feelings of inadequacy (Swartz et al., 2008). It is not known how Theron's failures were dealt with as a toddler, but she shows a lack of defensiveness and shame when she discusses her career failures in adulthood:

I would be the first to admit that some of the films that I've done have been rubbish. A lot of people expect you to disown your movies when they aren't successful or when the critics don't like your performance. But it is okay to admit that sometimes things didn't work out (Karsten, 2009, p. 149).

According to Erikson (1963), toddlers face the challenge of developing a sense of themselves as independent persons who are capable of making their own decisions and exercising self-control. Despite the possible idealisation of her mother discussed in the previous stage, Theron was able to separate from her and allow herself to be taken care of by the family nanny when her mother was working (Karsten, 2009). This may have provided the opportunity for her to experience and develop a sense of herself, apart from her mother. In addition, Theron currently views herself as an independent person and her anecdotes of her later experiences at boarding school suggest that her mother encouraged her to develop a sense of personal agency and be accountable for her actions (Erikson, 1995):

My friends and I would get into trouble and on Monday morning all of their parents would be in the principal's office. And I would be sitting there thinking, "OK, no mother ... I'm going to have to defend myself." And I'd get on the phone to her and be like, "You are the worst mother in the world because you never show up!" And she said, "What do you want me to do? You got yourself into trouble, get yourself out ...". For a long time I thought my mother wasn't caring. Now I know it taught me that if I fuck up, I'm going to have to sort it out myself. There's no running-to-mom to fix it. At one point, somebody stole my ruler and she just said, "Well then steal it back." I learned to take care of myself (Karsten, 2009, p. 171).

Furthermore, information from later stages indicates that Theron was allowed a considerable degree of autonomy in adolescence. Retha Snyman, organiser of the *Rooi Rose* modelling competition that Theron won shortly after her father's death in 1991, reported that Theron's mother permitted her to make her own choices at that time. After winning the Academy Award for Best Actress (Oscar) in 2004, Theron stated in an interview that her mother had taught her freedom of thought and celebration of individuality, and she would like to pass these qualities onto her own children (Allis, 2004).

There do not appear to be any obvious indications of the ritualism of *legalism*, which refers to an inflexible attitude towards the law for one's own gain, in the seminal literature (Austrian, 2008). There are also no obvious signs of the other developmental problems that may result from the unsuccessful resolution of this crisis, namely aggression, cruelty, intolerance, and Antisocial Personality Disorder (Hook, 2002). Nor is there apparent evidence of the maladaptive tendency of *impulsiveness* (Capps, 2004). However, the malignant tendency of *compulsion* requires further discussion (Capps, 2004).

According to Boeree (2006), *compulsion* is characterised by the urge to follow rules and complete tasks perfectly to avoid making mistakes. While there were no obvious signs of compulsion during Theron's early childhood, she was described as a hardworking and punctual perfectionist in adolescence (Karsten, 2009). In May 2001, Theron demonstrated a sense of this when she stated that she felt "a constant need to do better" (Karsten, 2009, p. 155). The researcher is uncertain whether the malignant tendency of *compulsion* developed during this psychosocial stage, but there is a possibility that Theron's second developmental crisis was resolved with an element of *compulsion*. This could be viewed as a developmental maladaptation or a useful personality trait that provided the impetus for the development of self-discipline which, in turn, underpinned her success as a ballet dancer and actress.

Furthermore, in the following quotation, Theron appears to display humility and an appropriate degree of doubt about her abilities in adulthood: "Then people started saying things like, 'You know you've got it [the Oscar] in the bag.' I don't want to live my life thinking that I've got anything in the bag" (Winfrey, 2005, p.3). Theron also seems to have the ability to exercise her free will and enforce healthy boundaries as a celebrity. This is evident in a statement that she made during an interview in 2008: "I won't allow people to stick their noses in my private life. There are things that are important to me, they're private, sacred, and they're mine. I don't share them with the world" (Karsten, 2009, p. 280).

In light of the above discussion, it is the opinion of the researcher that Theron's self-confidence was not compromised by overwhelming shame and doubt during this developmental period. Therefore, the researcher cautiously theorises that Theron has adequately resolved the psychosocial crisis of *autonomy versus shame and doubt* and acquired the ego strength of *willpower*. Once again, the researcher is unable to state whether this crisis was resolved during toddlerhood or reworked at a later life stage (Erikson, 1963).

5.3.3 Stage 3: Initiative versus guilt (Age 3 – 6)

Children between the ages of three and six years face the developmental crisis of *initiative versus guilt* (Erikson, 1995). At this stage they are able to move independently and explore their world more vigorously but they experience conflict between their ability to intrude into others' lives and moral rules (Meyer & Viljoen, 2008). Preschool children may develop a sense of guilt if they are criticised for expressing their plans or punished for taking initiative (Swartz et al., 2008). Successful resolution of this psychosocial crisis is achieved when children are able to strive for goals in a confident and purposeful way, without feeling excessive guilt or taking initiative that could cause offence (Louw et al., 1999). This positive balance of initiative over guilt results in the ego strength called *purpose* (Erikson, 1995).

5.3.3.1 Findings

Theron continued to live in Putfontein, her home until she moved abroad at 16 years of age. As described in the previous psychosocial stage, her parents worked long hours at their road construction business and Theron spent time with her nanny (Karsten, 2009). After Theron moved to Hollywood in 1993, she often referred nostalgically to her childhood on a farm in rural South Africa:

I grew up on a farm. Instead of Barbies and teddy bears, I had goats and sheep and ostriches and 20 dogs. You can't get any more natural than that ... I grew up with animals. I played not only movie-based games, but [also] very nature-orientated games. I felt very blessed (Rosen, 2000, p. 70).

My best friend was a goat named Bok ... I feel extremely fortunate to have had the innocence of nature as my constant surroundings. I didn't have computer games or Nintendo. We barely had television. We had TV for 3 hours a day and it was one channel and that was it (Karsten, 2009, pp. 22-25).

Theron was, nonetheless, an only child who lived on a spacious smallholding and learned early on to use fantasy to entertain herself. She has described herself as a child who pretended to have friends and enjoyed wearing costumes while playing characters in stories. She also seemed to be able to move from persona to persona with ease, as she claimed that she would be Sheena queen of the jungle one moment and a princess the next (Rosen, 2000). Theron reported that she spent a significant part of her childhood engaging in imaginative play. For example, she pretended that her dogs could speak and that her St. Bernard was a zebra (Passero, 2002). According to Green (2014), Theron was a precocious young girl who displayed a desire to entertain others from an early age. Theron has frequently reflected that

she considers her mother to be a supportive parent who fostered her talent and consistently accommodated her dreams (Karsten, 2009). The following quotation conveys a sense of Theron's mother's response to her creativity:

I didn't grow up wealthy, but every dream I had, even if it was crazy, my mother took seriously ... If I said I wanted to be a guitar player, somehow I ended up getting guitar lessons. If I said, "Mom, I want to paint," she'd say, "Okay – art classes." When I wanted to perform, she'd pull all of the men out of a business meeting and make them sit in the living room where I'd lip-synch and dance in her outfits and shoes. That's how I grew up. Whenever people were around, it was: Entertain! (Karsten, 2009, p. 23).

Pottie Potgieter, a resident of Putfontein, claimed that Theron's father adored her and was proud of his talented daughter (Karsten, 2009). Theron's father would reportedly urge her to sing when family and friends visited, and she happily obliged. Nevertheless, it appears that it was her mother that she drew close to and modelled herself on. Theron describes herself as a "mama's girl" who used to imitate her mother (Karsten, 2009, p. 170). In stark contrast to Theron's fond memories of this period, was the presence of a traumatic event that she witnessed at the age of five years. In 2008, during an interview with the *London Observer*, Theron recounted the following incident:

I was five years old and we were driving. All the cars stopped because a truck had rolled over and was ablaze. The doors were jammed and there was a man trapped inside. In South Africa everyone carries a weapon and the man begged for someone to shoot him because he didn't want to burn to death. Nobody could get him out of the cab, so somebody shot him. It was horrific, but definitely a moment that made me have great value for life (Karsten, 2009, p. 227).

5.3.3.2 Discussion

Erikson (1963) noted that pre-school children demonstrate greater mobility, curiosity and resourcefulness than in the previous developmental stages. They also have an active fantasy life and their imaginations guide their rigorous exploration of the social world through play (Erikson, 1968). The literature did not indicate whether Theron attended nursery school, nor did it provide any information on the nature of her relationships with her peers at this time. The researcher is therefore unable to comment on Theron's participation in a social group context. However, Theron was an only child and her statement to Rosen (2000) that she imagined having friends, indicates that she may have missed the company of other children during this developmental period.

Nonetheless, Theron's mother seems to have created an environment for her to explore who she was in relation to the external world. Theron grew up in a fairly rural setting, surrounded by a variety of animals (Karsten, 2009). South Africa received limited television broadcasts during the 1970s and Theron learned how to amuse herself from a young age (Karsten, 2009). The findings suggest that Theron had an active fantasy life as a youngster. According to Erikson (1963), Theron's imaginative abilities played an important role in stimulating her learning and creativity.

Theron seems to have employed *dramatic ritualisation* during her pre-school years, as demonstrated by her extensive engagement in imaginative role-play (Meyer & Viljoen, 2008). It is likely that she experimented with gender roles through play-acting different characters in stories. This type of fantasy play facilitates the development of gender identity and identification with the same-sex parent (Fromme, 2010). In addition, she has reportedly imitated her mother's behaviour since early childhood and has frequently described her mother as her role model (Karsten, 2009). This may have aided in her socialisation.

Imaginative play also facilitates the development of empathy, conscience, realistic ambition, and purpose (Fromme, 2010). As discussed in Chapter 3, the development of acting talent in childhood has been linked to high levels of empathy, good emotional regulation, and imaginative play (Goldstein, 2009). Furthermore, Erikson (1963) theorised that this particular psychosocial stage "sets the direction towards the possible and the tangible, which permits the dreams of early childhood to be attached to the goals of an active adult life" (p. 258). Thus, children actively fantasise about who and what they might become as adults (Hook, 2002). It is, therefore, the opinion of the researcher that Theron may have been laying the foundation for her future acting career in this developmental period.

During this stage, young children plan and perform tasks for the sake of being active (Erikson, 1995). They have the ability to act on their own initiative and may therefore feel guilty if they violate social rules or trespass on other people's territory (Swartz et al., 2008). Caregivers have usually established a number of boundaries at home and children are required to decide for themselves whether to respect these restrictions or to explore beyond them (Hook, 2002). From what is known of Theron during this time, it seems plausible to state that she acted on her own initiative as a young child. She reportedly planned and

executed numerous dance and song performances to entertain others, which appeared to be considered appropriate and fell within the social boundaries set in her home (Karsten, 2009). There is no information in the literature to suggest that her creative initiative resulted in punishment, nor were there any clear indications that she was criticised for expressing her plans. On the contrary, it appears that Theron's mother fostered her daughter's curiosity and assisted her in fulfilling her plans. For instance, her mother organised art classes when Theron expressed a desire to be an artist (Karsten, 2009). In addition, Karsten (2009) reported that Theron's mother would halt business meetings and ask her colleagues to be Theron's audience when she wanted to entertain. Similarly, Theron's father would encourage her to sing when friends and family members visited (Karsten, 2009). In short, there was a notable absence of criticism and/or punishment in response to her impromptu performances in the home. This is in keeping with a receptive and supportive reaction to her creative initiative.

On the other hand, Theron's recollection of the frightening incident that occurred when she was five years old conveys a sense of intrusion and violation of social rules for her. The act of looking involves curiosity. Theron took the initiative to watch as a man, trapped in a blazing vehicle, was reportedly shot to death. She could have closed her eyes or looked away but she chose to watch as the scene unfolded. Her initiative may have resulted in fear and perhaps even guilt at inadvertently intruding on the stranger's death scene and being part of the crowd that was unable to save him. This event should not be overvalued, but Theron was confronted with the reality of mortality at a young age and it is necessary to consider the impact that witnessing an incident of this violent nature may have had on her emotional development. Theron has concluded that this particular experience has given her an appreciation for life (Karsten, 2009).

However, information from later stages seems to suggest that this incident, combined with her subsequent experiences of death, also had a profound effect on her work ethic. In 1998, Theron told the *New York Times* that she has always felt the clock ticking as a result of the amount of death that she has been exposed to (Kennedy, 1998). And in 2005, she confided the following in an interview:

In my 20s, I felt I had to be doing something every moment. For years I'd had vivid dreams that I would die at 27 ... When you experience the death of others when you're young—and I did—you're aware of that clock (Winfrey, 2005).

A reporter from *Time* magazine summed up the motivational force behind Theron's work ethic in October 2000, when she proposed that the sense of the clock ticking is what compels her to work so hard (Karsten, 2009). The possibility exists that the above-mentioned traumatic event contributed to the development of Theron's work ethic and sense of *purpose*, which is characterised by the ability to strive for goals in a confident and purposeful way (Louw et al., 1999).

In conclusion, the researcher is of the opinion that Theron experimented with gender roles through imaginative play during this stage and identified with her mother. Consequently, there do not seem to be any apparent indications of the ritualism of *impersonation*, which results when a child does not commit to a social role (Austrian, 2008). There is also an absence of obvious evidence of the maladaptive tendency of *ruthlessness* or the malignant tendency of *inhibition* (Capps, 2004). Theron has not overtly demonstrated the use of initiative to achieve her goals at the expense of others, nor are there indications that she inhibits spontaneous actions to avoiding feelings of guilt (Boeree, 2006; Capps, 2004). The lack of evidence of these maladaptive and malignant tendencies is indicative of an overall resolution of this developmental crisis. In addition, Theron demonstrated that she was able to formulate goals, develop plans, and act on her initiative without experiencing excessive guilt as a young child. The researcher therefore posits that Theron has successfully resolved this developmental crisis with a favourable balance of *initiative* over *guilt* resulting in the emergence of the ego strength of *purpose* (Erikson, 1995).

5.3.4 Stage 4: Industry versus inferiority (Age 6 – 12)

The fourth psychosocial stage is characterised by the developmental crisis of *industry versus inferiority* (Erikson, 1995). During this stage, children usually begin formal schooling and learn the basic skills required for adult life (Louw & Louw, 2009). Youngsters develop a sense of industry if they have the ability to master the skills taught at school and their efforts are rewarded by their parents, teachers and peers. Conversely, children may develop feelings of inferiority if they are humiliated or ridiculed for poor performance at school (Carr & McNulty, 2006). A healthy resolution to this psychosocial crisis is achieved through the favourable ratio of industry and inferiority, that is, mostly industry with a small degree of inferiority to ensure sensible humility (Boeree, 2006). This leads to the emergence of the ego strength of *competence* (Erikson, 1995).

5.3.4.1 Findings

According to Karsten (2009), Theron was a happy, confident and spontaneous child, who could be stubborn at times. She enjoyed the outdoors and was an active girl who liked to swim, fish, ride on horseback and compete with boys. Theron's maternal cousin, Kobus Maritz, described her as a tomboy who did not mind getting dirty (Karsten, 2009). Her duties as a child included milking cows, and feeding chickens and her pet goat (Green, 2014). Theron was an attractive child but her physical appearance was reportedly downplayed: "Life wasn't about my mother walking around saying, 'Look how beautiful you are.' It was about, 'Did you milk the cow?'" (Karsten, 2009, p. 11). Theron's mother reportedly valued her creative talents over her beauty: "I don't think my mom ever said, 'Isn't she a pretty girl?' She'd say, 'You should hear her sing. You should read this poem she wrote.' The praise was always about what I'd done, not how I looked" (Winfrey, 2005).

In 1981, Theron began her school career at the Putfontein Primary School (Laerskool Putfontein), which was situated three kilometres from her home. Her first language was Afrikaans, though she would later learn English as well (Green, 2014). A former school friend claimed that Theron was a hardworking student who had adopted her father's strong sense of determination (Karsten, 2009). In 1992, 16-year-old Theron wrote a letter to her primary school alma mater (refer to Appendix F). The following extract from the letter describes her first day at school:

In 1981 I walked into my grade-one class for the first time. Proudly my mother stood next to me and said: "This is your new teacher and all your new friends." But all I kept telling her was not to forget to fetch me at twelve. To be honest, in the end I enjoyed the day so much that my teacher, whom I called "tannie" [auntie] the entire time, had to come and tell me my mother was waiting for me. That day was only one of numerous wonderful days I spent at Putfontein (Karsten, 2009, p. 60).

In the same letter, Theron maintained that she was a talkative and energetic learner in primary school (Karsten, 2009). During an interview in February 1997, Theron's mother described how she used to take her guitar to school to entertain her friends when she was in first grade. Furthermore, Karsten (2009) reports that Theron would often entertain staff members and the rest of the primary school during assembly. She once stumbled and fell in front of the entire school during a ballet performance. However, Theron simply tugged at her dress, smiled and kept dancing as if nothing had happened (Karsten, 2009). Sally Beal,

Theron's second-grade teacher at Putfontein Primary, reported that she believed it was this quality of tenacity that might have helped Theron through the family's trauma in later years (Karsten, 2009).

However, despite claims in her letter that she spent many enjoyable days at Putfontein Primary, Theron later characterised her primary school years as a period of not 'fitting in' and being excluded by her peers at times. This sense of exclusion did not extend to her high school years as she found acceptance among her fellow dancers at the National School of the Arts in Johannesburg (Freydtkin, 2011). In addition, Theron was elected head girl in her final year at Putfontein Primary (Karsten, 2009).

Theron began private ballet lessons at the age of six, as she was already showing an aptitude for dance (Karsten, 2009). Despite her demanding work schedule, Theron's mother attended most of her daughter's dance recitals and amateur theatre performances (Green, 2014). On Friday nights Theron and her mother would go to the drive-in theatre, while her father preferred the company of his friends. According to Karsten (2009), Theron reportedly adored her mother, who continued to serve as her role model during this developmental period. Furthermore, Theron acknowledged her mother's continued love and support in her letter to her primary school alma mater (refer to Appendix F).

In contrast, Theron remembers her father being emotionally and physically absent and stated that he did not attend any of her performances (Karsten, 2009). Contrary to Theron's recollection, her ballet teacher Bernice Lloyd, claimed that Theron's father often attended ballet concerts and school meetings (Karsten, 2009). One of Theron's close friends at primary school, Retseh Jansen, reported that Theron had been over-indulged by her wealthy father and Theron appears to be in agreement:

My memory of my Dad was that he was a very giving in a materialistic sense. There was never a birthday that I didn't get a spectacular gift. A horse, a car at fourteen, and jewellery. I drove from an early age on the farm. But I don't have a single memory of my father sitting down with me and talking just person to person (Karsten, 2009, p. 137).

Despite experiencing a strained relationship with her father, Theron enthusiastically participated in a variety of extracurricular activities. In addition to private ballet lessons, she took part in athletics and netball at school (Karsten, 2009). She also enjoyed horseback riding

and was thrown from a horse at the age of eleven. Theron recounted this incident during an interview with Van Meter (2007):

I was unconscious for a few hours and I broke my collarbone. I went through a little period of fear. But I hated it, so I eventually got back on. You can't go through your life hanging onto those fears. You'd be a nervous wreck.

The following year, 12-year-old Theron won several dance competitions in the East Rand and had her photograph published in the local community newspaper. Her ballet teacher at the time, Michele Pohl-Phillips, referred to her as an exceptional student (Karsten, 2009). In addition, Theron's Spanish dancing teacher, Gillian Bonegio, described her as a confident, humble and practical young girl who had a wonderful sense of humour (Karsten, 2009).

5.3.4.2 Discussion

Children begin formal schooling during this developmental period and the energy they previously expended on play is redirected towards task-orientated activities (Hook, 2002). Theron attended Putfontein Primary School from six years of age and developmental theory suggests that her cognitive abilities would have increased substantially during this psychosocial stage (Erikson, 1995). The researcher is unable to comment on her academic performance, other than to state that she completed seven years of primary school and began high school at the age of twelve (Karsten, 2009). Since this time frame correlates with expected school performance progression, it has been deduced that Theron did not fail a year during the primary phase, which suggests an adequate level of academic performance and sufficient abilities to master the skills taught at school.

Erikson (1995) held that the school age is characterised by a desire for success and recognition. This is achieved by being industrious in order to avoid feelings of inadequacy. Theron expressed her productivity by performing for staff members and other learners. In addition, she won many dance competitions, thereby achieving a measure of the recognition and success that children of this age desire. She seems to have been a valued member at the ballet school she attended and was described as an outstanding pupil (Karsten, 2009). Furthermore, Theron participated in numerous sporting activities and this may have developed a sense of competence in her physical skills.

Teachers are influential social agents throughout the primary school years as children evaluate themselves in relation to their teacher's feedback (Swartz et al., 2008). Theron's teachers at Putfontein Primary provided positive and affirming feedback when they elected her as head girl of the school in her final year (Karsten, 2009). Furthermore, the peer group becomes an important influence on the developing personality of the child as it acts as an extra-familial source of identification (Hook, 2002). It is the opinion of the researcher that Theron used her ability to entertain others as a way to communicate and engage with her peer group. For instance, she performed in assemblies and played guitar to her friends (Karsten, 2009). However, there have been conflicting reports regarding Theron's social experiences during her primary school years.

On the one hand, she claims to have been an extroverted learner who generally enjoyed school (Karsten, 2009). On the other hand, Theron later regarded this as a period of being excluded at times (Freydkin, 2011). Nonetheless, she describes the resultant emotional distress as being short-lived and resolved by high school. There is no further mention of her being excluded from her peer group in the seminal literature or evidence of a pervasive theme of marginalisation. It is therefore difficult to gauge the actual impact that her perception of not 'fitting in' may have had on her personality development. Yet Theron may have experienced feelings of inferiority if she was not wholly accepted by her peers (Erikson, 1995). It is also possible that any feelings of inadequacy may have been moderated by the acknowledgement she received from significant authority figures. For example, being elected head girl of her primary school. In addition to the recognition Theron received from her teachers at school and the judges of the dancing competitions she won, her industriousness was acknowledged and valued in her home environment. She received praise for completing household chores and for productive actions, rather than being complimented for her beauty.

The value placed on her productivity and creative talents may have bolstered her confidence in her abilities and fostered a sense of competence. Despite their rural home setting, Theron's mother fostered her daughter's artistic leanings. Theron showed an aptitude for dance and was trained as a classical ballet dancer (Karsten, 2009). Although her mother was supportive and attended most of her performances, it is unclear whether or not her father was present at any of her dance recitals (Karsten, 2009). Theron claimed that her mostly absent father was generous with material possessions but stated they did not have a close relationship (Karsten, 2009).

Theron demonstrated self-confidence and enjoyed entertaining her teachers and peers. There were, however, times when these performances were not perfectly executed, but the unexpected imperfections did not overwhelm her. For example, Theron was not overcome with embarrassment when she stumbled and fell in front of the entire school during a ballet performance. On the contrary, she was able to recover and continue with her performance (Karsten, 2009). Similarly, she overcame her feelings of fear after a horse riding accident that resulted in a broken collarbone and loss of consciousness. She chose to continue riding horses rather than succumb to her fear of them (Van Meter, 2007). Theron's second-grade teacher is of the opinion that her self-confidence and resilience helped her to cope with her father's sudden death in adolescence (Karsten, 2009).

The events of this stage suggest that Theron developed the sense of *competence* required for future collaboration in productive work and family life. The ritualism of *formalism* occurs when work or tasks become meaningless and routine (Fromme, 2010). There is no clear indication of the ritualism of *formalism* or the malignant tendency of *inertia* during this stage or in later years. Furthermore, Theron appears to find her work fulfilling in adulthood:

That's why I like my job so much, because at the end of the day they're fruits of labour that you don't pick very easily. And I love that. I like hard work. I like putting the effort towards it and then being able to look at it and go, "all right, I did that" (Weil, 2014).

The maladaptive tendency associated with this developmental period is *narrow virtuosity*, a term which essentially refers to an unhealthy investment in one's work, to the detriment of other aspects of general living (Boeree, 2006). Whilst there are no reported signs of narrow virtuosity during Theron's preteen years, she considers herself to be a hard-working individual in adulthood (Karsten, 2009). Her close friend, Ivana Milicevic, has described Theron as a hard worker who has a *joie de vivre* or enthusiasm for life (Karsten, 2009). The following quotation also creates the impression that Theron considers herself to be a competent actress who is industrious and has achieved a measure of balance in her life:

I'm really proud that I've been able to hang on to my life and do the work I really want to. You can have a great career and do great work, but at the end of the day if you don't have a life to celebrate that in, it's a pretty lonely place. Life comes first, with a great group of friends. That's my family. All of that is what makes me a better actor (Karsten, 2009, p. 133).

The lack of evidence of the maladaptive and malignant tendencies associated with this developmental phase is indicative of an overall resolution of this psychosocial crisis. Furthermore, Theron demonstrated the development of a sense of *industry* through her participation in school and extracurricular activities. Her experience of not ‘fitting in’ may well have been mitigated by her success in other areas, such as winning numerous dancing competitions and being elected head girl of Putfontein Primary. The researcher therefore tentatively hypothesises that Theron has adequately resolved the *industry versus inferiority* developmental crisis and acquired the ego strength of *competence*.

5.3.5 Stage 5: Ego identity versus role confusion (Age 12 – 18)

Adolescents are confronted with the fifth psychosocial crisis, namely *ego identity versus role confusion* (Allen, 2006). This psychosocial stage is resolved by the development of an integrated and stable sense of self (Louw & Louw, 2009). Adolescents are granted a period of tolerance, known as a psychosocial moratorium, to facilitate their search for identity (Louw et al., 1999). Carr and McNulty (2006) argue that adolescents are able to achieve a clear sense of individual identity when they experience a moratorium in which they explore many new roles and consolidate the social roles learned in earlier stages. Conversely, role confusion and identity diffusion occur when adolescents do not experience a moratorium and fail to experiment with new social roles (Carr & McNulty, 2006). A satisfactory resolution of the adolescent identity crisis leads to the ego strength referred to as *fidelity*.

5.3.5.1 Findings

Theron was sent to boarding school, the National School of the Arts in Johannesburg, at the age of 12. Here she studied classical ballet, flamenco, Greek and contemporary dance (Karsten, 2009). According to Passero (2002), Theron’s separation from her mother initially shook her confidence and she developed stomach ulcers during adolescence. However, she focused on her dance classes and began to mature into a poised performer (Green, 2014). Although dance was Theron’s main passion, the idea of performing through different types of media intrigued her and she began to experiment with acting and modelling while at boarding school (Green, 2014). In 1991, 15-year-old Theron, who had no previous modelling experience, entered the *Rooi Rose Model '91* competition. The winner would represent South Africa in the *New Model Today* competition in Italy (Karsten, 2009).

However, in Putfontein, the relationship between Theron's parents grew worse as she approached adolescence (Green, 2014). Theron's father would allegedly abuse alcohol and frighten her mother with his fits of rage (Green, 2014). Theron also reported a strained relationship with her father and the hope for a better bond with him (Karsten, 2009). On Friday, 21 June 1991, Theron's father was fatally wounded during a shooting incident involving her mother (Karsten, 2009). Earlier that day, Theron's mother took Theron to a studio in Johannesburg to have photographs taken for her modelling portfolio. Theron's father did not accompany them; he spent the afternoon at his sister's house because his brother and sister-in-law were visiting (Karsten, 2009). According to Theron's aunt, Elsa, the siblings had a few drinks and socialised around the kitchen table (Karsten, 2009).

Later that evening, at approximately half past nine, Theron and her mother arrived at Elsa's house to collect their house key from Theron's father. Theron walked through the kitchen to the bathroom, while her mother requested the key. According to Karsten (2009), Theron's father invited his wife in and asked her to wait for a couple of minutes, so that they could drive home together. Theron's mother reportedly refused and said that she was taking their daughter home immediately. When Theron returned from the bathroom, her father demanded to know why she had neglected to greet anybody on her way in (Karsten, 2009). Theron allegedly did not reply and followed her mother outside. Thereafter, Theron's father became angry and the atmosphere in the kitchen grew tense (Karsten, 2009). A short while later he used Elsa's telephone to confront his daughter about her behaviour. The following description of their last conversation is an extract from Theron's sworn statement to the police after her father's death (refer to Appendix G):

I picked up the phone then. It was my father. He began to argue with me again and asked why I had not greeted the people. I wanted to explain to him that I hadn't seen the other people. But he kept raising his voice. Then he asked where my mother was. He said: "Where's that bloody bitch?" I asked him to stop talking like that, please. He said: "Fuck you all!" He said it quite a few times and then he threw down the phone. I told my mother that I was afraid. She tried to keep me calm. At that point someone hammered on the kitchen door. I told my mother that it was my father and that I was afraid of him (Karsten, 2009, pp. 39-40).

After the phone call, Theron's father supposedly threatened to shoot the lock of the door if his wife locked him out again. He had a small .22 pistol with him and his sister, concerned that he might behave irrationally, invited him to sleep in her caravan (Karsten,

2009). Theron's father declined the offer and asked his brother, Danie, to drive him home instead. Danie remained in the car while Theron's father knocked on the door (Karsten, 2009). According to Theron's statement to the police, events unfolded as follows:

I heard him [my father] ask my mother why she had not left the door open for him. My mother answered that she and I were alone. Then my father began to curse and swear. I had never heard him swear like that. My mother told him that he was scaring her and that she had never seen him like that. At that he shouted that if she did not open the door he was going to shoot her dead. I heard the door being slammed. Then a shot rang out. My mother ran down the passage. I heard her wardrobe door opening.

The next moment she stormed into my bedroom. Another shot rang out. Then we heard my father hammer on the door [of Theron's bedroom]. My mother pushed the door shut. He tried to push the door open. The next moment another shot rang out. It went right through my bedroom door and through my window. At that my father said he was going to shoot both of us dead with his shotgun. I heard him go to the main bedroom. My mother said she was scared he was going to kill us. Then she also left the room. The next minute I heard a lot of shots. I don't know how many, but it was a lot. Then I heard my mother scream. It was a hysterical scream. I came out of my room too. When I got to the passage, I saw my father's brother, Danie Theron, there. My mother sat in a corner of the bedroom. I ran to her and asked: "What happened?" My mother was crying and said: "Charlize, I shot them, I shot them." Then I saw my father's body lying on the floor next to the bed. There was blood too (Karsten, 2009, pp. 39-40).

Theron ran to their neighbour and called for help. Karsten (2009) reported that Theron was sitting in the lounge, wrapped in a blanket and weeping, when the police and a doctor arrived at the family's plot. Theron's father, aged 43, was pronounced dead at approximately 22:00 that evening and the police registered a case of culpable homicide (Karsten, 2009). Theron's paternal grandmother, Bettie, arrived the day after her son's death to conduct her own investigation of the shooting and give the police a statement (refer to Appendix G). The following extract is taken from Bettie's sworn statement to the police:

There I asked the deceased's daughter, Charlize, why she had not greeted the deceased at the family's house before the incident. Then the incident might not have happened. Charlize looked at her mother and asked: "Am I getting all the blame now?" Then she jumped up and ran outside. She was crying. After a while Charlize came back. I asked Mrs Theron why she had not rather divorced the deceased if she had hated him so much. She pointed at Charlize and said: "You know very well, Ma, it was for the child's sake" ... For the past 20 years my son the deceased has always been Mrs Theron's inferior.

She is a very bad-tempered person and she never took anyone's feelings into account. We attach a lot of importance to family ties, which she considers ridiculous. She is an outspoken person, with little regard for family, even her own. He, my son, was never violent towards her, as far as I know. She, on the other hand, was often violent towards him (Karsten, 2009, pp. 48-49).

Bettie gave an account of Theron's parents' marriage that cast her daughter-in-law as the aggressor in the relationship. In addition, Theron's father's family claimed that they had never seen him inebriated or behaving violently towards his family members (Karsten, 2007). It is worth noting that Theron and her mother refused to have any contact with Bettie and the rest of the Theron family after her father's funeral (Karsten, 2009).

Theron's high-school ballet teacher, Bernice Lloyd, recalled that Theron returned to school a few days after the incident and displayed little visible emotion. She was struck by the way in which Theron was able to pick herself up and "perform like a true artist" (Karsten, 2009, p. 27). Theron turned 16 on 7 August 1991, three weeks after her father's death. A few days earlier, she won the local *Rooi Rose Model '91* competition and the prize was participation in an international competition, *New Model Today*, in Milan. Although Theron was one of the youngest models in the *Rooi Rose Model '91* competition, Retha Snyman, the organiser, claimed that she demonstrated the confidence and determination of someone much older than her 15 years. Furthermore, Snyman described Theron as tenacious young lady who showed a will to succeed in everything she tackled that almost bordered on obstinacy (Karsten, 2009).

However, Snyman was concerned that Theron might be vulnerable to exploitation or susceptible to the negative effects of competitive pressure, if she travelled abroad alone. Theron's mother responded to the concern by stating that she had faith in Theron's ability to cope without her, and Theron reassured Snyman by stating that she had confidence in her ability to deal with the challenges she would face (Karsten, 2009). When Snyman asked Theron about her father's whereabouts, she simply stated that he had died in an accident (Karsten, 2009). In later years, Theron recalled being at a crossroads after her father's death:

This horrible event had just taken place in my life, and at the same time I was being given this great opportunity to go to Europe and start my young adult life ... My mother realized the potential in that. She understood her role as a parent—to get me to a place where I was strong enough to attempt it emotionally (Hoffman, 2012).

Theron made the decision to end her school career and compete in Italy. She was crowned *New Model Today*, and received a one-year modelling contract to feature in various advertising campaigns around the world (Green, 2014). In later years, Theron reflected on her choices during this time and maintained that completing high school was not her best option under the circumstances; she viewed the modelling contract as a rare opportunity to be grasped (Karsten, 2009). In addition, Theron demonstrated resilience during difficult times. Shortly after she moved abroad to start her modelling career, she fell off a camel in Morocco. Theron was taken to hospital where she received treatment for a dislocated jaw and an injured thumb. She did not ask for time off to recuperate; instead she insisted on going back to work immediately after her jaw had been realigned (Karsten, 2009).

During this time in South Africa, the Benoni magistrate's court held an inquest six months after Theron's father's death and evidence was heard relating to the events of 21 June 1991. Theron and her mother both declared under oath that Charles Theron had been intoxicated and intended to shoot them with a shotgun (Karsten, 2009). A forensic analyst testified that Theron's father's blood alcohol had been high (0,21g per 100ml) and a pathologist testified that he had been struck by four bullets, which had penetrated his left arm, left shoulder and chest (Karsten, 2009). The act was legally adjudged to have been self-defence and no charges were brought against Gerda Theron (Karsten, 2009). A short while later, Theron's mother withdrew from her construction business and devoted her resources to her daughter's career (Karsten, 2007).

5.3.5.2 Discussion

Identity formation becomes the overriding focus in adolescence, the transition period between childhood and adulthood (Erikson, 1995). As discussed in the concluding sections of the preceding psychosocial stages, Theron seems to have acquired all the ego strengths from the previous stages and therefore laid the foundation for the establishment of identity in adolescence (Erikson, 1963). However, research findings suggest that she had a complex developmental response during this developmental stage. This may have been, in part, as a result of the trauma of her father's sudden and violent death.

According to Green (2014), Theron's father reportedly grew increasingly distant as she grew older and their relationship was characterised by tension. The same author cites Charles Theron's alcohol abuse as the main factor underlying their strained relationship.

Theron's mother decided that it would be in her daughter's best interests to leave Putfontein. Consequently, Theron was sent to boarding school and began her high school studies at the National School of the Arts in Johannesburg (Karsten, 2009). Although Theron initially had difficulty adjusting to the separation from her mother, it is likely that she benefitted from her diminished exposure to their household conflict. Theron later admitted: "He was an alcoholic. It was good for me to be at boarding school so I didn't witness that" (Karsten, 2009, p. 28). Furthermore, Theron gradually grew in confidence as she increasingly applied herself to her craft and the development of her identity as a classical dancer.

Carr and McNulty (2006) argue that adolescents are able to achieve a clear sense of individual identity when they experience a moratorium, which refers to a socially sanctioned period of experimentation with different ideologies and careers. Theron appears to have moved through a psychosocial moratorium, as she was reportedly given the freedom to search for her own identity, explore new social roles and consolidate previous ones (Karsten, 2009). While Karsten (2009) described Theron's mother as a driving force behind her daughter's success, he argued that she ultimately allowed Theron to make important career decisions for herself. In high school, Theron honed her dancing skills and adopted a variety of social roles, including those of classical dancer, actress and model (Karsten, 2009). In addition, her skills and competencies were being cultivated for her future occupation. Broadly speaking, she was establishing her identity as an entertainer. Despite having no previous modelling experience, Theron won both the *Rooi Rose Model '91* competition in South Africa and the *New Model Today* competition in Italy within months of her father's sudden death (Karsten, 2009). Her experimentation with her newly adopted social role, as an international model, had been successful and this may have bolstered her confidence in her ability to learn new skills and adapt to new environments.

Theron's father's sudden death, when she was 15, was a traumatic and pivotal event during her adolescence. This single incident should not be overvalued, but it is necessary to consider the impact that her father's death may have had on her identity development. According to Hook (2002), the effects of witnessing violence, committed by one family member against another family member, may vary widely for different children. However, children who have been exposed to domestic violence often exhibit anxiety symptoms, somatic complaints and feelings of guilt (Hook, 2002).

Theron was at home the night her father was fatally wounded by her mother and she reported being very afraid during the incident (Karsten, 2009). In addition to her father's traumatic death, Theron's tense home environment prior to the shooting may have heightened her anxiety levels, as she reportedly suffered from stomach ulcers as an adolescent. Stomach ulcers are often symptomatic of experiencing high levels of stress (Passero, 2002). Furthermore, Theron and her father had an argument shortly before he died. It is the opinion of the researcher that this may have caused Theron emotional distress and perhaps even feelings of guilt. She had wanted a better relationship with her father (Karsten, 2009) but did not have the opportunity to reconcile with him after the angry words they had exchanged during their last conversation. To compound matters, Theron's paternal grandmother, Bettie, adopted an adversarial stance in response to her son's violent passing. Bettie implied that Theron was partly to blame for her father's death because she did not greet him or his siblings on the night he died (Karsten, 2009). This may have exacerbated any feelings of guilt that Theron was experiencing at the time.

Even though Theron demonstrated her emotional distress on the night her father died and again during the above-mentioned confrontation with her grandmother, she returned to boarding school a few days after the incident and was composed in the presence of her teachers and peers (Karsten, 2009). Similarly, Theron was poised during the *Rooi Rose Model '91* competition, a few weeks after her father's funeral, where she projected confidence, determination and maturity (Karsten, 2009). Furthermore, before the actual circumstances of her father's death were reported by *National Enquirer* in 1999, Theron would explain that her father had died in a car accident (West, 2012). She later revealed that she did not want to discuss the events surrounding her father's death in order to protect herself: "I hated talking about it because telling the story made me seem like the victim" (Winfrey, 2005, p. 2) and to protect her mother: "It's a tattoo I cannot erase. People always bring it up, but I'm not comfortable, because it concerns others" (Harlow, 2009, p .6).

It is possible that several factors complicated Theron's grieving process, including the argument she had with her father during their last conversation, the traumatic way in which he died, her mother's involvement in his death, her grandmother's veiled accusation that she may have been partially responsible for the loss of her parent, and the abrupt ending of her relationships with her father's family after the funeral. Furthermore, the voracity of Theron's statement to the police after the shooting incident was called into question by her

grandmother. In a sworn statement to the police, Bettie denied any knowledge of her son's alleged violent behaviour and described Theron's mother as an uncaring, outspoken and bad-tempered person, who was often violent towards her husband (Karsten, 2009).

As previously stated in the discussion of Erikson's first stage, Theron initially described her father as an alcoholic who was violent when he was inebriated, but later amended her statement when she claimed in 2004 that he was verbally abusive (Karsten, 2007). Theron has categorised verbal abuse as "the worst kind of abuse ... It's the worst form of rape – the rape of a person's dignity" (Karsten, 2009, p. 235). She has shown solidarity and publically defended her mother's actions on the evening of her father's death, stating that she would have taken the same course of action if she had been in her mother's situation (Sawyer, 2004).

Theron therefore seems to have justified her mother's actions to herself and this may have enabled her to integrate the death of her father into her life in a meaningful way. In addition, Theron's emotional distress after her father's death may have been mediated by her close relationship with her mother. She perceived her mother as a supportive parent who understood her needs and helped her to work through her grief, as is evident in the following extract from an interview with Morgan (2011):

I had a parent who led me through grief, shock and anger going through all the emotional things that you do when you – when something like that happens to you ... [my mother] really kind of guided me towards not being a victim and not going through my life feeling victimised. You know, I'm incredibly saddened by that night and saddened by the event... but no, it doesn't haunt me. No, it doesn't haunt me at all. I'm completely at peace.

Hook (2002) argues that the identity and social roles of adolescents may be stabilised by key relationships with significant adults. It follows that, in addition to assisting her daughter with the emotional consequences of her husband's death, Theron's mother may have provided adequate stability for her continued identity development during this period. Karsten (2009) reported that Theron's mother did not want to let unfortunate circumstances affect her daughter's future, so she allowed Theron to leave school and resume her life abroad. Theron subsequently moved to Italy, which served as a base from which she travelled to other countries to participate in advertising campaigns and consolidate her social role as an international model.

In addition, Theron demonstrated tenacity in the months following her move to Milan. For example, she sustained serious injuries when she fell off a camel during a photo shoot and resumed work immediately after her dislocated jaw had been realigned. Karsten (2009, p. 59) is of the opinion that Theron has an “innate toughness” which is revealed during challenging times. Her tenacity may have aided in her search for an individual identity and been a protective factor against role confusion, as it facilitated Theron’s exploration of various social roles during adolescence. The remainder of this psychosocial stage will be discussed in the second historical period below under Section 5.4.1.

5.4 The Developing Actress (1993 – 2003): Italy, New York, and early Hollywood years

This historical period covers a decade of Theron’s life (17 – 27 years) and focuses on the development of her artistic abilities and courage during times of hardship. The timeline below (refer to Table 6) provides the reader with a brief summary of significant events during Theron’s second historical period.

Table 6

Timeline for the Second Historical Period

Year	Significant Experience
1993	Moved to New York to study dance at the Joffrey Ballet School
1993	Knee injuries ended her ballet career
1993	Flew from New York to Los Angeles to pursue an acting career
1994	A tantrum in a bank caught a film agent’s attention
1995	Made her first appearance in a film (<i>Children of the Corn III</i>) as an extra
1996	Began a two-year relationship with actor Craig Bierko
1996	Landed her first named role as Helga Svelgen in <i>2 Days in the Valley</i>
1997	Began a four-year relationship with <i>Third Eye Blind</i> frontman Stephan Jenkins
1999	The <i>National Enquirer</i> revealed that her mother had shot and killed her father
1999	Took part in the controversial Women Against Rape campaign in SA
2000	Starred in four major films to establish herself as a serious actress
2001	Received PETA’s Humanitarian Award for her charity work
2001	Began a nine-year relationship with Stuart Townsend
2003	Took the role of convicted serial killer, Aileen Wuornos in the film <i>Monster</i>
2003	Was nominated for an Oscar for her role as Wuornos in the film <i>Monster</i>

5.4.1 Stage 5: Ego identity versus role confusion (Age 12 – 18)

The final two years of Theron’s development during Erikson’s fifth psychosocial stage are discussed under the second historical period below.

5.4.1.1 Findings

By February 1993 Theron was no longer satisfied with fulltime modelling as a career, despite the international acclaim she had achieved as a model. According to Winfrey (2005), Theron missed the discipline and artistic expression that ballet offered. Her modelling contract was coming to an end and she decided to study dance at the Joffrey Ballet School in New York (Karsten, 2009). Theron therefore redirected her energy and focus into becoming a ballerina (Green, 2014). However, after only a few months at the Joffrey Ballet School, serious knee injuries prematurely ended her dance career. Karsten (2009) reported that Theron felt depressed and contacted her mother, who flew to New York to support her. According to Passero (2002), Theron missed telling stories onstage through dance and her mother suggested that she find another way to fulfil this need: “My [Theron’s] mom said, ‘Either you figure out what to do next or you come home because you can sulk in South Africa.’ She reminded me that I loved movies. She said, ‘They make them in Hollywood’” (Karsten, 2009, p. 69). Theron decided that she could redirect her passion for entertaining towards acting and purchased a one-way ticket to Hollywood, Los Angeles (Green, 2014).

5.4.1.2 Discussion

Theron moved to New York in 1993 to study dance at the Joffrey Ballet School. She reportedly missed the storytelling aspect of ballet, and having experimented with modelling, decided to consolidate a previous social role, that of classical ballet dancer. However, she sustained knee injuries and had to reconfigure her sense of identity once again. Theron decided to replace the social role she had lost, namely that of a dancer, with a new but related one. After discussing her options with her mother, Theron flew from New York to Los Angeles to pursue a career as an actress (Karsten, 2009).

The *ritualism of totalism* occurs when adolescents engage in excessive imitation of their heroes (Hook, 2002) or over-identify with and adopt another’s ideology at the expense of an individual sense of identity (Austrian, 2008). While Theron may have over-identified with her mother in previous psychosocial stages, she chose to separate from her and move to Italy shortly after her sixteenth birthday. It is the researcher’s opinion that this geographical distance afforded Theron the opportunity to psychologically separate from her mother and forge her own identity as an entertainer. Theron could have elected to stay in South Africa and join the family business, but she made the decision to leave instead. In light of these events, it is unlikely that the *ritualism of totalism* occurred during her adolescence.

The maladaptive tendency of this stage is *fanaticism*, which refers to intolerance resulting from over-involvement in a particular social role (Boeree, 2006). There are no obvious indications of fanatical behaviour during Theron's adolescence or adulthood thus far. Neither are there signs of the malignancy of *repudiation*, which involves rejection of the need for individual identity (Boeree, 2006). Furthermore, Theron does not display any obvious manifestations of the maladaptive behaviours and psychopathologies that originate from the unsuccessful resolution of this crisis, including social withdrawal and isolation, psychotic episodes, delinquency, substance abuse, and antisocial personality disorder (Hook, 2002). The lack of evidence of these maladaptive and malignant tendencies and associated psychopathologies are indicative of an overall resolution of this developmental crisis.

In addition, it appears that Theron managed to come to terms with her father's death and emerged from this developmental period with a stable and integrated sense of individual identity as an entertainer. Furthermore, she seems to be comfortable with her personal identity: "I'm not my mother, and I'm not my father, I'm my own human being. To find that person, I had to go on my own adventure of discovery ... I really like me" (Karsten, 2009, p. 284). It thus seems plausible that Theron resolved the adolescent identity crisis satisfactorily and acquired *fidelity*. This ego strength is characterised by a clear sense of individual identity and a capacity for loyalty towards one's social roles (Meyer & Viljoen, 2008).

5.4.2 Stage 6: Intimacy versus isolation (Age 18 – 40)

Intimacy versus isolation is the developmental crisis of young adulthood. During this psychosocial stage, individuals are tasked with committing to another in a loving relationship and those who do not manage to achieve this kind of intimacy experience a sense of isolation (Louw & Louw, 2009). Erikson (1995) maintains that the achievement of ego identity in the previous stage enables young adults to share their identity with another and to make the compromises that may be required for an intimate partnership. The attainment of *love* is the synthesis between intimacy and isolation (Erikson, 1963).

5.4.2.1 Findings

After 1991, Theron felt protective of her single mother and viewed potential suitors as a threat to their relationship. When Theron's mother met Ivor McCulloch (the man Theron refers to as her stepfather) in 1993, Theron apparently attempted to sabotage their new relationship (Karsten, 2009). However, Theron's mother reassured her daughter of her

devotion to her and they managed to work through their conflict. McCulloch subsequently assumed the role of a surrogate parent for Theron: “My stepdad ultimately had to reteach me about respect and trust in relationships, and with men in general. I didn’t have that with my father” (Karsten, 2009, p. 170).

Theron flew to Los Angeles in 1993 to pursue an acting career. She had no formal training as an actress and was initially unable to secure the services of a reputable casting agent or manager. According to Green (2014), Theron was competing against thousands of prospective actresses who annually moved to Hollywood seeking fame. Karsten (2009) reported that Theron experienced anxiety and self-doubt approximately six months after she arrived in Los Angeles, when she realised that it might be more difficult to become an actress than she had previously imagined. Moreover, she did not complete her secondary phase of school and could not envision a future for herself back in South Africa (Winfrey, 2005). Although Theron was waitressing to cover her monthly rent, her mother occasionally augmented her daughter’s income with cashier’s cheques from South Africa (Winfrey, 2005). A chance encounter during an errand to a bank on Hollywood Boulevard led to Theron’s signing up with her manager, John Crosby.

The bank teller, who served Theron, refused to cash the cheque she had received from her mother because it was issued from a foreign bank (Karsten, 2009). Theron, who was supposedly in urgent need of money, had a profound emotional response to the bank teller’s refusal. By all accounts, it seems that she vacillated between angry outbursts and pleading with the teller (Winfrey, 2005). More importantly, Theron was inadvertently auditioning for her future manager who happened to be in the same queue at the bank. John Crosby, having assumed that Theron was an actress, offered to represent her and gave her his business card (Winfrey, 2005). Theron seized the opportunity; she enrolled in acting classes and worked hard at eliminating her South African accent. She appeared as an extra in her first film, *Children of the Corn III*, in 1995 and claimed that acting came naturally to her; the transition from dancer to actress had therefore been fairly seamless (Karsten, 2009). However, Theron fired Crosby towards the end of 1995, as he reportedly kept pressurising her into accepting roles in films that placed greater value on her looks than her acting talent. She believed that his approach would negatively impact her longevity in the film industry (Green, 2014). Moreover, she claimed that the femme fatale roles did not accurately represent who she was: “I’m a bit common and crude. I’m a tomboy farm girl from Africa” (Karsten, 2009, p. 115).

The following year Theron began a two-year relationship with actor Craig Bierko and received critical acclaim for her first speaking role as Helga Svelgen in the film *2 Days in the Valley*. (Please note that Theron's filmography is not the focus of this treatise and reference is made to significant performances only. The reader can refer to Appendix A for a comprehensive list of Theron's film appearances.) In 1997 Theron began a romantic relationship with musician, Stephan Jenkins, which ended four years later because of conflicting work schedules. However, she continued to enjoy a close relationship with her mother, who moved to Los Angeles in 1999 to be near her daughter. Theron reportedly spends a great deal of time with her mother in adulthood:

We hike the same hike three or four times a week with our dogs, we work out in the same gym. She just lives up the road so I'll go and have a beer at her house at 5pm and hang out with her (West, 2012, p. 5).

The year 1999 was characterised by controversy for Theron. The *National Enquirer* revealed that her father had not died in a car accident as she had claimed. The fact that her mother had shot and killed her father in 1991 was made public knowledge. Theron, aged 23 at the time of this disclosure, addressed the media about the reasons behind her dishonesty by stating that she had been protecting her mother:

The only reason I was never honest about this before is that there are a lot of people in my life, including my mom, who didn't ask to be in the limelight, and I feel it's my prerogative to keep them out of it (Karsten, 2009, p. 135).

Later the same year, Theron participated in the controversial Women Against Rape campaign in South Africa and sparked a public debate. The campaign was withdrawn a month after it was launched because the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) had received a letter signed by 28 individuals, who complained that the advertisement portrayed all South African men as rapists (Karsten, 2009). Theron responded by stating that the advertisement had never intended to be discriminatory. Nevertheless, she argued that a hard-hitting campaign was needed to address the unacceptably high rape statistics in South Africa. An appeals committee of ASA lifted the ban on the advertisement shortly afterwards (Karsten, 2009). Theron extended her philanthropic pursuits to animal organisations and received PETA's (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals) humanitarian award in 2001. At the award ceremony she claimed that it was difficult to accept an accolade for actions that should be a natural part of everyday life (Karsten, 2009).

The year 2000 was particularly productive year for Theron, as she starred in four major films, namely, *Reindeer Games*, *The Yards*, *Men of Honour*, and *Legends of Bagger Vance* (Green, 2014). She simultaneously established herself as a serious actress and demonstrated different aspects of her acting personality. The following year Theron began a romantic relationship with actor Stuart Townsend. They reportedly thought of themselves as a wedded couple, even though they were not legally married (Karsten, 2009).

The early 2000s were both personally and professionally fulfilling for Theron. In 2003, she agreed to play the role of Aileen Wuornos in *Monster*. Wuornos had been executed the year before for the serial murders of seven men, whom she claimed had raped or attempted to rape her while she was earning an income working as a prostitute (Green, 2014). Wuornos argued that the homicides were committed in self-defence but was convicted of six murders and sentenced to death by lethal injection on 9 October 2002. Theron had moved into film production by this stage and suggested that her own company, Denver and Delilah Productions, should produce the film (Karsten, 2009). *Monster* was well received and Theron's masterful portrayal of Wuornos secured her nominations for all the major film awards in 2004, including the Best Actress Academy Award (Green, 2014).

5.4.2.2 Discussion

Broadly speaking, the goals of this stage are to formulate a mature love with a partner whom one trusts, and with whom one is willing to work, play and procreate (Erikson, 1995). According to Hook (2002), previous crises tend to re-occur during this developmental phase and require reworking. It is likely that Theron had to re-engage with Erikson's first psychosocial crisis, namely *basic trust versus mistrust*. Her father was allegedly a verbally abusive alcoholic, who was unfaithful to his wife (Karsten, 2009). This may have made it difficult for her to trust a romantic partner and share her identity with him.

It is, however, possible that Theron's relationship with her stepfather, Ivor McCulloch, may have mediated any feelings of mistrust that she developed towards men during her childhood. McCulloch reportedly adopted the role of a surrogate father who taught Theron about healthy relationships with men (Karsten, 2009). Furthermore, it appears that Theron is able to share her identity with others in meaningful relationships. In the mid-1990s she had a two-year relationship with actor Craig Bierko. From 1997 to 2001 she was in a

serious relationship with musician Stephan Jenkins. Thereafter, Theron began a nine-year relationship with actor Stuart Townsend (Karsten, 2009).

It is also likely that Theron had to revisit the loss of her father in 1999, after the media revealed that he had not died in a car accident as she had previously stated. Theron admitted that her mother had shot and fatally wounded her father, and explained that she had chosen to conceal this fact to protect her mother from unwanted publicity (Karsten, 2009). Furthermore, Theron refused to elaborate on the actual events surrounding her father's death until 2004, when she recounted the incident to Dianne Sawyer (2004) on ABC News, and stated that she had come to terms with her past. It seems that Theron had further processed the loss of her father when she spoke to Winfrey (2005, p. 2) the following year: "In my late 20s, I hated talking about it because telling the story made me seem like a victim. Then I realized that's not how I carry the experience, so talking about it doesn't matter."

Theron may also have re-engaged with the second crisis, *autonomy versus shame and doubt*, shortly after arriving in Los Angeles to begin her career as an actress. It is the researcher's opinion that her dancing and modelling successes had come fairly easily and this was the first time that she had experienced significant self-doubt about her ability to succeed as an entertainer. Theron realised that she had limited options due to her lack of formal training in acting and her incomplete secondary education. She reportedly experienced increased anxiety levels and started waitressing to earn an income (Karsten, 2009). Her self-doubt was short-lived as she was discovered by her future manager, John Crosby, during a chance encounter at the bank. This provided the impetus for Theron to regain her confidence and develop her natural acting ability by enrolling in drama classes. Theron's agent secured her first speaking role in the film *2 Days in the Valley* in 1996 (Karsten, 2009). She received critical acclaim for her performance and began to establish herself as an actress to take note of. The discussion of this psychosocial stage continues in the third historical period below under Section 5.5.1.2.

5.5 The Established Actress and Producer (2004 – 2015): The Post-Oscar Years

This historical period (refer to table 7) covers the last eleven years of Theron's life.

Table 7

Timeline for the Third Historical Period

Year	Significant Experience
2004	Won the Academy Award for Best Actress (Oscar)
2005	Received nominations for her role as Eklund in <i>The Life and Death of Peter Sellers</i>
2005	Received multiple nominations for her performance in <i>North Country</i>
2005	Obtained a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame
2007	Started The Charlize Theron Africa Outreach Project (CTAOP)
2007	Became a US citizen in 2007, while retaining her South African citizenship
2008	Was designated a United Nations Messenger of Peace
2010	Relationship with long-time companion Stuart Townsend ended
2011	Received a Golden Globe nomination for her performance in <i>Young Adult</i>
2012	Adopts a six-month-old son, Jackson
2013	Won the World Economic Forum's Crystal Award
2014	Began a relationship with fellow Oscar winner Sean Penn

5.5.1 Stage 6: Intimacy versus Isolation (Age 18 – 40)

5.5.1.1 Findings

Theron received critical acclaim and 17 separate awards for her portrayal of Aileen Wuornos in *Monster* (2003). Among other accolades, she received the Silver Bear, Golden Globe and Screen Actors Guild awards for Best Actress, and on 28 February 2004, she became the first South African to win an Academy Award (Oscar) in a major acting category, namely Best Actress (Karsten, 2009). The South African president at the time, Thabo Mbeki, issued an official statement: “Ms Theron, in her own personal life, represents a grand metaphor of South Africa's move from agony to achievement” (Karsten, 2009, p. 197).

Theron returned to South Africa the week after the Academy Award ceremony and was personally congratulated by both Thabo Mbeki and Nelson Mandela. The South African media portrayed Theron as a role model and symbol of the nation: “Theron is a citizen of the world, she reflects the new South African, the one with a fluid identity” (Karsten, 2009, p. 200). Theron has attributed ninety percent of her success to her mother's unfailing support and encouragement and therefore maintained that the Oscar was a victory for both their lives (Karsten, 2009).

In the weeks following the various film award ceremonies, Theron was repeatedly asked about whether she emotionally identified with her character in *Monster*, Aileen Wuornos, as a result of the tragedy of her own youth; her father's violent death. On the one hand, Theron acknowledged certain similarities between herself and Wuornos, including the desire for love and hope, the need for acceptance, the urge to improve her life, and the ability to survive tragedy (Karsten, 2009). On the other hand, she denied the media speculation that her choice of acting roles, often portrayals of women in unhappy or violent circumstances, has been informed by the experience of her father's alleged alcoholism, verbal abuse and violent death. She simply claimed that she selected roles that reflect real women with complicated issues (Karsten, 2009).

In 2005, Theron received further Golden Globe and Emmy nominations for her role of Britt Ekland in the *The Life and Death of Peter Sellers* and multiple nominations for her outstanding performance in the sexual harassment-themed drama *North Country* (refer to Appendix B). In short, she received two Oscar nominations in three years and established herself as one of Hollywood's most elite talents (Green, 2014). Theron's exceptional achievement was further acknowledged when she received a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame on 29 September 2005 (Karsten, 2009). After *North Country*, Theron decided to take an eighteen-month sabbatical from acting in May 2005, so that she could focus on film production, her relationships and philanthropic pursuits. Theron has also been committed to raising important social and political issues onscreen and off. Since 2000, she has been involved in television and film production, with the aim of providing social commentary on human weakness and relationships. However, her small independent films have not been well received by the American public (Karsten, 2009).

Theron began a serious relationship with actor Stuart Townsend in 2001. They lived together and reportedly considered themselves to be married: "I didn't do a church wedding or anything, but we're married ... We didn't have a ceremony. I don't need a certificate or state or the church to say otherwise" (Karsten, 2009, p. 161). Theron has frequently claimed that she subscribes to love but not to marriage. Furthermore, she is a supporter of same-sex marriage. In November 2005, she publicly stated that she refuses to get married officially until same-sex marriage is legal throughout the United States (Karsten, 2009). In addition, Theron has used her celebrity status to promote her other humanitarian projects. For example, she created The Charlize Theron Africa Outreach Project (CTAOP) in 2007. This project is

committed to supporting African youth in the fight against HIV/AIDS and to assist community organisations that address the underlying causes of the disease (Ewing, 2013). In addition, on 14 November 2008, Theron was designated a United Nations Messenger of Peace by the United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon as part of a worldwide campaign to combat violence against women. In his citation, Ban Ki-Moon stated that Theron had consistently dedicated herself to improving the lives of women and children in South Africa (Karsten, 2009).

Theron became a US citizen in May 2007, while retaining her South African citizenship. She argued that she had spent half of her life in South Africa and the other half in America, so it would be fitting to be a citizen of both countries (Karsten, 2009). She claims that she still experiences a strong connection to South Africa: “It’s home. It’s in my bones, it’s in my skin. It’s definitely a part of me, the way we make food, our sense of humour, it’s the way we are that’s in my skin, in my blood” (Karsten, 2009, p. 262).

Theron and Townsend quietly ended their relationship in 2010. After the break up, Theron admitted that she had not been single since the age of nineteen and was looking forward to rediscovering herself (West, 2012). Her next serious relationship began in 2014 with fellow Oscar winner, Sean Penn (Green, 2014). She also continued to deliver outstanding acting performances and received a Golden Globe nomination in 2011 for her role in the comedy-drama *Young Adult*. The following year, Theron announced the adoption of her six-month-old son, Jackson, from South Africa (Green, 2014). Theron has found the experience of motherhood to be fulfilling and intends to be a working mother:

This idea that if you don’t stay at home all the time and raise your child then you are a horrible mother is complete bullshit! My mother ran a road construction company and worked her entire life, and I couldn’t be closer to any human being than I am to her (Maher, 2012, p. 2).

Despite the addition of her new role as mother, Theron has continued to be a visible and hardworking ambassador for her country. She was awarded the World Economic Forum’s Crystal Award in January 2013 for her commitment to improving the lives of African youth with HIV and AIDS (Ewing, 2013).

5.5.1.2 Discussion

This developmental phase is characterised by *affiliative ritualisation* with others in work, friendship and love (Fromme, 2010). Theron's productive affiliation with her work colleagues resulted in many prestigious awards from the film industry. Theron portrayed Aileen Wuornos in the film *Monster* and consolidated her identity as an accomplished actress when she received the Oscar for Best Actress at the 76th Academy Awards in 2004. There was, however, extensive media speculation about whether she chose that particular dramatic role because the screenplay contained elements that were close to her own childhood circumstances, namely her mother had killed a man who allegedly abused her. There was further conjecture that Theron might be using filmography as a therapeutic tool to come to terms with the tragedy in her own life (Karsten, 2009). Theron responded angrily to the notion that the events in her childhood have exclusively determined her choices and experiences in adulthood:

Yes, it was tragic that it happened, that my father died. But it happened. But, my God, it was a long time ago, and my life has had many other journeys that people don't know about, that I've very much drawn from since then. To think that all my work is drawn from only this one well is a huge mistake (Maher, 2012).

As is evident from the above quotation, Theron sees herself as a multifaceted person whose life is not defined by a single trauma. She has continued to receive critical acclaim for her commitment to portraying a diverse range of authentic women, while raising important social and political issues (Karsten, 2009). Furthermore, Theron has acknowledged that her work, in addition to providing a sense of industry, can be therapeutic and cathartic at times:

I think a lot of people go to therapy because they don't know how to deal with the dark shit in their normal lives ... I don't have a lot of bullshit in my life. I think it's healthy to go to dark places. It's cathartic, for sure. I made a promise to myself that I can go to the darkest places possible and it's OK, because I just won't allow myself to stay there. When the camera stops rolling, it's over (Karsten, 2009, p. 263).

Theron also displayed productive affiliation in love during her nine-year relationship with Stuart Townsend. Even though they viewed themselves as a wedded couple until they parted ways in 2010, Theron has frequently claimed that she is not an advocate of the legal institution or ritual of marriage (Karsten, 2009). Her parents' conflictual relationship may have impacted negatively on her perception of marriage. In an interview in 2005, Theron

stated that her parents were unhappily married and, if she could go back and change the past, she would have insisted that they divorced years before the family confrontation that led to her father's death in 1991 (Winfrey, 2005). In addition to her romantic partnerships, Theron reportedly has a circle of close female friends (Karsten, 2009). The researcher holds that one of the most interesting aspects of Theron's productive affiliation in friendship is the unusually close bond that she shares with her mother: "It's a chemistry that you can't really put into words. We just like each other. Even if she weren't my mother, she'd have been my best friend" (Karsten, 2009, p. 170). Theron seems to have created a partnership with her mother, an individual whom she loves and trusts, that is characterised by a mutual dependence (Karsten, 2009). The possibility exists that Theron's need for a lifelong marital partner has been mitigated to some extent by the fact that her mother fulfils certain aspects of that role. More specifically, she appears to view her mother as a supportive companion who is actively involved in most areas of her life, including her work, recreational activities and parenting her adopted son. Nonetheless, Theron does seek long-term relationships with members of the opposite sex and is currently in a relationship with actor Sean Penn (Green, 2014).

Theron applied for and was granted American citizenship in May 2007. However, she chose to retain her South African citizenship, claiming that she still experiences a close connection to her country of origin. In addition, she has committed time and resources to improving the lives of women and children in Africa (Karsten, 2009). For example, Theron participated in the Women Against Rape campaign, she provides support for a community foster care programme for orphans in the Cape, called Home from Home, and started CTAOP to assist in the fight against HIV/AIDS on the African continent (Ewing, 2013). She has also been producing independent films that highlight important social concerns since 2000, including *The Burning Plain* (2009), *The Road* (2009), and *Dark Places* (2014).

It is noteworthy that Theron has shown signs of generativity since the early 2000s. *Generativity* refers to concern for the next generation, which leads to a productive focus on making the world a better place for those who will follow (Carr & McNulty, 2006; Erikson, 1995). Theron has demonstrated this concern through her numerous philanthropic pursuits and the adoption of her son, Jackson, from South Africa. Batra (2013) proposes that individuals who do not have children may decide to contribute to society through institutionalised arrangements (such as adoption) that facilitate intergenerational bonding and

the transfer of knowledge, aspirations, and cultural traditions. Theron's premature display of generativity is consistent with findings from a study conducted by Peterson and Stewart (1993), which indicate that individuals begin to develop generativity well before middle age.

Theron is a private individual who does not freely disclose information about her social life. The researcher is therefore unable to comment on the ritualism of this psychosocial stage, namely *elitism*, which may be described as superficial social engagement with a small exclusive group (Fromme, 2010). However, Theron does not appear to have developed the maladaptation of *promiscuity*, which refers to the inclination to become intimate too freely with others in the absence of a meaningful relationship. In addition, she does not display obvious signs of the malignancy of *exclusion*, which is characterised by spiteful behaviour and the tendency to isolate oneself socially (Boeree, 2006). It is important to note, however, that Theron has deviated from social norms as she has not embraced the typical social roles expected of adult females, namely those of wife and biological mother.

While Theron demonstrates certain elements of the ego strength referred to as *love*, namely a capacity to make emotional commitments and share her identity with members of the opposite sex in romantic relationships, she is a single mother in a fairly new relationship with her current partner. It therefore seems plausible to tentatively conclude that Theron is still in the process resolving the *intimacy versus isolation* crisis, whilst exhibiting signs of *generativity*, the ego strength of the next developmental stage.

5.6 Summary of the Research Findings

Basic trust versus mistrust (Age 0 – 1). The potentially harmful effect of her parents' marital discord seems to have been mitigated by Theron's close attachment bond with her mother. Theron appears to have adequately resolved the *trust versus mistrust* developmental crisis and acquired the ego strength of *hope*. However, there is a possibility that Theron's first psychosocial crisis was resolved with an element of idealisation of her mother.

Autonomy versus shame and doubt (Age 1 – 3). Theron's self-confidence does not seem to have been compromised by overwhelming shame and doubt during this developmental period. Therefore, the researcher tentatively hypothesises that she has acquired the ego strength of *willpower*. Nevertheless, there is a possibility this psychosocial crisis was resolved with an element of *compulsion*.

Initiative versus guilt (Age 3 – 6). Theron demonstrated that she was able to formulate goals, develop plans, and act on her initiative without experiencing excessive guilt as a young child. It seems that Theron has successfully resolved this crisis with a favourable balance of *initiative* over *guilt*, resulting in the emergence of the ego strength of *purpose*.

Industry versus inferiority (Age 6 – 12). Theron demonstrated the development of a sense of *industry* through her participation in school and extracurricular activities. Her experience of not ‘fitting in’ may well have been mitigated by her success in other areas, such as winning numerous dancing competitions and being elected head girl of Putfontein Primary. The researcher therefore posits that Theron has adequately resolved this developmental crisis and acquired the ego strength of *competence*.

Ego identity versus role confusion (Age 12 – 18). It appears that Theron managed to come to terms with her father’s death and emerged from this developmental period with a stable and integrated sense of individual identity as an entertainer. It therefore seems plausible that Theron resolved the adolescent identity crisis satisfactorily and acquired *fidelity*.

Intimacy versus isolation (Age 18 – 40). Theron is a single mother who is in a fairly new relationship with her current partner. The researcher therefore tentatively concludes that Theron is still in the process of resolving the *intimacy versus isolation* crisis. She is, however, exhibiting signs of *generativity*, the ego strength of the next developmental stage.

5.7 Chapter Summary

Theron’s biographical data was presented and discussed in this chapter in accordance with Erikson’s theory of psychosocial development (1950, 1963, 1995). It is important to note that the tentative analysis provided in this chapter is one of many possible explanations of Theron’s personality development.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

6.1 Chapter Preview

An overview of the study is provided in this chapter, followed by a discussion of the extent to which the research aims were met. Next, the value and limitations of the study are presented and the chapter concludes with recommendations for future research.

6.2 Overview of the Study

The introductory chapter provided a brief orientation to the context of the research study, in addition to outlining the aims of the study and introducing the reader to the psychobiographical subject, Charlize Theron. Next, a theoretical overview of the psychobiographical approach was provided and the relationship that exists between psychology and biography was highlighted. A discussion regarding the value and limitations of the psychobiographical method was included in this section. Erikson's theory of psychosocial development (1950, 1963, 1995) was discussed in detail and critically evaluated. The methodological considerations, research design, and methodology were presented next. Theron's life data was organised and analysed according to Erikson's theory (1950, 1963, 1995), the general analytic approach developed by Huberman and Miles (2002), and one of Alexander's (1990) strategies, namely questioning the data. Thereafter, the study findings and discussion were presented, followed by a summary of the results.

6.3 The Aims of the Study Revisited

The first aim of the study was to formulate an accurate, detailed, and coherent biographical description of Theron. This aim was only partially achieved, as Theron is a relatively young individual whose life has not been well documented to date. More specifically, the seminal literature on Theron provided little information pertaining to her infancy and early childhood. Consequently, only salient aspects of the available biographical data were presented to the reader in this treatise.

The second study aim was to explore, describe and interpret Theron's personality development in terms of Erikson's theory of psychosocial development (1950, 1963, 1995). This aim was achieved, in that Theron's available biographical data was analysed in accordance with Erikson's first six psychosocial stages.

The third study aim was to evaluate informally the applicability of aspects of Erikson's theory (1950, 1963, 1995) to Theron's personality development. Erikson's theory was applied to the data and it was demonstrated that Theron's personality development could basically be divided into six discrete stages. However, one significant discrepancy, regarding Erikson's concept of *generativity*, was discussed in relation to relevant research findings in Chapter 5.

The final aim of the study was to contribute towards psychobiographical research focusing on extraordinary South Africans. The researcher has demonstrated that Theron is a remarkable individual. Despite the adverse circumstances of her childhood, she is the only South African who has been awarded an Oscar. Therefore, this study contributes to psychobiography's body of knowledge pertaining to extraordinary South Africans.

6.4 Value of the Study

6.4.1 Psychobiographical research

This study provided the first tentative psychological explanation on the life of Charlize Theron according to the psychosocial developmental stages proposed by Erikson (1950, 1963, 1995). Furthermore, the psychobiographical method provided an idiographic lens for the exploration of Theron's personality development because it is a morphogenic approach that appreciates individual uniqueness within the context of the whole person (Schultz, 2005). In addition, psychobiographical studies, such as this one, have value because patterns of behaviour are examined over the entire life course, thus facilitating an in-depth understanding of Theron's personality development (Fiske, 1988). Psychobiographical studies of creative individuals also benefit psychology because they highlight the increased levels of psychological health and ingenuity often associated with artistic personalities, such as Theron (Clark, 2007).

Another advantage of the psychobiographical approach is that it provides a useful means of testing existing psychological theories (Carlson, 1988; Roberts, 2002; Schultz, 2005). As mentioned above, Erikson's theory of psychosocial development (1950, 1963, 1995) was applied to Theron's biographical data and his construct of *generativity* was contested in relation to her life experiences.

Lastly, psychobiographies provide insight into the subjective experiences of the individual studied and are therefore valuable educational tools that can aid the development of empathic skills in psychology students, in addition to deepening their understanding of human behaviour (Kőváry, 2011).

6.4.2 The theoretical model

Erikson's psychosocial theory (1950, 1963, 1995) provided a comprehensive lifespan approach to studying Theron's personality development within six separate developmental stages (Meyer & Viljoen, 2008). His theoretical position has highlighted the importance of the contextual dimensions of Theron's experience, such as the impact of her home environment, her close attachment bond with her mother, and the violent death of her father on her psychosocial development. In addition, Erikson's epigenetic principle proposes that individuals have the opportunity to revisit and rework crises in future stages (Atalay, 2007).

In short, Erikson contends that personality development continues throughout life and individuals, like Theron, can rectify whatever problems may have arisen during the course of their development (Meyer & Viljoen, 2008). This hypothesis, together with his focus on adaptive ego abilities, was particularly useful in facilitating an understanding of Theron's personal and professional successes despite significant periods of adversity. For example, Theron demonstrated resilience and managed to become an accomplished actress regardless of the trauma of her father's death and the prolonged separation from her mother in adolescence. Erikson's optimistic view of human development is valuable as psychologists are becoming increasingly interested in the study of optimal functioning and positive psychology (Simonton, 1999).

6.4.3 The psychobiographical subject

The selection of Charlize Theron as the subject of this psychobiographical study was advantageous for two main reasons. Firstly, a systematic review of psychobiographical research written by South African authors from 1995 to 2004 highlighted the need for more psychobiographical studies on women (Fouché et al., 2007). Secondly, Fouché and Van Niekerk (2010) have called on local researchers to conduct psychobiographical studies that acknowledge the diverse contributions made by extraordinary South Africans. Theron is a remarkable South African woman whose life story appears to have theoretical significance and applicability regarding Erikson's theory (1950, 1963, 1995).

6.5 Limitations of the Study

6.5.1 Psychobiographical research

The limitations of the psychobiographical approach are discussed in Chapter 2, Section 2.5. When considering the limitations of this method, the researcher is of the opinion that Theron's personality is too complex to be studied in its entirety using any single research method, including psychobiography (Alexander, 1990). This tentative psychobiographical interpretation has been undertaken without sufficient data pertaining to Theron's early life. Furthermore, the researcher had to guard against reductionism and excessive reliance on a single event when interpreting Theron's life story, namely her father's death.

6.5.2 The theoretical model

The shortcomings of Erikson's theory (1950, 1963, 1995) are explained in Chapter 3, Section 3.7. There are, however, two specific limitations that apply to this psychobiographical study. Firstly, Erikson's theory has received criticism for its male bias and inadequate account of female development (Swartz et al., 2008). This shortcoming may have impacted negatively on the analysis of the data because Theron has deviated from social norms; she has not embraced the typical social roles expected of adult women, namely those of wife and biological mother.

Secondly, while the use of specific age ranges has facilitated the application of Erikson's theory to Theron's life, these discrete stages have perhaps been applied to the data more rigidly than Erikson intended. It is worth noting that Erikson does acknowledge that all the components of personality develop to some extent throughout life, even before their critical stages (Allen, 2006).

6.5.3 The psychobiographical subject

As mentioned previously, the seminal literature on Theron provided little information pertaining to her personality development during infancy and early childhood. Furthermore, the available literature has been censored to a degree, as Theron is a celebrity whose public image has been carefully constructed. Nonetheless, various sources in her unauthorised biography by Karsten (2009) have provided fairly consistent reports regarding her life experiences, behaviour and personality.

6.5.4 The researcher

Data analysis procedures contain the epistemological assumptions of the researchers who developed them and are imbued with the personal assumptions of the researchers who use them (Doucet & Mauthner, 2008). The researcher and subject are both white South African women of a similar age and the researcher had to guard against over-identifying with Theron and projecting aspects of her own worldview and experiences into the analysis of the data. In addition, there is an element of subjectivity in the selection of data for analysis and the researcher made an effort not to idealise Theron or intentionally portray her in a favourable light. Lastly, the researcher's inexperience may have negatively impacted on the quality and depth of the analysis of Theron's biographical data.

6.6 Recommendations for Further Research

This treatise has highlighted the potential for further in-depth psychobiographical exploration of the life of Charlize Theron. A full master's or doctoral thesis, with a particular focus on Theron's resilience and creativity development, may be a valuable contribution to psychobiographical research in South Africa, as this may aid in the positive development of children in our socio-cultural context. Furthermore, multiple psychobiographies of Theron's life would enable a comparison of research findings, thereby increasing the reliability of these studies. In addition, future psychobiographical studies of other extraordinary South African women, especially black South African women who have achieved greatness despite difficult environmental conditions, are highly recommended. These studies may reveal how psychosocial variables influence the development of psychological strengths and greatness (Fouché & Van Niekerk, 2010).

Overall, Erikson's theory of psychosocial development (1950, 1963, 1995) was well suited to the study of Theron's life and its future use in psychobiographical studies is recommended. Nonetheless, theoretical pluralism is called for as a complex life story cannot be fully understood using a single psychological theory (Clark, 2007). Future researchers could consider utilising additional theoretical approaches to personality development, thereby augmenting the research findings of this study. The use of multiple psychological theories could provide a rich description and deeper understanding of Theron's personality development, in addition to minimising the application of rigid age ranges and possible gender bias inherent in Erikson's theory.

6.7 Concluding Remarks

Epistemological reflexivity motivates researchers to reflect on what it is they know and how they have come to know it. Reflexive practice fosters new insights and divergent perspectives because it encourages researchers to question the ‘truth’ and value of their assumptions and theoretical frameworks (Oelofsen, 2012). This serves to remind researchers that there is no final truth or answer because humans are subjective beings who construct their knowledge frameworks through social interaction (Willig, 2001). The researcher is aware of her role in shaping the meaning construction process during this psychobiographical study. Whilst every effort has been made to ensure that the study findings are theoretically sound, the researcher acknowledges that other interpretations may be equally valid.

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APPENDIX A
THERON'S FILM APPEARANCES

YEAR	TITLE	ROLE
1995	Children of the Corn III: Urban Harvest	Young Woman
1996	2 Days in the Valley	Helga Svelgen
1996	That Thing You Do	Tina Powers
1997	Trial and Error	Billie Tyler
1997	The Devil's Advocate	Mary Ann Lomax
1998	Celebrity	Supermodel
1998	Mighty Joe Young	Jill Young
1999	The Astronaut's Wife	Jillian Armacost
1999	The Cider House Rules	Candy Kendall
2000	Reindeer Games	Ashley Mercer
2000	The Yards	Erica Stoltz
2000	Men of Honor	Gwen Sunday
2000	The Legend of Bagger Vance	Adele Invergordon
2001	Sweet November	Sara Deever
2001	15 Minutes	Rose Heam
2001	The Curse of the Jade Scorpion	Laura Kensington
2002	Trapped	Karen Jennings
2002	Waking Up in Reno	Candy Kirkendall
2003	The Italian Job	Stella Bridger
2003	Monster	Aileen Wuornos
2004	The Life and Death of Peter Sellers	Britt Ekland
2004	Head in the Clouds	Gilda Bessé
2005	North Country	Josey Aimes
2005	Aeon Flux	Aeon Flux
2007	In the Valley of Elah	Det. Emily Sanders
2007	Battle in Seattle	Ella
2008	Sleepwalking	Joleen Reedy
2008	Hancock	Mary Embrey
2008	The Burning Plain	Sylvia
2009	The Road	Wife
2009	Astro Boy	Narrator
2011	Young Adult	Mavis Gary
2012	Snow White and the Huntsman	Queen Ravenna
2012	Prometheus	Meredith Vickers
2014	A Million Ways to Die in the West	Anna
2015	Dark Places	Libby Day
2015	Mad Max: Fury Road	Imperator Furiosa

APPENDIX B
THERON'S NOMINATIONS AND AWARDS

AWARD	YR	NOMINATION/AWARD	CATEGORY
Academy Awards	2004	Won Oscar	Best Actress in a Leading Role: <i>Monster (2003)</i>
	2006	Nominated Oscar	Best Performance by an Actress in a Leading Role: <i>North Country (2005)</i>
Golden Globes	2004	Won Golden Globe	Best Performance by an Actress in a Motion Picture: <i>Monster (2003)</i>
	2005	Nominated Golden Globe	Best Performance by an Actress in a Supporting Role in a Series, Mini-Series or Motion Picture Made for Television: <i>The Life and Death of Peter Sellers (2004)</i>
	2006	Nominated Golden Globe	Best Performance by an Actress in a Motion Picture Drama: <i>North Country (2005)</i>
	2012	Nominated Golden Globe	Best Performance by an Actress in a Motion Picture - Comedy or Musical: <i>Young Adult (2011)</i>
Primetime Emmy Awards	2005	Nominated Primetime Emmy	Outstanding Supporting Actress Movie: <i>The Life and Death of Peter Sellers (2004)</i>
BAFTA Awards	2005	Nominated BAFTA Film Award	Best Performance by an Actress in a Leading Role: <i>Monster (2003)</i>
	2006	Nominated BAFTA Film Award	Best Performance by an Actress in a Leading Role: <i>North Country (2005)</i>
Academy of Science Fiction, Fantasy & Horror Films, USA	1999	Nominated Saturn Award	Best Supporting Actress: <i>Mighty Joe Young (1998)</i>
	2009	Nominated Saturn Award	Best Supporting Actress: <i>Hancock (2008)</i>
	2010	Nominated Saturn Award	Best Actress: <i>The Burning Plain (2008)</i>
	2013	Nominated Saturn Award	Best Supporting Actress: <i>Snow White and the Huntsman (2012)</i>
Awards Circuit Community Awards	2003	Won ACCA	Best Actress in a Leading Role: <i>Monster (2003)</i>
Bambi Awards	2000	Won Bambi	Shooting Star Female: <i>The Cider House Rules (1999)</i>
Berlin International Film Festival	2004	Won Silver Berlin Bear	Best Actress: <i>Monster (2003)</i>
Blockbuster Entertainment Awards	1998	Nominated Blockbuster Entertainment Award	Favourite Supporting Actress – Drama: <i>Devil's Advocate (1997)</i>
	2001	Nominated Blockbuster Entertainment Award	Favourite Actress - Drama/Romance: <i>The Legend of Bagger Vance (2000)</i>
Broadcast Film Critics Association Awards	2004	Nominated Critics Choice Award	Best Actress: <i>Monster (2003)</i>
	2006	Nominated Critics Choice Award	Best Actress: <i>North Country (2005)</i>
	2012	Nominated Critics Choice Award	Best Actress: <i>Young Adult (2011)</i>

Central Ohio Film Critics Association	2004	Won COFCA Award	Best Actress: <i>Monster (2003)</i>
	2012	2nd place COFCA Award	Best Actress: <i>Young Adult (2011)</i>
Chicago Film Critics Association Awards	2004	Won CFCA Award	Best Actress: <i>Monster (2003)</i>
CinEuphoria Awards	2013	Won CinEuphoria	Best Supporting Actress - Audience Award: <i>Snow White and the Huntsman (2012)</i>
		Nominated CinEuphoria	Best Actress - International Competition: <i>Young Adult (2011)</i> <i>Snow White and the Huntsman (2012)</i>
CineVegas International Film Festival	2007	Won Half-Life Award	
CinemaCon, USA	2012	Won CinemaCon Award	Distinguished Decade of Achievement in Film
Dallas-Fort Worth Film Critics Association Awards	2004	Won DFWFCA Award	Best Actress: <i>Monster (2003)</i>
	2005	Nominated DFWFCA Award	Best Actress: <i>North Country (2005)</i>
	2011	Nominated DFWFCA Award	Best Actress: <i>Young Adult (2011)</i>
Detroit Film Critic Society, US	2011	Nominated DFCS Award	Best Actress: <i>Young Adult (2011)</i>
Elle Women in Hollywood Awards	2005	Won Icon Award	Shared with: Rachel Weisz; Laura Linney; Shirley MacLaine
GLAAD Media Awards	2006	Won Vanguard Award	
Georgia Film Critics Association	2012	Nominated GFCA Award	Best Actress: <i>Young Adult (2011)</i>
Golden Camera, Germany	2006	Won Golden Camera	Best International Actress
Gotham Awards	2011	Won Tribute Award	
Hasty Pudding Theatricals, USA	2008	Won Woman of the Year	
Hollywood Film Awards	2005	Won Hollywood Film Award	Actress of the Year: <i>North Country (2005)</i>
Independent Spirit Awards	2004	Won Independent Spirit Award	Best First Feature: <i>Monster (2003)</i>
			Best Female Lead: <i>Monster (2003)</i>
International Cinephile Society Awards	2004	2nd place ICS Award	Best Actress: <i>Monster (2003)</i>
International Online Film Critics' Poll	2010	Won IOFCP Award	Best Actress of the Decade: <i>Monster (2003)</i>

Irish Film and Television Awards	2004	Nominated Audience Award	Best International Actress: <i>Monster (2003)</i>
Italian Online Movie Awards (IOMA)	2012	Nominated IOMA	Best Actress (Miglior attrice protagonista): <i>Young Adult (2011)</i>
Las Vegas Film Critics Society Awards	2004	Won Sierra Award	Best Actress: <i>Monster (2003)</i>
London Critics Circle Film Awards	2005	Nominated ALFS Award	Actress of the Year: <i>Monster (2003)</i>
Los Angeles Film Critics Association Awards	2004	2nd place LAFCA Award	Best Actress: <i>Monster (2003)</i>
MTV Movie Awards	2004	Nominated MTV Movie Award	Best Female Performance: <i>Monster (2003)</i>
			Best Kiss: <i>Monster (2003)</i> Shared with: Christina Ricci
National Board of Review, USA	2003	Won NBR Award	Breakthrough Performance by an Actress: <i>Monster (2003)</i>
National Society of Film Critics' Awards	2004	Won NSFC Award	Best Actress: <i>Monster (2003)</i>
New York Film Critics Circle Awards	2003	3rd place NYFCC Award	Best Actress: <i>Monster (2003)</i>
New York Film Critics, Online	2003	Won NYFCO Award	Best Actress: <i>Monster (2003)</i>
Online Film & Television Association	2004	Won OFTA Film Award	Best Actress: <i>Monster (2003)</i>
		Nominated OFTA Television Award	Best Supporting Actress in a Motion Picture or Miniseries: <i>The Life and Death of Peter Sellers (2004)</i>
	2005	Won OFTA Television Award	Best Guest Actress in a Comedy Series: <i>Arrested Development (2003)</i>
Online Film Critics Society Awards	2004	Nominated OFCS Award	Best Actress: <i>Monster (2003)</i>
Palm Springs International Film Festival	2006	Won Desert Palm Achievement Award	
	2012	Won Indie Impact Award	
		Won Chairman's Vanguard Award	<i>Young Adult (2011)</i>
People's Choice Awards, USA	2005	Nominated People's Choice Award	Favourite Female Movie Star
	2013	Nominated People's Choice Award	Favourite Dramatic Movie Actress: <i>Snow White and the Huntsman (2012)</i> <i>Prometheus (2012)</i>

	2015	Nominated People's Choice Award	Favourite Comedic Movie Actress
San Francisco Film Critics Circle	2003	Won SFFCC Award	Best Actress: <i>Monster</i> (2003)
Satellite Awards	2000	Nominated Golden Satellite Award	Best Performance by an Actress in a Supporting Role, Drama: <i>The Cider House Rules</i> (1999)
	2004	Won Golden Satellite Award	Best Performance by an Actress in a Motion Picture, Drama: <i>Monster</i> (2003)
	2005	Nominated Satellite Award	Outstanding Actress in a Motion Picture, Drama: <i>North Country</i> (2005)
	2011	Nominated Satellite Award	Best Actress in a Motion Picture: <i>Young Adult</i> (2011)
Screen Actors Guild Awards	2000	Nominated Actor	Outstanding Performance by a Cast in a Theatrical Motion Picture: <i>The Cider House Rules</i> (1999)
	2004	Won Actor	Outstanding Performance by a Female Actor in a Leading Role: <i>Monster</i> (2003)
	2005	Nominated Actor	Outstanding Performance by a Female Actor in a Television Movie or Miniseries: <i>The Life and Death of Peter Sellers</i> (2004)
	2006	Nominated Actor	Outstanding Performance by a Female Actor in a Leading Role: <i>North Country</i> (2005)
Seattle Film Critics' Awards	2003	2nd place Seattle Film Critics Award	Best Actress: <i>Monster</i> (2003)
St. Louis Film Critics Association, US	2005	Nominated SLFCA Award	Best Actress: <i>North Country</i> (2005)
Teen Choice Awards	2000	Nominated Teen Choice Award	Film - Choice Actress: <i>The Cider House Rules</i> (1999)
	2012	Won Teen Choice Award	Choice Movie Hissy Fit: <i>Snow White and the Huntsman</i> (2012)
		Nominated Teen Choice Award	Choice Summer Movie Star – Female: <i>Snow White and the Huntsman</i> (2012); <i>Prometheus</i> (2012)
			Choice Movie Villain: <i>Snow White and the Huntsman</i> (2012)
Utah Film Critics Association Awards	2003	Won UFCA Award	Best Actress: <i>Monster</i> (2003)
Vancouver Film Critics Circle	2006	Nominated VFCC Award	Best Actress: <i>North Country</i> (2005)
	2004	Won VFCC Award	Best Actress: <i>Monster</i> (2003)
Walk of Fame	2005	Won Star on the Walk of Fame	Motion Picture Awarded on September 29, 2005 at 6801 Hollywood Blvd.
Washington DC Area Film Critics	2005	Nominated WAFCA Award	Best Actress: <i>North Country</i> (2005)

Association Awards			
Women Film Critics Circle Awards	2013	Won Acting and Activism Award	For her work for in The Global Fund, and for starting the Charlize Theron Africa Outreach Project
	2005	Won WFCC Award	Best Actress: <i>North Country (2005)</i>
			Best Female Images in a Movie: <i>North Country (2005)</i>

APPENDIX C
SOUTH AFRICAN MASTER’S AND DOCTORAL PSYCHOBIOGRAPHIES

Subject	Researcher	Degree and Year
1. Cornelis Jacobus Langenhoven	Burgers, M.P.O.	M.A. (1939)
2. Louis Leipoldt	Burgers, M.P.O.	D.Litt. (1960)
3. Ingrid Jonker	Van der Merwe, L.M.	Ph.D. (1978)
4. Jan Christiaan Smuts	Fouché, J.P.	D.Phil. (1999)
5. Helen Martins	Bareira, L.	M.A. (2001)
6. Bantu Stephen Biko	Kotton, D.	M.A. (2002)
7. Balthazar John Vorster	Vorster, M.S.	M.A. (2003)
8. Wessel Johannes (Hansie) Cronje	Warmenhoven, A.	M.A. (2004)
9. Mother Teresa	Stroud, L.	D.Phil. (2004)
10. Albert Schweitzer	Edwards, M. J.	M.A. (2004)
11. Cornelis Jacobus Langenhoven	Jacobs, A.	M.A. (2005)
12. Karen Horney	Green. S.	M.A. (2006)
13. Wessel Johannes (Hansie) Cronje	Warmenhoven, A.	Ph.D. (2006)
14. Chris Barnard	Van Niekerk, R.	M.A. (2007)
15. Ray Charles	Biggs, I.	M.A. (2007)
16. Hendrik Verwoerd	Claasen, M.	M.A. (2007)
17. Melanie Klein	Espinosa, M.	M.A. (2008)
18. Herman Mashaba	McWalter, M.A.	M.A. (2008)
19. Isie Smuts	Smuts, C.	M.A. (2009)
20. Helen Keller	Van Genechten, D.	M.A. (2009)
21. Jeffrey Dahmer	Chéze. E.	M.A. (2009)
22. Emily Hobhouse	Welman, C.	M.A. (2009)
23. Mahatma Gandhi	Pillay, K.	M.A. (2009)
24. Kurt Cobain	Pieterse, C.	M.A. (2009)
25. Ralph John Rabie	Uys, H.M.G.	M.A. (2010)
26. Ernesto “Che” Guevara	Kolesky, C.	M.A. (2010)
27. Frans Martin Claerhout	Roets, M.	M.A. (2010)
28. Alan Paton	Greeff, M.	M.A. (2010)
29. Paul Jackson Pollock	Muller, T.	M.A. (2010)
30. Vincent van Gogh	Muller, R.	M.A. (2010)
31. Christiaan de Wet	Henning, R.	Ph.D. (2010)
32. Bram Fischer	Swart, D.K.	M.A. (2010)
33. Desmond Tutu	Eliastam, L.M.	M.Soc.Sci (2010)
34. Brenda Fassie	Gogo, O.	M.A. (2011)
35. Olive Schreiner	Perry, M.	Ph.D. (2012)
36. Winston Churchill	Moolman, B.A.	M.A. (2012)
37. Friedrich Nietzsche	Booyesen, D.D.	M.A. (2012)
38. John Wayne Gacy	Pieterse, J.	M.A. (2012)
39. John Winston Lennon	Kitching, P.H	M.A. (2012)
40. Francis Bacon	Kerr, N	M.A. (2012)
41. Josephine Baker	Eckley, S.	M.A. (2012)
42. Ellen Kuzwayo	Arosi, Z.	M.A. (2013)

43. Helen Martins	Mitchell, D.	M.A. (2013)
44. John Wayne Gacy	Coetsee, E.	Ph.D. (2013)
45. Helen Suzman	Nel, C.	Ph.D. (2013)
46. Beyers Naude	Burnell, B.	Ph.D. (2013)
47. William Wilberforce	Daubermann, B.P.	M.A. (2013)
48. Steve Jobs	Ndoro, T.	M.B.A. (2013)
49. Antwone Fischer	Wannenburg, N.	M.A. (2013)
50. Michael Jackson	Ruiters, J.	M.A. (2014)
51. Helen Martins	Mitchell, D.	M.A. (2014)
52. Richard Tenton Chase	Nel, H.	M.A. (2014)
53. Roald Dahl	Holz, T.	Ph.D. (2014)
54. Martin Luther King Junior	Pietersen, S.	M.A. (201?)
55. Walt Disney	King, B.	Ph.D. (201?)
56. Steve Jobs	Du Plessis, R.	M.A. (201?)
57. Marie Curie	Roets, E.	M.A. (201?)
58. Angela Merkel	Mayer, C.	Ph.D. (201?)
59. Charlize Theron	Prenter, T.	M.A. (2015)
60. Elizabeth Kubler Ross	Venter, E.	Ph.D. (201?)
61. Steve Biko	Bazana, S.	Ph.D. (201?)
62. Richard Branson	Preston, A	Ph.D. (201?)
63. Mevalana Jalaludin Rumi	Julies, Z.	Ph.D. (201?)

APPENDIX D

CONSENT FOR RESEARCH

Psychology Department
Rhodes University
P O Box 94
Grahamstown
6140
8 May 2013

Ms Amanda Silverman
220 West 42nd Street
12th Floor
New York
NY 10036

Dear Ms Silverman

I am currently a Masters student in Clinical Psychology in the Department of Psychology at Rhodes University. I am planning to conduct a psychobiography on the life of Charlize Theron in partial fulfilment of the requirements for this degree. The primary aim of my research is to explore, describe and interpret Charlize Theron's personality development in terms of Erik Erikson's theory of psychosocial development. I have received ethical clearance from the Research Projects and Ethics Review Committee (RPERC) at Rhodes University and hereby request your permission to conduct this study.

To conduct the proposed study, I will collect biographical data on Charlize Theron from primary and secondary sources that are freely available in the public domain including books, interviews and newspaper articles. This information will be treated in a respectful and objective manner to ensure that no harm comes to the reputation of Charlize Theron, her relatives and associates.

Please do not hesitate to contact either myself or my supervisor, Professor Roelf van Niekerk should you require any further information.

Kind regards

Tracey Prenter (Student Psychologist)

083 3124219
t.prenter@ru.ac.za

Professor Roelf Van Niekerk

046 603 7381
roelf.vanniekerk@ru.ac.za

APPENDIX E

FORMAT FOR THE PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

HISTORICAL PERIOD	PSYCHOSOCIAL STAGE	SUBHEADINGS
1. The childhood of Charlize Theron (1975 – 1992): The South African years. - A timeline is provided - This historical period covers the first sixteen years of Theron's life in South Africa. She won several dance and modelling competitions. Her father's death was a pivotal event during her adolescence.	<i>Basic Trust vs Mistrust</i> (0 – 1 years)	1. Findings 2. Discussion
	<i>Autonomy vs Shame and Doubt</i> (1 – 3 years)	1. Findings 2. Discussion
	<i>Initiative vs Guilt</i> (3 – 6 years)	1. Findings 2. Discussion
	<i>Industry vs Inferiority</i> (6 – 12 years)	1. Findings 2. Discussion
	<i>Identity vs Role Confusion</i> (12 – 18 years)	1. Findings 2. Discussion
2. The developing actress (1993 – 2003): The Italy, New York, and early Hollywood years. - A timeline is provided - This section focuses on the development of Theron's artistic and creative abilities and her resilience in the face of adversity.	<i>Identity vs Role Confusion</i> (12 – 18 years)	1. Findings 2. Discussion
	<i>Intimacy vs Isolation</i> (19 – 40 years)	1. Findings 2. Discussion
3. The established actress and producer (2004 – 2015): The post-Oscar years. - A timeline is provided - Theron won an Oscar and received critical acclaim for later films. - Her relationship with Townsend ended. - The bond between Theron and her mother remains curiously close. - Theron becomes a philanthropist who is involved in numerous projects - Theron adopts a son.	<i>Intimacy vs Isolation</i> (19 – 40 years)	1. Findings 2. Discussion

APPENDIX F

THERON'S LETTER TO HER PRIMARY SCHOOL ALMA MATER (1992)

In 1981 I walked into my grade-one class for the first time. Proudly my mother stood next to me and said: "This is you new teacher and all your new friends." But all I kept telling her was not to forget to fetch me at twelve. To be honest, in the end I enjoyed the day so much that my teacher, whom I called "tannie" [auntie] the entire time, had to come and tell me my mother was waiting for me. That day was only one of numerous wonderful days I spent at Putfontein.

I definitely believe in a future for everyone, that is probably why I have such faith in the youth of SA and the entire world. I hope one day everyone will be able to see how important children are, and give them a good education and fill them with knowledge. I can say from my own experience that the seven years of primary school are probably the most important of a child's growing-up years. There must be teamwork between parents and school to develop good discipline and moral values. The child and his or her friends will continue with the mischief that has been part of their lives since they were very young. I was always too talkative, as every staff member can tell you and, of course, I had way too much energy.

My school work was done with the help of friendly and highly qualified staff. These teachers built a large part of my personality, and I am definitely responsible for a few grey hairs they acquired during the years I spent there. I thank my Saviour for the wonderful people they are. Since I was young I have had a great love of many things, probably too many, but for this I thank my mother. Ballet, sport, music and drama. You name it, and I did it. All these things helped me to get where I am today. I now spend most of my time overseas, where I do modelling and television work for months on end, something I enjoy thoroughly. It is mom who raised me with love, and who always comforted me with the words: "Remember, I believe in you and stand by you, no matter how far you are from me; don't forget, I love you very much!" Parents, love your children, they are our future.

To the learners: Your lives lie ahead of you, make certain that you live each day fully, with true meaning and happiness. Enjoy the good and avoid the bad, be grateful and always be humble. It is wonderful to be young, so enjoy every moment and never stop believing in your dream!

Much Love, Charlize Theron (Karsten, 2009, p. 60).

APPENDIX G

POLICE STATEMENTS

1. Charlize Theron's Sworn Statement to the Police 24 June 1991:

I, Miss Charlize Theron, a white female of fifteen years old, living at Plot 56, 7th Road, Cloverdene, tel [omitted], High School Die Kruin, Johannesburg, Std 8, declare:

On Friday 1991-06-21 at about 21:30 my mother and I arrived at our home. We looked for the house key. We have a special place where we hide it, but we could not find the key. We then went to Mrs Mala at the corner of Cloverdene Road and Third road. When we arrived there my father (the deceased) and his brother, Mr Danie Theron, were there. They were sitting in the kitchen and they were drinking liquor. I am not certain exactly what kind of liquor they were drinking. My mother asked my father for the key. I could hear that my father was aggressive towards my mother, but she got the key of the house, and went back to our vehicle alone.

Then I heard my father's brother, Danie Theron, say to my father: "Why do you take her shit?" They spoke some more, but I couldn't hear exactly what was being said. I left the house and returned home with my mother. After we had arrived home, my mother locked all the doors carefully. We put on our pyjamas and then the telephone rang. My mother said that we should not answer it. We let the phone ring. After a very long time the phone stopped ringing. Immediately afterwards it began to ring again. I picked up the phone then.

It was my father. He began to argue with me again and asked why I had not greeted the people. I wanted to explain to him that I hadn't seen the other people. But he kept raising his voice. Then he asked where my mother was. He said: "Where's that bloody bitch?" I asked him to stop talking like that, please. He said: "Fuck you all!" He said it quite a few times and then he threw down the phone. I told my mother that I was afraid. She tried to keep me calm. At that point someone hammered on the kitchen door. I told my mother that it was my father and that I was afraid of him. I got into bed and told my mother to tell my father that I was asleep. I switched off the light.

My mother went to the kitchen. I heard my mother open the kitchen door, but the safety door was still locked. I heard him (my father) ask my mother why she had not left the door open for him. My mother answered that she and I were alone. Then my father began to curse and swear. I had never heard him swear like that. My mother told him that he was scaring her and that she had never seen him like that. At that he shouted that if she did not open the door he was going to shoot her dead. I heard the door being slammed. Then a shot rang out. My mother ran down the passage. I heard her wardrobe door opening. The next moment she stormed into my bedroom. Another shot rang out.

Then we heard my father hammer on the door [of Charlize's bedroom]. My mother pushed the door shut. He tried to push the door open. The next moment another shot rang out. It went right through my bedroom door and through my window.

At that my father said he was going to shoot us both of us dead with his shotgun. I heard him go to the main bedroom. My mother said she was scared he was going to kill us. Then she also left the room. The next minute I heard a lot of shots. I don't know how many, but it was a lot. Then I heard my mother scream. It was a hysterical scream. I came out of my room too. When I got to the passage, I saw my father's brother, Danie Theron, there. My mother sat in a corner of the bedroom. I ran to her and asked: "What happened?" My mother was crying and said: "Charlize, I shot them, I shot them." Then I saw my father's body lying on the floor next to the bed. There was blood too.

I shouted to my mother that we had to get away. I grabbed the keys of one of our vehicles. When I came outside, I saw my father's brother getting into his pickup. My mother shouted: "Go and call Uncle Wick (our neighbour)!" So I did. He phoned the police.

The body did not sustain any further wounds or injuries in my presence. I also want to add that at no point did my mother drink any alcohol. She was sober. I am familiar with and understand the contents of the statement. I have no objection to the oath. I consider the oath binding to my conscience.

2. Bettie Moolman's Sworn Statement to the Police 24 June 1991:

I, Mrs Elizabeth Johanna Moolman, a white female residing at [omitted], Kuruman, tel. [omitted], declare under oath:

On Sunday 1991-06-23 I was at Plot 25.Cloverdene, with my daughter, Mrs Malan. The deceased in the case, Mr C Theron, was my son. On [Sunday] 1991-06-23 Mrs [Gerda] Theron phoned me and asked me to come to her house. She is the wife of the deceased, my daughter in law.

When I arrived at Plot 56, Cloverdene, Mrs Theron invited me in and we began to talk. I asked Mrs Theron to tell me what had really happened there on the [Friday] evening of 1991-06-21. Mrs Theron said that the deceased had been furious because they had locked him out of his own house and because his daughter had allegedly not greeted him when he had been with the family earlier that evening. She had also said that the deceased and Danie Theron had been drunk.

Then I asked her to show me how everything had happened. First she showed me the kitchen door where the deceased had wanted to come in. She said that she had not wanted to open the door for him and that he had fired a shot. After that she showed me the door of the bar and said that the deceased had forced open the [sliding] door.

We walked on and in an alcove in the passage [I] saw that someone had been cleaning. I asked Mrs Theron whether that was the place where she had shot Danie. She answered affirmatively.

Then we went to the main bedroom where the shooting had taken place. I noticed that there were several blood stains that were covered with sheets. Mrs Theron said: “Ma, he was the strongest man. He wouldn’t fall.” She [unclear] her hands in the air and said “Dear God, help me to give him one more shot so that he will fall.”

Then we went back to her office. There I asked the deceased’s daughter, Charlize, why she had not greeted the deceased at the family’s house before the incident. Then the incident might not have happened. Charlize looked at her mother and asked: “Am I getting all the blame now?” Then she jumped up and ran outside. She was crying. After a while Charlize came back.

I asked Mrs Theron why she had not rather divorced the deceased if she had hated him so much. She pointed at Charlize and said: “You know very well, Ma, it was for the child’s sake.” I then told them about another incident when Mrs Theron had locked the deceased out of the house. He drove to me in Kuruman. The day before he returned home, I found him crying in his room. He told me that he was afraid to go back. He did not want to hear all the recriminations and bad things. Then he left.

There were still unanswered questions, however, like why she had not summoned help after she had shot him, or why [she had] not run away after he had begun to stagger. Furthermore I also want to say: For the past 20 years my son, the deceased, has always been Mrs Theron’s inferior. She is a very bad-tempered person and she never took anyone’s feelings into account. We attach a lot of importance to family ties, which she considers ridiculous. She is an outspoken person, with little regard for family, even her own.

He, my son, was never violent towards her, as far as I know. She, on the other hand, was often violent towards him.