A PSYCHO BIOGRAPHICAL STUDY OF CHARLES MANSON

S. FLATELA

2021
A PSYCHOBIIOGRAPHICAL STUDY OF CHARLES MANSON

By

Sambesiwe Flatela

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts in Clinical Psychology

In the

Department of Psychology

Faculty of Health Sciences

At the

Nelson Mandela University

April 2021

Supervisor: Dr. A Sandison
Declaration

Name: Sambesiwe Flatela

Student number: 212210912

Qualification: Master of Arts in Clinical Psychology

I hereby declare that the treatise A Psychobiographical Study of Charles Manson for the degree of Master of Arts in Clinical Psychology is my own work and that it has not previously been submitted for assessment or completion of any postgraduate qualification to another University or for another qualification.

........................................

Sambesiwe Flatela

Official use:

In accordance with Rule G5.11.4, I hereby declare that the above-mentioned treatise is my own work and that it has not previously been submitted for assessment to another University or for another qualification. However, material from publications by the student may be embodied in a treatise/dissertation/thesis.
NELSON MANDELA UNIVERSITY

PERMISSION TO SUBMIT FINAL COPIES
OF TREATISE/DISSERTATION/THESIS TO THE EXAMINATION OFFICE

Please type or complete in black ink

FACULTY: Health Sciences

SCHOOL/DEPARTMENT: Psychology

I, (surname and initials of supervisor) Sandison, A

and (surname and initials of co-supervisor) _____________________________

the supervisor and co-supervisor respectively for (surname and initials of

candidate) Flatela, S

(student number) 212210912 a candidate for the (full description of qualification)

MA Psychology C (Clinical)


_ A Psychobiographical Study of Charles Manson_

It is hereby certified that the proposed amendments to the treatise/dissertation/thesis have been
effectected and that permission is granted to the candidate to submit the final copies of his/her
treatise/dissertation/thesis to the examination office.

_________________________  _______________________
SUPERVISOR               DATE

And

_________________________
CO-SUPERVISOR            DATE
Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the following people who provided emotional and intellectual support throughout my journey in completing this research study.

- My Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ who has been my anchor and given strength when I felt depleted.
- To my supervisor, Dr Alida Sandison for your invaluable expertise on the subject. Thank you for your thought provoking questions. I would not have been where I am today if it was not for your guidance and feedback. I will always be grateful for the support you provided.
- My mother, Sizeka Flatela who has supported me throughout my academic journey. Thank you for the sacrifices you made for me. Thank you for your prayers and encouragement, thank you for your love. Diya, Bhejula! (Clan praises).
- To my brothers, Songezo and Siphe Flatela, thank you for all your support and love.
- To Bongani and Bongiwe Robin who took me under their wing when I was far away from home. Thank you for your encouragement, guidance and support.
- To my cousin, Philisa Manimani. Thank you for your love and for making sure I had a life outside of my academics.
- To Pearl Grunewald for her weekly prayer and messages of encouragement.
- To my extended family and friends for your motivation and support throughout this journey.
Abstract

Charles Manson was notorious for his antisocial behaviour and influence; through his charisma, he formed a group of followers known as the Manson family. Manson and his followers became involved in various criminal activities which culminated in the murder of 7 people. These murders were not committed by Manson per say, but he planned them, and incited his followers to commit them; this resulted in a trial and Manson going to prison, being given a life sentence. He continued to influence people while he served his sentence in prison. Manson died of natural causes in November 2017. The research study explores and describes the life of Manson in the form of a psychobiography. The aim of the study was to gain insight into the personality development of Charles Manson. This was achieved by applying Otto Kernberg’s Object Relations Theory to Manson’s known life experiences. Various data was collected and triangulated, using primary and secondary sources. Miles, Huberman, and Saldana’s (2013) three step procedure was used to analyse the data. The findings highlight the influence of genetics and rejection as pivotal to the unfolding of Manson’s personality, and provide insight into how his antisocial patterns unfolded. They highlight, in particular, his use of control, dominance and devaluation to protect his positive experience of self.

Key words: Charles Manson, Object Relations Theory, psychobiography, personality development
Table of Contents

Declaration ........................................................................................................................................... i
Acknowledgements .......................................................................................................................... iii
Abstract ................................................................................................................................................ iv
Chapter 1: Introduction ..................................................................................................................... 1
Chapter Preview .................................................................................................................................. 1
Research Context ............................................................................................................................... 1
Motivation for the Study ..................................................................................................................... 2
Problem Statement ............................................................................................................................ 2
Primary Aim .......................................................................................................................................... 3
Chapter Outline .................................................................................................................................... 3
Chapter 2: Psychobiography as an Approach and a Research Methodology ................................. 5
Chapter Preview .................................................................................................................................. 5
Psychobiography ................................................................................................................................ 5
Psychobiography and its Related Fields of Study ............................................................................. 6
Biography ............................................................................................................................................ 7
Life narratives ....................................................................................................................................... 7
Personology ......................................................................................................................................... 7
Pathography .......................................................................................................................................... 8
Hagiography ......................................................................................................................................... 8
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Development of Psychobiography</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development of Psychobiography in South Africa</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value of Psychobiographical Research</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary Aim of the Research</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Methodology</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Design</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodological considerations.</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reductionism</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analysing an absent subject.</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross-cultural differences.</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Researcher bias.</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inflated expectations.</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Validity and reliability</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit of Analysis and Sampling Procedure</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Collection and Data Analysis</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethical Considerations</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 3: Overview of the life of Charles Milles Manson</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Preview</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manson’s Parents</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Childhood (0-6 years)</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Middle Childhood (7-12 years) ................................................................. 29
Adolescence ............................................................................................... 31
Young Adulthood (20-39 years) ............................................................... 34
The Manson family .................................................................................. 37
Adulthood (40-65 years) .......................................................................... 39
Los Angeles .............................................................................................. 39
The Spahn ranch ...................................................................................... 40
Tate-LaBianca trials and life in prison ...................................................... 44
Old Age (65 years to death) .................................................................... 45
Conclusion ................................................................................................ 45
Chapter 4: Otto Kernberg’s Object Relations Theory ......................... 47
Chapter Preview ....................................................................................... 47
Object Relations ...................................................................................... 47
Stages of Development ........................................................................... 48
Stage 1: Normal Autism ......................................................................... 48
Stage 2: Normal Symbiosis ..................................................................... 49
Stage 3: Differentiation from Self- from Object- Representation ........... 49
Stage 4: Integration of Self- Representation and Object- Representation ... 50
The Id. ....................................................................................................... 51
The superego ............................................................................................ 52
The ego ..................................................................................................... 53
Stage 5: Consolidation of Superego and Ego Integration ........................................... 54

Process of Internalisation ................................................................................................. 54

Optimal Health and Development .................................................................................... 55

An Integrated Concept of Self and Other ......................................................................... 56

A Broad Spectrum of Affective Experience ....................................................................... 56

An Internalized Value System ............................................................................................. 57

Pathology ............................................................................................................................. 57

Defense Mechanisms .......................................................................................................... 61

Primitive Defense Mechanisms .......................................................................................... 61

Splitting ................................................................................................................................. 61

Omnipotence ........................................................................................................................ 62

Primitive idealisation ........................................................................................................... 62

Omnipotent control ............................................................................................................... 62

Denial .................................................................................................................................... 63

Devaluation .......................................................................................................................... 63

Projective identification ....................................................................................................... 64

Mature Defense Mechanisms ............................................................................................... 64

Repression .............................................................................................................................. 64

Rationalization ...................................................................................................................... 65

Intellectualization ................................................................................................................ 66

Humour .................................................................................................................................. 66
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Critique of Object Relations Theory</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 5: Findings and Discussion</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Preview</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Childhood Object Relations</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Object Relations in Middle Childhood, Adolescence and Adulthood</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rejection</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manipulation and control</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masking vulnerability with dominance</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criminal behaviour, aggression and violence</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inability to form meaningful relationships</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creating his own world</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 6: Conclusion, Limitations, and Recommendations</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Preview</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aim</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limitations</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendations</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Conclusion ......................................................................................................................................................... 97

References .............................................................................................................................................................. 98

Appendix A: Extract from Journal Entries ........................................................................................................... 107

Appendix B: Extract of Triangulated Data Sources .................................................................................................. 110

Appendix C: Images of Charles Manson ................................................................................................................ 113

Appendix D: Summary of Turnitin Originality Report ............................................................................................ 115

List of Tables

Table 1: Manson’s object relations patterns in middle childhood, adolescence and adulthood. ........................................ 74
Chapter 1

Introduction

Chapter Preview

This chapter introduces the research study by outlining the research context. It then provides the motivation of the study and problem statement. Following that, the primary aim of the research is highlighted. Lastly, the outline of the chapters for the research study is provided.

Research Context

Psychobiography was previously described by Sigmund Freud as an understanding of persons (du Plessis, 2017). This research study is a single case psychobiographical study conducted within a qualitative research paradigm. It is important to note that a psychobiography is not used for diagnostic purposes but rather as a tool to aid in the understanding of the subject’s behaviour and experiences that shaped the individual’s life. Psychobiographical research studies have developed and become popular as a methodology in various South African institutions (Fouche & van Niekerk, 2010).

The research subject is Charles Manson who was born on the 12th of November 1934 in Cincinnati, Ohio in the United States of America (Oliver, 2016). Charles Manson’s personality development is explored using Otto Kernberg’s Object Relations theory. Otto Kernberg’s object relations theory looks at how interpersonal relations develop, and the impact they have on individual development (Kernberg, 1976). Object relations are patterns of interactions with an image of self, and image of other and an affect attached to the image. This image or pattern develops between the child and their primary caregiver (Kernberg, 1995). As the patterns are repeated, they become stored as memory clusters, and guide
interactions when triggered. The patterns experienced by the infant are subjective to an individual’s experiences (Clair & Wigren, 2004).

Motivation for the Study

I became interested in personality disorders and criminal behaviour due to the crime rate in the world, particularly South Africa. This made me want to gain insight in the life experiences and personality development of individuals who take part in criminal behaviour. I have come to understand that in most instances individual’s behaviour and thinking is influenced by different factors such as childhood experiences, genetics and the relationships/support they have, amongst others. I am also aware that there are a lot individuals who grow in similar unfavourable circumstances that do not turn out to be criminals. Thus, one cannot assume that one will turn out to be a criminal based on their life experiences. So, I am intrigued to know what makes one person turn to crime, and another not. Research shows that there has been an increase in the number of studies done in an effort to understand the role temperament together with environmental factors has on the development of an individual (LaBrode, 2007). Although the exploration of this individual cannot be generalised to the experience of others, it allows me to explore the role of temperament, genetics and environment in an individual to a level of depth.

Problem Statement

Psychobiographical studies were not popular until the last two decades as they were not viewed as a scientific measure (Stroud, 2004; Navsaria, 2014; Ponterotto et al., 2015). However, this method has become more popular in recent times, in particular, as it gives the researcher, and their readers, the opportunity to study the personality of the subject (Schultz, 2005). It is further beneficial for psychology and psychology-related professionals to gain a deeper understanding of human development (Ponterotto, 2017). Psychobiographical studies
enable the researchers to work on data that already exists, providing insight into a lived life, that can be understood by others (Nortje et al., 2013; Schultz, 2005).

**Primary Aim**

The primary aim of the research study is to explore and describe the personality development of Charles Manson using Otto Kernberg’s Object Relations Theory. The exploration will generate an understanding of his personality development and produce insight into his deviant behaviour. Additionally, conducting a psychobiographical study will aid the researcher with skills which can be applied in her therapeutic work and understanding of both antisocial behaviour and of object relations theory. This research study further illustrates the use of a psychodynamic theory in a case.

**Chapter Outline**

Chapter 1 provides the research context of the research study. It then provides the motivation and problem statement for the research study. It concludes by providing the format through an outline of the chapters.

Chapter 2 defines psychobiography as a research approach and provides related fields of study by highlighting the similarities and differences to psychobiography. It then explores the development of psychobiography, particularly within South Africa, and provides an outline of the value of psychobiography. Thereafter it explores psychobiography as a research method. It then provides the research aim of the study and describes the research design, unit of analysis and sampling procedure, data collection and data analysis. Lastly, it explores the ethical considerations.

Chapter 3 provides an overview of the life of Charles Manson by describing his family background and environment. It then explores his life experiences from childhood, adolescent years, adulthood and old age. His life is examined from his birth in 1934 until his death in 2017.
Chapter 4 examines Otto Kernberg’s Object Relations theory by providing a definition of object relations, and the stages of development outlined within the theory. It then explores the theories conceptualisation of normal development and of pathology, including the defense mechanisms highlighted within the theory. A brief outline of criticisms of Otto Kernberg’s Object Relations Theory is further provided.

Chapter 5 explores and analyses the life of Charles Manson using Otto Kernberg’s Object Relations Theory. The chapter presents and discusses object relations and patterns throughout his lifetime. Lastly, his defense mechanisms are highlighted where relevant.

Chapter 6 provides a conclusion of the research study. It restates the primary aim of the research summarises the findings. Thereafter the limitations and recommendations for future studies are highlighted.
Chapter 2
Psychobiography as an Approach and a Research Methodology

Chapter Preview

This chapter begins with unpacking psychobiography as an approach. To achieve this, it provides a comprehensive definition of the psychobiography, and explores fields of study that are close in focus, highlighting their similarities and differences. It then explores the development of psychobiography, particularly within South Africa, and provides an outline of the value of psychobiography. Thereafter the chapter unpacks psychobiography as a methodology, as used within the current research. It presents the study’s aim and explores the methodology through a description of the research design, unit of analysis and sampling procedure, data collection and data analysis. Finally, it explores the ethical considerations.

Psychobiography

Psychobiography can be defined as the study of a person’s life in their socio-cultural-historical context (du Plessis, 2017; Ponterotto, Reynolds, Morel & Cheung, 2015); it was previously described by Sigmund Freud as an understanding of persons (du Plessis, 2017). The research subject’s life is analysed and understood through the course of their lifetime (Runyan, 1982). The research subject is selected based on interest and potential psychological and historical significance (Fouche & van Niekerk, 2010). Consequently, this is often someone who is in the public eye. Runyan (1982, p. 101) elaborated that "everyone lives through the same developmental periods in adulthood, just as in childhood, though people go through them in radically different ways". The psychobiography tries to explore this radical difference to gain an understanding of the subject, and sometimes how that difference led to their public notoriety; it explores the life history of the research subject and tries to understand why things happened the way they did (Elms, 1994). To do so, psychobiography
applies psychological theory to the lived experiences. In so doing, psychobiography uses theory “to transform the individual’s life into a coherent and illuminating story” (McAdams, Josselson & Lieblich, 2006, p. 503). No one psychological theory can fully explain the personality of the individual however, the application of a theory allows the researcher to describe and understand the personality development of the subject (Elms, 1994; Runyan, 1984).

The application of psychological theory to their life experiences is the vehicle through which the subject is critically examined and analysed (Carlson, 1998; Ponterotto, 2015; Schultz, 2005). Ponterotto (2015) alluded to the method or “science” of a psychobiography as underpinned by the following factors;

- Using psychological theories that are validated and tested. According Ponterotto, researchers such as Schultz (2005) emphasise the importance of using different validated theories to expand the methodology of psychobiography research.
- The integration of the histographic approach with qualitative research methods. The emphasis is on integration of historical, biographical and psychological approaches to create a reliable and valid psychobiographical approach (Ponterotto, 2015).
- Consideration of ethical matters, formulating and reporting on the findings of the research study. Historically, psychobiographical research studies received limited ethical guidance (Ponterotto, 2015). It is thus important for a psychobiographical research study to include updated guidelines on the methodological approach that speaks to the science of the study.

**Psychobiography and its Related Fields of Study**

The field of psychology is known for adopting aspects of different disciplines (Ponterotto et al., 2015). Thus fields of study that are, in focus, close to psychobiography are explored here. Their similarity and difference to psychobiography is highlighted.
Biography.

Biography is the study of historic figures who have captured the interest of the public. The main focus is the story of the life which is conveyed. Biography and psychobiography are both interested in the study of the individual’s life and they both use research methods to understand the life. However, biographical study does not include a deeper understanding of the figure’s drives, behaviours and thoughts (Ponterotto, 2015), but emphasises the individual’s narrative identity (Schultz, 2005), while psychobiography tries to gain a deeper understanding of the individual’s behaviour. Biographical study has contributed to the development of psychobiographical studies.

Life narratives.

Life narratives are storied autobiographical accounts told in the person’s own words (McAdams, 1988). They map out a sequence of events that took place and further provide analyses and interpretations of the events that took place (Habermas & de Silveira, 2008). McAdams (2008, p. 101) summarised life narratives as “psychosocial constructions co-authored by the person himself or herself and the cultural context within which that person’s life is embedded and given meaning”. Alexander (1988) highlighted that in a life narrative, meanings are firmly fixed in the nuances of written and verbal communication. Life narrative, unlike psychobiography, focuses on the narrative and meaning the subject attaches to events (McAdams et al., 2006). The subject also has the freedom to choose the events they want to include in their narrative. Whereas psychobiographical studies are narratives and meaning constructed by person’s other than the subject. Furthermore, they explore the entire lifespan of the subject (Haslam, 2007).

Personology.

Personology seeks to explore the whole life of an individual through life histories (Kőváry, 2011). The information obtained is categorised into themes/scripts of an
individual’s life story (McAdams, 1988). Contemporary personology focuses on autobiographies and biographies. Personology has made significant contributions to psychobiographical studies; it has led to the expansion of psychobiographical theory from traditional psychoanalysis to a broader range of theory used to interpret the life of an individual (Kőváry, 2011; Ponterotto, 2015). Personology focuses on understanding an individual’s life using personality theories whereas a psychobiography is not limited to personality theories (Schultz, 2005).

Pathography.

Elms (1994) described pathography as a description and analyses of an individual’s psychological shortcomings. This identification and exploration of these shortcomings is mostly inclined to follow a combination of medical, psychiatric and psychological approaches. The individual is analysed to evaluate how all the aspects of the individual impacted his/her thought process, behaviour and achievements (Kőváry, 2011).

Psychobiography compared to a pathography analyses the life of an individual in his/her socio-cultural context. The aim is to holistically understand the individual’s life rather than their diagnosis (Runyan, 1982).

Hagiography.

Hagiography is “a branch of learning focusing on religious qualities of the saints and aimed at both edification and enhancing devotion to saintly figures” (Delehaye, 1961, as cited in Ponterotto, 2015, p. 380). There are two approaches to hagiography studies, the first approach is practical hagiography which aims to interpret the life of the research subject. This is to provide guidance and improve the moral standards of others. The second approach is critical hagiography, which aims to emphasise the truth and accuracy of a religious figure (Ponterotto, 2015). Mitchell and Howcroft (2015) argued that hagiography studies tend to only highlight the positive elements/attributes of the research subject rather than creating a
holistic understanding, which psychobiography does. There has been a movement toward combining hagiography and psychobiography, which combines studying the life of religious figure with the methodological approach of a psychobiography (Mitchell & Howcroft, 2015).

**Development of Psychobiography**

It is believed that learning about individual lives began with Greeks and spread in the middle ages (Elms, 1994). In so doing, the study of lives has featured in a variety of professions throughout the 20th century. Sigmund Freud’s analysis of Leonardo Da Vinci in 1910 is generally considered to be the beginning of modern psychobiography (Denzin & Lincoln, 2001). In 1925 a biography was written by Henry Murray of Herman Melville as the first attempt of psychological analysis (Elms, 1994). Psychobiographical research studies were mainly popular with psychoanalysts before the 1930s, but after 1930 psychobiographies were not restricted to the psychoanalytical approach (Kőváry, 2011). The argument was that human lives are too vast to be only understood through one theoretical lens (Ponterotto, 2015).

A major upliftment in psychobiographical studies came from the study personology of Murray (1938), and his students Buhler (1933) and Dollard (1935) (Runyan, 1982). Despite this upliftment, interest in the study of lives declined from World War II because psychological research focused more on the scientific principles generated from group data (McAdams, 1996). Interest in individual cases grew again in the 1960s (Runyan, 1982). Erik Erikson’s psychological profiles of Martin Luther and Mahatma Gandhi renewed and stimulated interest in psychobiography (Ponterotto et al., 2015). In the 1970s and 1980s the generic name of psychobiography was acquired (Elms, 1994). In the 1980s and 1990s, there was a notable shift in how life story research was conducted (Kőváry, 2011). Psychobiographical studies gained more popularity in approximately the last four decades. This is due to a decrease in concerns about the scientific validation of the psychobiography’s
methodology (Stroud, 2004; Du Plessis, 2017; Ponterotto et al., 2015). Thus, time has seen an exploration of the methodology of psychobiography, with the main contributors for psychobiography as a research method being Irving Alexander (1990), Alan Elms (1994), Todd Schultz (2005) and Joseph Ponterotto (Fouche & van Niekerk, 2010; Du Plessis 2017).

**Development of Psychobiography in South Africa**

According to Ponterotto (2015) the first psychological analysis in South Africa was of Cornelis Jacobus Langehoven in 1939 by Burgers. Burgers also wrote an analysis of Louis Leipoldt in 1960. This was followed by Van der Merwe’s analysis of Ingrid Jonker in 1978 (Fouche, 2015). In 1991 Chabani Manganyi conducted a biography of Gerard Sekoto from a Clinical Psychology perspective, and in 1999, Fouche conducted a psychobiographical study on General Jan Christiaan Smuts (Fouche & Van Niekerk, 2010). From this point psychobiography as a methodology gained more momentum.

Fouche, Smit, Watson and Van Niekerk (2007) conducted a systematic review of South African psychobiographical research conducted between 1995 to 2004, which revealed that prior to 1995, the most common theoretical frameworks used were Daniel Levinson’s seasons of life theory, Abraham Maslow’s Motivational theory, Erik Erikson’s Psychosocial development theory and Carl Jung’s Analytical theory of personality development. Currently, there has been growth and variety in the theoretical frameworks used in psychobiographical research (Fouche & Van Niekerk, 2010). This variety allows researchers the opportunity to explore different developmental areas such as health, leadership, personality and career development (Fouche & Van Niekerk, 2005).

Psychobiographical research studies have developed and become popular as a methodology in various South African institutions (Fouche & van Niekerk, 2010). Some of the institutions are the Nelson Mandela University, Rhodes University, University of Johannesburg and the University of the Free State (Fouche & Van Niekerk, 2005). The
conducting of psychobiographical research in South Africa is giving rise to a number of new academics/ researchers that are experts in different theoretical frameworks as well as in the application of these theories (Ponterotto, 2015).

Despite growth in the area of psychobiography in South Africa, Fouche and Van Niekerk (2010) highlight:

- a need to conduct and develop post-graduate psychobiographical research studies at South African universities.
- a need to conduct psychobiographical studies using different theories or models and particularly feminist theories.
- a need for more psychobiographical studies on females and African research subjects (Fouche, 2015).
- increased exposure in terms of congress presentations and article publications and books on psychobiography (Fouche, 2015).

Value of Psychobiographical Research

There are many strengths to the methodology. Psychobiographical studies are beneficial for psychology and psychology-related professionals to gain a deeper understanding of human development and unique personality patterns (Runyan, 1982; Elm, 1994; Ponterotto, 2015). Psychobiography enables researchers to provide insight into a lived life, that can be understood by others (Nortje et al., 2013; Schultz, 2005). They may be used as a means of learning about personality development and psychopathology (Runyan, 1982), and can be used to increase knowledge of behaviour and cognition from a psychological perspective (Runyan, 1997). This information can be translated into the clinical practice of Psychologists, and findings can be used for further theory development (Elm, 1994; Runyan, 1982; Fouche & Van Niekerk, 2010).
Primary Aim of the Research

The primary aim of the research study is to explore and describe the personality development of Charles Manson using Otto Kernberg’s Object Relations Theory. The exploration generates an understanding of his personality development and produces insight into his deviant behaviour. Additionally, conducting a psychobiographical study aids the researcher with skills which can be applied in her therapeutic work and her understanding of the antisocial behaviour and object relations theory. This research study further illustrates the use of a psychodynamic theory in a case.

Research Methodology

A methodology is the approach a researcher takes to seek answers to a research question. The methodology used for the present study is unpacked below.

Research Design

This research study is a single case psychobiographical study conducted within a qualitative research paradigm.

Qualitative researchers are interested in how individuals, groups or organisations behave in their respective environments (Taylor et al., 2016). The purpose of qualitative research is to gain an in-depth understanding of a subject (Baxter & Jack, 2008). The qualitative paradigm generally works with data that is verbal rather than numerical. Qualitative researchers often use different strategies, tools and guidelines that are available to generate this data.

The research design may furthermore be described as case study research. A single case study design “investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-world context” (Yin, 2017, p. 44). The phenomenon is explored and described using in depth data collection methods and using different sources of information to gain effective understanding of how the subject functions (de Vos et al., 2005). Although data produced from case study
work is not generalisable to a broader population, if properly conducted, case studies can provide a hypothesis to understand similar subjects or to new avenues to research the area. According to Mohajan (2018, p.11) “Case studies are not used to test hypotheses, but hypotheses may be generated from case studies”.

Psychobiography refers to a case study that examines a lived life in its entirety. Psychobiography may be described as exploratory- descriptive and descriptive- dialogic. Exploratory- descriptive refers to the provision of detailed and accurate description of the subject’s personality development, to provide an understanding of the individual from their respective socio-historical context (de Vos et al, 2005). Descriptive- dialogic focuses on the reliable use of theory or constructs to generalise to the subject’s experiences or personality development (de Vos et al., 2005); theory is accurately depicted within the data on the life. The research study uses Otto Kernberg’s Object Relations Theory to explore and describe Charles Manson’s life experiences in his socio-historical context.

**Methodological considerations.**

The psychobiographical methodology has received several criticisms. The main criticism is the issue of the validity of psychobiographical research (Runyan, 1984). There have been concerns around the interpretation and possible bias of the researcher (Runyan, 1982), with data interpretations seen as being too subjective (Runyan, 1997), and researchers accused of allowing biased views to steer the direction of findings and conclusions. This type of research method is also viewed to be difficult to generalise from (Runyan, 1997), with limited basis for scientific generalisation because of the size of the population. (Yin, 2014).

Psychobiographical studies have also been negatively viewed for being time-consuming and data heavy (Alexander, 1990; du Plessis, 2017). Schultz (2005) highlighted that it is important to carefully consider the methodological issues that might come from a
psychobiographical research study, and how they may be countered. Accordingly, the following potential pitfalls were considered:

**Reductionism.**

Reductionism refers to reducing the subject’s life from complexity to simplicity. The problem lies in the lack of nuance explored, with conclusions drawn from certain aspects of the subject while ignoring other relevant aspects of the subject’s life. This leads to reducing the individual’s life to simplicity (Elms, 1994). Reductionism can be further understood through Anderson’s (1981) exploration of two assumptions or errors that researchers may make while conducting psychobiographical studies. The first assumption is the belief that a “one dimensional analysis can explain all of the complex psychological dimensions of a subject’s life history” (Anderson, 1981, p. 456). The second is the tendency to focus on psychological factors and ignore other factors that are important in the analysis of the subject’s life (Anderson, 1981). These errors should be avoided as they can create an analysis that lacks depth and is one sided. They may also put researchers at the risk of prematurely pathologizing and diagnosing the subject (Schultz, 2005).

To counter the tendency toward reductionism, researchers are encouraged to look for sources that corroborate each other and add a thicker understanding of the life experience. This corroboration will support conclusions (Schultz, 2005). Furthermore, psychobiographical researchers should acknowledge that childhood experiences involve complex processes, but these experiences are not the only explanation for the subject’s personality (Navsaria, 2014). Researchers should thus have an appreciation of the subject’s complex personality (Anderson, 1981) formed across their lifespan. Researchers are further encouraged to avoid psychological jargon, this may reduce the chances of researchers using reductionistic terms (Runyan, 1984).
**Strategies applied.** Within this study, the researcher guarded against reductionism by always bearing in mind the complexity of Manson’s life. The researcher strove to understand Manson’s personality development through the perspective of Otto Kernberg’s Object Relations theory. She realises that this theory places a lot of emphasis on the development of the personality pattern in childhood. However, within the theoretical context, the researcher attempted to explore different hypotheses in understanding variables in the data. The researcher tried to avoid drawing conclusions prematurely and explored and challenged conclusions thoroughly before accepting them. The researcher also acknowledges that the choice of theory is complex thus putting her at a risk of using too much psychological jargon. The researcher attempted to unpack all theoretical concepts clearly, to make the research study accessible and understandable to the reader.

**Analysing an absent subject.**

The majority of psychobiographical studies are written on deceased subjects (Elms, 1994). de Vos et al. (2005) stated that data available on the lives of subjects might be written for other purposes, making it difficult to get an accurate representation of the subject. Another disadvantage is that the researcher does not receive direct information from the subject. The direction and focus might be on the pathology and functioning presented by the individual. This may limit the holistic view of the subject, with the reader seeing more the pathology of the individual (Elms, 1994). However, using data that is already available also affords the researcher opportunities. The researcher can study a variety of aspects of the subject’s life from a range of data sources (Anderson, 1981; Carlson, 1988). Furthermore, the triangulation of this data can allow for the same life experience to be explored from a variety of perspectives.

Conducting research on deceased subjects is also beneficial for developing and testing theories. The researcher can carefully trace the personality of the research subject across the
lifespan, in ways that are better than when they are alive. The researcher is better able to pay closer attention to how the research subject responds to demands, changes and challenges of life (Elms, 1994). This may lead to an in-depth understanding of the subject (Carlson 1988).

**Strategies applied.** Although there are challenges to the subject being absent, the researcher investigated and collected different sources of information on Manson, consulting different books, articles and documents, and information available on the internet. The triangulation of these sources helped to validate his life experiences and to provide a validated account of his life experiences. This process further allowed the researcher to examine how Manson responded to experiences and challenges across his lifespan. The information from different sources ensured that different experiences were confirmed, but that they could be explored through different interpretations.

**Cross-cultural differences.**

In a psychobiographical study, the culture of the subject might be different from the culture of current times (Stroud, 2004). Elms (1994) suggested that it would be beneficial if the researcher and research subject come from a similar context however, this is not always possible because of development and diversity of psychobiography research in the world. Furthermore, the application of theoretical concepts developed a long time ago might be irrelevant to the subject’s cultural context (Anderson, 1981). This adds an additional cross-cultural challenge. Berg (2001) recommended that to counter these challenges, the culture of the subject should be explored and understood. Thus, it is important to include socio-political, religious contexts relevant to the research subject (Du Plessis, 2017), to enhance understanding of the subject, and their contextual influences. Elms (1994) argued that humans are human regardless of their background thus, researchers can draw conclusions about research subjects provided that sufficient evidence of data is available.
**Strategies applied.** The researcher is aware that she is from a different cultural and socio-context and gender from Manson. Therefore, the researcher explored Manson’s socio-historical context in order to gain an understanding of how his context may have influenced him. The insight from this exploration helped to enhance the researcher’s understanding of Manson, and to bridge the potential bias that cross-cultural differences could cause in the analysis of data.

Manson was born in 1934 and Otto Kernberg’s Object Relations theory was developed in the 1970s (Marynick, 2010; Tuttman, 1984); the theory might have some differences as the development of its constructs differs from the time period of Manson’s birth and early development. This said, the theory does not focus strongly on cultural or socio-economic factors but rather on the didactic patterns that emerge in an individual’s development and its applicability to understand Manson’s development is deemed sound.

**Researcher bias.**

When conducting psychobiographical studies, researchers have the potential of becoming biased in the data collection and interpretation process (Elms, 1994). The psychobiographical research study is conducted over a long period, and researchers may develop an emotional response to the research subject (Navsaria, 2014). To counter this tendency, researchers are encouraged not to conduct their research on subjects that they idolise or detest as this might cloud their judgement (Elms, 1994). Stroud (2004) suggested that the researcher becomes aware of potential feelings, judgements and conclusions about the research subject. The researcher should thus become aware of issues of transference and countertransference (Kőváry, 2011). The researcher should not try to hide his/her subjective decisions and expectations (Du Plessis, 2017), but in identifying them, the researcher will be better track their influence on, or bracket their influences from the analysis.
Elms (1994) advised that researchers should not omit or misrepresent important aspects of the subject’s life. Once the psychobiographical study is published other researchers will have the opportunity to examine and evaluate the information and formulate their alternative views of the subject’s life.

**Strategies applied.** The researcher tried to acknowledge her transference by tracking feelings, judgements, and countertransference in a research journal. This assisted the researcher to track her transference over time, and to understand the influence of the researcher’s subjective views on the analysis. An extract of the journal is included here as Appendix A. In guarding against transference and its influence to interpretation, the researcher consulted her supervisor who validated interpretations as drawn from data. The researcher chose Manson as a research subject as she found his notoriety interesting, but she does not have strong feelings about Manson. The researcher attempted to include a variety of information in the analysis and was careful to not misrepresent or omit important information about him.

**Inflated expectations.**

The researcher should be cognisant of the limitations of psychobiographical research and view results as possible hypothesis rather than factual conclusions (Anderson, 1981). Psychological explanations add to the understanding of the subject, rather than dismissing explanations from other disciplines (Anderson, 1981). It is important to let all the information and conclusions guide the researcher rather than just focusing on psychologically related information (Schultz, 2005).

**Strategies applied.** Manson has led a complex life, the focus of this study was exploring and understanding his personality development. The researcher is aware of psychology being one lens through which Manson can be viewed. However, it is the chosen lens of the study. Otto Kernberg’s Object Relations Theory provides incomplete insight into the life of Charles
Manson. This said, the researcher did her best to be inclusive of complex factors when understanding his life experiences.

**Validity and reliability.**

The psychobiographical approach has been previously criticised for its poor validity and reliability (Ponterotto, 2015). Issues related to validity and reliability have been explored and addressed for several decades (Cho & Trent, 2006). Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggested a particular focus on validity and reliability in order to increase the trustworthiness of data. The trustworthiness of data must address credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Guba, 1981). Golafshini (2003) stated that if trustworthiness is achieved in a research study, it may lead to the generalisability of the results in certain circumstances. Thus, a focus on trustworthiness will enhance the quality of a research study.

**Confirmability.** This involves confidence in the findings, and the degree to which the findings of a study would be verified by another researcher. One of the ways confirmability is ensured is through triangulation. Triangulation is “checking the degree to which each source confirms, elaborates and disconfirms information from other sources” (Alasuutari et al., 2008, p. 222). Triangulation is a systematic process of sorting through sources, and through their interaction confirming life experiences, as well as themes that emerge from the research study. It requires that researchers use both primary and secondary sources of information, to gain a deeper understanding of the subject and his/her environment (Taylor et al., 2016). The role of triangulation is to increase the researcher’s confidence that the findings can be presented to other researchers (Atkinson & Delamont, 2011), and through the process of a chain of evidence (Creswell & Miller, 2000), provide reliable findings.

**Strategies applied.** Triangulation and reflexivity were applied by the researcher to increase the confirmability of the research study. The researcher triangulated multiple sources. This served as a data reduction strategy. It also helped to confirm data used to that
which could be trusted. At times untriangulated data was kept for its uniqueness, and because it added value, but this was acknowledged in text. Overall, triangulation enhanced the trustworthiness of data. The researcher has a certain level of self-awareness pertaining to her beliefs and background, and to assumptions about the research subject (Creswell & Miller, 2000). Therefore, reflexivity refers to the researcher’s ability to examine these assumptions and beliefs. The researcher made note of her beliefs, feelings and assumptions in a journal (see appendix A). She also consulted her supervisor to make sure that she was not producing biased conclusions.

**Credibility.** Credibility is concerned with the ‘truth value’ of the data (Guba, 1981). This refers to the degree to which methods used to generate findings can be trusted. In particular, it requires the accurate description of constructs, in order for constructs to be correctly measured and interpreted within the data. Credibility reduces errors in the findings of the research that might produce false conclusions or personal preferences of the researcher (Neuman, 2011; Pandey & Patnaik, 2014). Credibility is generally encouraged through the prolonged engagement with data and the use of adequate materials (Forero et al., 2018).

**Strategies applied.** To enhance credibility, care was taken to describe Kernberg’s constructs accurately, and consistently throughout the study, and stay true to their intent throughout. The researcher was guided by her supervisor in order to check any gaps in data that might have compromised the credibility of the research study. Furthermore, the researcher ensured that she persistently observed the subject, his environment and behaviours through the data, in order to gain a deeper and accurate understanding of the data (Anney, 2014).

**Transferability.** This looks at how conclusions or results can be generalised across other population groups (Neuman, 2011). In a psychobiographical study, findings cannot be generalised to a broader population, as there is only one subject. However, the transferability
of a study can be enhanced by a description of the parameters or context to which there may be similarities, thus setting up domains which the research study can be generalised to (Runyan, 1984). Transferability thus ensures that the findings can be generalised/ applied to other similar contexts (Pandey & Patnaik, 2014). According to Guba (1981, p.80) “Transferability is dependent upon the degree of similarity (fittingness) between two contexts”. Although a degree of fit in transferring findings to another context (subject) would be positive, this cannot be guaranteed. The findings of the research study were aimed at analytical generalisation which refers to generalisation to theory (Rowley, 2002). Halkier (2011, p.788) highlighted that analytical generalisation “should not be universalizing”, and thus look at how findings “have baring on the theory” (Yin, 2010, p. 21). In this case, the findings are generalised to Otto Kernberg’s Object Relation Theory (1975, 1976, 1980, 1984, 1994). Generalisation to theory means that findings cannot be generalised broadly but only to the theory chosen.

Strategies applied. The research study’s aim was not to generalise findings broadly, but rather to generalise findings to Otto Kernberg’s Object Relations Theory. Transferability was enhanced through providing a thick description of data and theory to depict how the findings informed the conclusions of the research study (Pandey & Patnaik, 2014). Although it was not the researchers aim to transfer findings to other contexts, enough data is provided to support this should a context be deemed similar enough (Yin, 2010).

Dependability. This looks at the consistency of a research study; it suggests that the data collection procedures can be repeated with similar results. This replicability can be ensured by making sure that the steps are as functional as possible (Yin, 2014; Yin, 2017). The dependability of a psychobiographical study is seen when interpretations make sense of the life of the subject (Elms, 1994). This transparency is clear when the procedures taken, and interpretations made can be followed and duplicated.
**Strategies applied.** The researcher documented all procedures followed in the research study. This enhanced transparency and would allow for the research process to be repeated, if necessary.

**Unit of Analysis and Sampling Procedure**

Lewis-Beck et al. (2004, p. 1157) defined the unit of analysis as “the subject (the who or what) of study”. Elms (1994) suggested that the life of an individual should be taken as a unit of analysis in psychobiographical or single case study. The research study focused on the life of an individual, Charles Manson, who is thus the unit of analysis (Simonton, 2003; Fouche & van Niekerk, 2010).

The sampling method used is non-probability purposive sampling. Non-probability purposive sampling refers to the selection of a research subject based on the researcher’s judgement and interest (Alasuutari et al., 2008). Randomisation for this sampling procedure is not important. The researcher does not base his/her sample selection on probability theory, rather, efforts are taken to learn from the subject about something in particular. Manson was a very subjective choice on behalf of the researcher, chosen based on the researcher’s interest in his unusual life and personality. An exploration of his life experiences has assisted the researcher to gain insight into a particular subject, namely his personality, and his deviant behaviour.

**Data Collection and Data Analysis**

The data collection process entails searching and examining data that is already available (Nortje et al., 2013). Researchers use primary and secondary sources of information. As Manson was well known, there was a large variety of particularly secondary sources available on his life which were used. This included biographies, online articles and documentaries. Given the volume, the data needed to be organised in a manner that made it ready for analysis (Berg, 2001). This organisation was initially conducted through the triangulation of primary...
and secondary sources. Within this study, triangulation reduced data to that which could be trusted, acting both as a data reduction technique, and a method of validating data, and enhancing its trustworthiness. This process led to the formation of a case study database, an extract of which is attached here as Appendix B.

Miles et al. (2013) three-step data analysis method was utilised within the research study to analyse the data. This method overlapped with the formation of the case study database. The steps highlighted by Miles et al. are as follows:

**Step 1: data reduction.**

This is a process where the researcher selects, simplifies and organises data from data sources, and is begun when data is triangulated and stored. Data reduction takes place throughout the research study and it is not viewed as separate from analysis. Data reduction organises information in a linear manner in order to be able to verify and understand results (Miles et al., 2013). The data also is reduced and organised in order to make it readily accessible to draw themes and patterns that might come up (Berg, 2001). An example of the case study database, formed from the triangulated data sources is attached here as Appendix B.

**Step 2: data display.**

Data display is “an organised, compressed assembly of information that permits conclusion drawing and action” (Miles et al., 2013, p.11). Information is summarised in an understandable manner using several different ways such as graphs, charts, diagrams, etc. (Miles et al., 2013; Du Plessis, 2017). It is important to move beyond summarising the data and to represent the central aspects of transformed data in an understandable manner. It is this aspect that presents information that is interpreted, from psychological perspective (Du Plessis, 2017). Data display is not a separate step but rather a part of the analysis process (Berg, 2001). It made the most sense to the researcher to organise and display data according
to the relevant life stages, rather than visual depiction such as graphs and charts. This was the easiest to follow and fit with the how data on Manson’s life experiences was structured.

**Step 3: conclusion drawing and verification.**

Conclusion drawing and verification is two-folded: firstly, the researcher draws conclusions and meaning from patterns, explanations and possible gestalts. These conclusions might initially be tentative but emerge and solidify over time. Secondly, the researcher makes sure that the procedures used to arrive at the conclusions are clearly marked (Berg, 2001). This again speaks to transparency in the analysis process. Final conclusions are made once the data collection process is completed (Miles et al., 2013). This process was engaged with over a period of time, with some patterns in the data emerging almost immediately, and other patterns immerging over time, and through consultation with the research supervisor.

It is important to note that these three steps are flexible and interactive. Thus, these steps took place throughout the research study process, until the findings were verified, and conclusions were clear.

**Ethical Considerations**

Psychobiographers have not been given enough guidelines on how to conduct ethical research on a research subject (Ponterotto, 2015). The ethical guidelines set out by the American Psychiatric Association (APA) are followed for this research study as they are one of the few bodies that present guidelines on psychobiography (Elms, 1994). The researcher did not consult the APA ethics body, however, but consulted the ethics body of the Nelson Mandela University, who gave permission for the commencement of the study.

The APA suggested that a psychobiography be conducted on a deceased subject. Berg (2001) pointed out that researchers must ensure that the rights, privacy and welfare of the research subject is protected as well as the publication of information that might have a negative impact on living relatives. Charles Manson died in 2017. Manson had three children, one is
deceased and both remaining two children feel no connection to their father. One of has changed his name and lives in anonymity and the other wants minimal media contact. Contact details for both children are not available (Vincenty, 2019). Most ethical guidelines for qualitative research studies suggest that the researcher keep the subject’s personal information confidential. Due to the nature of a psychobiographical study the researcher identifies personal information of the research subject. To respect the research subject, the researcher only used data that was already available to the public to avoid any harm (Ponterotto, 2013). Protecting the research subject also includes not publishing deceptive information (Yin, 2014). The researcher used information in a transparent manner and only used information needed for the purpose of the research. The researcher handled all data with respect.

**Conclusion**

This chapter explored the psychobiographical as an approach. It defined psychobiography, fields of study that are close in focus to it, and the development of psychobiography, particularly within South Africa. It outlined the value of psychobiography. It then explored psychobiography as a methodology, and presented the study’s aim, research design, unit of analysis and sampling procedure, data collection and data analysis. Finally, it presented the ethical considerations. This chapter represents the methodological approach used in the study, applied to examine the life of Charles Manson. The following chapter provides an overview of Manson’s life experiences.
Chapter 3

Overview of the life of Charles Milles Manson

Chapter Preview

This chapter will provide an overview of the life of Charles Manson. It first describes Manson’s family background and environment, which will later aid in exploring his early object relations. Thereafter it examines his life from his birth in 1934 until his death in 2017. It presents his life experiences chronologically under the headings early childhood, adolescence, and early adulthood, middle adulthood and late adulthood.

Manson’s Parents

Manson’s mother, Kathleen Maddox, lived with her mother Nancy Maddox who was a devout Christian. Nancy Maddox was rigid in her religious beliefs and had very strict rules. She required everyone living under her roof to obey her instructions and live according to the church of Nazarene rules (Emmons, 1986; Sederstrom, 2020). However, Kathleen was not a devout Christian like her mother (Hourly History, 2018). Kathleen rebelled against her mother’s teachings and did not live according to religious teachings (Oliver, 2016). There was a bridge that linked Ashland and Ironton, and Kathleen frequently crossed the bridge to have fun in pubs in Ironton (Guinn, 2013). According to some sources, Kathleen was a prostitute and alcoholic by the age of 16 years (Zeff, 1995; Biography.com Editors, 2020; Moako, 2019), while other sources indicate that she was not a prostitute, just rebellious (Guinn, 2013). She also made money by scamming men in these pubs (Hourly History, 2018). Here Kathleen Maddox met Manson’s father, Colonel Scott, who was 23 years old. It is speculated that Colonel Scott was a petty criminal from Catlettsburg (Guinn, 2013). They had a brief relationship, and Kathleen Maddox fell pregnant (Marynick, 2010). Kathleen, at
16, became a reference to the community of the consequences of rebellious behaviour (Sederstrom, 2020).

In August 1984 Kathleen married Manson’s stepfather William Manson (Marynick, 2010), while she was pregnant. It is speculated that Kathleen and William Manson met at a dance hall, however the location of the dance hall is unknown (Sederstrom, 2020). Manson was born shortly after the wedding.

**Early Childhood (0-6 years)**

Charles Milles Manson (Manson) was born on the 12th of November 1934 at Cincinnati General Hospital in Cincinnati, Ohio in the United States of America (Oliver, 2016). Manson was unwanted and illegitimate. He was initially registered as ‘No name’; Kathleen did not initially give him a name. This was later changed, and he was registered under the name Charles Milles Manson (Hourly History, 2018) after she married his stepfather. According to Emmons (1986, para. 23), when talking about his birth, Manson referred to himself as an “outlaw from birth”. After Manson’s birth Kathleen tried to live a crime free life but soon reverted to making money by scamming men in bars and pubs (Hourly History, 2018). At this point she was married to William Manson. However, the marriage did not last long, and William Manson filed for divorce and accused Kathleen of “gross neglect [of her] duties”; the divorce was ruled in April 1937 (Guinn, 2013, para. 20). Manson explained that he did not have a relationship with his stepfather. Manson referred to him as the man who gave him a name (Emmons, 1986).

Two weeks before the divorce was finalised Kathleen went to Colonel Scott with the hope of marriage. To her disappointment she found that Colonel Scott was already married; she then decided to take him to court for child maintenance. She was granted child maintenance however, Colonel Scott did not follow through with the court ruling (Guinn, 2013; Marynick, 2010). Consequently, Kathleen struggled financially to take care of Manson.
It is reported that she once attempted to sell Manson for a jug of beer (Hourly History, 2018). Manson’s uncle searched for him for a couple of days, and when he found Manson, he took him back home (Oliver, 2016).

As an infant, Manson spent a lot of time with his maternal grandmother, aunt, and uncle (Oliver, 2016). In 1938, Manson and Kathleen moved to McMechen, West Virginia; they stayed with Kathleen’s sister and brother in-law. In 1939 Kathleen and her brother Luther Maddox robbed a man named Frank Martin. However, this led to legal proceedings, and Kathleen was sentenced for 5 years in prison, and her brother was given a longer sentence, at the West Virginia State Prison in Moundsville (Marynick, 2010; Hourly History, 2018).

Manson moved in with his uncle, aunt, and cousin in McMechen so that he would be closer to Kathleen’s prison. Nancy Maddox and Manson’s aunt explained to Manson that his mother was not going to be at home for a while. Manson’s aunt and uncle did not want to take in little Manson, but did so as they felt that it was a responsibility they had to take as a family (Guinn, 2013). The Thomas’s ascribed to strictly religious beliefs, and this filtered to forming a strictly religious home environment, believing that “children should be seen as not heard” (Landsing, n.d., p. 1). Manson was approximately 5 years old at the time. He was forced by his uncle to visit his mother in prison on a regular basis, which was very frightening to him (Zeff, 1995; Sederstrom, 2020). Already, at this time, Manson’s uncle perceived Manson to be deviant and a “pathological liar” (Hourly History, 2018; Landsing., n.d., p.1). Manson later reported that he was brought up well by his aunt and uncle however, he never felt a sense of belonging with them and always thought about his mother (Emmons, 1986).

In 1939 Manson was enrolled at a primary school where he was verbally mistreated by a teacher. His Grade 1 teacher was very strict, and she made the children sit according to their intelligence (Sederstrom, 2020). Manson was placed at the end of the classroom because he was one of the students that was struggling academically. An incident is reported where
Manson came back from school crying (Sederstrom, 2020). Instead of comforting him, his uncle believed that he needed to “toughen up” (Landsing, n.d., p. 1) The following morning, his uncle dressed him in his cousin’s dress, and sent him to school like this as a form of punishment (Guinn, 2013). Howard and Tillet (2019) report on this differently, indicating that his uncle dressed him in a dress on the first day of school. Manson struggled with regularly wetting his bed, and Landsing (n.d., p. 1) asserted that he most likely received “corporal punishment for his nightly incidents”. Seldersom (2020, p. 1) quoted Guinn as describing Manson as a “disagreeable child” who often “whined, complained and fibbed incessantly”.

There is some evidence that Manson tried to protect himself. He developed an interest with guns, knives, and other sharp objects (Guinn, 2013). At school, Manson would round up naïve girls in his class and encouraged them to attack children he did not get along with. When interrogated by his teachers, he would indicate that he did not force them to do anything (Sederstrom, 2020). Manson shared that one Christmas, while visiting his grandmother, he burnt the toys of the other children in the neighbourhood because he was jealous and believed that they were mocking him by showing off their gifts (Emmons, 1986; Oliver, 2016).

Middle Childhood (7-12 years)

When he was 7 years, Manson was left with his cousin Jo Ann. Little is known of this time, other than an incident relayed where Jo Ann asked him to go play outside while she was busy with her chores. Manson went outside and came back with a sickle and swayed it in front of her face. Jo Ann managed to overpower Manson, threw him out the house and locked the screen door. Manson became angry and damaged the screen door while trying to force himself back into the house (Sederstrom, 2020). In 1942, Kathleen was released on parole. Manson described this as one of the happiest days of his life (Emmons, 1986). Kathleen took
Manson back and they moved to Charleston. They did not have a stable home and it is speculated that they lived in various hotel rooms (Marynick, 2010). Manson reported that he enjoyed living with his mother however, he was always worried about being separated from her. Additionally, Kathleen often brought home different males which made Manson unhappy (Emmons, 1986). He was told to leave the house when his mother had male visitors (Sederstrom, 2020). During this period, Manson did not regularly attend school due to his unstable home environment (Emmons, 1986).

Kathleen eventually got a job as a clerk at a grocery shop. On the surface this would imply increased stability, yet she struggled with the transition of being out of prison and being independent (Guinn, 2013), and used alcohol to cope. Consequently, Kathleen became a heavy drinker to the point that she decided to attend Alcoholic Anonymous (AA) meetings. In these meetings she met a man named Lewis (Hourly History, 2018). Lewis had just been released from the army and was working in the Property department of a circus (Guinn, 2013). In 1943 Kathleen and Lewis married in St Clairsville, Ohio. At this point, Manson was aged 9 years.

Manson was already displaying behavioural problems. Kathleen started to notice that Manson was often truant from school and causing trouble. Hourly History (2018) explained that Manson’s troublesome behaviour progressed to petty criminality. Kathleen also noticed that Manson displayed manipulative behaviour especially towards females (Guinn, 2013). Manson sometimes visited one of his uncles in Kentucky. This relative would often use a shotgun to threaten people in his community (Emmons, 1986). Apparently around this period, his uncle from Kentucky told him to not go to school and encouraged him to follow in his footsteps of being a rebel (Zeff, 1995). Manson himself in response to this said implied that he took the message to heart, in his response “so I burnt down my school when I was 9 years old” (Zeff, 1995, 3:18).
Kathleen and Lewis stopped attending AA sessions; Lewis went back to abusing alcohol and could not maintain his jobs which forced Kathleen to work to support her family (Guinn, 2013). According to O’Neill and Piepenbring (2019) Kathleen often neglected Manson and would sometimes leave him at the care of their neighbours. Kathleen also had periods where she would leave his family for a couple of days, and it is speculated that she would be drinking in the local pubs (Howard & Tillett, 2019).

**Adolescence**

Manson started to run away from home. In 1947, at the request of Kathleen, he was placed at Gibault School for Boys in Terre Haute. Kathleen hoped that placing Manson at the school would reform his behaviour. However, Manson experienced this as a rejection and stated that he was angry at his mother for sending him away (Emmons, 1986; Hunter, 2017). The school was designed for delinquent boys and was run by Catholic priests (Guinn, 2013, Howard & Tillett, 2019). After 10 months he ran away from the school to look for Kathleen. He managed to find her, but she again rejected him and sent him back to the school. Manson explained his thoughts and feelings at this time to Emmons (1986, para. 2):

Naturally I went straight to Mom’s. I thought I could show her how grown up I was and how I could help her. There was no guilt trip in my mind about running away; I was sure my mom would throw her arms around me, as glad to see me as I was to be there with her. She’d take me down to the judge and tell him she was in a position to take care of us. Everything would be all right. God, was I dreaming! She turned me in and the next day I was back at the Home for Boys. But I didn’t feel like a boy any longer. There were no tears. At least, none that ran down my cheeks. I didn’t feel weak or sick, but I also knew I could no longer smile or be happy. I was bitter and I knew real hate.

Manson later explained that his mother’s rejection taught him to never trust and depend on anyone (Zeff, 1995; CieloDrive.com, 2015) this seems to convey the level of injury he felt in
relation to this rejection. Manson ran away again within a few days of returning to the school, (Marynick, 2010; Emmons, 1986) and consequently, at 13 years old Manson was on the streets and needed to survive. He started to burgle local retail and grocery stores. However, this led to his arrest. He was sent to a juvenile centre in Indianapolis, managed to escape after one day (Marynick, 2010; Oliver, 2016). After being captured again, he was sent to Father Flanagan’s Boys Town, a juvenile facility in Nebraska. After four days in the facility, Manson stole a car with one of the other boys and drove to Illinois (Zeff, 1995; Guinn, 2013).

Manson and his friend sought refuge with the friend’s uncle who was also involved in criminal activities (Guinn, 2013). After two weeks of being in the outside world, Manson started engaging with petty crimes and an armed robbery, which again led to his arrest. The judge at that time did not have pity on him as he now had a history of criminal behaviour; he was subsequently sent to Indiana School for Boys in Plainfield (Howard & Tillett, 2019). Guinn (2013) described the facility in Plainfield as less lenient as Manson’s previous facility. The school had a population of boys ranging from early teenage years to 21 years old. The boys were there for various crimes ranging such as petty crime, armed robbery and manslaughter. Young boys and boys of small stature were at a risk of being bullied or assaulted by older stronger boys (Sederstrom, 2020). Unfortunately for Manson, his small body stature meant that he was a target. He was sexually assaulted by older boys. Years later, Manson reported that these older boys were encouraged by one of the staff members (Emmons, 1986; Howard & Tillett, 2019). To avenge the assault, Manson physically assaulted one of the boys with an iron window handle. He did this in the dark while the boy was sleeping. The boy was found unconscious by one of the security guards and Manson managed to leave the room without being noticed (Emmons, 1986).

To survive at the facility Manson played what he called the ‘insane game’, where, in the face of his assault, he would pretend he was ‘crazy’ by making sounds, facial expressions and
changing his mannerisms. This seemed to work somewhat as a deterrent, although some went ahead with their assaults regardless (Guinn, 2013). It is speculated that Kathleen was not in contact with Manson when he was at Plainfield (Guinn, 2013).

Manson attempted to escape from Plainfield several times, on his own, unsuccessfully. In 1949 Manson escaped successfully with six other inmates. Manson was caught after 12 hours of being in the outside world, whilst attempting to break into a petrol station, and sent back to the facility (Guinn, 2013). In 1951, Manson and other inmates stole a car and escaped the facility, but were caught in Utah (Marynick, 2010). Manson was convicted for driving a car across state lines. This was his first federal offence and led to him being sent to The National Training School for Boys in Washington, DC (Howard & Tillett, 2019).

At the training school, a psychometric and psychological evaluation was conducted on Manson. It was found that he had an IQ level of above 100, but despite this intelligence, Manson was illiterate (Marynick, 2010; Howard & Tillet, 2019). He was also found to be “aggressively antisocial” and had the tendency to want to dominate other boys (Guinn, 2013, para. 30). After a couple of sessions, the Psychiatrist suggested that Manson would benefit from an institution with minimum security. He was transferred to Natural Bridge Honor Camp near Virginia. In 1952 Manson qualified for parole however, a month before was released, he was found sexually assaulting a boy holding a blade to the boy’s throat (Emmons, 1986; Hourly History, 2018). Any form of sexual activity was forbidden at the camp and rape was considered a serious offense (Guinn, 2013). After this incident Manson was transferred to Federal Reformatory in Petersburg, Virginia (Emmons, 1986). Between January – August 1952 Manson committed “eight serious disciplinary offenses”, three out of the eight were of a sexual nature (Guinn, 2013, para. 33). In September of that year, he was transferred to a maximum -security reformatory at Chillicothe, Ohio. At the facility it was
concluded that Manson was dangerous and could not be trusted in public (Guinn, 2013; Hourly History, 2018).

**Young Adulthood (20-39 years)**

When Manson turned 21, he was released on parole even though the authorities at the facility believed that he “was beyond rehabilitation”. (Guinn, 2013, para. 34). He was expected to live with his uncle’s family (Guinn, 2013; Marynick, 2010), but due to the tension between them, lived between his uncle and his mother (Howard & Tillett 2019). Manson started to look for employment, but it proved to be difficult for him due to his criminal record and lack of education; he eventually found employment at a local racetrack (Guinn, 2013). Manson tried to live crime free and started to go to Nazarene church with his family (Emmons, 1986). Nazarene church taught that women were inferior to men and people should not focus on acquiring material possessions (Guinn, 2013).

In 1955 Manson met a woman named Rosalie Willie, who was 4 years his junior, who worked at Warsinky’s grocery shop in Wheeling, West Virginia (Guinn, 2013; Hourly History, 2018). He stated that this was his first romantic relationship and the first time he felt that he was with someone who reciprocated his love (Emmons, 1986). Manson married Rosalie Willie (Howard & Tillett, 2019). In the beginning of their marriage, he was crime free and had legal employment, but once Rosalie fell pregnant, he reverted to his criminal activities (Hourly History, 2018). Manson reported to Emmons (1986, para 2) that “trouble was, all I knew was reform schools, stealing and not trusting anyone. The patience, the willingness to struggle and earn that normal life demands wasn’t part of my make up”.

Manson started to socialise with two local males. They started to steal cars from areas around Ohio (Guinn, 2013; Hunter, 2017). After a while, Manson stole a car and was headed to California with Rosalie when they were caught by police in Indianapolis. Just before he was charged for this crime, Rosalie gave birth to Charles Manson Junior in March of 1956.
(Howard & Tillet, 2019). In April 1956, the charge of Motor Vehicle Theft led to Manson’s parole being cancelled (Marynick, 2010), and he was arrested and sent to Terminal Island Penitentiary in San Pedro, California. Initially Rosalie visited Manson in prison, however, she soon stopped coming (Guinn, 2013). Kathleen told Manson that Rosalie was in relationship with a truck driver. For a time, Manson had hope that the relationship would not last (Emmons, 1986).

Whilst in prison, Manson spent time interacting with older inmates, and he stated that they were like father figures to him (CieloDrive.com, 2015). Through his interaction with these men, he learnt about their life philosophies and how they executed their criminal activities (CieloDrive.com, 2015). According to Guinn (2013) Manson learnt how to procure women. The lessons comprised of identifying the women, distancing them from their family and friends and finding other ways of mentally controlling them. In 1957 Manson found out from Kathleen that Rosalie was now living with her new partner, and Rosalie filed for divorce; the divorce was finalised in 1958 (Marynick, 2010; Hourly History, 2018). On hearing this news, Manson lost hope for the relationship and felt bitter and angry (Emmons, 1986). Manson behaved well in prison and this led to his transfer to minimum security cells. However, after a couple of days, he was found in a parking lot trying to break into a car to escape. This incident led to the court adding three additional years to his prison sentence (Guinn, 2013).

Manson was given the opportunity to attend a four-week course based on How to Win Friends and Influence People, a book by Dale Carnegie. The book’s main idea is that humans only have two motivating factors, sexual desire, and the desire to be great (Howard & Tillet, 2019). Manson identified with the ideas of the book and perspective of the author. Engagement with this book proved that Manson, by this point, had developed the ability to read, understand and apply written material. One of the chapter’s was titled How to get
cooperation, which spoke about how to make people think that your idea was their original idea. This became one of the lessons that he applied throughout his life (Zeff, 1995). He stopped attending the course once he felt he had obtained adequate information. His behaviour at the prison changed for the better and given that the prison paroled well behaved prisoners due to limited space capacity, he was released on parole (Zeff, 1995). This release occurred in September 1958, after Manson has been in prison for 2 years and 10 months (Howard & Tillett, 2019).

As soon as he was released, Manson became a procurer of underaged girls in California (Sederstrom, 2020). To support himself financially he forged a cheque at a supermarket and was subsequently caught by the police. Before appearing in court, he convinced one of his prostitutes, Leona Rae Stevens, to claim that she was pregnant and that he was going to marry her so that she could testify for him. The case was dropped but he was given a 10-year suspended sentence (Howard & Tillett). The suspension did not stop Manson, who continued to procure women. In 1961 Manson was arrested for travelling prostitutes across state from California to New Mexico, which was a violation of the Mann Act. He eventually married Leona because wives could not testify against their husbands (Hourly History, 2018; Howard & Tillett, 2019). However, as a consequence of this arrest, Manson was convicted and sent to McNeil Island Penitentiary in Washington to serve his 10 years (Marynick, 2010).

At this point Manson was accustomed to prison life as he had been in and out of prisons since he was a teenager. At McNeil Island Penitentiary, Manson took an interest in Scientology and music; he also became better at manipulating people. He participated in the prison’s sports, and was made a cleaner (Guinn, 2013). In 1963 Leona filed for divorce and it was granted in 1964. In that period Leona had given birth to their son Charles Luther Manson (Marynick, 2010). The staff at the prison took note of his changed behaviour and after serving six out of his ten-year sentence, he was transferred to a minimum- security prison at
Terminal Island. In March 1967, at 32 years old, Manson was released on parole against his wishes, having expressly asked that he remain in prison. He reported that he was not ready for the outside world (Zeff, 1995; Guinn, 2013).

**The Manson family.**

Manson moved to Berkeley, California. Berkeley and the world in general had changed to what he was accustomed to (Howard & Tillet, 2019). The hippie culture was prominent at the time, especially among students (Hewitt & Mendez, 2013). It had become socially acceptable for men to have long hair, women to wear jeans, and people to engage in sexual exploration and to smoke substances (Guinn, 2013). The Civil Rights movement was taking place which was not something Manson was pleased with; he believed that non-white people were not equal to white people (Hourly History, 2018). In California Manson spent most of his days at the University of California in Berkeley, even though he was not a student at the university (Hourly History, 2018). Here he met Mary Brunner, who was a 23-year-old female assistant Librarian. He made a connection with her and convinced her to let him move in with her (Guinn, 2013; Howard & Tillett, 2019). Mary supported Manson financially since she was the only one working at that time. Manson also met Lynette Fromme, who was 18-years old, whom he convinced to move in with Mary and himself (Hourly History, 2018). Mary was not pleased with this arrangement, however, Manson used his skills to persuade her (Guinn, 2013). He also brought other women home and had casual sexual relationships with them (Marynick, 2010).

Manson started exploring the areas of Haight and Venice, both in San Francisco; he would target young vulnerable girls to have sexual intercourse with and take them home (Guinn, 2013; Emmons, 1986). San Francisco was a bit different from Berkeley, the hippie culture was more inclusive, which meant that people gave each other chances and there was a sense of community (Marynick, 2010). Some people in Haight- Ashbury adopted the hippie
lifestyle and they had access to Lysergic acid diethylamide (LSD), cannabis and other substances. The opportunities and lifestyle of this community resonated with Manson (Guinn, 2013), and in April 1967 Manson convinced his girls to move to Haight, San Francisco with him. He traded his piano for a Volkswagen minibus which they travelled with (Guinn, 2013; Hourly History, 2018, Emmons, 1986). On their way they managed to convince Patricia Krenwinkel, whom they met at Manhattan Beach, to join them. Mason made Patricia Krenwinkel feel like she had a place where she belonged (O’Neill & Piepenbring, 2019). When they arrived at San Francisco they also convinced Susan Atkins to join them (Marynick, 2010). Susan grew up in an alcoholic house and was molested as a child. She was working as a topless dancer at the time (O’Neill & Piepenbring, 2019).

In Haight, Manson had taken note that people were more open to listening to preachers in the streets, so this is what he did. He would stand in the streets and play his guitar, quote scriptures from the Bible, and speak about Scientology. Manson was charismatic which afforded him the opportunity to lure people, especially vulnerable females. By this stage, a group of girls had formed around him, and he called them his disciples, and they were known as the Manson Family (Guinn, 2013; Oliver, 2016).

After a while Manson wanted a change of scenery. He asked permission from his parole officer to go search for his mother. However, he actually wanted to explore Washington (Emmons, 1986). Manson left with the Family, but apparently went to his mother’s house alone, but was not welcome (Guinn, 2013). After his encounter with his mother Manson told his Family that they should leave because he thought they will never manage to find her (Guinn, 2013). In Oregon they met Bruce Davis who became the first male to join the Manson family. Manson found a way to trade his minibus for yellow school bus (Hourly History, 2018). He informed the Family that Haight was unsafe, and they should move to Los Angeles. Manson’s parole supervision was changed to Los Angeles thus, he was not worried
about being trouble with the law (Marynick, 2010; Emmons, 1986). The real reason he wanted to move to Los Angeles was to pursue his music career (Zeff, 1995). Mary Brunner had fallen pregnant at this time and Manson was pleased with the news. He had convinced his girls to avoid using contraceptives and to be sexually active with male members of the Family (Guinn, 2013). When Manson was around his Family, he would provide them with LSD and preach to them (Emmons, 1986). The other Family members started to notice that Mary Brunner often had black eyes, and that this was caused by Manson (Guinn, 2013). However, he instructed his followers not to ask the motive and reasoning behind his thinking and behaviour (Bugliosi & Gentry, 1974).

**Adulthood (40-65 years)**

**Los Angeles.**

In the 1960’s Los Angeles was a bit unsettled due to fighting against racial discrimination, led by the Civil Rights movement. Within the city there was a big gap between the rich and poor, and the justice system mostly worked in favour of the rich. The entertainment industry was also booming in this period (Guinn, 2013). Manson convinced his followers that his teachings would spread once he was signed up with a record company (Zeff, 1995; Hourly History, 2018). In April 1968 Mary Brunner gave birth to Michael Manson. Thereafter, the number of children in the Family grew (Howard & Tillett, 2019). Even though the adults seemed unkempt, the children always looked well cared for, although it is interesting to note that Manson insisted that females were not allowed to take care of their own children (Guinn, 2013). Manson taught the Family to scavenge for food as they struggled to get food supplies. He sometimes had sex with staff from grocery stores for them to sneak food to him (Guinn, 2013).

Later in 1968 two girls from the Manson Family met with a singer and cofounder of The Beach Boys while hitch hiking in California. Dennis Wilson offered them accommodation in
Sunset Boulevard (Marynick, 2010; Guinn, 2013). The girls spent the night at the Wilson mansion and after a while the Manson Family joined them without Dennis Wilson’s knowledge (Marynick, 2010; O’Neill & Piepenbring, 2019). Manson then convinced Wilson to allow his whole Family to stay at his house. Manson was also hoping that Wilson would help him with his music career (Zeff, 1995). According to Marynick (2010) Dennis Wilson organised a meeting for Manson with a producer manager of a record company. However, to Manson’s disappointment, he was not as good as he thought he was. Dennis Wilson moved out of the house when he was overwhelmed by Manson and his Family (Hourly History, 2018). According to Guinn (2013) Dennis Wilson could not tolerate how Manson took over his property and his inflated sense of importance. After Dennis Wilson moved The Manson Family was forced to find other accommodation (Marynick, 2010).

The Spahn ranch.

Manson and his Family came across Spahn ranch, located in the countryside of the county of Los Angeles (Weihl & Rother, 2018). The ranch had been previously hired as a movie set for Western movies (Guinn, 2013; Weihl & Rother, 2018). Manson convinced the owner, George Spahn, to let them occupy the ranch (Hourly History, 2018), and proposed that he and the Family would assist with maintenance on the property. This appealed to Mr Spahn as he was old and had visual problems. Lynette Fromme, who was one of Manson’s girls, was assigned to take care of Mr Spahn’s wellbeing and his household (O’Neill & Piepenbring, 2019). The members of the Manson Family increased once everyone was settled. One of the people who joined was Charles ‘Tex’ Watson. Initially he was told that he had to prove to Manson that he was willing to work hard and let go of his ‘ego’ (Marynick, 2010; Guinn, 2013).

Shorty Shea and Juan Flynn already worked on the ranch, helping Mr Spahn; once the Family moved in, they mostly supervised the maintenance that the Family provided. Shorty
Shea and Juan Flynn thought that Manson took advantage of Mr Spahn, and as a result encouraged Mr Spahn to sell the ranch to property developers. Fortunately for the Family it did not happen (Hourly History, 2018). Juan Flynn had a few altercations with Manson, as Manson sometimes refused to follow his orders. Manson did not like being ordered around and further did not want to lose the respect of his followers (Zeff, 1995; Guinn, 2013). In between work on the ranch, Manson would take his followers to a secluded area where he would teach and preach to them without disturbances (Hourly History, 2018). On top of the teaching and preaching, Manson ordered the group to randomly have sex with each other or take part in group sex and daily distribution of LSD. In an interview with Zeff (1995), Patricia Krenwinkel stated that she speculated that Manson did not use the LSD himself and only distributed it to the group. He also required his followers to mimic his facial expressions, this was one of his tactics of exercising control over them (Zeff, 1995). Success in this meant that one was on the path to spiritual enlightenment while failure meant that one had too much ego and was reprimanded (Guinn, 2013).

Dennis Wilson kept contact with the Manson family, and would sometimes visit them at the ranch. Terry Melcher who was a record executive would also visit the ranch with Greg Jacobson, and this gave Manson hope that his music career would finally blossom (Guinn, 2013; Hourly History, 2018). However, Manson’s attempts at recording his music were again unsuccessful. In March 1969 Manson tried to visit Terry Melcher at his home in Cielo Drive and to his surprise found that Melcher had moved to another house; the house was now occupied by Sharon Tate an actress and Roman Polanski a movie producer (Guinn, 2013; O’Neill & Piepenbring, 2019)

Manson finally got hold of Melcher, who agreed to visit Manson at the ranch to listen to Manson’s recording (Hourly History, 2018), and in May 1969 he came to listen to Manson’s music. He was not impressed but gave Manson money and told him that he would find
someone who would be interested. Melcher later returned with Mike Deasy, but here also the performance failed (Guinn, 2013). After another failed attempt, Manson and the Family placed their energy elsewhere.

The Family started to focus on preparations for what they called Helter Skelter. Manson believed that there was an impending *apocalyptic* racial war where black Americans would defeat white Americans (Bugliosi & Gentry, 1974) – he referred to preparations for this war as Helter Skelter. He was preparing his Family to go in hiding in Death Valley to establish an underground city to escape the war (Guinn, 2013; Hourly History, 2018). To prepare for this war, the Family started dealing with drugs in order to make money.

During the course of their preparations, Charles Watson robbed a cannabis dealer, who then threatened to kill the Manson Family. Upon hearing about this, Manson went to the dealer’s house and shot and killed him as he did not like being threatened by anyone, especially an African American (Hourly History, 2018). Later in July, Gary Hinman owed the Manson Family money for drugs. Manson used a sword to slit Hinman’s face and cut off part of his ear. Beausoleil was told to beat Hinman throughout the night, after which he was ordered by Manson to kill him (Hourly History, 2018). After the murder of Hinman, Beausoleil isolated himself from the Manson Family (Weihl & Rother, 2018). Hinman’s body was found 2 weeks after the murder (Guinn, 2013). Beausoleil was traced through a car he stole from Hinman; one of the murder weapons was found in the car (O’Neill & Piepenbring, 2019). Beausoleil was arrested and found guilty of first-degree murder and was sentenced to life in prison (Wiehl & Rother, 2018).

On the 8th of August 1969, Manson informed Charles Watson that they needed to go to Cielo Drive (Guinn, 2013), to Melcher’s old home now occupied by the Polanski-Tate couple (Marynick, 2010). Roman Polanski was away with work, and the couple’s friends Voytek Frykowski and Abigail Folger were staying with Sharon Tate who was pregnant (Marynick,
Manson ordered Watson to ‘destroy everything’ in the property and take what they could (Zeff, 1995; Hourly History, 2018). Susan Atkins, Patricia Krenwinkel and Linda Kasabian went with him, while Manson remained at the ranch (O’Neill & Piepenbring, 2019). Watson shot the caretaker of the property, in his car, (Hourly History, 2018). He climbed through the window of the house with the girls, however, Linda Kasabian was instructed to return to the car. They gathered everyone in the living room, tied them and demanded money (Zeff, 1995). When they did not receive anything from the victims, they stabbed them to death (Guinn, 2013). The members wrote “PIG” on the front door with the victim’s blood to make it seem as though the Black Panthers, who were Hinman’s associates, murdered the victims (Bugliosi & Gentry, 1974; Hourly History, 2018). Back at the ranch, Manson was not impressed that they came back with 70 dollars (Guinn, 2013). The following day Manson informed them that they were going back out, and he would join them to show them how they were supposed execute his orders (O’Neill & Piepenbring, 2019). On August 10th they went to a house in Los Feliz, Wavery Drive about 17 kilometres away from Ceilo Drive. The house belonged to Leno and Rosemary LaBianca (Marynick, 2010), who owned a grocery store, although Manson and his members did not know who they were (O’Neill & Piepenbring, 2019). Manson went in first to inspect the house, but soon involved everyone. He instructed Charles Watson that he must “make sure that everybody does something” (Hourly History, 2018, para. 1). They tied up the couple. Three Family members were left to murder the couple, while Manson and the remaining members made their way back to the ranch (Marynick, 2010). Like the previous murder, they wrote the words death to pigs, rise and Healter Skelter using the victim’s blood (Bugliosi & Gentry, 1974). Before reaching at the ranch, they stopped at a petrol station where one of the members discarded the wallet. Manson also bought milkshakes for the people in the car (Guinn, 2013).
On the 16th of August 1969, Spahn ranch was raided by the police. The police believed that the ranch was full of stolen possessions. A total of 27 adults and 7 children under 18 years were arrested (O’Neil & Piepenbring, 2019). The Manson Family spent two nights in jail. However, they were released because the police had an invalid warrant (Marynick, 2010). The children were handed over to the Social Services (Bugliosi & Gentry, 1974). Manson assumed that Shorty Shea had informed the police about the Manson family’s criminal activities (Wiehl & Rother, 2018). On the 26th of August Manson and 3 family members went to see Shorty Shea. He disappeared, and his body was found after a couple of years with indications that he was tortured and stabbed (Wiehl & Rother, 2018; Hourly History, 2018).

Towards the end of August, the Manson Family fled to Barker ranch in Death Valley where they proceeded with preparations for Helter Skelter. Some of the family felt anxious and uneasy as to how things were run at the Barker ranch (Howard & Tillet, 2019), and left. Stephanie Schram and Kitty Lusinger escaped and were taken into protective custody by the police (Hourly History, 2018). Kitty Lusinger mentioned Susan Atkins’s involvement in the Hinman murder to the police.

**Tate-LaBianca trials and life in prison.**

Susan Atkins was interrogated by the police officials, and despite Manson’s orders to not disclose confidential information, she admitted being involved in Hinman’s murder (Zeff, 1995). Police officials noted similarities between the Tate and LaBianca murders (Guinn, 2013), and they placed the Manson Family on their top list of suspects. After the police collected enough information, Manson, Susan Atkins, Leslie Van Houten and Patricia Krenwinkel were convicted for the Tate and LaBianca murders. Manson initially wanted to represent himself, but his request was rejected (O’Neill & Piepenbring, 2019). Manson appeared in court with an X mark on his forehead, and he was soon followed by his old and
new Family members. He reported that the X meant that he had “X-ed” himself from the world (Guinn, 2013, Wiehl & Rother, 2018). In March 1971 Manson was sentenced to death, but in April 1972, the sentence was reduced to a life sentence (Marynick, 2010).

In 1972, while at San Quentin state prison, Manson was found guilty of the deaths of Gary Hinman and Shorty Shea (Hourly History, 2018). While serving his life sentence Manson was transferred to several prisons. He was constantly threatened by other prisoners (Guinn, 2013). In 1974 Manson gained more fame when Vincent Bugiosli published Helter Skelter: The True Story of the Manson Murders. The book became a best-seller and became a catalyst for television interviews about Manson (Hourly History, 2018). The Manson case is recorded as one of the most notorious cases in America (Marynick, 2010). In 1984 Manson was attacked by a fellow inmate who poured paint thinners on him and set him on fire. He survived, however, he sustained second degree burns in various parts of his body (Guinn, 2013; Hourly History, 2018). In 1998 Manson was moved to California State Prison where he was placed at the Protective Housing Unit (Guinn, 2013).

**Old Age (65 years to death)**

In an interview with Marynick (2010), Manson reported that he was diagnosed with Schizophrenia, paranoid type, and with Antisocial Personality disorder. Manson was denied parole 12 times, the final application being in 2012 when he was 77 years old (Hourly History, 2018). He continued to influence his followers while serving his sentence in prison. He died at 83 years old on the 19 November 2017, at Kern County hospital, due to natural causes (BBC, 2017; Hourly History, 2018).

**Conclusion**

This chapter provided a chronological overview of the life of Charles Manson It explored his known experiences from childhood, through adolescence years and into old age. Manson’s life experiences will be understood theoretically. In order to do so, the following
Chapter 4

Otto Kernberg’s Object Relations Theory

Chapter Preview

Charles Manson’s personality development will be conceptualised using Otto Kernberg’s Object Relations theory (1975, 1976, 1980, 1984, 1994). It is important to gain an understanding of the theory, as the conceptual framework. Kernberg’s Object Relations theory is a contemporary theory used to understand personality pathology. This chapter will explain the theory by providing a definition of object relations, and the stages of development outlined within the theory. It will then explore the theories view of optimal development and pathology and will examine the defense mechanisms highlighted within the theory. Thereafter it will briefly look at criticisms of the theory.

Object Relations

Infants have undifferentiated reactions as they interact with their primary caregivers. Over time their reactions solidify into patterns called object relations. Object relations are patterns of interactions made up of an image of self, and image of other and an affect attached to the image (Kernberg, 1995). This image or pattern develops between the child and their primary caregiver (Kernberg, 1995), and are thus dyadic in nature (Kernberg & Caligor, 2005). For example, if the caregiver has a rough manner in picking up the infant, over time, the infant will develop an image of self being picked up by other with fear imbedded in the pattern. The patterns experienced by the infant are subjective to the individual’s experiences (Clair & Wigren, 2004). Thus, the caregiver might experience themselves as gentle, but their intent does not impact the pattern formed. Rather, it is the infant’s subjective experience of the pattern which is important. Object relations are stored as affective memories (Summers, 2014). As the patterns are repeated, they become stored as memory clusters, and guide
interactions when triggered (Summers, 2014). Thus, in the example, the fear reaction will be continually triggered for the developing infant.

Affects associated with object relations are either positive or negative, thus when patterns are triggered, they are experienced by the infant as pleasurable or unpleasurable. For example, an infant finds pleasure when being breastfed by his mother and pain when experiencing hunger which is unpleasurable for the infant (Kernberg, 2012). These positive and negative affects determine whether the infant will try to avoid or stay in an environment (Kernberg, 1995). Object relations cluster together, based on their affect, with pleasurable merging together, and unpleasurable merging together. Affects form the building blocks of drives; they determine the functioning of drives (Clarkin, Yeoman & Kernberg, 2007; Person et al., 2005). When triggered, they influence the behaviour of the infant (Kernberg, 1995). Object relations that start to form in infancy become building blocks for an individual’s self-concept (McGinn, 1998), and over time develop to form various ego structures. This development occurs in stages.

**Stages of Development**


**Stage 1: Normal Autism**

This stage takes place in the first month of infancy. There are undifferentiated self-object representations between the infant and their primary caregiver (Kernberg, 1976). This means that the infant experiences itself as part of their caregiver. Throughout this stage the
primary undifferentiated self-object representations are built from experiences the infant has with the caregiver (Palombo et al., 2009).

**Stage 2: Normal Symbiosis**

This stage takes place between six to eight months. In this stage, the infant is still enmeshed with the primary caregiver. However, representations are divided into good self and object representations and into bad self and object representations. They are initially separate (i.e. good and bad) because the infant is biologically unable to integrate them as yet (Palombo et al., 2009). During this stage pleasurable experiences between the infant and caregiver are experienced as all good self and object relations, and these representations combine and become good internal object (Kernberg, 1995). When the infant’s caregiver is nurturing the infant internalises many patterns of a loving and nurturing object. Unpleasurable or bad representations are experienced as all bad self and object relations and combine to become the bad internal object. When the caregiver is neglectful, stern or abusive the infant internalises many patterns of a sadistic object (Caligor, Kernberg & Clarkin, 2007). This happens around the third to fourth month and is estimated to be completed around eight months (Palombo et al., 2009; Kernberg, 1976). Kernberg (1976, p. 61) points out that “the ‘good’ and the ‘bad’ internal structures are “two separate constellations of ‘affective memory’”. When the pleasurable patterns that are internalised are triggered, they elicit learning; when the unpleasurable patterns that are also internalised are triggered, they elicit anxiety (Clair & Wigren, 2004). The psychological structures are “stable and enduring pattern[s] of mental functions that organize the individual’s behavior, perceptions, and subjective experience” (Yeoman et al., 2007, p. 2).

**Stage 3: Differentiation from Self- from Object- Representation**

This stage occurs between 6-8 months to 18-36 months. The infant starts to recognise their primary caregiver and boundaries of self and caregiver (object). In this way their
representations divide into good self and good object, and bad self and object. Practically, this means that the infant is able to experience themselves as good and their objects as good, and is also able to experience themselves as bad, and their objects as bad (Kernberg, 1976). The psyche still keeps good and bad representations apart. In particular, good and bad self-representations are of importance here. Although separate from good, when bad is triggered the child is likely to experience their whole self as bad, and this is very threatening. The child will split off bad object relations, and project them out onto the outside world in order to protect their experience of their self as good (Kernberg, 1976). In essence, the child will experience others as bad to maintain their experience of their good self. Splitting is a normal function of this stage and is used by the child as a coping mechanism in situations that cause anxiety (Clair & Wigren, 2004).

**Stage 4: Integration of Self-Representation and Object-Representation**

Stage 4 occurs at approximately 36 months. At this point the child starts to merge their good and bad self-representations, and their good and bad object representations. The merging of good and bad self-representations form a total self-representation, and results in a definite self-system (Kernberg, 1976; Palombo et al., 2009). The merger of good and bad other representations leads to total object representations (Palombo et al., 2009, p. 186). These integrations lead to object constancy, or a constant view of self, and a constant view of others. After integrations start to occur, the child is able to experience their self as both good and bad, and their object as both good and bad. Up until this point, the child could only experience one of these positions. For example, the child can experience mom as both kind and stern. When she is both these things, she remains consistent, as opposed to either kind or stern, in which case she would be experienced as inconsistent. Integrations thus support the child developing a realistic and more complex view that people can be seen as both satisfying and frustrating (Clarkin et al., 2007). The child is also able to view themselves more
realistically, with complexity, and is able to compare their current self to their ideal self (Kernberg, 1995).

Christopher et al. (2001, p. 694) stated that one of the outcomes of integrating object relations of opposite affective valence is that “the drive derivates are neutralised, thereby liberating energy that can be utilized for repression”. Thus, after integrations occur, the affects, called valence, neutralise or tone each other down, and become less intense and volatile, but importantly, this process releases energy which activates repression as a defense. Repression then replaces splitting as a primary defense mechanism (Summers, 2014). This means that when an object relation pattern is triggered that is threatening, for example the child experiences themselves as selfish, this pattern is repressed into the unconscious, rather than split and projected. In this way, the child no longer makes others bad, and rather the threatening pattern is repressed when activated, and the child is unaware of the selfish representation. Apart from being a defense mechanism, repression has an additional function. It causes growth in the psyche, and as a direct consequence is pivotal to the formation of the ego, superego, and identity (Kernberg, 1976).

**The Id.**

Early object relations may present as intense and overwhelming to the infant as they have very high affect charge and are often irrational. When they are triggered, they are experienced intensely, and bad representations are experienced as threatening. The infant struggles to integrate representations with such intensity, because of their vulnerable psyche. When repression is activated as a defense, these early overwhelming representations are rejected by the ego and repressed, and thus are unloaded into the id (Kernberg & Caligor, 2005). The id is formed through the accumulation of “extreme manifestations of sexual, aggressive, and dependent impulses, needs, and wishes” (Kernberg & Caligor, 2005, p. 126). The effect is
that very intense and irrational representations are removed from the conscious experience and become part of the drive system.

**The superego.**

The superego goes through different developmental phases in its formation. These phases are layers of internalised self and object representations. The *first layer* forms when the infant is able to differentiate themselves from their objects. Threatening object representations are split off and projected onto the infant’s environment, which at this stage is most likely threatening images of their primary caregiver (Kernberg & Caligor, 2005). However, this too is threatening as the child requires their object to be good. In order to protect the image of the caregiver, the child then re-introjects the projected object representations against themselves (images of objects as punitive or disallowing) (Kernberg, 1998). This then forms the punitively charged first layer of the superego.

The *second layer* takes place in the fourth stage of development and consists of ideal self and object representations that the infant has, that become integrated to form the ego ideal, the representations that the child wants to live up to (Kernberg & Caligor, 2005). The ego ideal integrates with the punitively charged images from the first layer. This integration is sparked by a tension between these idealistic images of self and object, and the punitive images of objects, which causes the child to internalise idealistic images alternatively with punitive images (Clarkin et al. 2007, p. 475). In the process, the very irrational and erratic parts which are overly prohibitive or idealised are repressed into the superego. The superego is then made up of these extreme representations, which when integrated become a bit more realistic, and function to pressurise the ego when actual behaviour does not fall in line with the ideal (Kernberg, 1976). This pressure is experienced as guilt. At this point the child is able to identify a variation of extremes within their representations and is thus able to
internalise a more realistic view of conflicts arising from object representations. For example, the child feels guilty when they do not meet expectations and standards.

This skill leads to the third layer in the development of the superego (Kernberg & Caligor, 2005). In the third stage the superego places pressure on the ego, and projects the guilt outward. It then re-introjects it back into the superego, at a different position. This re-introjection stimulates growth in the superego, causing it to become more organised, realistic, and nuanced. Overall, the superego becomes less strict, but also becomes depersonified and abstracted (Kernberg, 1998). This means that rules are experienced as coming from themselves, and their own evaluation of acceptable behaviour, rather than coming from outside of themselves from society, or an individual. The effect is that individuals have realistic expectations of their own behaviour, rather than overly idealistic expectations that they never reach (and then feel guilty about), as well as a nuanced sense of personal accountability in terms of that which is important to them.

The ego.

At a basic level, the ego is initially protected by splitting. The ego boundaries slowly solidify as the introjections become more intricate (Christopher et al, 2001). When this takes place, repression replaces splitting as the defense mechanism (Kernberg, 1968). The integrations and activation of repression allow the ego to more effectively organise representations and establish the ego identity (Kernberg, 1998). Ego identity “is a structure characteristic of the ego, a fundamental outcome of the synthetic function of the ego” (Kernberg, 1976, p. 32). It means that the ego structures (Id, Ego, Superego) are established, and overall leads to a stable sense of self and objects. Interactions become more consistent and the child has a realistic view of interactions with the self, objects, and environment (Kernberg, 1976).
Stage 5: Consolidation of Superego and Ego Integration

This stage begins when the integration of superego levels are complete (Kernberg, 1976). The superego becomes more sophisticated, and as this occurs, the intense opposition between the ego and superego decreases (Summers, 2014). At the same time, the ego identity continues to develop. The individual continues to build up representations through their interaction with others, and the representations they have are continually being re-shaped by their experiences (Kernberg, 1976). This refinements process develops their self-concept further.

The superego is gradually integrated into the individual’s personality (Summer, 2014), the ego identity becomes further solidified. Concurrent to this process the child’s character is also developed. Character in this context “refers to the behavioral manifestations of identity” (Kernberg & Caligor, 2005, p. 121). The child’s character includes lasting behaviour patterns, also referred to as their personality traits. These patterns play out throughout different situations and influence psychosocial functioning (Kernberg & Caligor, 2005). There is an interaction between ego identity and character. Integrations leads to a greater fit between the two, and this congruence increases health and functioning of the individual.

Process of Internalisation

Over time the individual develops more and more object relations. Initially, introjection is the most basic form of internalisation (Summers, 2014). The introjections are primitive, with patterns still representing undifferentiated self from object representations (Kernberg, 1986). Introjection is dependent on the memory clusters and experiences of the individual (Kernberg, 1976). Later identifications replace introjects, as a “higher-level form of introjection” (Kernberg, 1976, p. 31). Essentially, the patterns that are formed and identified with are more complex and sophisticated. Identifications start to occur when “the perceptive and cognitive abilities of the child have increased to the point that it can recognize the role
aspects of interpersonal interaction” (Kernberg, 1976, p. 31). This means that the child can recognise roles and functions. For example, when a mother performs a task with the child (such as dressing them), she is not merely completing the task, but she is also demonstrating to the child what a socially acceptable role looks like. The pattern that is stored is thus more complex as it also represents the social role. The internalization of this complexity allows the child to mimic the roles and functions (Kernberg, 1976). Identifications takes place towards the last months of the infant’s first year and become fully developed during the infant’s second year (Kernberg, 1976).

Over time, introjects and identifications of opposite valence become integrated, and form part of the psychic structures. In Kernberg’s view ego identity forms through “the overall organization of identifications and introjections under the guiding principle of the synthetic function of the ego” (Kernberg, 1976, p. 32). Essentially, the ego boundaries solidify, and the ego both establishes and identity, the ego core, but also continually organises the introjects and identifications within that core. When the representations are integrated and solidified (Kernberg, 1976), the core ego as strengthened. The ego starts to repress unwanted representations, leading to the formation of the superego and id as separate structures. A normal ego identity allows the child to have a healthy self-concept, and experience consistency in self and others. The child is able to show empathy and relate appropriately with his/her social environment without losing the sense of autonomy and independence (Kernberg & Caligor, 2005). It also leads to a continuity and complexity in the experience of others.

**Optimal Health and Development**

When individuals progress through the developmental stages in an appropriate and expected manner, they are said to form a normal personality organisation. This means that they reach the point of establishing a whole self and other system, along with the appropriate
ego structures. Clarkins et al. (2007) identified 3 characteristics that individuals display when this occurs. These are an integrated concept of self and other, a broad spectrum of affective experiences, and the presence of an internalised value system.

**An Integrated Concept of Self and Other**

The individual with an integrated concept of self and other has a realistic perception of their good and bad representations of self and others. This forms the basis for ego identity (Clarkins et al., 2007; Kernberg & Caligor, 2005). The individual’s cognition and behaviour are congruent and consistent. These integrated, consistent representations become an important foundation for the individual’s self-esteem (Clarkins et al., 2007). An integrated perception of one’s self leads to the actualisation of one’s capacities, commitments, and goals.

An integrated perception of others leads to a consistent view of others (Kernberg & Caligor, 2005), the ability to form emotional attachments, have empathy, and make informed decisions without losing the sense of autonomy and independence (Kernberg, 2004). The individual is able to trust and be in committed interpersonal relationships (Kernberg & Caligor, 2005). Integrations support the ability to observe and evaluate social norms and respond accordingly (Kernberg & Caligor, 2005).

**A Broad Spectrum of Affective Experience**

Integration leads to toning down of erratic affects and a deeper capacity and nuance in the experience of a wider range of affects (Kernberg, 1976; Clarkin et al., 2007). The individual with broad spectrum of affective experience is able to have a greater level of control of affects (Kernberg, 2004). Thus, the “[n]ormal personality organization allows for the experience of a full range of complex and well-modulated affects with full (non-defensive) awareness and without the loss of impulse control” (Clarkins et al., 2007, p. 477).
The formation of an integrated ego identity causes the individual to have the capacity to trust others, become creative and be committed in relationships (Caligor & Kernberg, 2005).

**An Internalized Value System**

An internalised value system initially stems from parental prohibitions, but over time values are internalised and depersonalised. They form a structure that develops internally, outside of external relationships. The internalised value system becomes stable and distinct (Caligor & Kernberg, 2005; Clarkins et al., 2007). An individual with an internalised value system is able to make decisions that stem from personal standards, morals, ideals that are realistic and flexible (Clarkins et al., 2007; Yeoman et al., 2007). This allows individuals to act from a position of personal integrity.

**Pathology**

When development does not occur as it should, pathology emerges. Within Kernberg’s framework, difficulties with development occur from stage 3. The individual has more bad than good object relation patterns, and the bad patterns are more often activated. These bad patterns hold negative affects, which the individual is then likely to experience more often, than positive affects. The triggering and experience of bad patterns and their affects threaten the individual’s experience of themselves as good. Consequently, when bad patterns are triggered, the individual splits off bad object relations and projects them outside onto the world (Kernberg, 1976). They continue to split off and project these bad patterns, beyond the point that is developmentally appropriate; the splitting defense continues, as integrations require a predominance of good patterns to support integrations. In this position, individuals do not reach a point of the healthy integration of good and bad (Kernberg, 1976), as they are continually invested in a defensive position, rejecting their overwhelming bad.

Splitting is a normal primitive defense mechanism which is appropriately used in an infant’s early development. It becomes abnormal when used beyond the time that is
developmentally appropriate. Splitting keeps “introjections and identifications of strongly conflictual nature” apart (Kernberg, 1986, p. 26), separating the aggressive affects from the budding ego core” (Christopher et al., 2001, p. 696). The effect is that the individual experiences self or others as inconsistent, as their experience is limited to only that pattern which is currently active. For example, mom is mean right now, and that is all she is, despite her kindness being active an hour before. Consequently, the individual’s view of self or other is superficial and unidimensional. Although splitting does work to protect the ego, the continued lack of integration means that repression based defenses are not activated (Kernberg, 1986; Summers, 2014). This has a variety of consequences. The neutralisation of libidinal and aggressive drives does not take place as it should, and consequently affects remain unrefined and intense (Kernberg & Caligor, 2005), and are difficult to regulate. Along with the intensity, early representations, which are generally more irrational and volatile, remain conscious and can be triggered easily. This leads to the individual potentially having intense, irrational and/or exaggerated reactions, and having poorer control of these reactions and impulses. The individual struggles to reflect on and resolve these exaggerated reactions (Clarkin et al., 2007). These difficulties are also associated with a low frustration tolerance (Kernberg, 2004).

As repression is impossible, splitting continues as the primary defense and becomes further exaggerated, with numerous splits causing a weakening of the ego. A weak ego further lacks the energy to combine good and bad object representations which further prevents the making of energy needed for repression (Christopher et al, 2001). Another effect of not integrating is that the superego becomes impaired, the individual either presents with superficial morals, or morals that are personalised to others (Clarkin et al., 2007). For example, the child might say ‘mom says don’t steal’. This makes the individual feel a sense of being externally controlled rather than having an internal moral code (Kernberg, 1976).
The degree of integrations may be thought of along a continuum, with an increase in pathology related to the degree of lack in integrations.

Pathology may emerge on three different levels of severity, **neurotic**, **borderline** and **psychotic**. The **neurotic level** and represents mostly stable functioning, associated with a high level of integrations. The individual has the ability to experience a wide range of affects which are nuanced, controlled, and can mostly adapt to social environments (Palombo et al., 2009). At this level, “internal object relations that are threatening are split off from the integrated representations that comprise normal identity” (Kernberg & Caligor, 2005, p. 137); these are repressed into the unconscious. This means that repression-based defences are used to keep these threatening representations away, which supports consistent and stable functioning of the integrated identity. When the threatening representations are triggered, internal conflicts arise; the threatening representations remain repressed from consciousness, but occasional impulsive behaviour may arise as the representations are not integrated into the ego (Summers, 2014). Pathology at this level is characterised by phobic, hysterical, obsessive-compulsive and depressive-masochistic characters (Palombo et al., 2009).

The **borderline** level is again split into two levels, the **higher borderline organisation** and the **lower borderline organisation**. Within the higher borderline level, there are many healthy integrations, but splitting occurs more easily. Mostly repression based defenses are used in conflict but splitting occurs occasionally when particular pockets of conflict are activated, that represent an area of conflictual and unintegrated object relations. Overall, difficulties in these pockets of unintegrated object relations impair growth, and lead to problems with the regulation of the ego and superego. This means that there is conflict between the ego and a less integrated, harsh, and rigid superego (Kernberg, 1976). For example, the individual has “fewer inhibitions” (Summers, 2014, p. 198) and experiences a higher degree of impulsivity, severe mood swings, and dissociated sexual and aggressive urges (Palombo et al., 2009).
Pathology at this level is characterised as narcissistic, passive-aggressive, sadomasochistic, and sexually deviant (Palombo et al., 2009).

The lower borderline level holds the more extreme pathology. The individual interacts with predominantly part objects rather than whole objects and draws predominantly on splitting based defences in conflict. For example, mom is experienced as kind or stern, but never as both these things at the same time. This means that the individual experiences their relationships as inconsistent. They would similarly split their self and experience their self as inconsistent as well. Essentially, the individual experiences exaggerated and chaotic self and object representations (Palombo et al., 2009), and this affects the realistic view the individual has of themselves and others (Tuttmann, 1984); their view of self and others remains unidimensional and superficial. According to Summers (2014) individuals in this level tend to become impulsive and their behaviour is driven by paranoia. In an attempt to control these impulsive responses, the individual may attempt to suppress them which then causes anxiety (Caligor et al., 2007; Person et al., 2005). Additionally, the splitting causes the individual to lack the capacity to evaluate previous and present experiences for future learning (Kernberg, 2012). Difficulties within this level of personality organisation leads to narcissistic personalities, antisocial behaviour, sexual deviancy, and hypomanic disorders (Summers, 2014).

The psychotic level represents the inability to differentiate self from others. The individual does not have the capacity identify distinctions from the internal and external world (Lenzenwenger & Clarkin, 2005). The individual further cannot follow social norms and show empathy. Delusions and hallucinations are experienced, primitive defenses are the main defense mechanisms in this level (Lenzenwenger & Clarkin, 2005).
Defense Mechanisms

When object relations are activated that are experienced as threatening, defense mechanisms are used in order to protect the ego from negative affects. They can be divided into the primitive defense mechanisms, based in splitting, and the mature defense mechanisms, based in repression. Defense mechanisms are an important part of Kernberg’s theory, as the habitual use of particular defense mechanisms can be seen as indicators as to the personality structure, and the level of pathology (neurotic, borderline or psychotic level) that the individual usually functions on. Again, optimal health and development would reflect mature defense mechanisms while the degree of pathology would be reflected in the extent of use of the primitive defense mechanisms.

Primitive Defense Mechanisms

Splitting is the primary primitive defense mechanism. Secondary primitive defense mechanisms include omnipotence, primitive idealization, omnipotent control, denial, devaluation, and projective identification (Palombo et al., 2009). These secondary defenses are used to further support splits. These will be explored below:

Splitting.

An individual fails to integrate their good and bad representations (Kernberg, 1986), when there are more bad object relations than good. The bad patterns have a negative affect attached to them and are often triggered (Kernberg, 1976), overwhelming their experience of self as good. Splitting protects the good patterns from being tainted by the bad patterns (Kernberg & Caligor, 2005) by keeping them separate. For example, when mom does not meet the needs and expectations of the child, the child reacts by viewing mom as unloving, even though she was loving a few minutes before.
Omnipotence.

The individual identifies themselves as an idealised, all good and powerful object. They assign themselves qualities that are unrealistic, in order to buffer the fragile self. This assigning of qualities is to protect the self against their all bad, threatening, painful and aggressive representations (Kernberg, 1986). Omnipotence further protects against the individual from their own persecutory objects (Summers, 2014) (which have been split and projected onto others). For example, the child might see themselves as an angel, always loveable and kind, but the nature of the understanding is idealistic and improbable.

Primitive idealisation.

Primitive idealisation is a defense mechanism that perceives objects as all good and uncontaminated in order to shield against bad or undesirable objects. The association with such objects forms protection and shields the individual from anxieties associated with their negative representations (Caligor et al., 2007). Despite the idealisation, the individual treats the object harshly and only uses the object’s good qualities for protection. The close association with the object causes a blurring of boundaries, and individuals experience the object as an extension of themselves (Kernberg, 1986). For example, the child may become friends with a popular child at school. The child idealises and desires the qualities that the friend has thus, and by association the child experiences those qualities as a part of them. Simultaneous, the child’s experience of self is buffered, and they are protected from their own bad representations.

Omnipotent control.

Within omnipotent control the individual also idealises the object, and again through the blurring of boundaries, experiences the object as an extension of self. However, omnipotent control takes primitive idealisation a step further. Because the object is experienced as an extension of self, the individual feels a right to control the object. In controlling the idealised
object, the individual is not concerned about the ideal object (Kernberg, 1986), but is still protected by their association with their object. For example, a child might ask mom to perform a task for them and expect mom to drop everything and focus on them because of their underlying experience of mom as an extension of their self.

**Denial.**

In denial the individual ignores internal and external experiences that may be threatening (Caligor et al., 2007). Thus, “the patient is aware of the fact that at this time his perceptions, thoughts, and feelings about himself or other people are completely opposite to those he had at other times; but this memory has no emotional relevance” (Kernberg, 1986, p. 31). When pressured the individual “acknowledges his intellectual awareness of the sector which has been denied, but again he cannot integrate it with the rest of his emotional experiences” (Kernberg, 1986, p. 32). For example, a child might have two needs that oppose each other and cause internal conflict and anxiety. In order to manage the internal conflict, the child focuses on one need and unconsciously denies the importance of the other need at any given point. Thus, he has cognitive awareness of what has been denied but cannot integrate it with his emotional experiences.

**Devaluation.**

Devaluation is ascribing negative qualities to the object (Vaknin, 2006; Summers, 2014). This can take the form of either an active negative attribution, or a distance and dismissal of the object, almost as if the history of positive attribution did not exist. Once the object’s positive qualities serve no value, the individual devalues and rejects the object (Summers, 2014). The aim is to weaken the bond with the object, and to punish the object by diminishing its value and importance (Vaknin, 2006; Kernberg, 1986). Devaluation is more than rejecting the object though, it is shielding against the individual’s need for and fear of the object (Summers, 2014). Furthermore, in devaluation, the individual protects themselves
against persecutory anxiety they feel to prevent the object from appearing as a threat (Summers, 2014). Devaluation, for example, takes place when a child gets angry with his sibling for not sharing toys. The child sees the sibling as unworthy and hits him for not complying to the child’s wishes. The child tries to destroy the sibling through hitting him.

**Projective identification.**

The main purpose of projective identification is to project bad and aggressive self and object images (Kernberg, 1986). The individual projects and experiences the other as bad, so that they do not have to be bad. They then try to control these bad representations in the other. The individual interacts with the object, and unconsciously makes the object experience the projected representations (Kernberg, 1986; Kernberg, 1987). The aim is for the individual to receive responses from the object that are congruent with what was projected; thus, projections are actively brought out of the object (Caligor et al., 2007; Clarkin et al., 2007). For example, the child, while interacting with mom, splits off representations and projects images of aggression onto mom and experiences her as aggressive. The child tries to control mom’s aggression with fear and compliance. Thus, the child experiences the aggression as outside of themselves, which is less threatening to them, than experiencing the self as aggressive. Given that an individual cannot cut out parts of themselves, they unconsciously maintain a link to the representations they are projecting.

**Mature Defense Mechanisms**

Repression is the main mature defense mechanism. Rooted in repression, are also the defenses of sublimation, rationalization, intellectualization, and humour (Clarkins et al., 2007). These will be explored below:

**Repression.**

In repression the individual keeps inappropriate clashing ideas or thoughts out of conscious awareness (Caligor et al., 2007; Frankland, 2010). When these representations are
triggered, they cause anxiety and tension. Repression helps to minimise the associated anxiety and “maximize the individual’s ability to act flexibly and engage successfully with the environment” (Clarkin et al., 2007, 479). For example, when the child has an argument with their friend, which triggers an image of their very volatile mother when angry. This image or pattern is repressed, to protect the child from the associated fear and anxiety allowing them to function and continue in interacting with their friend, in that moment. They may later feel irritable or anxious when they are on their way home (Caligor et al., 2007).

**Sublimation.**

Sublimation “involves the constructive and creative redirection of conflictual motivations into nonconflictual areas of functioning” (Caligor et al., 2007, p.27). This means that the individual turns the unacceptable idea or feeling into acceptable ideas and behaviour (Palombo et al., 2009; Frankland, 2010). Sublimation helps the individual to function from the position of whole object relationships and hold pleasurable and unpleasurable parts of relationships with self and others (Kernberg, 1986). For example, a child who struggles with aggressive thoughts and behaviour joins a boxing club to transform their aggressive thoughts and behaviour into a socially acceptable behaviour.

**Rationalization.**

In rationalization the individual comes up with rational explanations to account for changing ideas and behaviour (Caligor et al., 2007). This represents the individual’s attempt is to avoid feelings of guilt, shame, fear, anxiety or punishment (Frankland, 2010). For example, the child does not perform as well as she thought she would on the sports field. She justifies this by highlighting that her performance was affected by the unsuitable condition of the field. This helps to protect her from the shame she feels for not performing as well as she hoped.
Intellectualization.

According to Palombo et al (2009, p. 73) intellectualization involves using “intellectual capabilities to think about instinctual conflicts rather than experiencing them directly”. The individual distances themselves from uncomfortable feelings by focusing on the intellectual process (Caligor et al., 2007). For example, a child who hears tragic news about a family member will focus on the details of the message relayed instead of expressing sadness and fear.

Humour.

Humour involves finding amusement in a stressful situation in order to manage the distress and reduce the intensity of the situation (Clarkin et al., 2007). Vaillant (2000) pointed out that “humour permits the expression of emotion without individual discomfort and without unpleasant affects on others”. For example, the child will make a joke during an argument to avoid the tension and discomfort.

Critique of Object Relations Theory

According to Summers (2014, p. 237) “Kernberg has created the most comprehensive object relations theory of development, psychopathology, and treatment yet developed”. Otto Kernberg’s Object Relations Theory (1975, 1976, 1980, 1984, 1994) has produced a theory that explains personality and character disorders using a structural approach (Christopher et al., 2001). Otto Kernberg is also commended for his ability to integrate concepts of Object Relations Theory and merge the work of Edith Jacobson, Margaret Mahler, and Melanie Klein (Summers, 2014).

Despite the good developments of Otto Kernberg’s theory there have been criticisms as well. Christopher et al. (2001) stated that some of Kernberg’s concepts are vaguely explained and may lead to confusion. He further stated that the jargon and metaphors used to explain certain concepts may also add to the confusion. As previously discussed, object relations are
patterns of interactions between the image of the self and the other with an affect attached to them (Kernberg, 1995). The object relations are then stored as affective memory (Summers, 2014). Christopher at al., (2001) argues that the memory Kernberg is referring to is a form of event memory (episodic memory), and event memory only develops at a later stage of childhood. Thus “by treating episodic memory as if it were primary, Kernberg attributes cognitive abilities to the infant that are unsupported by memory research” (Christopher et al., 2001, p. 697).

Otto Kernberg’s theory is also criticised for its unsuitable explanation of energy as related to integrations. His view is that a weak ego lacks the energy to combine good and bad object representations which further prevents the making of energy needed for repression (Christopher et al, 2001). Additionally, Kernberg asserts that, at a later stage of development, positive and negative representations integrate, and release energy needed for repression (Kernberg & Caligor, 2005). This view of energy contradicts with the qualities and characteristics of chemical and static electricity (Christopher et al., 1992) within the sciences, which would usually see integration as using energy rather than releasing it.

Conclusion

This chapter introduced Kernberg’s Object Relations Theory (1975, 1976, 1980, 1984, 1994) by discussing Object relations, and the stages of development and individual progresses through. It then explored the process of internalisation and as well as optimal health and development. Following it looked at pathology and the primitive and mature defense mechanisms highlighted by Kernberg. Lastly, it outlined criticisms of Otto Kernberg’s Object Relations Theory.
Chapter 5
Findings and Discussion

Chapter Preview

This chapter presents the findings and discussion emerging from the exploration of Charles Manson’s personality development through the lens of Otto Kernberg’s Object Relations Theory. The researcher will first present and discuss the circumstances in which Charles Manson’s object relation patterns unfolded in his early childhood. Thereafter the patterns are explored within middle childhood, adolescence and adulthood. Defense mechanisms that emerge within his patterns will also be highlighted in italics, where evident.

Findings-

Early Childhood Object Relations

To explore and understand Charles Manson’s personality it is important to look at the circumstances within which his early object relations formed. Object relations are patterns of interactions made up of an image of self and an image of other, with an affect imbedded into the image (Kernberg, 1995). Early patterns are formed with interactions with the primary caregiver (Kernberg & Caligor, 2005), and form the building blocks of the psyche.

Genetics.

The affect embedded in patterns is partly affected by the individual’s genetic disposition. This means that an individual has a natural reaction to certain triggers and experiences (Kernberg, 2004), and may be genetically inclined to the establishment of more negative affects than positive. It is important to note that one cannot know Manson’s exact genetic disposition. However, the researcher was able to make certain inferences based on his family background and childhood behaviour. There is insufficient family or background information on Manson’s biological father (Guinn, 2013). However, there is an indication that he was a
petty criminal. It is possible that Colonel Scott had an antisocial personality or antisocial traits. He impregnated Kathleen and once Manson was born, had nothing to do with him and did not pay maintenance. From the literature it can be speculated that Kathleen also had an antisocial personality or at minimum strong antisocial traits. She displayed a lot of rebellious behaviour. Some sources raised questions around her being a prostitute, however at best she was highly promiscuous at a time when such behaviour was not condoned. Kathleen Maddox and her brother Luther Maddox were also involved in criminal activities (Marynick, 2010; Hourly History, 2018). From Kathleen’s behaviour it can be seen that her rebellious behaviour was not limited to an adolescent phase, but a tendency evident throughout her life. Manson displayed violent and rebellious behavior from a young age. Kathleen might have modelled this behaviour but given that antisocial behaviour is highly heritable (Piotrowska et., 2015) there is also the possibility of him being genetically inclined to it. However, there is no information in the data on Manson’s infancy to add information on his genetic inclination via his temperament as an infant.

**Early circumstances.**

Manson’s primary caregiver was his mother, Kathleen Maddox, with whom we could expect Manson formed his early patterns in relation to. In the first month of infancy there are undifferentiated self-object representations between the infant and the primary caregiver (Kernberg, 1976). This means that during this stage, Manson experienced himself as part of Kathleen. According to Oliver (2016), Kathleen struggled to take care of Manson and would often leave him at the care of Nancy Maddox, his grandmother, or Kathleen’s neighbours while she went drinking at the local pubs. There is no information about role that William Manson played in Manson’s life, but his absence in all literature reviewed implies his complete withdrawal from Kathleen and Manson. The lack of presence of Kathleen, with whom he was merged, most likely had a negative impact on Manson’s development of
patterns, and it is impossible to know how successful or unsuccessful Nancy and the neighbours were as replacement objects for the creation of positive patterns, when they looked after him. From the six to eight months period, the representations are divided into good self- and object self- representations and into bad self- and object -representations (Palomba et al., 2009). The above circumstances continued during this time period. Again, it is unknown how Nancy and the neighbours interacted with Manson, and what patterns would have formed. However, it is reported by some sources that Kathleen at one point attempted to sell Manson for a jar of beer (Hourly History, 2018) so it is likely that she continued to disown responsibility for Manson. It can be speculated that Kathleen might have felt overwhelmed with being a mother at 17 years, when she gave birth to Manson. It can be further speculated that when she was interacting with him, Manson formed more unpleasurable than pleasurable patterns (Kernberg, 1995) as he would have felt Kathleen’s overwhelm and/or irritation, and rejection of him. Manson spent a period of his early childhood years in the care of his grandmother and it is possible that within these early years she was the more consistent primary object in relation to whom his patterns developed.

Nancy was described as a ‘strong-willed’ woman who was rigid in her religious beliefs and did not show affection (Guinn, 2013; Emmons, 1986). Again, there is very little data on this time period, but more indication that patterns would have been more negatively than positively charged.

These bad or negatively charged representations that emerged from interaction with these two caregivers became Manson’s bad internal object, merging frustrating and painful experiences (Kernberg, 1976) to form a view of other as, for example, neglectful and rejecting, or exacting and cold. Caligor et al. (2007) highlighted that when the caregiver is neglectful, an infant internalises many patterns of a sadistic object. From this psychological
position, it is likely that many of Manson’s early patterns would have leaned more toward the experience of negative affect, that represented his needs as burdensome.

At aged six to eight months to 18-36-month period, the self- and object- representations differentiate and the infant is able to form clear boundaries in relation to self and other (such as other family members and people outside of the nuclear family) (Kernberg & Caligor, 2005). Manson aged three would have built up representations of himself as good and as bad, and of others as good and as bad. It is likely that the patterns that emerged were also strongly impacted by difficult life experiences.

Difficult life experiences.

Up until the age of 4 years, it is unclear where Kathleen and Manson lived but indications are that they moved around between relatives. As Manson spent a lot of time with Nancy, the incongruence in the teachings between his grandmother’s household and his mother’s household (or that of others) might have caused instability and confusion in his life. When Manson was approximately 4 years old, he and Kathleen moved to McMechen, West Virginia where they stayed with Kathleen’s sister and brother-in-law. This would have further challenged the stability of Manson’s world, leading to the loss of Nancy as an object and the introduction of new objects and interactional patterns. At this stage of development, Manson was in stage 4 where integrations are expected to occur. It is likely that this changing environment, and the propensity toward patterns with negative affect would not have created the ideal circumstances to support healthy integrations, given that a predominance of positive patterns is needed to facilitate this.

At the age of 5 years, Manson’s patterns were further disrupted when Kathleen was imprisoned, and he lost her as an object from his world. He permanently moved in with his aunt Glenna and uncle Bill, and cousin Jo Ann Thomas (then aged 3) in McMechen (Marynick, 2010). Similar to Nancy, the Thomas’s ascribed to strictly religious beliefs, and
this filtered to forming a strictly religious home environment, believing that “children should be seen as not heard” (Landsing, n.d., p. 1). It is likely that they continued to be rejecting and inaccessible objects in Manson’s life.

Manson went to school in McMechen and at home reported a difficult incident that took place at school with his teacher. One could expect this reporting to be normal behaviour, for a 5-year-old child who had a disappointing interaction. However, his uncle believed that he needed to “toughen up” (Landsing, n.d., p. 1) and the following day, sent him to school in a dress as a form of punishment (Sederstrom, 2020). This presumably indicated that voicing hurtful behaviour is something that girls do. At his uncle’s household Manson was discouraged from crying and told to act like a man and not a girl (Emmons, 1986). This seems to imply that there were other incidents about which he expressed difficult emotions. There are a variety of theoretical deductions that can be made from these descriptions.

Although there is no information on Manson as an infant, the pattern expressed seems to imply information regarding his temperament. Feelings of hurt and vulnerability are depicted, and the need to talk to a caregiver about a difficulty, which may be more likely associated with an anxious ambivalent temperament, than an avoidant one. According to Hildyard and Wolfe (2002), children who experience neglect and rejection are more likely to have an anxious temperament, which may fit with the data on Manson up until this point. Through his interactions it is likely that Manson continued to develop images of his objects as inaccessible, unreliable and possible punitive, and the external environment as unsafe. The punishment for showing vulnerability most likely caused further detachment from his primary objects. Manson struggled with regularly wetting his bed, and Landsing (n.d., p. 1) asserted that he most likely received “corporal punishment for his nightly incidents”. We see the above dynamics playing out again in relation to the bed wetting and how it was handled. His aunt and uncle’s response to him would have again reflected to Manson a self that was
inferior and unsupported, and one would expect associated emotions of hurt, shame, anxiety, fear and/or rage. There is no indication of how he reacted to this punishment. However, at 5 years, he was described as “a pathological liar” and “selfish” (Landsing, n.d., p. 1) and given the lack of positive mirroring he received, it is easy to understand how these patterns would have emerged defensively, as strategies to protect his positive self, and avoid a perception of self as inferior and the experience of vulnerability. Seldersom (2020, p. 1) quotes Guinn as saying Manson was a “disagreeable child” who often “whined, complained and fibbed incessantly”. These descriptions seem to represent patterns embedded with more negatively infused valence, leading to the experience of negative emotion in interaction. This negative emotion supported the early emergence of increasingly aggressive and disruptive behaviour. There is furthermore evidence of splitting as underlying his defensive strategies. Manson’s cousin Jo Ann quickly learnt that even though she could try to protect him, he would easily “throw her under the bus” if he needed to (Landsing, n.d., p. 1). This seems to represent clear devaluation evidence in the data, with Manson being indifferent to Jo Ann and her needs in such moments, as they held no protection for his positive experience of self.

Overall, the evidence in the data points to Manson building up more negative representations than positive ones. The consequences of these patterns for Manson’s development emerged more clearly in the patterns evident in his middle childhood, adolescence and adulthood.

**Object Relations in Middle Childhood, Adolescence and Adulthood**

Manson’s object relations are discussed thematically, and within each theme, are tracked from the period they became evident, and then across the lifespan.
Table 1

*Manson’s object relations patterns in middle childhood, adolescence and adulthood.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Negative schooling experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rejection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masking vulnerability with dominance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rebellion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criminal behaviour, aggression and violence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prison: a place of safety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unreliable intimacy experiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inability to form meaningful relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creating his own world</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Negative schooling experience.**

Manson struggled with schoolwork. His teacher made her students sit in order of intelligence, and thus through where he sat, Manson was publicly labelled as unintelligent, and inferior. It is likely that academics was another area of his world that reflected his self as ineffectual and inadequate. It would have triggered his experienced of himself as inferior, and the experience of negative emotions, placing him in a defensive position within the schooling environment. It is unclear how long he carried on with schooling but there is an indication that he engaged in occasional truancy from primary school (Marynick, 2010; Guinn, 2013). He continued the pattern of academic failure until he tried to drop out of school. He then was taken to Gibault school for boys, where he could not drop out but was forced to attend classes. However, he was academically unsuccessful because he was found to be illiterate. Manson later challenged his academic competence in prison, and he was able to successfully learn and apply his knowledge (Zeff, 1995), but overall his journey to literacy was difficult.
The tendency to manipulate soon emerged at school. An incident is reported when Manson rounded up some naïve girls in his class and encouraged them to attack other children he did not get along with. He denied this when questioned and stated that he did not force them to do anything they did not want to do (Sederstrom, 2020). This behaviour could have emerged from the need to protect himself from other children, or from the need to punish them. It seems that Manson projected his bad representations onto some of the children, making them into bad objects, and in this used *devaluation* as a defense mechanism. Concurrently, through *omnipotent control* he manipulated the girls, and used them to defend his positive self. The use of both these defenses implies that he viewed others as part objects, and placed them where they could best protect his positive experience of self.

Howard and Tillet (2019) stated that Manson at times became so furious that he would start fights with everyone, implying that he would become more directly involved. It also seems to indicate a rage that was diffusely projected out on the world. According to Kernberg and Caligor (2005, p. 128) “rage represents the core affect of aggressive internal object relations”. Manson’s aggressive behaviour was most likely motivated by the triggering of negatively charged patterns. Given the tendency to devalue, and thus split others into bad, it is likely that the patterns driving his rage were early object relations that were intense and irrational. The split and projection of bad representations onto others made the world into a dangerous place because it made these objects bad, and furthermore, through them, the externalised bad representations could be directed at him at any given point. This *devaluation* process was to protect of his positive experience of self.

The need to defend himself in a world of dangerous objects possibly explains Manson’s interest with guns and sharp objects (Guinn, 2013). His affinity with these objects could be seen as a way of protecting himself from the externalised bad representations that were threatening his security.
Rejection.

Manson experienced rejection from his infancy. He was often left in the care of others and this progressed from emotional rejection, with Kathleen finding him burdensome, to physical rejection, through Kathleen being in jail. Manson described the day his mother was released from prison as one of the happiest days of his life (Emmons, 1986). Given the difficult history of rejection that he had with her before she went to jail, and the possible experience of rejecting him through going to jail, his overly positive view of her in these younger years reflects a primitive idealisation. Manson enjoyed spending time with Kathleen, however, he constantly feared being separated from her, defending against the experience of rejection. Kathleen on the other hand struggled to meet Manson’s emotional needs. She also struggled with transitioning into life out of prison (Guinn, 2013). When her life stabilised somewhat through a marriage and job, she noticed that Manson displaying behavioural problems (truancy from school and causing trouble), and as his behaviour escalated (petty criminality and manipulation of particularly women) (Guinn, 2013), she realised that she was unable to cope with him. In 1947, at age 12, she sent Manson to Gibault school for boys due to these behavioural problems. Although he stayed at school for a time, he ran away hoping to be reunited with Kathleen. It is possible Manson had rationalised away his mother’s rejection of him, but a more likely explanation is the continued use of primitive idealisation that turned her into an all-good object. This meant that he did not have a realistic view of his relationship with her, and explains why Manson was unable to fathom that she would not want to take him back, and was amazed when Kathleen sent him back to the school (Emmons, 1986). Naturally, Manson was hurt by Kathleen’s decision to send him back. However, his description implies more than hurt. Manson reported that after that incident he could not trust anyone (Emmons, 1986). He said: “There were no tears. At least, none that ran down my cheeks. I didn’t feel weak or sick, but I also knew I could no longer smile or be
happy. I was bitter and I knew real hate” (Emmons, 1986, para. 2). Sending him back to school triggered Manson’s split, and the movement of Kathleen from the good object to bad object position. Thus, in order to protect his positive experience of self in this rejection, he devalued Kathleen and experienced her as all bad (Kernberg, 1976). Kathleen’s response had triggered Manson’s patterns of rejection, and his experience of self as inferior and unwanted, which were formed in his early childhood, resulting in the projection of his bad object relations onto her to protect himself (Kernberg, 1976).

Many of these dynamics, rooted in rejection, were seen in Manson’s relationship with his aunt and uncle. Again, he was tolerated physically, but rejected emotionally. He felt unwanted, like he didn’t belong. There is limited evidence in the data on this life as to how he responded to them, but evidence points to him having a very different response than to Kathleen. Whereas he kept Kathleen in the good position for a substantial part of his childhood, as could be expected of a child interacting with his mother, Manson’s aunt and uncle were never really parents to him psychologically. He projected his bad representations onto his aunt and uncle and experienced them negatively from early on, defensively engaging in lying and poor conduct to maintain his positive experience of self.

Data on Manson’s adolescent relationships in scant, but the pattern of rejection emerges in the data in adulthood when his attempts at fame and success were rejected. Manson pursued a career in music particularly when he was in Los Angeles in the 1960’s (Hourly History, 2018). He met Denis Wilson, who organised a meeting with a music producer, however, the producer thought Manson’s music was not good enough (Marynick, 2010). Manson did not give up. Wilson, Terry Melcher and Greg Jacobson, who were all in the music industry, occasionally visited Manson (Guinn, 2013; Hourly History, 2018). It seems that they had different intentions for their visits, but for Manson, he saw these visits as an opportunity for him to convince them of this talent. Unfortunately for him, all of his attempts
proved to be unsuccessful (Marynick, 2010). After the final failed attempt, Manson’s behaviour started to unravel. It is likely that Manson believed that he deserved to be recognised and recorded, and falling short of his ideal self, inflated through omnipotence, the rejection challenged his view of self as wonderful. It triggered patterns of rejection from his early childhood, and his experience himself as being inferior, leading to the use of familiar strategies associated with the projection of his rage onto objects, that is devaluing them by projecting his bad representations onto them. This was to protect his positive experience of self. This may have been one of the reasons he sent some of his followers to destroy Melcher’s former property. Melcher’s former property may have been a symbol of Melcher, for Manson. Manson’s perception of a failed attempt at gaining riches at the property, led to a second such attack, with both incidents involving the murder of innocents, most likely being Manson’s devaluation and destruction of his own bad, projected onto others. Although he did not do the murdering himself, through omnipotent control his family members were an extension of him, and it is likely that he experienced the murdering as done by himself.

**Manipulation and control.**

Manson displayed rebellious behaviour from a young age (Emmons, 1986), and in early childhood this was seen in lying, and in the manipulation of his peers. The first account in the data was when he was in Grade 1 in the incident where he convinced some girls to attack children he did not get along with (Sederstrom, 2020). Around 9 years old, Kathleen noticed that he was manipulative especially towards women (Guinn, 2013). Manson was aware of his manipulative behaviour, and he indicated that when he was 16 years old, he was already devious and knew how to get himself out of situations he did not want to be in. He attributed this to the 5 years he spent in different facilities (Emmons, 1986). Manson might have used intellectualisation here to explain his acquisition of this behaviour. However, this behaviour
was detectible from Grade 1. In the act of manipulation, we see him interacting with others as part objects, placing them in positions where they could best serve his purpose.

In adulthood, Manson’s manipulative behaviour was particularly seen in relation to women. Immediately on Manson’s release from prison in 1958, he became a procurer for underaged girls (Sederstrom, 2020), and used them for financial and sexual gain. Manson saw females as objects. His relationship with them often started with him making them feel special, then once they felt comfortable around him, he would control them to serve his purpose. He convinced one of his prostitutes to marry him so that she could not testify against him (Hourly History, 2018; Howard & Tillett, 2019), even though the strategy failed, he was convicted and sent to McNeil Island Penitentiary.

Manson usually targeted girls that seemed vulnerable who did not have close relationships with their families. This was seen when Manson was released on parole in 1967, and he met Mary Brunner and convinced her to let him move in with her (Guinn, 2013; Howard & Tillett, 2019). The motive for this relationship seemed to have been Manson’s physiological needs. After that Manson would bring home different women to have casual sexual relationships with, and some of these women stayed with them. Even though Mary was not pleased with this, Manson was able to reassure her that it was okay (Marynick, 2010; Guinn, 2013). This convincing extended to all the women he gathered, with Manson’s flattery and the extreme manipulation, amid the era of hippie openness, leading them to tolerate each other, and seemingly buy into the Manson’s Family narrative and forming a predominantly cohesive group. The gathering of women points to omnipotence in his belief in his specialness, to be able to attract and maintain such a following.

The Manson Family initially started with only females but later included both males and females. Manson dictated the rules of how the family operated. For example, the females in the group were instructed to have sexual intercourse with the other male members (Guinn,
2013), and the females were also not allowed to take care of their own children (Guinn, 2013), who were essentially raised by other females within the group. Manson targeted vulnerable women and made them feel beautiful and loved (O’Neill & Piepenbring, 2019). Similarly, he gave his followers LSD and preached to them while they were intoxicated (Emmons, 1986), to make them feel euphoric, and associate this positively with his words. It is speculated that Manson did not use the LSD but rather distributed it only (Zeff, 1995). Manson stroked the egos of the vulnerable and gave them a sense of purpose in his words. Once the positive bond was established, omnipotent control was activated, and Manson felt the right to control and set his terms to them. He instructed his followers to not question his motives (Bugliosi & Gentry, 1974), and required his followers to mimic his facial expressions. This again could be seen as a form of omnipotent control, where he quite literally was asking them to mirror him, removing any separation from them. Any member that could not mimic him would be reprimanded (Zeff, 1995; Guinn, 2013), essentially being devalued. It is likely that Manson behaved in this manner to reinforce the merger between himself and his followers. Through omnipotent control, Manson did not experience the members of the Family as separate objects with minds of their own. By being in control and dictating the terms, he removed his own vulnerability and dependency and the consequent anxiety that would emerge in experiencing them as separate objects that could leave. The need for merger may be seen as a reflection of Manson’s own “dependency needs” (Salande & Perkins, 2011, p 388), stemming from the lack with his primary caregivers. By experiencing the Family members as part of him, Manson was in essence controlling himself in them, and by dictating the rules, Manson protected himself from his bad, threatening, and painful representations (Kernberg, 1986), should their separation become evident. Through rules, Manson further created cohesion between members.
Again, inherent to these circumstances, Manson’s omnipotence continued to inflate his view of himself, as the all good and powerful leader that deserved obedience at all costs (Kernberg, 1986). His omnipotence and manipulation were again seen in the purposeful pursuit of a friendship with Denis Wilson for his own gain, and in Denis Wilson’s reaction to Manson, which was to move out of his own property, as he could not tolerate Manson’s behaviour and his inflated sense of importance (Guinn, 2013). Primitive idealisation and omnipotent control are evident in Manson’s interaction with Wilson. Manson may have idealised and desired qualities he saw in Wilson, and through omnipotent control felt the right to dictate to Wilson, who resisted this control.

During the trial of the Tate and LaBianca murders Manson’s omnipotence was evident in him wanting to represent himself in court (O’Neill & Piepenbring, 2019). This may suggest that Manson felt special enough in his knowledge, that he could do as adequate a job as a qualified lawyer. It suggests that he believed that he had the knowledge and power to stand for himself in court.

The use of manipulation and control, associated with the use of omnipotence and omnipotent control is evident throughout Manson’s patterns. They were supported by his view of others as part objects, and merger with them to control and dominate them. Manson seems to have felt the right to take control in every environment he was in.

**Masking vulnerability with dominance.**

As a child, Manson was often psychologically vulnerable. His primary objects were rejecting and inaccessible to him. He developed compensatory mechanisms from a young age to emerge from vulnerability and dominate, to protect his positive experience of self. The first instance noted was when he destroyed other children’s Christmas presents (Emmons, 1986).

Manson was additionally physically vulnerable due to his small body stature. When he was sent to facilities, this led to him being assaulted a couple of times (Emmons, 1986;
Howard & Tillett, 2019; Sederstrom, 2020), and while at Indiana school for Boys in Plainfield, he was sexually assaulted by older boys. It is likely that these experiences were traumatic and confirmed the world of objects as a dangerous place. However, Manson did not allow himself to dwell in this vulnerability. It is likely that these experiences increased his need to feel a sense of autonomy and dominance over himself and his environment. We see this dominance first through the devaluation of one of these persecutory objects, when Manson physically assaulted a boy with an iron window handle while he was sleeping. We see his dominance again at Natural Bridge Honor Camp Manson sexually assaulted a boy while holding a blade to his throat (Emmons, 1986; Hourly History, 2018). During one of the psychological evaluations that was conducted with him, Manson was described as “aggressively antisocial” with the tendency to want to dominate other boys (Guinn, 2013, para. 28). Again, this may be seen as defensive behaviour.

From the various incidents reviewed here, we seem to identify a split, with vulnerability and weakness on the one side, and autonomy and dominance on the other. It is likely that vulnerability and weakness confirmed Manson’s experience of self as inadequate, and that Manson learnt to equate a positive sense of self with autonomy and dominance over others. It is likely that his ability to dominate others was supported by his interaction with them as part objects. Thus, he did not connect to them as whole objects and could not consider the impact of his behaviour on them nor engage with empathy for them. He experienced others as potentially dangerous. Therefore, he would rather dominate them before they dominate him, to remove the persecutory anxiety he felt.

Rebellion.

During his early adolescence, Manson was placed at his first facility. He ran away after 10 months with the hope of being reunited with Kathleen (Emmons, 1986). He reported that he did not feel guilty for running away but rather justified his behaviour as acceptable since
he was going to his mother (Emmons, 1986). Soon after returning to the facility he ran away again (Marynick, 2010). Manson tried to escape from every facility he was placed in, and it is recorded that Manson ran away from the facilities 18 times (Zeff, 1995). Manson was unable to accept rules imposed on him, and due to his split psyche, experienced these as rules coming outside of him, controlling him, rather than any kind of internalised right behaviour, to stay and improve. To some extent his rebellious behaviour can be understood as him reacting to the control from the outside. As Manson split off his bad representations and projected them onto the world, he experienced others negatively, and perceived the world as a threatening place. This was additionally confirmed through traumas such as maternal rejection and sexual assault, which would have enhanced his need to be independent, and not controlled by others. He may have felt persecutory anxiety, as his projected bad representations could come for him at any point and destroy him. Manson tried to escape environments that he perceived to be threatening.

Manson’s rebellion was rooted in these dynamics. As an adult he described himself as an ‘outlaw from birth’ (CieloDrive.com, 2015), which indicates a view of self as outside of the law, or unacceptable to ‘normal society’ from birth. His wording here reflects a deep-seated experience of othering and rejection as far back as he could remember. Manson was not accepted by anyone and had a deep-seated threat experience in relation to his environment.

**Criminal behaviour, aggression and violence.**

Manson started developing patterns of aggression and violence in his early childhood. He had his first encounter with the law officials before he was 8 years old because he had burnt other children’s Christmas toys out of jealousy (Emmons, 1986). At approximately 13 years old he was involved in armed robbery (Howard & Tillett, 2019). At Indiana school for Boys, Manson avenged a sexual assault by physically assaulting one of the boys in his sleep with an iron handle (Emmons, 1986). While at Natural Bridge Honor Camp he sexually assaulted a
boy while holding a blade to his throat (Emmons, 1986; Hourly History, 2018). For this offence, he was transferred to Federal Reformatory where it was recorded that in 8 months, he committed 8 serious disciplinary offences (Guinn, 2013). Of these, 3 were sexual offences (Guinn, 2013). Due to these serious offences, he was transferred to a maximum-security reformatory. At the facility it was concluded that Manson was dangerous and could not be trusted in public (Guinn, 2013; Hourly History, 2018). From the patterns listed above, Manson’s criminal and aggressive behaviour is suggestive of Conduct Disorder.

An explanation of Manson’s behaviour here is again accounted for through similar dynamics as outlined in Rebellion. Manson’s ability to harm others was facilitated by his interaction with them as part objects, being unable to access empathy for his impact on them. His strong use of *devaluation* as a defense mechanism punished his objects. For instance, within the sexual assaults that Manson committed, he may have removed envy of the good qualities in these objects, and/or anxiety resulting from them appearing as a threat to him (Summers, 2014), through their destruction. It is important to note that although Manson’s own bad representations projected onto the world made it a dangerous place, some of these objects were also objectively bad given their shared environment within facilities, and thus their behaviour did additionally make the environment a dangerous one which Manson needed to control (and survive).

As an adult, Manson tried living a crime free life for a short period of time but soon reverted back to criminal behaviour. He stated that he did not have the restraint of living a ‘normal life’ (Emmons, 1986). Early in his life we see Manson stealing cars and becoming a procurer for underaged girls (Marynick, 2010), forging cheques, moving prostitutes across states and spending a substantial amount of time in prison. This is also evident in his criminal behaviour, aggression and violence. He acted impulsively and had a constant need for control and dominance.
When the Family started dealing in drugs, a cannabis dealer threatened them, Manson responded by shooting the dealer and killing him (Hourly History, 2018). Soon after, Manson ordered Bobby Beausoleil, to kill Gary Hinman for drug money owed (Guinn, 2013; Hourly History, 2018), and shortly thereafter ordered Charles Watson, Susan Atkins, Patricia Krenwinkel and Linda Kasabian to destroy everything at Cielo Drive, leading to the deaths of Sharon Tate, Voytek Frykowski, Abigail Folger, Steven Parent and Jay Sebring (Zeff, 1995; Marynick, 2010; Guinn, 2013; Hourly History, 2018). The following day, Manson again had his followers commit the murder of the LaBianca couple (Marynick, 2010).

It is possible that Manson lacked the capacity to evaluate previous and present experiences for future learning (Kernberg, 2012), that is, he did not learn from past experiences that criminal behaviour led to poor outcomes for him. However, given his continued experience of prison in response to criminal behaviour, a more likely interpretation is that it did not matter to him that his criminal acts were an unacceptable social behaviour and led to poor outcomes. The immediate benefits they provided his positive self were more important. Imbedded in Manson’s continuous cycle of criminal behaviour we observe an underdeveloped superego, that enabled his behaviour. Manson did not feel remorse for the crimes he committed, and the literature on his life reflects a complete absence of guilt. His superego had not developed beyond the first layer. Thus, his erratic and punitive patterns were not repressed into the superego. Manson’s ego ideal did not develop correctly, thus there was no pressure on his ego to cause guilt. Rather, Manson felt controlled from the outside and did not have an internalised value system of right and wrong to help him navigate that control. He focused on survival and movement away from perceived control to facilitate a positive experience of self. It is likely that Manson was guided by punitive images for correct behaviour coming from the rudimentary superego, that maintained the very
importance of autonomy and dominance over others, to feel okay. The absence of guilt, in particular, and rebellion against the control he felt facilitated his criminal behaviour.

**Prison: a place of safety.**

Manson was sent to a school that was designed for delinquent boys in 1947 (Emmons, 1947; Guinn, 2013). Kathleen hoped the school would reform Manson’s behaviour (Hunter, 2017). However, this was the beginning of many years in facilities for Manson. After his first escape, as a 13-year-old he had to find ways to survive in the outside world. He started to burgle local shops which led to his arrest. For many years this pattern played out, with Manson escaping, and then going back to a facility. After being at the minimum-security facility in Natural Bridge Honor Camp near Virginia, he qualified for parole in 1952, and a month before being released he was found sexually assaulting another boy (Emmons, 1986; Hourly History, 2018). One would expect that Manson would look forward to being released on parole, but he committed an offense that would keep him in the facility.

When Manson was 21 years old, he was released on parole (Guinn, 2013). He got married and tried to lead a crime free life (Hourly History, 2018). However, that did not last long, he reverted back to the pattern of prison and parole until he was 32 years old. Even then, when released, this was done against his wishes, as he reported that he was not ready for the outside world (Zeff, 1995; Guinn, 2013). This statement may confirm that Manson was anxious about being in the outside world. The researcher speculates that Manson may have identified with the prison environment, and felt like he belonged/fitted in this environment as this is really all he knew. It is likely that he feared being in the outside world, feeling anxious to be discharged into a world of persecutory objects.

**Unreliable intimacy experiences.**

Manson’s first experience of a woman was Kathleen, who was unreliable and rejecting. His other female figures – his grandmother and aunt – were old, strict, and staunchly
religious. Manson’s early perception of women were informed by these early objects. There is little evidence of interaction with women in his childhood other than his manipulation of peers in Grade 1, and Kathleen’s observation that he tended to manipulate women. More information is evident when Manson was released from a security reformatory at Chillicothe, Ohio at the age of 21 years. Living with family, he started attending the church of Nazarene, which specifically taught that women are inferior to men (Guinn, 2013). His first recorded romantic relationship was with Rosalie Willie, who he married in 1951 (Guinn, 2013; Hourly History, 2018). This was his first romantic relationship, and this is understandable as he spent most of his life in prison. Manson described this as the first time he met someone who reciprocated his love (Emmons, 1986). Rosalie may have affirmed his positive experience of self; she may have been the first person who really mirrored and saw him. It seems that this relationship held *primitive idealisation* and he may have perceived Rosalie as a perfect person who was not contaminated (Kernberg, 1986). Assigning Rosalie with these positive qualities would have protected Manson from personal anxieties, and his positive experience of self would have been buffered through his associated with her. While he was a newlywed, Manson formed friendships with two local men. The friendships seemed to have been motivated by criminal activities because they started to steal cars together (Guinn, 2013; Hunter, 2017). It is interesting to note that Manson only started engaging with criminal activity again when Rosalie fell pregnant. It is possible, that unconsciously the pregnancy challenged Manson’s experience of control of Rosalie, as the pregnancy was something he had no control over. It is also possible that he unconsciously experienced the pregnancy as a threat, and triggered his feelings of inferiority. This resulted in Manson acting out, projecting his anger over the world of objects through crime, which was his familiar defensive pattern. This led to Manson being arrested and being sent to prison again and ultimately to his marriage with Rosalie ending.
Individuals with such a part object interaction generally experience difficulty in predicting other’s behaviour. It is possible that this difficulty played a role in his relationship with Rosalie. It may be that he thought that she would always accept him and not disconnect from him, because of the enmeshment caused by omnipotent control, and he could not predict her divorcing him, from dissatisfaction with him. It could also be the that need to affirm his positive experience of self was more important, at that point, than the potential rejection from Rosalie, which was a more distant possibility.

When Rosalie and Manson divorced, he lost hope, he felt bitterness and anger again (Emmons, 1986). These are the same feelings he experienced when he felt rejection from his mother. The researcher speculates that these feelings may have been unconsciously projected onto women in general, and that these negative affects devalued women. It is likely that Manson experienced women as withholding their good from him. It is likely that this withholding confirmed himself as an inferior object, and that he tried to control and dominate particularly women, to counter the shame and rage he felt about this. He interacted with them as part objects, and through seeing them only as sexual beings to meet his needs, he confirmed his positive self. His part object interaction led to a focus on his own needs, and the inability to hold his impact on them removed any potential guilt regarding his manipulation of them.

**Inability to form meaningful relationships.**

Manson experienced rejection from infancy. The patterns that he developed did not support the internalisation of positive guiding models for interactions with others. It was difficult for him to form relationships as he did not trust anyone. There is no record of Manson’s friendships as a child. Manson did not have a close relationship with his cousin Jo Ann. In middle childhood he tried to hurt her with a sickle (Sederstrom, 2020), and she
indicated that he would “throw her under the bus” when it suited him (Landsing, n.d., p. 1). He also had a poor relationship with his aunt and uncle.

When Kathleen was released on parole, she took Manson back and they were constantly moving, which would have made it challenging for him to form friendships. A child at his age normally learns to form relationships outside of his family in schools. However, Manson did not regularly attend school due to his unstable home environment (Emmons, 1986). Given his history of rejection by Kathleen, and then again through rejection from Rosalie, Manson made a decision to not trust and depend on anyone (Zeff, 1995; CieloDrive.com, 2015).

From this point onwards Manson got into relationships only to use the other. In prison, he interacted with inmates that he described as father figures to him (CieloDrive.com, 2015), but only describes how he learnt about how they executed their criminal activities (CieloDrive.com, 2015), not anything else gained from the friendships. Once he was released in prison in 1967, the pattern of using seemed to be more apparent. In September 1958 Manson convinced one of his prostitutes, Leona Rae Stevens, to marry him so that she could not testify against him in court.

Manson could not form connections and meaningful relationships with people around him. Under normal development, an individual with an integrated consistent view of others has the ability to have empathy, establish trust, and form committed interpersonal relationships (Kernberg, 2004; Kernberg and Caligor, 2005). Given Manson’s pathological development, and his part object interaction, these skills were absent. Given this split view, it is likely that Manson’s reality testing was impacted, and he could not reliably predict friend from foe through a lack of object constancy. In not predicting consistently what others are like, he removed the emerging anxiety through control and dominance. By interacting from a superior position Manson was able to form superficial connections to substitute, to some
degree, for real connection. It is likely that such relationships were superficial and unfulfilling.

**Creating his own world.**

Manson grew up in an unstable environment but was consistently exposed to religious doctrine in his early years was via the church of Nazarene (Guinn, 2013). Later, in prison Manson was introduced into Scientology and used this doctrine, in combination with aspects of Christianity to preach to people. The accuracy of his teachings is however unclear, and Manson’s real religious belief is also not evident. However, through his charisma and doctrine he formed connections with vulnerable people, gathering a group of followers he called the Family (Guinn, 2013; Oliver, 2016).

Manson taught his followers that there was an apocalyptic racial war called Helter Skelter (Bugliosi & Gentry, 1974) and prepared his Family to go in hiding in the Death Valley (Guinn, 2013; Hourly History, 2018). He asserted that he was important and “have surpassed the abilities and knowledge of a “normal” person and gained access to some special knowledge or salvation” (Salande & Perkins, 2011, p. 388). In the ‘world’ that he created for himself and his followers, it seems like he was the only one who possessed the knowledge of enlightenment. In this we see omnipotence, the belief in special knowledge which made Manson feel special. Through projective identification Manson may have unconsciously evoked the desired reaction from his Family members (Salande & Perkins, 2011). He may have projected his aggression and anger towards the world onto them. They then responded by becoming fearful and compliant to his rules. Fear of Manson, along with feeling special through his flattery, and euphoric from drug use caused them to follow Manson’s rules and respond with aggression and violence when Manson required them to. They believed in the accuracy of his specialness and wanted to please him.
It is important to note that Manson’s beliefs and teachings may have been influenced by his mental health. In an interview with Marynick (2010), Manson reported that he was diagnosed with Schizophrenia, paranoid type, and with Antisocial Personality disorder. Although the Antisocial Personality Disorder is clear within the data, the Schizophrenia diagnosis is less so. This latter diagnosis may possibly be seen as an unrealistic view of himself and the world. It is possible that his omnipotence and persecution images were so unrealistic that they bordered on or were psychotic. We see this in the creation of Helter Skelter when there was no objective evidence of an impending war. He had loss of contact with reality. However, his impaired reality testing emerged at a time of decompensation when his rejection patterns were triggered. This was possibly associated with more irrational early object relations. Here we see paranoia within the need to protect himself against an impending war. However, the impaired reality testing and paranoia isn’t clearly evident in his patterns until this point.

**Discussion**

From the data presented on Manson, it is clear that he had a difficult childhood. There was a familial history of antisocial behaviour, influencing him genetically and being modelled to him. The data further reveals that rejection throughout his life, gave the message to Manson of his self as unwanted and inferior. As a child he experienced schooling negatively, and it again provided evidence of his inferiority. In response, Manson engaged with strategies to protect his positive experience of self. He manipulated people to control them and masked his vulnerability with dominance. His early object relations impacted his ability to form meaningful relationships, and to establish reliable intimacy experiences. He found safety and belonging in prison, but overall Manson developed patterns associated with rebellion, aggression and violence, and criminality. He also created his own world with the Manson Family. His patterns support the use of the splitting as his primary defense,
supported by the secondary defences, and place him in the borderline personality organisation. He revealed from prison that he was diagnosed with an Antisocial Personality disorder, a disorder which falls within this level of organisation, and is supported theoretically.

**Conclusion**

This chapter explored and analysed Charles Manson’s personality development using Otto Kernberg’s Object Relations Theory. It presented findings and discussed the formation of Charles Manson’s early object relations in his early childhood, and traced his object relations patterns in middle childhood, adolescence as well as his adulthood. His defense mechanisms were highlighted where relevant.
Chapter 6
Conclusion, Limitations, and Recommendations

Chapter Preview

This chapter will provide the conclusion of the research study. It does so by restating the primary research aim. It summarises the conclusions of findings. The value and limitations of the study are highlighted and recommendations for future research is provided.

Aim

The primary aim of the research study was to explore and describe the personality development of Charles Manson using Otto Kernberg’s Object Relations Theory (1975, 1976, 1980, 1984, 1994). The exploration generated an understanding of his personality development and produced insight into his deviant behaviour. A psychobiographical research study was the most appropriate approach to meet the primary aim of the research study. Through this research method the research subject was analysed and understood through the course of their lifetime (Runyan, 1982). It is impossible to fully understand the personality of an individual however, certain inferences were made through analysing the available data on Manson’s life experiences. Additionally, no single psychological theory can fully explain the personality of the individual however, the application of a theory allowed the researcher to describe and understand the personality development of the subject (Elms, 1994; Runyan, 1984) through a particular lens.

To meet the primary aim of the research study the researcher started by unpacking psychobiography as a methodology and outlining the research design. Following, she provided an overview of the life of Charles Mason by analysing his family background and environment. An explanation of Otto Kernberg’s Object Relations Theory was further provided. Lastly Manson’s personality, his life and experiences were analysed and conceptualised using Otto Kernberg’s Object Relations Theory.
Conclusions

The researcher concludes that Manson’ early rejection, and potentially his genetic disposition, played a pivotal part to the formation of his object relations, and ultimately his personality structure. Manson developed many negatively infused patterns, that interfered with his ability for form integrations. This led to constant splitting dynamics, that worsened already unreliable objects, and led him to see the world was as dangerous, and believe that people should not be trusted. Through splitting, Manson protected the image of Kathleen for a time. He had an unrealistic view of his relationship with her and denied her rejection, initially, idealising her. However, when he came into terms with rejection, he devalued her and acted out aggression. This experience further confirmed the world as a place of unreliable, untrustworthy objects.

Manson interacted with people as part objects. Consequently, he maintained shallow relationships with the people around him, and experienced them as either good or bad and never both. One of his tactics was to target vulnerable people, make them feel special and then manipulate them. He enhanced the positive experience with him through drug use. When he had established a relationship with such people, through omnipotent control, he set down rules of interaction, and experienced the right to control them as he experienced them as an extension of himself. This was a major defensive tactic that he used to protect his positive experience of self.

Manson’s superego was highly underdeveloped, it had not developed beyond the first layer. This meant that erratic and punitive patterns were not repressed into the superego, and rules came from outside of himself, rather than from within, leading him to feel like others were trying to control him. He strongly resisted feeling controlled. Right behaviour thus did not come from an internalise moral code, but from the early punitive images that demanded his autonomy, control and dominance over others to be okay. His ego ideal did not develop
correctly, so it did not put pressure on his ego for good behaviour. The lack of pressure from an ego ideal meant that he did not experience guilt, which facilitated his antisocial activities.

After spending most of his childhood and young adulthood years in prison, Manson was motivated by the search for fame and success. His antisocial behaviour spiralled when his pursuit for success and fame was rejected, which for him was like they were rejecting him. Through this rejection, Manson’s main defense mechanisms of omnipotence and omnipotent control were challenged. This triggered early object relations associated with rejection and inferiority, and Manson’s behaviour started to unravel, and his reality testing became impaired. He became highly aggressive, paranoid, and violent. An increase in his paranoia was seen in his views around a possible apocalyptic war, Helter Skelter. It was also seen in the heightened need to destroy his bad representations, which he had projected onto the outside world. His use of devaluation thus escalated and took the form of murder. Although he did not commit most of the murders himself, he convinced his followers to do so, and through omnipotent control would have experienced them as committed by himself.

Manson was functioning from the borderline organisation at the lower borderline character level. He revealed in prison that he was diagnosed with Antisocial Personality Disorder, and his patterns support this diagnosis.

**Value**

The researcher conducted a psychobiographical study to equip herself with skills which she can apply to her therapeutic work. Even though the research findings cannot be generalised to the larger population, the researcher believes that the conceptualisation of Charles Manson’s life through the lens of Otto Kernberg’s Object Relations Theory (1975, 1976, 1980, 1984, 1994) provided transferable skills into her practice as a Clinical Psychologist (Elm, 1994; Runyan, 1982; Fouche & Van Niekerk, 2010). In particular it has
refined her case conceptualisation skills using Otto Kernberg’s Object Relations Theory. These skills can be used in any case conceptualisation.

**Limitations**

The study had a number of limitations. There is little information on Charles Manson in infancy. Additionally, there is limited information on his early childhood. The researcher analysed the information on Manson’s family and environment to gain an understanding of the events and experiences Manson might have had in that period of his life. The sources of the data for the research study were predominantly secondary, and although some primary sources were used in the form of a book and video recordings of interviews, secondary sources are seen as less reliable. The sources were triangulated to allow and enhance data reliability.

The findings of the research are generalised to Otto Kernberg Object Relations Theory (1975, 1976, 1980, 1984, 1994). Generalisation to theory means that findings cannot be generalised broadly but only to the theory chosen. The research study was limited to a single unit of analysis (Charles Manson). The exploration of this individual allowed the researcher to explore the role of genetics and environment in Manson at a level of depth, and this has facilitated her skill development, particularly in case conceptualisation. However, the learning about antisocial personalities cannot be generalised to the experience of all others with antisocial patterns. There may be some overlap, but there are unique variables to every individual presenting with antisocial patterns.

**Recommendations**

It is recommended that other researchers conduct studies seeking to explore the life of Charles Manson through other theoretical lenses. This will create different insights and understandings of Manson’s personality. It would also be beneficial for psychobiographical research studies on antisocial personalities to be conducted using different subjects. Lastly,
the researcher believes that psychological professions and other professionals working with individuals who take part in criminal behaviour/activities would benefit from engaging with research studies of this nature.

**Conclusion**

This chapter outlined the conclusions of the study. The value of the study, and limitations that emerged during the study were then presented. Thereafter recommendations for further research were highlighted. This study has demonstrated insight, meeting of the identified aim, which was to explore and describe the personality development of Charles Manson using Otto Kernberg’s Object Relations Theory (1975, 1976, 1980, 1984, 1994).
References


CieloDrive.com. (2015, August 3). Charles Manson, March 1977, interviewed by Dr. Joel Fort [Video]. YouTube. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W0zeZiZPvzQ&ab_channel=CieloDrivecom](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W0zeZiZPvzQ&ab_channel=CieloDrivecom)


Contextualization: Evidence from Distributed Teams.” Information Systems Research, 16(1), 9-27.


https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TBzJZmW6nLc&ab_channel=PETMOAKO


Appendix A

Extract from Journal Entries

February 2018
Today I start collecting data on Charles Manson (Manson). It is difficult to find any biographies of him at this point. I think I need to keep looking. I am looking forward to reading more on him. From the little I have read Manson seems like he was a very dangerous man and a cult leader. From face value, he just seems like a notorious criminal. I wonder what happened to him, whether in childhood or adulthood, that influenced his behaviour.

March 2018
I have started reading up on Manson. His mother was young when she had him and initially named him No Name Maddox. This is very interesting, did she not name him because she did not want him or was it normal in their family to not name a child until you found a suitable name? I have been wondering about this for a while now, it might be because I come from a different culture and race from Manson. There are things that I will not initially understand about him but I am willing to learn. Reading on his adulthood, I learnt that he did not necessarily commit those murders but instructed his followers to execute them. It is scary to think that a person could have so much influence on others to a point where they would be willing to kill for him. I think he indeed was a dangerous man, maybe he could not physically control people but he could by manipulating and controlling them. At this point I have mixed feelings about Manson. I feel sorry for him due to his difficult childhood but on the other hand I am not sure if I should. I will observe if my perception of him will change over the course of this research study.

After reading on Manson, I feel I am ready to start writing my proposal.

September 2018
Writing a proposal is taking longer than I anticipated. So far, I have drafted Manson’s biographical overview and other sections. I still feel like there are gaps in the information that I have collected. There is a gap in the information on his infancy period. The only information I have so far is that he spent a lot of time with his grandmother and neighbours. The more I read about it the more I realise that Manson was probably rejected by his mother even before his birth. Was this one of the factors that impacted his behaviour? His mother attempted to sell him for a jug of beer. I can’t help but wonder what was going through his mother’s mind. Maybe she was overwhelmed. I feel sorry for her because she was young and probably not ready to be a parent. But I am unsettled about how she treated him. I feel pity when I read about Manson’s childhood. He had a difficult childhood, his grandmother was stern and his aunt and uncle did not treat him well. To some extent, I understand why he behaved the way he did. I am also wondering if he would have been different if he grew up in a different environment. Would his personality be different if he grew up in a loving and supportive family?

November 2019

I started working on my treatise, to be honest I am finding it difficult to balance research with other aspects of my life. I am reviewing data on Manson’s adolescent years. It is like once he got into the first facility, he never ‘got out’ until his early adulthood. In almost all of these facilities Manson tried to escape. He did not go home when his escapes were successful, but it also seems like he was rebelling against the system. His rebellion makes it hard for me to feel the same pity I did when I read on his early childhood. Manson’s behaviour at this point suggests conduct disorder.

October 2020

I am working on the theoretical framework: Otto Kernberg’s theory. The theoretical framework is quite complex. I have been stuck trying to figure out the jargon. Even though it
is complex and might take a while to fully grasp it, I think it is a suitable framework for my research. Otto Kernberg’s framework states that object relations are patterns that emerge in interaction between a child and their primary caregivers. I am thinking of the images that Manson formed as an infant/child when he interacted with his mother. I’m also wondering if he formed any patterns with his stepfather. From the information, it does not seem like he had a relationship with him. For now, I think that he may have had patterns of rejection that formed from his interactions with his mother. I also think that since he experienced a difficult childhood, most of his object relations would be negative.

December 2020

I have been reading again on Manson when he was an adult. Manson’s treatment of women makes me angry. He treated women like objects and used them only for his benefit. He targeted those that he identified as vulnerable, made them feel special then he could control them. I received feedback from my supervisor that this might have been one of his defense mechanism (omnipotent control). They became an extension of him and as a result he felt he could control them. Manson’s was in and out of prison but his behaviour unravelled only when his music career did not work out. He started destroying everything and ordered his followers to murder people. It is as if his failed attempt triggered him. Why did this trigger him so badly? How is it that he could hold things together before? Even though I do not condone Manson’s behaviour nor how he treated people, I have gained an understanding on how his temperament, home environment, relationships and other experiences may have influenced his behaviour and thinking. It almost feels like the odds were against him. It also made me realise of the need for positive interactions in childhood. The question I am left with now is what can be done in South Africa to help children/adults who are in similar positions?
Appendix B:

Extract of Triangulated Data Sources


Marynick (2010)

Parents

- Kathleen Maddox lived with her mother Nancy Maddox.
- Nancy Maddox was a devout Christian. Kathleen was not a devout Christian like her mother.
- Nancy Maddox was rigid in her religious beliefs and had very strict rules. She required everyone living under her roof to obey her instructions and live according to the church of Nazarene rules.
- Kathleen was a prostitute and alcoholic by the age of 16 years. Kathleen made money by scamming men in these pubs.
- Kathleen Maddox met Manson’s father, Colonel Scott, who was 23 years old. Colonel Scott was a petty criminal from Catlettsburg.
- They had a brief relationship, and Kathleen Maddox fell pregnant. August 1984 Kathleen married Manson’s stepfather William Manson.

Early childhood

• Born on the 12th of November 1934 at Cincinnati General Hospital in Cincinnati, Ohio in the United States of America.

• Manson was unwanted and illegitimate, registered as ‘No name’, Kathleen did not initially give him a name. He was registered under the name Charles Milles Manson after she married his stepfather.

• Manson referred to himself as an “outlaw from birth”.

• After Manson’s birth Kathleen tried to live a crime free life but soon reverted to making money by scamming men in bars and pubs

• She was granted child maintenance. Colonel Scott did not follow through with the court ruling

• Kathleen struggled financially to take care of Manson. She once attempted to sell Manson for a jug of beer. Manson’s uncle searched for him for a couple of days, and when he found Manson, he took him back home.

• As an infant, Manson spent a most his time with his maternal grandmother, aunt, and uncle. Manson and Kathleen moved to McMechen, West Virginia; they stayed with Kathleen’s sister and brother in-law.

• In 1939 Kathleen and her brother Luther Maddox robbed a man named Frank Martin. Kathleen was sentenced for 5 years in prison, and her brother was given a longer sentence, at the West Virginia State Prison in Moundsville

• He was forced by his uncle to visit his mother in prison on a regular basis. This was scary to him

• In 1939 Manson was enrolled at a primary school where he was verbally mistreated by a teacher. His Grade 1 teacher was very strict, and she made the children sit according to their intelligence.
• Manson was placed at the end of the classroom because he was one of the students that was struggling academically. An incident is reported were Manson came back from school crying. His uncle believed that he needed to “toughen up”.

• The following morning, his uncle dressed him in his cousin’s dress, and sent him to school like this as a form punishment.

• One Christmas, while visiting his grandmother, he burnt the toys of the other children in the neighbourhood because he was jealous and believed that they were mocking him by showing off their gifts.
Appendix C

Images of Charles Manson

Figure 1: Charles Manson at 5 years old (Oliver, 2016).

Figure 2: Manson as at 13 years old (Oliver, 2016).
Figure 3: Charles Manson in California State Prison (NBC, 2017).
Appendix D

Summary of Turnitin Originality Report

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Source Description</th>
<th>Similarity Index</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Submitted to Pomperaug High School</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td><a href="http://www.tandfonline.com">www.tandfonline.com</a></td>
<td>&lt;1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>web1.msu.montana.edu</td>
<td>&lt;1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Submitted to University of the Free State</td>
<td>&lt;1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Submitted to Southern New Hampshire University - Continuing Education</td>
<td>&lt;1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Submitted to University of Southern California</td>
<td>&lt;1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Submitted to University of Johannesburg</td>
<td>&lt;1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Submitted to Columbia College of Missouri</td>
<td>&lt;1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>pt.scribd.com</td>
<td>&lt;1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>