

THE LIFE OF OLIVE SCHREINER: A PSYCHOBIOGRAPHY

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ABSTRACT

Olive Schreiner (1855-1920) was a famous South African novelist and humanitarian. A remarkable and enigmatic woman, her life and work have inspired a substantial amount of research by Schreiner scholars representing a diversity of academic disciplines. They continue to speculate about the extent of her contribution to society, the degree to which she realised her potential as a writer and the nature of her psychological disturbance.

Olive was chosen as the subject of this research because she was so interesting, complex and controversial. She has been the subject of numerous biographies. All have offered interpretations of her life and some have employed formal theories of psychology to do so. None has utilised explicit or established psychological research designs and methodologies.

The aim of this study was to conceptualise Olive's life in terms of the principles of Individual Psychology, thereby providing an illuminating account of her life and offering explanations of her creativity, altruism, psychological difficulties and general personality development. Individual Psychology is the theory developed by Alfred Adler (1870-1937). It is a holistic theory, emphasising subjectivism and the creative roles of individuals in developing their lifestyles. Adler's work has had a significant influence on psychotherapeutic practice although he has received comparatively little recognition for his contributions to contemporary psychology. The autobiographical nature of the Adlerian concept of *lifestyle* and the theory's focus on the uniqueness of human beings means that it is well suited to the study of individual lives.

The study can be described as life history research. It employed a single case, holistic design and entailed a psychobiographical study of a single subject over an entire lifespan. The research was explanatory and the method was qualitative. Two strategies for data extraction and analysis were employed. One entailed the use of theoretical propositions to identify relevant data, and the other involved the development of a

descriptive framework for organising the case material. The combination of these strategies enabled the researcher to obtain evidence for key theoretical constructs throughout Olive's life. This type of psychobiographical research is useful in understanding rare or unique phenomena and its application to the lives of enigmatic individuals facilitates theory development and testing.

The researcher concluded that Individual Psychology was well suited to conceptualising Olive's life, and that it offered a plausible and coherent explanation of her moral development, creativity and her psychological distress. Olive's lifestyle, in accordance with the tenets of Individual Psychology, was understood to be motivated by a deep sense of inferiority which she spent her life striving to overcome. To this end, and in an attempt to protect her fragile sense of self-worth, she employed particular symptoms. Most obvious were her attempts at safeguarding her self-esteem by distancing herself from life's challenges. In many respects she displayed evidence of the Adlerian concept *social interest*, or a commitment to the welfare of others.

The study of Olive's personality provided a positive demonstration of the value of Adler's theory. The validity of the construct social interest as the primary indicator of mental health was questioned. Suggestions for further research were made.

Keywords: Olive Schreiner, Individual Psychology, psychobiography, life history.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Chapter preview

This chapter entails an overview of the study. Several important aspects of the study are introduced and briefly described. These include the subject of the research, the aim of the research, the research method employed and the theoretical framework utilised. A brief description of the contents of each chapter is also provided.

1.2 Subject

The subject of this study is Olive Schreiner (1855–1920). Olive was a South African writer who received acclaim and earned notoriety for her first book, *The story of an African farm* (Schreiner, 1883, 1995). The novel has been hailed by some (e.g., Rive, 1977) as the most significant work to emerge from South Africa, perhaps less for the quality of the writing than for what the book represented at the time of its initial publication. Generally regarded by her biographers as having been psychologically maladjusted (e.g., Friedmann, 1955; Schoeman, 1991) Olive, however, showed signs of a highly developed social conscience. The publication of her *Woman and labour* (Schreiner, 1914) established her as a leading figure in the early women's movement. Moreover she championed the cause of the Boers during the Anglo–Boer War, when she felt that they were treated unfairly by England. She fought for the enfranchisement of South Africans of colour, and with uncanny prescience predicted that the government's policies in respect of blacks would exact a heavy toll from white South Africans (First & Scott, 1989).

Olive was an enigmatic and controversial figure during her lifetime, and is hardly less so today. Schreiner scholars are legion, and represent a diversity of academic disciplines, including psychology, psychoanalysis, literature, political science and feminist studies

(e.g., Berkman, 1989; First & Scott, 1989; Friedmann, 1955; Lewis, 2010; Schoeman, 1991). They continue to debate such puzzling aspects of Olive's life as the import of her contributions to society, the extent to which she realised her potential as a writer, and the degree to which she was psychologically disturbed. The volume of research inspired and stimulated by her life, as well as the fact that Olive's own literature continues to be printed (e.g., Schreiner, 1995, 2004a, 2004b) suggests that her work is still important and retains the power to speak to a wide audience.

1.3 Aim

The aim of this study is to offer an illuminating account of Olive's life by the systematic application, to that life, of the principles of *Individual Psychology*. This theoretical framework is introduced below. The research involves conceptualising her life in terms of Individual Psychology. Important facets of Olive's life such as her development, creativity, altruism and psychological difficulties, will be described and interpreted. Particular attention will be paid to exploring such seemingly contradictory aspects of her life as her psychological disturbance and interpersonal difficulties on the one hand, and her altruism and highly developed social conscience on the other (First & Scott, 1989; Friedmann, 1955; Schoeman, 1991).

1.4 The psychobiographical method

This study can be described as life history research (Runyan, 1984, 1988a). It entails the application, to Olive's life, of a particular theoretical framework, thereby allowing for the explanation and understanding of that life. The research therefore constitutes a psychobiographical study (McAdams, 2006).

Psychobiography may be seen as a special instance of the case-study method (Cozby, 2007; Runyan, 1984) and typically employs a single-case research design (Fouché, 1999). Such research is used to describe, explain and interpret data about peoples' lives. Often

these are historical figures whose lives have been regarded as significant (Alexander, 1990; McAdams, 2006).

Psychobiographical research is usually morphogenic (Allport, 1961). It is therefore person-centered and allows for a holistic appreciation of the individual's uniqueness. It can be distinguished from those approaches in the field of personology that are nomothetic, essentially normative, and therefore comparative. In such quantitative approaches any sense of individuality is derived from the specific configuration of deviance from the statistical norm (Alexander, 1990; Elms, 1994).

According to Fouché (1999) any researcher who systematically and self-consciously employs psychological theory in the process of understanding an individual's life story is engaged in psychobiography. Runyan (1984) defined psychobiography as "*The explicit use of systematic or formal psychology in biography*" (p. 202). McAdams (2006) has described psychobiography as the use of psychological theory to "... *transform a life into a coherent and illuminating story*" (p. 503).

Psychobiographical research is useful for a number of reasons. It allows for the development, refinement and testing of psychological theories (Runyan, 2005). It allows theorists to assimilate disparate bodies of knowledge because, by examining one life at a time, researchers can bring a number of psychological theories to bear on a single life. That life then constitutes a forum for the integration of theories (Schultz, 2005a). Psychobiographical research has the potential to contribute to the advancement of personality theory. This is because it enables researchers to address fundamental questions in the study of personality development by allowing for a description of the subject at referential points in time, and over the entire life span. This makes possible explanatory links between an outcome and the factors that were influential in producing it (Alexander, 1990; Fouché, 1999; Runyan, 1984, 1988b). Perhaps most significant for this study, however, is that psychobiography allows for an intense study of unusual and significant phenomena (McAdams, 2005; Schultz, 2005b, 2005c). Examples of these would include Olive's creativity and her contributions to society. Understanding such

behaviour allows researchers, in turn, to understand similar phenomena in others (VanWynsberghe & Khan, 2007).

1.5 Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework chosen for this study is Adler's theory of *Individual Psychology* (e.g., Adler, 1952, 1956, 1958, 1970). Alfred Adler is generally regarded as one of the founding figures of modern psychology. The ideas of his contemporaries, Freud and Jung, have been developed to a high degree. By comparison, those of Adler have been overlooked, probably because his work was incompatible with the dominant metaphors of his time. In spite of this, however, his ideas and clinical techniques have had an enormous, if unacknowledged, influence on the field of psychotherapy (Milliren, Evans & Newbauer, 2003). He seems to have anticipated the development of phenomenological, cognitive, systemic, and neo-Freudian psychodynamic perspectives in psychology. His work also has much in common with postmodern constructivist and social constructionist approaches to psychotherapy. In fact Adler appears to have been so far ahead of his time that it is only recently that theorists have begun to appreciate the significance and relevance of his work (Carlson, Watts & Maniaci, 2006).

Central to Adler's psychology is the belief that all individuals strive to overcome the sense of inferiority that is inherent in the human condition. For healthy individuals this striving is tempered by social interest and is reflected in co-operation with others. For those in whom the sense of inferiority is overwhelming, the striving for superiority is even more pronounced, and is aimed at personal gain and security, rather than co-operation. Psychological disturbance occurs in the context of an increased sense of inferiority and a decreased degree of social interest. It entails an exaggerated form of the normal striving and the use of psychological symptoms as well as more general personality traits to help the individual safeguard against a sense of inadequacy and achieve a sense of superiority, albeit in an idiosyncratic manner (Adler, 1958, 1996a, 1996b).

Adlerians have traditionally employed the case study method for research purposes. The autobiographical nature of the Adlerian concept of *lifestyle* means that the theory is well suited to case study and psychobiographical research. Such research, moreover, is consistent with the underlying principles of Adlerian theory, which stresses holism, subjectivism and the uniqueness of human beings (Carlson et al., 2006; McAdams, 2006; Shelley, 2000). It is therefore not surprising that a number of Adlerian psychobiographies have been conducted (e.g., Clark, 2005; Pearson & Wilborn, 1995).

1.6 Overview of chapters

Chapter 1 is an introduction to the study and places the research in context. Chapter 2 is concerned with the presentation and discussion of the theory of Individual Psychology. Adler's original position is explained and the views of a number of contemporary Adlerians are also presented.

Chapter 3 entails the presentation of an overview of Olive's life. This is regarded as important for several reasons. In the first place, it offers an account of the life story of a remarkable woman. In the second, it provides information that is important as a background to the section on data presentation. Third, and related to the previous point, it presents significant socio-historical and cultural information that is essential to understanding and conceptualising Olive's life.

Chapter 4 is titled *Psychobiography and related concepts*, and is primarily concerned with defining and describing psychobiography as a method of research. By way of introduction, however, certain related concepts, such as qualitative research and case study, are presented and explained.

Chapter 5 is titled *Preliminary methodological considerations*. It deals with the challenges to writing good psychobiography and criticisms of psychobiography on methodological grounds, outlining the strategies employed to ensure acceptable standards

of methodological rigour. This chapter is an important adjunct to Chapter 6, which presents the research method and design employed in the study.

Chapter 7 is titled *Findings and discussion* and entails the presentation of data derived from an examination of Olive's life. The chapter is structured by a data analysis matrix that represents a combination of two strategies of data extraction and analysis (Yin, 2009). Essentially this allows for data from the life to be presented in terms of the theory of Individual Psychology, thereby facilitating the conceptualisation of Olive's life according to that theory. This conceptualisation is presented along with a commentary that considers aspects of the life, the theory and the compatibility of, or degree of fit between, the two. Chapter 8 is the final section of the study, and concludes the research.

1.7 Summary

This chapter has introduced the research project. It presented brief descriptions and explanations of certain key concepts, and offered an overview of the study and its contents. The next chapter entails the presentation of the theoretical framework employed for the research.

CHAPTER 2

THEORY OF INDIVIDUAL PSYCHOLOGY

2.1 Chapter preview

This chapter is concerned with the presentation and discussion of the theory of *Individual Psychology*, the psychological theory developed by Alfred Adler. Adler's original position is explained and in addition, the ideas of many contemporary Adlerians are presented. These do not always accord with Adler's views. For the purposes of this study, the researcher has accepted a position close to Adler's. A rationale for this is presented, as it is when contemporary ideas are accepted. Findings from contemporary research in the field, and in related fields, will be presented in support of Adlerian views where appropriate. Throughout the chapter the terms *Individual Psychology* and *Adlerian Psychology* will be regarded as synonymous and used interchangeably.

2.2 Adler in context

Alfred Adler (1870–1937) was a member of that triumvirate, including Freud and Jung, who are generally regarded as the founders of modern psychology and psychotherapy. Adler qualified as a physician in 1895 and showed an almost immediate interest in psychology. Also evident from the earliest days of his medical career were his leanings towards both humanism and socialism. He attracted the interest of Sigmund Freud, who in 1902 invited him to join his study circle, the forerunner of the Viennese Psychoanalytic Society (Milliren et al., 2003). Adler became president of that society in 1910 but resigned in 1911 after his differences with Freud led to a bitter rift between the two. He founded the *Society for Individual Psychology* in 1912 and continued to develop his own theory (Corey, 2005). The ideas of both Freud and Jung have been extensively developed. By comparison those of Adler have been overlooked, in spite of the significant influence of his theory and clinical techniques. His impact can be seen not only in the field of psychotherapy but also in other disciplines such as contemporary

psychology, anthropology, biology and physics. He is very seldom credited for his contribution to contemporary thought (Carlson et al., 2006; Weber, 2003).

2.3 Key concepts

2.3.1 The sense of inferiority

Central to Adler's psychology is the belief that all individuals strive to overcome the sense of inferiority that is inherent in the human condition. This striving begins in infancy and arises because infants and small children are dependent on adults for the satisfaction of their needs and, aware of their inadequacy in relation to stronger adults, perceive themselves as inferior. This sense of inferiority, also called the inferiority feeling, motivates them to overcome their perceived deficiencies (Adler, 1929, 1945, 1952, 1956, 1958, 1965, 1996a; Orgler, 1963; Stein & Edwards, 1998). The upward striving, the movement from a felt minus to a felt plus, is inexorable. According to Adler:

I began to see clearly in every psychological phenomenon the striving for superiority. It runs parallel to physical growth and is an intrinsic necessity of life itself. It lies at the root of all solutions of life's problems and is manifested in the way in which we meet these problems. All our functions follow its directions. They strive for conquest, security, increase, either in the right or in the wrong direction. The impetus from minus to plus never ends. The urge from below to above never ceases. (1956, p. 103)

The feeling of inferiority is, according to Adler (1952, 1996b), ubiquitous because it is experienced by all human beings. It is not pathological but a stimulant to healthy development, movement and action because humans cannot endure the sense of inferiority and want to overcome it.

Not all contemporary Adlerians accept the centrality to Individual Psychology of the sense of inferiority. Carlson et al. (2006) barely paid the idea any attention in their comprehensive work, and Bitter (1996, 2007) rejected the idea that all striving stemmed from a sense of inferiority. He believed that the striving for superiority was innate. For

the purpose of this study the researcher has accepted the sense of inferiority as a significant, key construct of Individual Psychology and, in this respect, has adopted a more classical Adlerian position, closer to that espoused by Stein and Edwards (1998). One reason for this is that to accept the striving for superiority as innate is to accept drive theory, or something very close to it, and therefore determinism. This is fundamentally incompatible with almost all of Adler's key concepts, as will become evident in the discussion below. Another reason is that without the sense of inferiority as a central feature of the theory, many of the other concepts do not make sense or cohere in a meaningful fashion.

2.3.2 Striving for superiority and the unique life goal

Arising from the feeling of inferiority and giving direction to the upward striving of individuals are their unique goals (Adler, 1929, 1945, 1965, 1996a; Lemire, 2007). They are established during childhood and are necessary because: "... *a person would not know what to do with himself were he not oriented towards some goal. We cannot think, feel, will, or act without the perception of some goal*" (Adler, 1956, p. 96). The goal enables individuals to think of themselves as superior to the present difficulties because it offers the possibility of success in the future. The sense of a goal gives meaning to individuals' activities. It constitutes their plan for overcoming the sense of inferiority, and therefore helps orient them in the world. The goal includes an ideal of what they would like to be. This is called the *self ideal*. The forming of the goal and the first movements towards it constitute the prototype or model of the matured personality (Adler, 1952, 1958; Stein & Edwards, 1998).

The formation of a goal then, is the way in which children compensate for what they perceive as their deficiencies. It should, however, not be confused with reality, and neither are children's actions always guided by reality. The goal is an abstract ideal. Adler (1956, 1965) also called it a fictional ideal or a fictional goal. The influence of Hans Vaihinger's (1925) philosophy of *as if* on Adler is apparent in these terms. According to Vaihinger, people lived their lives according to fictions. Fictions were

mental structures, constructions of the psyche which were to a large extent unconscious, and which, although not the same as objective reality, served the function of helping people deal with the world and make sense of it. Ansbacher and Ansbacher (1956) explained the concept of a fiction by comparing it to a working hypothesis that was adopted as a basis for action “... *because it works in practice, although its truth is dubious*” (p. 77). Fictions then were, as Vaihinger described them, expedient psychical constructs that functioned in the lives of individuals as significant organisers for their strivings, and offered explanations for their actions. Adler’s concept of the goal was such a fiction, and he called the individual’s upward striving towards this goal fictional finalism. This forward orientation, the movement toward a fictional goal in the future was, as already indicted, the basis for his dynamic psychology.

The goal is the creation of individuals, based on their perception of themselves and the world. It is influenced by their inherited (genetic) material and by environmental factors, but is not determined by them (Adler, 1952, 1958). According to the Adlerian psychologist, Orgler, “*The human being is not a product of inheritance and environment. He uses his congenital abilities and acquired impressions as the elements with which to construct with his own creative power his own unity, his life style ...*” (1963, pp. 14-15). Adler (1952) maintained that it was not what people inherited that was important, but the use to which they put their genetic makeup. It was not character traits that were inherited, but only capacities. Similarly, the influence of the environment only suggested the probability of a certain line of development, and did not act as a decisive determinant of development. In this respect Adler (1996a) stated that:

We concede that every child is born with potentialities different from those of any other child. Our objection to the teachings of the “hereditarians” and every other tendency to over stress the significance of constitutional disposition is that the important thing is not what one is born with, but what use one makes of that equipment. Still, we must ask ourselves: “Who uses it?” As to the influence of the environment, who can say that the same environmental influences are apprehended, worked over, digested, and responded to by any two individuals in the same way? To understand this fact, we find it necessary to assume the existence of still another force: the creative power of the individual. (p. 353)

Vaihinger (1925) believed that fictions were subjective. They were mental structures created by the individual, and were not reducible to objective causes. This is important to keep in mind when considering the Adlerian concept of a goal, and how it develops. It is not objective reality that determines the goal, but rather individuals' experience or interpretation of it (Adler, 1958, 1996a; Carlson et al., 2006). Ansbacher and Ansbacher (1956) used the adjective *subjective* as synonymous with *fictional* when discussing the fictional goal. The implications of this are significant, because they indicate one of the major differences between Individual Psychology and psychoanalysis, with which Adler was originally associated. According to Ansbacher and Ansbacher, Freud's biologically oriented system accepted mechanistic, reductionist positivism in that it "... looked for ultimate causes in the past and in objective events" (1956, p. 87). For Freud then, personality development was driven from behind, determined by the individual's inherited genetic material and by events that occurred early in life. Adlerian subjectivism denied this deterministic stance, and stood in strong opposition to physiological reductionism (Adler, 1956, 1958, 1996a; Carlson et al., 2006). For Adler, as previously indicated, it was primarily the meaning that individuals ascribed to environmental events and to their genetic makeup that led them to develop goals for the future. The motivation for personality development was, as stated above, the desire to achieve those goals. Adler's conception of human personality development was therefore rooted, philosophically, in teleology and finalism, or the determination by final causes. People are motivated not by the objective future, but by a fictional or subjective future experienced in the present (Adler, 1965).

It is important to note that although Vaihinger (1925) stressed subjective meaning and believed that people were guided by fictions, he did not deny objective reality. To deny an objective world, to see the whole world as an idea and all forms as subjective would, in his opinion, give rise to an untenable subjectivism. Similarly for Adler, the primary determinant of development was the meaning given to events by people, but he recognised that there were certain situations that would influence them. He did not deny objective or external reality, but did emphasise that peoples' responses or reactions to events or situations would differ. Both Vaihinger and Adler believed that the primary

factor to consider when trying to understand people's actions was their subjective experience of the world, but neither denied the existence of that world (Adler, 1958, 1996a; Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956).

While aspects of the goal might be manifest in childhood in such concrete aims as the desire to be a policeman, the full extent of the goal was not fully realised by individuals, and its nature not clearly articulated. The fictional goal was, according to Adler (1956), blurred and pliable. Vaihinger (1925) believed that fictions were, to a large extent, unconscious. Similarly, Adler believed that the final goal was partly unconscious but the extent to which this was so, varied from person to person (Adler, 1958). He cautioned against the use of the terms *conscious* and *unconscious* to designate distinctive factors or entities. He believed that they formed a single unity (1996a). Both operated together along the lines set by the striving towards the goal: "*Consciousness and unconsciousness move together in the same direction and are not contradictions, as is so often believed*" (Adler, 1952, p. 56). The unconscious constituted, for Adler, merely those aspects of the goal of which individuals were not aware. In his theory the term unconscious is used as an adjective rather than a noun (Mosak, 1984).

2.3.3 The unity of personality and the style of life

As indicated above, children set their own goals early in life, and strive toward them in their own way. The goal becomes the governing principle of mental life because all psychological processes form a self-consistent organisation in the movement toward that goal (Adler, 1956, 1970, 1996a). The particular way in which individuals pursue their goals and approach the main tasks of life is called the *style of life* or the *lifestyle* (Carlson et al., 2006; Stein & Edwards, 1998). Adler conceived of human beings as individual unities and this was revealed in the consistent way in which they moved toward their goals. Everything that individuals do is indicative of their goals and lifestyles (Adler, 1952, 1996a; Oringer, 1963). For example Adler stated that: "*Individual Psychology tries to see individual lives as a whole and regards each single reaction, each movement and impulse as an articulated part of an individual attitude towards life*"

(Adler, 1952, p. 31). Even physical conditions such as asthma can develop in the service of individuals' striving to attain their goals, and inherited defects can serve the same function. Behaviour that is apparently contradictory is seen, when considered as a whole, to be an integrated, although not necessarily healthy, way of achieving the goals (Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956; Bottome, 1957; Carlson et al., 2006). In this regard Adler (1952) stated:

The important thing is to understand the individual context – the goal of an individual's life which marks the line of direction for all his acts and movements. The goal enables us to understand the hidden meaning behind the various separate acts – we see them as parts of a whole. (pp. 32-33)

The goal, as mentioned above, is set early in life. The striving toward the goal begins then, and the style of life is evident from an early age. This style persists into later life and under normal circumstances rarely changes (Adler, 1965).

2.3.4 The schema of apperception

In the first four or five years of life, individuals develop an opinion about or a view of, themselves and the world, and set goals based on this opinion. It is not possible to predict what this opinion will be or the nature of the goals that they set, since "... *the child works in the realm of freedom with his own creative power*" (Adler, 1958, p. 187). Once the goal is set, children's movement towards it begins, and is revealed as the style of life. This style of life, in turn, influences the way in which individuals view themselves and the world. It helps to assimilate and utilise experience and information, and certain personal rules and principles are developed, in accordance with the lifestyle, to this end. Individuals' conceptions of the world are referred to as *schema of apperception*. They function like a set of lenses through which individuals see the world, and they mould their experiences (Adler, 1956; Carlson et al., 2006; Orgler, 1963; Stein & Edwards, 1998). The concept of the schema of apperception is indicative of the Adlerian emphasis on subjective experience, and the distinction between facts and the meaning that people give to these facts. For example, Adler (1956) stated:

When the prototype – that early personality which embodies the goal – is formed, the line of direction is established and the individual becomes definitely oriented. It is this fact which enables us to predict what will happen later in life. The individual's apperceptions are from then on bound to fall into a groove established by the line of direction. The child will not perceive given situations as they actually exist, but under the prejudice of his own interests. (p. 189)

Adlerians believe that certain individual's conceptions of the world are more sound, or accurate, than others. Some people make mistakes in their view of reality. These arise from misinterpretations made in childhood, which are significant because they impact on the subsequent course of development (Adler, 1956, 1958, 1965; Carlson et al., 2006; Stein & Edwards, 1998). Ansbacher and Ansbacher (1956), commenting on this, suggested that while the ultimately correct view of the world was unknowable, the schema of apperception of some individuals approximated this reality more closely than did others. Those whose schemata are more erroneous develop an idiosyncratic intelligence which is often at variance with the good of the wider society, while less erroneous schemata are more in accord with common sense (Adler, 1956; Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956). The idea of common sense and its implications will be discussed in more detail in section 2.3.5, below.

2.3.5 Social interest

Human infants are weak and helpless, and it is the awareness of their deficiencies which leads to their striving to overcome them. Neither this sense of inferiority nor the upward striving that arises from it is necessarily, or even usually, unhealthy. Normally it leads to healthy growth and development. As Adler (1956) stated:

But this inferiority with which he is afflicted, and of which he becomes aware through a feeling of deprivation and insecurity, acts as a continuous stimulus to find a way of adjusting, of providing, of creating situations in which the disadvantages of his position seem compensated. (p. 129)

The striving to overcome feelings of inferiority does not only apply to individuals, but is paralleled to a large extent by the group life of humans (Adler, 1952). Compared to animals, human beings are weak and defenseless. Without aids they are unable to survive the elements. Humans were, according to Adler (1956), inferior beings from the point of view of nature. Unable to survive alone, their awareness of their inferiority stimulated them to create the kinds of conditions in which they could survive. Only group life and society offered the possibility of developing such conditions (Adler, 1952; Orgler, 1963). As Adler (1956) stated:

Group life proved to be a necessity because it alone enabled man, through a division of labor, to solve problems in which the individual as such would have been condemned to failure. Division of labor alone was capable of providing man with ... all goods which he needed to maintain himself and which we today include under the concept of culture. (p. 129)

In order for human beings to survive then, they needed to co-operate (Adler, 1958; Orgler, 1963). To ensure their own survival and possibilities for development, individuals had to be committed to the welfare of the broader society. Co-operation with, and commitment to others, constitutes part of what Adlerians call *social interest* or *community feeling*. Social interest is an attitude that is based on the capacity to empathise with, or understand, other human beings. It includes an interest in the wellbeing of others, leading to actions which will benefit them. People who have developed social interest will feel a sense of harmony with the universe. They will feel at home on earth, and will be aware of the necessary interdependence between people. They will feel connected to the past and will invest in the future, making a useful contribution to the development of society (Adler, 1952, 1956, 1958, 1965; Bottome, 1957; Carlson et al., 2006; Mansager, 2000; Nikelly, 2005; Penick, 2004). Social interest is important throughout life, although its expression may change form across time. It may include a concern for animals, plants and inanimate objects, as well as spiritual development and recreation (Leak, 2006; Stein & Edwards, 1998).

The degree to which individuals developed social interest was, for Adler, a measure of their mental health (Adler 1958, 1970). According to him normal individuals

were those whose modes of life were such that the community derived a certain benefit from their work, whether or not this was their specific aim (Adler, 1952). Healthy people were those whose striving to overcome perceived deficiencies led not only to an attempt to achieve perfection of the self, but also to a contribution to society:

All individuals have a sense of inferiority and a striving for success and superiority which makes up the very life of the psyche. The reason all individuals do not have complexes is that their sense of inferiority and superiority is harnessed by a psychological mechanism into socially useful channels. (Adler, 1952, p. 215)

As long as the sense of inferiority was not too great, children would always strive in such a way as to make a useful and worthwhile contribution to the community. Almost nobody is so disturbed that they do not retain some interest in others, and a need for others at some level (Adler, 1965; Carlson et al., 2006).

Adlerians see no fundamental conflict between the development of individuals on the one hand, and the development of society on the other. Self development and social interest are not necessarily mutually exclusive. The concept of social interest includes the possibility of the full development of individuals' potential and capacities, as long as they lead to benefits for others. Personal fulfillment and social interest are recursive processes which can impact positively on each other. For example the greater people's personal development, the more they can impact positively on others. The more people are involved in making contributions to others, the more they are able to learn from others and develop themselves (Stein & Edwards, 1998).

The fact that human beings have always lived together has necessitated the development of rules for regulating human relations. These rules have existed from earliest times as if they were absolute truths (Adler, 1956). Ansbacher and Ansbacher (1956) pointed out that by absolute truth Adler meant a useful fiction that, essentially, entailed the logic of communal life. Similarly, when Adler spoke about reality, he was talking about the rules, explicit or tacit, which were generally agreed upon to regulate communal life, and which constituted *common sense*. Healthy people, or those with well

developed social interest, had a schema of apperception that came close to *reality* or common sense. Maladjusted persons, in contrast, developed a *private intelligence*, or *private sense*, which was at variance with common sense. They held a personal goal of superiority which offered no, or little, contribution to society (Adler, 1952, 1965; Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956).

Ansbacher (1965, 1994c) traced Adler's use of the term common sense to Kant's *sensus communis* (Kant, 1964) which essentially referred to reality as a view of the world arrived at by consensual validation. Reality from this point of view then, was socially and culturally situated (Gold, 2005). Private sense (Kant's *sensus privates*), also referred to by Adlerians as private intelligence or *private logic*, was regarded as the antithesis of common sense. It referred to an idiosyncratic view of the world and was, for many Adlerians, a basic characteristic of all psychological maladjustment. Some theorists, however, believe that common sense is not necessarily associated with social interest, and that private sense is not necessarily opposed to it. As Carlson et al. (2006) have pointed out by referring to the rise of Fascism and the Nazi Party in the 1920s, common sense, while often important in defining what is healthy and socially useful, could also be "... *tragically and monumentally wrong, causing great pain and horror*" (p. 85). Adler (1956), however, made it clear that common sense and associated social interest did not necessarily refer to a set of beliefs held by any one community at any one point in time, but entailed a consideration of the well being of society in the future, and in its development towards perfection. In this regard he stated:

We do not wish to deal with the usual and thoughtless case, where what we call society is understood as the private circle of our time, or even a larger circle which one should join. Social interest means much more. It means particularly the interest in, or the feeling with, the community sub specie aeternitatis ... It means the striving for a community which must be thought of as everlasting, as we could think of it if mankind had reached the goal of perfection. It is never [only] a present-day community or society, a specific political or religious formation. (Adler, 1956, pp. 141-142)

Adler stated that social interest was not inborn as a fully fledged entity but was an innate potentiality which had to be consciously developed (1956). Social interest does not develop from a biologically based social instinct and its expression depends upon children's perceptions of their environment. If individuals are to develop social interest, that development must begin in infancy, in the context of children's relationships with their mothers. The mothers' task is to empathise with their children, to encourage them, and to extend their interests to other family members and the wider community (Adler, 1956, 1958, 1970). If this does not occur, the "... *individual remains unprepared to meet the problems presented by social living*" (Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956, p. 135).

Traditionally Adlerians have believed that there are three major challenges in life which confront every human being. These are the problems presented by society, occupation and love (Bottome, 1957; Orgler, 1963). The extent to which individuals are able successfully to meet these challenges is an indicator of the degree to which they have developed social interest (Adler, 1952, 1956).

The problem presented by society concerns the bond of human beings to each other. In order for individuals to thrive, and for society as a whole to survive, people have to take each other into consideration. They have to involve themselves in the lives of others and co-operate with them. They need a feeling of community, or community feeling which, as indicated previously, is a term often used synonymously with social interest (Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956; Stein & Edwards, 1998).

The problem of occupation arises out of the need to make a living, and for this reason is most easily solved. People are forced to work because they need money (Orgler, 1963). Adler (1956) believed that the need to work arose as a result of mankind trying to find an answer to the problem of living on a planet with limited resources, and because people were exposed to harsh climactic conditions. The need for various occupations occurred because:

Through the division of labor we can use the results of many different kinds of training and organize many different abilities, so that all of them contribute to the common welfare and guarantee relief from insecurity and increase opportunity for all the members of society. (Adler, 1956, p. 132)

People who have met the challenge presented by the problems of occupation are those who, by virtue of their work, are useful to others (Adler, 1952, 1956).

The third problem, love, arises from the relationship between the sexes. Adler (1956) believed that for the problem of love to be solved, people had to have been successful in meeting the other two challenges. He believed that the best solution to the problem of love, and the one most consistent with the demands of society and the division of labour, was monogamous marriage. He did indicate, however, that it was the best solution for the time in which he was writing. Love and marriage required, more than the problems of social adjustment and occupation, an exceptional ability to empathise with other people. A successful love relationship, according to Adler (1952), led to marriage and involved not only a degree of co-operation aimed at benefiting the couple, but also the welfare of the society since procreation ensured the continued existence of that society (Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956).

Contemporary Adlerians have added to these life tasks, and have included under social interest such challenges as spirituality, coping with oneself, parenting, and creativity (Carlson et al., 2006; Leak, 2006; Lemire, 1998; Mansager, 2000; Mosak & Dreikurs, 2000). Not all Adlerians recognise these areas as additional life tasks but one, spirituality, is worth mentioning because Adler (1965) himself stressed its significance and because spiritual development was a significant aspect of Olive's life (Berkman, 1989; First & Scott, 1989; Schoeman, 1991). Spirituality includes, but is not limited to, orthodox religion and a belief in the supernatural. In general, by spirituality, Adlerians refer to the way in which humans make sense of their existence in, and relation to, the cosmos. The term also refers to such transcendental concepts as cosmic interconnectedness and social union, both of which are related to *Holism*. Holism is a

significant aspect of Individual Psychology (Gold, 2005; Stein & Edwards, 1998) and will be discussed in 2.5.1.

The life tasks subsumed under the rubric of community feeling or social interest are interrelated. A successful marital relationship, for example, depends to a large extent on individuals having met the challenges presented by the need to live in society and to work. It is difficult, therefore, to conceive of problems being solved separately, and without success in other areas (Adler, 1952, 1956; Bottome, 1957; Orgler, 1963). Stein and Edwards (1998), however, have pointed out that social interest is a multi-level complex, and that people may show signs of having developed social interest on some levels but not on others.

2.3.6 Unhealthy striving and maladjustment

2.3.6.1 Inferiority complex

All individuals have a sense or a feeling of inferiority and, as indicated above, this is not necessarily unhealthy. In fact it spurs people to growth and development. Psychological disturbance arises from an exaggerated or intensified inferiority feeling (Adler, 1952, 1958, 1996a, 1996b; Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956; Orgler, 1963). It is perhaps the automatic association of the word inferiority with psychopathology that has led some contemporary Adlerians (e.g., Bitter, 2007; Carlson et al., 2006) either to reject the concept or to downplay its significance. A reading of Adler's works, cited above, clearly indicates that the ubiquitous sense of inferiority is not considered to be unhealthy unless it is greatly exaggerated. In such cases it is referred to as an inferiority complex.

A significant factor concerning Adler's approach to psychological disturbance is that he presented no taxonomy or nosological system to designate types of psychopathology, although he did distinguish between *neurotic* and *psychotic* disorders, and often used descriptive labels such as *melancholic* or *paranoid*. He generally considered maladjusted individuals to be *discouraged*, and Individual Psychologists have

traditionally used this term rather than *pathological* or *sick* (Adler, 1956, 1996b; Mosak, 1984; Stein & Edwards, 1998). Carlson et al. (2006) have delineated various types of dynamics from the Adlerian point of view, and supported attempts to align Adlerian theory with the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (4th ed., text revision; DSM – IV – TR; American Psychiatric Association, 2000). For the purpose of this study, however, the more traditional or classic Adlerian position of eschewing diagnostic labels will be adopted. This is because it is not an aim of the study to diagnose Olive using a contemporary, psychiatric, diagnostic framework. Moreover, to impose such a system on a person who lived a century ago might well, from the point of psychobiographical research, be considered inappropriate (Fouché, 1999; Runyan, 1984).

The sense of inferiority becomes pathological when it is increased to the extent that individuals feel overwhelmed by the demands of the environment. This sense of inadequacy, rather than acting as a spur to growth, is so great that it leads individuals to become discouraged, and to believe that they are incapable of meeting life's tasks and making a useful contribution to society (Adler, 1952, 1958). An exaggerated sense of inferiority arises from individuals' interpretations of the environment and themselves, and is not determined by hereditary factors or the environment. Nevertheless there are real, objective factors that may exert an influence in this regard (Adler, 1996a; Orgler, 1963). Contemporary Adlerians (e.g., Stein & Edwards, 1998) group these factors into three categories, namely; physical handicaps, family dynamics and societal influences. These will be considered under their respective headings, below.

2.3.6.2 Physical handicaps

Children may be born with physical handicaps, or develop such handicaps in early childhood. Adler (1952, 1958, 1965) called such organic conditions organ inferiorities. Ill or otherwise handicapped children obviously have greater difficulty in meeting the demands of the environment than healthy children. Moreover, they may compare themselves to healthy children and adults, and decide that they are inferior by comparison. Physical problems can lead to a healthy striving for compensation although

when the sense of inferiority is too great, the result may be an inferiority complex (Adler, 1958, 1970; Olson & Hergenhahn, 2010). In this regard Adler (1956) said that: *“In the functioning of constitutionally inferior organs, the impression of insecurity increases due to the greater tension towards the demands of the external environment, and the low self-estimation of the child ... brings about a permanent inferiority feeling”* (p. 11).

Adler originally based his entire system of thought on the concept of organ inferiority and the corresponding drive towards overcoming this inferiority. In 1910, however, he shifted his emphasis from actual organ inferiority to subjective inferiority, and took up a position against the drive psychology that he had initially advocated (Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956; Olson & Hergenhahn, 2010). Disease or physical handicaps then, became factors which were likely to influence development but the degree to which they did so, and contributed to an inferiority complex, depended upon the individual and his or her attitude towards such a handicap. As Adler (1952) stated:

A given defect does not always lead to the same result. There is no necessary cause and effect relation between a physical imperfection and a bad style of life ... it is not the physical defect which causes the bad results: it is the patient's attitude which is responsible. That is why for the individual psychologist mere physical defects or exclusive physical causality does not exist, but only mistaken attitudes towards physical situations. (pp. 71-72)

2.3.6.3 Family dynamics

Under the general rubric of family dynamics there are two factors which are significant. They are parenting styles, and a child's position in the family. Families constitute the primary social environment for growing children, and they are the context in which they begin to learn the rules and customs of society, and to form an opinion of themselves and the world (Adler, 1958; Mosak, 1984). The attitudes of parents towards children are influential in this respect, and there are two parenting styles in particular that may lead to the development of a sense of inferiority. They are *pampering* and *neglect* (Adler, 1965, 1970, 1996a). As indicated previously, the prototype of individuals'

relations with the broader society is the mother-infant relationship. The chief task of mothers is to encourage infants to co-operate with others, and therefore to develop social interest (Adler, 1956, 1970; Orgler, 1963). If mothers fail in this task, problems may arise in later life. For example, if mothers bind children to themselves exclusively, children will not learn to co-operate with others. If they or other care-givers indulge children's every whim, then children will expect always to be the centre of attention, and will expect only to receive and never to give (Adler, 1956, 1958; Olson & Hergenhahn, 2010). Such attitudes may lead to discouragement later on in life, when individuals are exposed to a society that places demands on them and has no interest in gratifying all their desires. Moreover such pampered children do not learn to function autonomously since they are dependent on others and do not master skills that are essential to lead a healthy life (Adler, 1996a; Stein & Edwards, 1998).

Children who are neglected or abused experience very little empathy or encouragement in their family of origin, and may feel worthless and discouraged (Adler, 1996a; Olson & Hergenhahn, 2010). Furthermore, if they experience their primary care givers as indifferent, uncaring or cruel they may come to view the rest of society with mistrust. This is not an attitude ideally suited to foster co-operation and a sense of cosmic harmony. Abuse and neglect in early relationships therefore do not encourage the development of social interest (Stein & Edwards, 1998; Wolfe, 1932).

Adler (1952) insisted that no two children, even in the same family, ever grew up in exactly the same situation or psychological climate. His beliefs in this regard accorded with those of many object relations theorists, particularly Winnicott (1990) who stated that: *"For the five children in a family there are five families. It does not require a psychoanalyst to see that these five families need not resemble each other, and are certainly not identical"* (p.132). A particularly influential factor in the development of the life style is the position of a child in the constellation of children, or the birth order (Adler, 1952; Orgler, 1963). Adlerians believe that certain behaviour patterns can be associated with particular positions in the family. First born children, for example, are the centre of attention in the family until a sibling is born. Thereafter they find themselves

dethroned and may not enjoy the change of situation at all. This can engender a sense of tragedy that affects their prototypical life style. They may spend the rest of their lives trying to recapture the privilege of their past lives. Second children normally have older siblings as a pacemaker. They may respond by striving to surpass and conquer them, and second children are often ambitious achievers. If, however, older siblings are perceived as exceptionally accomplished, second children may become discouraged and withdraw from the competition. Such discouragement could form the basis for the development of an inferiority complex in later life. Only children are sometimes pampered and spoiled. They remain the centre of attention and, never having to share with siblings, may not learn to co-operate with others. These are examples of only a few possible outcomes. Adlerians are at pains to point out however, that what is most influential is children's psychological rather than ordinal positions, and the meaning they ascribe to these positions. Birth order suggests the possibility of certain traits developing but does not act in a deterministic, causal fashion (Adler, 1952; Carlson et al., 2006; Orgler, 1963). Parents, for example, may ameliorate the difficulties associated with a particular position, and may foster co-operation rather than a competitive climate. This can prevent the development of characteristics often associated with birth order positions (Stein & Edwards, 1998).

2.3.6.4 Societal influences

Adler (1952) believed that people could not be understood without taking into account the social contexts in which they lived. Individual psychologists hold that societal factors outside the family can influence individuals' views of themselves and the world. Social discrimination linked to poverty, ethnicity, gender, religion or educational level can exacerbate feelings of inferiority (Adler, 1965; Carlson et al., 2006; Stein & Edwards, 1998). Of particular concern to Adler in this regard was his culture's over-valuation of masculinity, and its devaluation of women (Adler, 1952, 1956, 1965). He regarded this as the: "... *arch evil of our culture* ..." (Adler, 1956, p. 55). It is interesting to note that Rollo May (1991) believed that it was the different attitudes towards women

held respectively by Adler and Freud that constituted one of the main reasons for Adler's withdrawal from the Freudian group:

Freud had taken a condescending attitude toward women, using the Victorian method of flattery; he referred to them as the "fair sex", the "tender ones", and on that basis he understandably could never find an answer to his question, What do women want? Adler, on the contrary, said many times in different ways that "Civilization will never be complete as long as one half of the people in it are considered inferior". (p. 289)

Orgler (1963) stated that such popular phrases as *the strong sex* and *the weak sex* indicated the degree to which femininity was associated with weakness and inferiority, and masculinity with strength and superiority. She believed that the view of boys as worth more than girls, entrenched as it was in the culture, contributed to women's sense of inferiority. The Adlerian psychologist, Wolfe (1932), expressed similar sentiments. He stated:

The patriarchal system of considering women as the inferior of men naturally wreaks its worst effects on the growing girl ... If you are a girl the feeling that you are doomed from the very beginning to an inferior role in life is not calculated to develop a courageous spirit in you (p. 60)

The low estimation in which women were generally regarded by society then, contributed to their sense of inadequacy, and could lead to an inferiority complex. When the concomitant striving for superiority revealed psychological difficulties, the manifestation of which included women protesting against their feminine roles, this was known as the *masculine protest*. The masculine protest was described as a cluster of certain over-compensatory character traits that might involve women engaging in so-called manly behaviour, or the unconscious desire to be a man (Adler, 1956). Ansbacher and Ansbacher (1956) drew an important distinction between the way in which Adler originally used the term masculine protest, and the meaning that the term subsequently came to hold. Originally Adler used masculine protest to describe the central dynamic principle of his psychology, and it referred, in a general way, to the striving for

superiority in compensation for feeling inferior. Later the definition of the term was reserved for the more restricted sense in which it was explained above.

The emphasis placed by society on masculinity may also be detrimental to males. As Wolfe (1932) pointed out: “*The burden of proving his complete masculinity is not easy for every boy to bear*” (p. 60). Over-valuing masculinity creates high expectations for boys and men, and when they cannot meet them, their sense of inferiority increases (Stein & Edwards, 1998).

Any one, or a combination, of the factors mentioned above may influence individuals to adopt a negative view of themselves or the world. All normal individuals feel a sense of inadequacy and inferiority feelings, but where the environment is unfavourable the sense of inferiority may be greatly intensified, and individuals discouraged. This is known as an inferiority complex, and is merely an exaggerated form of the normal sense of inferiority (Adler, 1956; Orgler, 1963). In all people the sense of inferiority leads to an upward striving for superiority. When the sense of inferiority is exaggerated and an inferiority complex is present, so too is the compensatory striving for superiority exaggerated (Adler, 1952, 1996a, 1996b). The exaggerated striving for superiority is called the superiority complex. The superiority complex and the inferiority complex occur together in the same individual; indeed the superiority complex normally covers or conceals the inferiority complex. The apparent paradox of these contradictory tendencies, that is, the co-existence of the two ostensibly antithetical complexes, is resolved when it is noted that they represent merely an exaggerated form of the normal sense of inferiority, and the concomitant striving for superiority which is found in all people (Adler, 1952, 1958).

2.3.6.5 The goal of personal superiority

Healthy individuals temper their striving for superiority with social interest. Those in whom the sense of inferiority is exaggerated, however, tend not to be socially interested. The superiority complex involves a personal goal of superiority that does not

include concern for others. Such individuals lack the courage to meet the demands placed on them by society, and to overcome difficulties. Instead they are concerned with shoring up their own deep sense of inadequacy by pursuing a fictional goal of superiority aimed at proving that they are better than others (Adler, 1952, 1996a; Stein & Edwards, 1998).

While healthy people have a goal of superiority that includes the welfare of others, discouraged individuals are more self-centered and operate according to an idiosyncratic, private intelligence (Adler, 1952, 1958, 1965, 1970, 1996a, 1996b; Carlson et al., 2006; Stein & Edwards, 1998). Adler drew a clear distinction between private logic or private sense on the one hand and common sense on the other. Common sense was associated with reason, or sense that could be shared. Private sense entailed a personal, private view of the world, and people who operated according to such private logic would continuously be attempting to assert themselves and enhance their own sense of superiority by disadvantaging or injuring others (Adler, 1956). He further clarified the difference between normal and unhealthy individuals in this regard:

We maintain that the ideal, typical, ultimate purpose of a human being, irrespective of health or sickness, is to solve his life problems. The neurotic, however, has set for himself entirely different tasks ... The neurotic has, of course, a notion of the frame of reference of normal life, for every one knows what the demands of life require of one. Yet despite this knowledge, his behavior takes place according to another frame. Here then we have two frames of reference. The one is the normal, the socially average, which includes logic and all reason, and within which we would expect those movements of an individual which we call normal. The other is the neurotic, a private frame of reference. (Adler, 1956, p. 251)

Private sense, differing as it does from common sense, constitutes what Adlerians call the antithetical schema of apperception. The schema of apperception, as indicated earlier, refers to the way in which individuals come to see the world; a lens that is developed early in life and which subsequently forms their perceptions. The antithetical schema of apperception is the lens that psychologically disturbed persons use, in a rigid fashion, in pursuit of their exaggerated goals of superiority (Adler, 1958; Carson et al.,

2006; Stein & Edwards, 1998). The schema of apperception in healthy individuals and the antithetical schema of apperception in unhealthy persons differ. In the latter case it is characterised by an accentuated dogmatised guiding fiction that characterises unhealthy thinking:

The neurotically disposed individual has a sharply schematizing, strongly abstracting mode of apperception. Thus he groups inner as well as outer events according to a strictly antithetical schema ... and admits no degrees in between. This mistake in neurotic thinking, which is identical with exaggerated abstraction, is also caused by the neurotic safeguarding tendency. This tendency needs sharply defined guiding lines, ideals, and bogeys in which the neurotic believes, in order to choose, foresee, and take action. In this way he becomes estranged from concrete reality, where psychological elasticity is needed rather than rigidity (Adler, 1956, p. 248)

2.3.6.6 Psychological maladjustment and the life plan

Disturbed individuals, like normal people, live life according to a fiction that enables them to free themselves from a sense of inferiority by initiating a compensatory striving for superiority. The fiction or goal and concomitant striving acts as a safeguarding measure against inferiority feelings. In normal individuals where the sense of inferiority is not too strong; the upward striving follows the impetus of the guiding fiction. In less healthy individuals the process is identical except that the guiding fiction is dogmatised and rigid (Stein & Edwards, 1998). The “*neurotic guiding line*” (Adler, 1956, p. 108) originates in childhood with feelings of discouragement, humiliation and inadequacy. Its aim is a degree of superiority much greater than that in healthy people. All the persons’ faculties, emotions and actions are subordinate to this guiding aim:

The constitutional inferiority and similarly effective childhood situations give rise to a feeling of inferiority which demands a compensation in the sense of enhancement of the self-esteem. Here the fictional, final purpose of the striving for power gains enormous influence and draws all psychological factors into its direction. (Adler. 1956, p. 111)

There is therefore no less unity of the lifestyle in the upward striving of unhealthy persons than is evident in healthy individuals, although their respective goals will differ.

2.3.7 Safeguarding mechanisms

2.3.7.1 The purpose of symptoms

Psychologically disturbed individuals, with an exaggerated sense of inferiority, set their compensatory goals of superiority so high that they have to protect themselves from them, as well as from threats to an already tenuous or fragile sense of self-esteem. A number of safeguarding strategies are employed to this end (Adler, 1952, 1970; Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956; Carlson et al., 2006; Olson & Hergenhahn, 2010; Stein & Edwards, 1998). Perhaps the most important of these are psychological symptoms which, broadly speaking, have two functions: they protect the self by acting as excuses, and they help the person accrue power and influence (Adler, 1956, 1996a, 1996b).

Although Freud had clearly ascribed both meaning and motive to symptoms (e.g., Freud, 1949), Adler's insistence on their purpose and use by disturbed individuals in creative ways, in the service of the upward striving, represented a radical departure from previous thinking. According to Adlerians symptoms are not the result of psychological disturbance. Rather they are strategies employed by people to obtain their goals (Adler, 1996a, 1996b; Carlson et al., 2006; Lemire, 2007; Olson & Hergenhahn, 2010; Rasmussen & Dover, 2006; Stein & Edwards, 1998). According to Adler, people did not suffer the shock of traumatic experiences, but rather made out of them whatever suited their purposes. He stated: "... *neurosis is: the utilization of shock experiences for the protection of the threatened prestige*" (Adler, 1996b, p. 328). Maladjusted individuals select symptoms in accordance with their life plans and goals of superiority, and develop them: "... *until they impress him [consciously] as real obstacles. Behind his barricade of symptoms the patient feels hidden and secure*" (Adler, 1956, p. 265). They function as excuses for people not to achieve their goals, or to solve life's problems, while at the same time protecting self-esteem (Adler, 1956, 1996a, 1996b; Ansbacher & Ansbacher,

1956). Essentially they enable people to convince themselves and others that they would be able to achieve a particular goal were it not for this troublesome problem. The symptoms make sense according to discouraged individuals' private logic, yet they always constitute a retreat or flight from responsibility or challenges (Bottoms, 1957; Carlson et al., 2006).

Symptoms are also used in the striving for superiority by influencing other people. Depressed people, for example, might be the centre of attention in their families. Agoraphobic patients may always have family members accompany them when they ventures out of doors. As Adler (1952) rather drily pointed out, weak individuals may wield a substantial amount of power. He stated:

What can a person not accomplish when he is suffering from an anxiety neurosis! He may be constantly striving to have someone accompany him; if so, he succeeds in his purpose. He is supported by others and gets others to be occupied with him. ... Other people must serve! In getting other people to serve, the neurotic becomes superior. (p. 219)

The above quotation also gives an indication of the extent to which symptoms exist within an inter-relational matrix. For Adler symptoms were, by definition, interpersonal. For example:

In the investigation of a neurotic style of life we must always suspect an opponent, and note who suffers most because of the patient's condition. Usually this is a member of the family. There is always this element of concealed accusation in neurosis. (Adler, 1956, p. 270)

It must be pointed out that the selection and use of symptoms is generally not a conscious process. It must also be stressed that individuals pay a price for symptoms, and really suffer (Adler, 1952, 1996b). As Adler remarked, people would rather tolerate this suffering than have their sense of worthlessness disclosed: "... We see now what a neurotic state really is. It is an attempt to avoid a greater evil, an attempt to maintain the semblance of value at any price, and paying the costs" (Adler, 1956, p. 266).

It is not only circumscribed psychopathological symptoms that are used to safeguard against feelings of inferiority. More general character traits and interpersonal styles are also employed to this end (Adler, 1956; Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956; Olson & Hergenhahn, 2010). Similarly, physical symptoms may be incorporated into the lifestyle and used in pursuit of the life goal. This is entirely consistent with the Adlerian emphasis on the unity of the personality and holism (Bottomo, 1957; Fall, 2005; Sperry, 1999). As Adler stated, “... *physical and psychic factors are always mixed together and influence each other reciprocally*” (1996b, p. 325).

2.3.7.2 Safeguarding through aggression

Aggression is one of the forms that the striving for superiority might take when an individual is discouraged and has little social interest. Aggression may manifest itself in a number of ways, some of which may be quite subtle. The three considered most important by Adlerians; namely depreciation, accusation and self-accusation (Carlson et al., 2006) will be considered here.

Depreciation refers to the tendency to over-value own accomplishments while disparaging those of others, thereby enhancing the self-esteem of discouraged individuals (Carlson et al., 2006; Stein & Edwards, 1998). Depreciation generally takes two forms. The first is idealisation. This refers to the setting of such high standards for others that no human being could possibly meet them. Idealisation constitutes an illusory standard which discouraged persons carry around, and against which they measure the attributes of others, and always find them wanting. It offers an excuse to depreciate others constantly, thereby enabling individuals to feel somewhat better by comparison. It may serve as an excuse to avoid the commitments of real life, such as relationships, because no person is right or suitable (Adler, 1956; Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956; Olson & Hergenhahn, 2010). The second form which depreciation can take is solicitude. This refers to the tendency to interfere in the lives of others, and to treat them as if they could not manage alone. People exhibiting this attitude worry constantly about others, continuously proffer help, and generally take charge of others' lives. They act as if others are incapable of

coping without them, thereby proving to themselves their superiority over others (Adler, 1956; Olson & Hergenhahn, 2010).

Accusation is another form which aggression can take, and it is one that Adler (1956) believed was present to some degree in all mental disturbances. Accusation refers to the tendency of discouraged individuals to blame other people or fate for their difficulties or shortcomings. This enables them to shore up a fragile self-esteem, since responsibility for failure is abdicated (Carlson et al., 2006; Olson & Hergenhahn, 2010; Stein & Edwards, 1998).

A third form of aggression employed by discouraged individuals is self-accusation. This entails self-reproach, self-deprecation, feelings of guilt and even suicide. Such self-recrimination can lead, paradoxically, to a sense of virtue aimed at depreciating the environment (Carlson et al., 2006; Stein & Edwards, 1998). There is a hidden accusation in such self-reproach, and it is aimed at hurting others or gaining attention (Adler, 1956).

2.3.7.3 Safeguarding through distance

Maladjusted individuals or, in Adlerian terms, those who are discouraged and lacking social interest, inevitably safeguard their self-esteem by distancing themselves from the demands and challenges of life (Olson & Hergenhahn, 2010). This they can do in a number of ways, but all involve what Adler (1956, 1996a) called an attitude of hesitation, designed by the person to seclude “... *himself from the world and reality in various degrees*” (Adler, 1956, p. 274). By avoiding the challenges of reality, by narrowing their sphere of activity, individuals avoid threats to their self-esteem and therefore protect themselves from the possibility of failure. This tendency, as well as the inclination of discouraged individuals to limit themselves to those activities at which they are sure of succeeding, has also been called the exclusion tendency (Adler, 1956, 1996b; Carlson et al., 2006; Stein & Edwards, 1998). An invariable aspect of distancing, and one that is present to some degree in all psychological maladjustment, is anxiety (Adler,

1956). The tendency to avoid the difficulties of life or to engage in distancing strategies is amplified by anxiety. The most important of these distancing strategies namely moving backwards, standing still, hesitation and the construction of obstacles, will be considered below.

Moving backwards entails disorders or symptoms such as conversion disorders, agoraphobia, anorexia, psychosis, suicidal ideation or suicide, and certain physical conditions such as asthma. These constitute a retreat from the world, and provide an excuse for withdrawing from social and personal obligations (Adler, 1956, 1996a; Carlson et al., 2006).

Standing still involves a certain paralysis, almost like stage fright, which keeps the individual, metaphorically at least, rooted to the spot and prevents the person: “... *from moving closer toward the reality of life, from facing the truth, from taking a stand, from permitting a test or a decision regarding his value*” (Adler, 1956, p. 274). Memory loss, insomnia, compulsions and impotence are examples of symptoms which may serve this purpose (Adler, 1956).

Hesitation entails a degree of vacillation when faced with a problematic situation. It is frequently characterized by compulsions, which lead to the postponing of decisions or action until it is too late. It is typified by individuals’ belief that they would do very well if they did not have this or that particular problem (Adler, 1996a).

The construction of obstacles is a strategy employed by people who are often quite functional, and who often display a good deal of social interest. Inferiority feelings are present, however, and symptoms are used to excuse failure if this occurs. Such people do not try to avoid life tasks, but hold symptoms in reserve in case they do not succeed. These symptoms are usually not severe, and might include insomnia, mild compulsions, fatigue or headaches. If such persons succeed at life’s tasks, the presence of the symptoms enhances their sense of achievement and therefore superiority, because they can pride themselves on overcoming in spite of the illness or problems (Adler, 1956;

Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956). It is important to point out, once again, that while all of the symptoms and safeguarding strategies mentioned above constitute a retreat from life's demands, the movement of individuals towards their goals, and their upward striving, never ends.

2.3.7.4 Psychosis

For Adler (1956) the dynamics of psychosis did not differ fundamentally from those of the less severe forms of psychological disturbance. The same underlying dynamic unity of psychic life is present. Psychotic individuals are striving for superiority and attempting to overcome their sense of inferiority, and psychotic symptoms act in the service of this upward striving. According to Carlson et al. (2006):

The main issue for these individuals is an early and pervasive training in escapism. Fantasy becomes more satisfying than reality and, given their potential organic inferiorities, once they begin to consistently withdraw from external stimulation and follow their internal cues, it becomes harder and harder for them to come back. (p. 95)

The most significant difference between psychosis and other mental disorders is that, in the case of the former, individuals are more inclined to retreat into and utilise idiosyncratic logic. They have very little common sense, and display little or no social interest (Carlson et al., 2006). The difference then, is essentially one of degree. A summary of the key concepts presented above is presented in Table 1.

2.4 The onset of mental disturbance

Psychological disturbance has its roots in a deep sense of inferiority or inadequacy that develops, for a number of reasons, early in life (Adler, 1996b). Individuals with an underlying inferiority complex may function quite well at certain times and in certain places. However, when they are subject to particular demands that

Table 1

Key concepts

Concept	Definition
Sense of inferiority	A sense of being inferior, deficient or lacking in some respect.
Life goal	Also known as the ideal. A fictional goal of superiority that is set to assuage inferiority feelings and which orients people in the world.
Striving for superiority	The efforts made by people to achieve their goals.
Style of life	The particular way in which individuals pursue their goals and approach the main tasks of life, the consistent pattern of their striving.
Schema of apperception	Individuals' views of themselves and the world. It can be likened to lenses through which people experience the world. In maladjusted people this view or perspective is characterized by rigidity of perception and idiosyncratic logic, and is called the antithetical schema of apperception.
Social interest	Co-operation with and commitment to other human beings. It is based on a capacity for empathy and involves meeting the challenges presented by the need to live in society, work and love. It entails making a contribution to society.
Inferiority complex	Also referred to as discouragement. It entails an increased sense of inferiority, idiosyncratic logic and a corresponding decrease in social interest. Symptoms are employed to safeguard against threats to a fragile sense of self-worth.

are perceived as threatening, they may take recourse to symptoms to protect their fragile sense of self-worth or unconscious ideals (Adler, 1956; Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956).

Demands become stressful when they are taxing to a degree to which individuals perceive themselves as unable to cope, and when they require adaptation. As Carlson et al. (2006) have put it, “... *challenges become stressful when core convictions are confronted*” (p.91). As previously indicated in section 2.3.6.5, psychologically maladjusted persons are characterised by an antithetical schema of apperception which entails rigidity and inflexibility. Adaptation is not easy for them, and they resort to safeguarding mechanisms to protect a vulnerable self-image rather than meeting life's challenges (Adler, 1956, 1996a, 1996b). It is important to note that whether a situation is threatening or not depends on individuals' interpretations (Ansbacher & Ansbacher,

1956). It is also worth repeating that individuals may function quite well in certain areas or situations, but exhibit symptoms in others. It all depends on whether the situation is seen as a threat to an individual's self-worth, and as thwarting the attempts to achieve the life goal (Carlson et al., 2006; Mosak, 1984).

2.5 A psychology of health

2.5.1 Holism

The Adlerian emphasis on the unity of the person and the consistency of the life style is one of the reasons that Individual Psychology has been called holistic (Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956; Gold, 2005). Holism is a concept that was developed by Jan Smuts (1926). He coined the term to designate what he felt was the fundamental tendency of the universe to create natural wholes or wholeness. Holism, in stressing the unity of the personality, stands in opposition to dualism, determinism and reductionism. It goes beyond an exclusive focus on individuals however, and sees the inner functioning of humans as inextricably linked to the environments in which they exist. It therefore emphasises the interdependency of the self and the external world. Holism posits that humans are creative agents who play active and purposeful roles in their own development (Dreikurs Ferguson, 2000; Mansager, 2000; Sperry, 1999). From this perspective, the health of individuals cannot be considered separately from the health of the society in which they live (Ansbacher, 1961, 1994b).

The respective works of Adler (1952, 1958, 1965) and Smuts (1926) show many similarities of thought. The two men corresponded and both expressed admiration for the others' work (Ansbacher, 1961). The issue of holism will be revisited in section 2.6, where Adler's ideas are compared to a number of contemporary viewpoints concerning illness.

2.5.2 Social psychology

The concept of social interest and the emphasis on social adjustment as an indicator of mental health gives an indication of the extent to which Individual Psychology is actually a social psychology. Adlerians believe that individuals are socially embedded and cannot be understood outside of their social contexts (Adler, 1958, 1965; Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956; Carlson et al., 2006; Stein & Edwards, 1998). Adler, for example, stated that since the style of life was developed so early in life, it could be understood only with reference to children's caregivers. A child, he said: "... *has interlocking relations with the mother and family which could never be understood if we confined our analysis to the periphery of the child's physical being in space*" (Adler, 1952, p. 59). He also believed that broader societal conditions influenced individuals' development, sometimes negatively (Adler, 1952, 1956), as previously indicated in 2.3.6.4

2.5.3 Positive psychology

The Adlerian emphasis on social interest, the capacity of humans for healthy growth, and the creative role of individuals in their development (e.g., Adler, 1952, 1956, 1958; Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956; Lemire, 2007; Stein & Edwards, 1998), is significant because it aligns Individual Psychology with the *positive psychology* movement. Positive psychology is a contemporary endeavour that distances itself from what it sees as the traditional focus of psychology on weakness and psychopathology (Snyder & Lopez, 2002). It emphasises the positive qualities of people, and stresses a balanced perspective that includes a focus on healthy individuals and society (Seligman, 2002). In fact, as Carlson et al. (2006) have pointed out, Adler might well be considered one of the forefathers of positive psychology, even if this movement has failed to recognise his contributions. They also suggested that Adlerian theory might serve the movement well by offering a unifying theoretical framework, something that some authors (e.g., Cowen & Kilmer, 2002) believed was lacking in this approach.

2.6 Adlerian theory and contemporary thinking

Adler's views concerning the psychobiological unity of the individual and the creative use of symptoms as part of the lifestyle are worth considering in the light of contemporary theory. It is important to do so for two reasons. In the first place they are provocatively contrary to the dominant model of healthcare (Engel, 1977; Nikelly, 2005), and in the second, they have immediate relevance for this study since Olive was plagued by ill health, and particularly by asthma, for most of her life (Schoeman, 1991).

The dominant paradigm in healthcare and medical research for the past century has been the *biomedical model*. According to this model disease is reducible to biological causes, and health is regarded as beginning and ending with the individual. The model is also characterised by a distinction between psychological and physiological variables, the so called mind-body or mind-brain dichotomy (Nikelly, 2005; Sperry, 1999). A concerted attack on this traditional dualistic model from within the medical profession began, in 1977, with the publication of Engel's now classic article entitled: *The need for a new medical model: A challenge for biomedicine*. Engel pointed out the inadequacy of a purely physical model of disease in accounting for illness. He said that while signs and symptoms of a disease might be present, "... *how these are experienced by any one individual, and how they affect him, all require consideration of psychological, social, and cultural factors, not to mention other concurrent or complicating biological factors*" (Engel, 1977, p. 132). He also indicated that psychological and social conditions were significant factors in determining who developed disease in the first place, a point that has been confirmed by subsequent researchers (e.g., Bloomberg & Chen, 2005). Engel called for the adoption of a *biopsychosocial model* that would consider biological, psychological, social, and environment factors, as well as the reciprocal relations between these factors, when trying to understand patients. In referring to the "*psychobiological unity of man*" (1977, p. 133) he was, in short, asking for patients to be approached holistically.

Other thinkers have echoed Engels' views. Eisenberg and Kleinman (1981) for example, stated that:

The factors that determine who is and who is not a patient can only be understood by taking non-biological variables into account; patienthood is a social state, rather than simply a biological one. Psychosocial variables influence, not only the social and personal meaning of illness, but also the risk of becoming ill, the nature of the response to the illness and its prognosis. (p. 12)

Similarly Good and Delvecchio Good (1981) made the point that cultural, social and psychological factors influenced not only individuals' experiences of a biochemical condition, but also its clinical manifestation. According to them, the most critical aspect of any disease was the meaning that patients attached to it. Lewis (1981) concurred. He stated that people perceived the world selectively and imposed meaning on it by relating it to themselves and their past experiences. For this reason symptoms of disease or pain would be experienced differently by different people. In this respect he sounded very much like Adler (1956, 1958, 1970). Further similarity to Adler's views is revealed in his belief that there was a voluntary element to symptoms, and that symptoms might serve a culturally mediated purpose.

Perhaps the greatest challenge to the biomedical model has come from practitioners and researchers concerned with pain management. Traditionally pain was conceptualised in terms of *specificity theory*. According to this theory pain was an inevitable sensory response to tissue damage, and there was a simple, fixed relationship between tissue damage and pain perception (Cambell, Clauw & Keefe, 2003; Loeser, 1982; Loeser & Melzack, 1999). This model, however, proved to be inadequate both for understanding and treating pain. Melzack and Wall (1965) proposed the best known alternative model, namely *gate control theory*. In terms of this model the brain was no longer seen as merely the passive recipient of sensory stimuli from damaged tissue, but played an active role in pain perception by means of descending modulatory signals that could either moderate or increase pain sensation. Melzack (1999) has subsequently revised this theory and has proposed a *neuromatrix model* of pain. According to this

model, pain experiences are the result of a neural network programme, one that is determined not only by genetic influences, but also by sensory, cognitive and affective experiences that are unique to each individual. Pain specialists are increasingly accepting the role of non-biological factors in the experience of pain. Sullivan (2001), for example, stated that:

We will never escape the dualism of mental versus physical pain as long as we see pain as occurring completely within the biological individual. Interpersonal and social factors are essential to a coherent concept of pain as both mental and physical. (p. 146)

Sullivan not only rejected the traditional biomedical model of pain, but emphasised the interpersonal nature of pain symptomology. Pain symptoms, he believed, were socially negotiated. Moreover he suggested, along with Wittgenstein (1980), that the expression of pain symptomology served a purpose for the afflicted individual. What Melzack (1999), Sullivan (2001) and a great many others (e.g., Cambell et al., 2003; Loeser, 1982; Nielson & Weir, 2001; Sutton, Porter & Keefe, 2002) are calling for is a biopsychosocial model for understanding and treating pain.

Research in the field of asthma has yielded equivocal results in studies aimed at establishing the relationship between asthma, stress and emotional variables (Bienenstock, 2002; Huovinen, Kaprio & Koskenvuo, 2001; Rietveld, Everaerd & Creer, 2000). Researchers are, however, becoming increasingly aware of the complex interactions between emotional factors and immunological and inflammatory processes, and are calling for research that considers biological, psychological and social variables in the aetiology of asthma. Bienenstock, for example, has called for carefully designed experiments that may allow investigators to: “... *become more insightful as to how factors in our environment such as our complex psychosocial circumstances and emotions can interact with our genetic and biological makeup to promote, cause or even ameliorate physical distress and disease*” (2002, p. 1035). Similarly Bloomberg and Chen (2005) have advocated a biopsychosocial approach to understanding asthma. They stated:

Continued investigation emphasized cellular and molecular explanations for the underlying pathophysiology that is responsible for the exacerbations and persistence of asthma activity ... yet there is much interest in the interface and reciprocal interactions between biology of asthma, behavior, stress, and the immune system. (p. 83)

What all of these authors, from different disciplines and areas of interest, have in common is an objection to the reductionism of the biomedical model, and the advocating of a holistic approach to understanding and treating people in distress. They are espousing a position very similar to that of Adler. It is therefore not surprising that many contemporary Adlerians have echoed their views. Fall (2005) for example, in proposing an Adlerian conceptual framework for *somatisation disorder*, pointed to the way in which psychological and physiological variables exerted a reciprocal influence on each other. He stated that what was most important about physical symptoms for understanding an individual in totality was the way in which they were perceived and utilised as elements of the life style. Sperry (1999) rejected the dualistic model of biomedicine with its emphasis on a mind-brain split, and advocated a biopsychosocial approach to therapy. He stated:

Because it is holistic and comprehensive, this model differs from reductionistic perspective such as the systems model, the biomedical model, the psychodynamic model, and the behavioural model. Rather, the biopsychosocial model integrates several concepts from many of these models. (Sperry, 1999, p. 234)

He also suggested that the biopsychosocial model had its roots in Adlerian theory and praxis. Nikelly (2005) has advocated Individual Psychology as offering a broader scope for therapy than traditional psychiatric practice, with its organic orientation and heavy reliance on medication as the primary mode of treatment. In his opinion:

Adlerian therapy can be seen as countering this trend. It is neither reductionistic nor psychodynamic but multidimensional, and it can be integrated into a unified biopsychosocial, holistic, and teleological perspective. This form of care addresses all levels of functioning synergistically in relation to the environment and to the communal nature of

life: biological, psychological, social and life-meaning spirituality. (2005, p. 330)

It is clear from the above then, that Adler's views, not only regarding the psychobiological unity of the individual, but also with respect to the interpersonal nature of symptoms and their use in the lifestyle, are finding increasing support and popularity amongst contemporary theorists and practitioners from divergent fields.

2.7 Epistemological considerations

2.7.1 Existential phenomenology

Individual Psychology has been associated, historically, with the *existential phenomenological* tradition in philosophy and psychology (Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956; Shelley, 2000). This is largely because of Adlerians' use of the phenomenological method, which entails a focus on their clients' subjective views of the world, and their insistence that theory neither impede nor prejudice the understanding of clients. Early Adlerians for example, were always careful, when expounding their theory, to issue a caveat and warn that things could always be otherwise (e.g., Adler, 1956; Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956; Orgler, 1963). In this regard they adopted the phenomenological reduction or *epoché*, a disciplined bracketing of assumptions that impede description or understanding (Brooke, 1991). However, Individual Psychology is very close to the existential position for a number of other reasons. As Ansbacher (1959, 1994a) has pointed out, both represent an objection to, and a movement away from: "*mechanism and atomism, toward a holistic, organismic, phenomenological and idiographic psychology*" (p. 483). Ansbacher referred to Binswanger's suggestion that the term *existence* be used synonymously with the word *life* (e.g., Binswanger, 1958, 1963), and engaged in an exercise where he substituted the word *life* for *existence* in existential texts, and *existence* for *life* in Adlerian texts, thereby demonstrating the similarities between the two.

Hjertaas (2004) compared the theory and practice of Individual Psychology with the existential analysis of Binswanger (1958) and concluded that the approaches were similar and that they complemented each other. He found, in Binswanger's works, parallels with a number of Adlerian concepts. These included the style of life, elevated goals in psychological disturbance, psychopathology as a retreat from life, social interest and its absence in psychological disturbance, private logic and its association with psychological ill-health, the essentially social nature of human beings, and a teleological perspective on human development. He suggested that:

The Existential school has a valuable body of literature for the Adlerian to read because it offers a similar viewpoint that is broad enough to expand and enrich that of Individual Psychology. The two approaches truly complement and enhance each other, both becoming strengthened through the comparison. (Hjertaas, 2004, p. 405)

2.7.2 Idealistic positivism

Shelley (2000) pointed to the increasing use, by Adlerians, of research methodologies based on positivism. He described positivism as the philosophical premise "... *that all sciences are united in their quest for objectivity, neutrality, reductionism, hierarchy, categories, and experimental control*" (p. 60). He argued that positivism was epistemologically inconsistent with Adler's original position, which stressed subjectivity rather than objectivity. Adlerians, he said, being phenomenologists and therefore subjectivists, could not coherently or sensibly also be positivists. Shelley, drawing on Ansbacher and Ansbacher (1956), described Adler's approach, based as it was on Vaihinger's neo-Kantian philosophy, as *idealistic positivism* (Kant, 1964; Vaihinger, 1925). Idealistic Positivism is based on the premise of "truth *as-if*" (Shelley, 2000, p. 65), and eschews pure positivism or a dogmatic advocacy of objectivism: "*Rather, idealistic positivism has a pragmatic element based upon notions of usefulness and experience that do not depend upon the assumption of fixed and universal truths*" (Shelley, 2000, p. 66).

2.7.3 Hermeneutics

Shelley (2000) also argued that Adlerian works could profitably be read in conjunction with *Gadamerian hermeneutics* (Gadamer, 1960, 1989), a phenomenologically based system of philosophy concerned with interpretation. He stated:

*There are several horizons upon which Individual Psychology and hermeneutics may form a fusion of horizons. Both are concerned with subjectivity and are thus phenomenological disciplines; both are concerned with interpretative understandings; adherents of both use dialogue as a key feature in generating questions – indeed both Individual Psychology and hermeneutics are deeply influenced by the styles adopted in the Socratic dialogues ... Adherents of both also recognize the power of prejudice, Adler through the concepts of private logic and mistaken notions (biased apperception) and Gadamer through the concept of historically based prejudices. Indeed, Ansbacher and Ansbacher's (1956) central positing of Individual Psychology as both an **understanding** and a **context** psychology is close in subject matter to Gadamer's central interests of understanding and historical situatedness. Moreover, there is a compatibility with Adler's long resistance to objectivism and Gadamer's central critique of positivism.* (Shelley, 2000, p. 69, emphasis in original)

2.7.4 Postmodernism

Adlerian theory and therapy resonates with a number of postmodern approaches such as constructivism and social constructionism, and a reading of Adler's works from these perspectives is becoming increasingly popular (e.g., Carlson et al., 2006; Scott, Kelley & Tolbert, 1995). Postmodernism is an epistemological stance that entails the questioning of the objectivist view, as well as challenging a rationalist approach to truth and any claims of absolute reality. Postmodernism instead offers a subjectivist and relativist perspective (Blatner, 1997). Constructivism views human beings as active agents creatively involved in co-constructing their own reality. Reality is, for the individual, a matter of perception, and perception is a function of a mind that is seen as an interactive system, operating on the world to organise sensory information in terms of

existing cognitive structures (Blatner, 1997; Scott et al., 1995; Watts, Peluso & Lewis, 2005). Adler's view of the centrality of cognitive structures such as guiding fictions, as well as his use of such concepts as the schema of apperception and the antithetical schema of apperception that organise perception and experience, place him very close to the constructivist position. Extreme or radical constructivists believe that there is no reality, only perception. It is clear, as indicated earlier when discussing the influence of Vaihinger (1925) on Individual Psychology, that Adler did not accept this view. According to Carlson et al. (2006) Adler's position is much closer to that of the existentially oriented constructivists who do not deny the existence of reality and the world, and who emphasise the interrelationship of people with the world, as did Vaihinger.

Social constructionism is an intellectual movement opposed to the traditional epistemological (modernist) view of reality as existing independently of people and their perceptions, and as represented by language. Rather, social constructionist perspectives assert that learning, psychological development and reality are socially embedded and are arrived at by a process that is fundamentally conversational and interrelational (Carlson et al., 2006). Social constructionism is particularly concerned with language, which "... is viewed not simply as a tool for communicating or mirroring back what we otherwise discover in our reality but is itself an important formative part of that reality ..." (Kerby, 1991, p. 2). Language then is seen as constitutive of reality rather than merely representative of it.

Associated with social constructionism is the growing emphasis, in psychology, on the role of narrative in development, and on narrative therapy in clinical practice. From the narrative position the self is not a prelinguistic given or entity, but rather a product of language. Particular attention is given to the stories that people develop and tell about themselves (Kerby, 1991). According to Disque and Bitter (1998):

We live "storied" lives. As humans we not only experience life directly through our senses, but we also transform it in an effort to make meaning out of what we experience. We live constantly with other human beings, and

as such, we frame all that we do in the context of social relationships. The ordering of the meaning we experience in our lives with others most often takes the form of a story or narrative about who we are; who others are; what we are worth to ourselves, others, and the world; and what conclusions, convictions, and ethical codes will guide us. (p. 431)

The narrative position, then, emphasizes the key role in development of the construction of a self-defining life story, or of multiple stories (McAdams, Josselson & Lieblich, 2006; Raggatt, 2006).

Narrative therapy focuses on the deconstruction of problematic narratives and the re-creation of preferred stories in the lives of people in distress (Schneider & Stone, 1998). Many Adlerians (e.g., Disque & Bitter, 1998; Hester, 2004; Schneider, 1998; Schneider & Stone, 1998) have embraced the narrative stance because they see it as having much in common with Adler's position. Disque and Bitter suggested that Adler anticipated the narrative trend because he was one of the first to recognise the significance of stories for the development of the lifestyle. Schneider and Stone have pointed to the autobiographical nature of Adler's concept of the lifestyle, which may in fact be regarded as a life script. Adlerian similarities to the narrative position have not been highlighted in this chapter yet, because they are more evident in the practice of Individual Psychology than in its theory. For example, Adlerian therapists and researchers typically ask clients to disclose their earliest memory as a key to understanding their lifestyles (e.g., Adler, 1956; Clark, 2005; Mwita, 2004). The assumption is not that this memory is factually correct, but rather that it is a construction that reveals aspects of the lifestyle (Adler, 1965). Hester (2004) has pointed to the similarities between Adler's position and that of narrative therapists in this regard by quoting both Adler, and White and Epston. Adler (1958) for example said that:

Out of the incalculable number of impressions which meet an individual, he chooses to remember only those which he feels ... have a bearing on his situation. Thus his memories represent his "Story of My Life"; a story he repeats to himself to warn him or comfort him, to keep him concentrated on his goal, to prepare him ... to meet the future with an already tested style of action. The use of memories to stabilize a mood can be plainly seen in

everyday life. If a man suffers a defeat and is discouraged by it, he recalls previous instances of defeat. (pp. 73-74)

Similarly, narrative therapists White and Epston (1990) stated:

The sense of meaning and continuity that is achieved through the storying of experience is gained at a price. A narrative can never encompass the full richness of our lived experience ... The structuring of narrative requires recourse to a selective process in which we prune, from our experience, those events that do not fit with the dominant stories that we and others have about us. (pp. 11-12)

Adlerian psychology then clearly has much in common with both constructivism and social constructionism. These two perspectives, however, differ in several fundamental ways, as Carlson et al. (2006) have pointed out. Constructivism in its extreme form is potentially individualistic and solipsistic, in that it posits a private reality divorced from the outside world. Moreover constructivism uses language in a structuralist way in that it views language as representational, and it has been criticised by social constructionists on these grounds. Social constructionism on the other hand, sees meaning as socially and linguistically created or constituted, and in its extreme form denies any form of individualism, or the possibility of individual agentic consciousness. In other words, social constructionism offers the possibility of emptying the self. Carlson et al. agreed with a number of theorists who see the Adlerian perspective as reconciling the divide between these two postmodern positions, and the Adlerian view as an integrative bridge that “... *might be usefully labeled **relational constructivism***” (p. 29, emphasis in original). This is because Adlerian psychology accepts the socially-embedded nature of meaning and the situatedness of human beings, as well as the personal agency, creativity, and capacity for self-reflection of individuals within society. They stated:

The Adlerian perspective, in agreement with Martin and Sugarman (1997), states that the individual arises from the social but is not the same as, nor is it reducible to, the social. Adlerian theory is a holistic perspective, one that does not view humans in a reductionistic manner. The Adlerian approach

affirms that knowledge is socially embedded and relationally distributed but does not empty the self. (2006, p. 30)

2.8 Evolution of Adlerian ideas and their contemporary status

2.8.1 Early theory

In 1902 Adler was invited by Freud to join his study circle, later to become the Viennese Psychoanalytic Society. Adler had already formulated some of the ideas that were to be developed into the tenets of Individual Psychology (Milliren et al., 2003). Adler seems never to have been a pupil or disciple of Freud's. Their ideas appear to have differed from the start, and it was these differences that were to lead to the acrimonious split that later occurred (Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956).

Adler's early theory emphasised physiologically based drives (Adler, 1912, 1921). He postulated the *aggression drive*, the super-ordinate force that provided direction for the confluence of drives. The aggression drive entailed, essentially, individuals' attempts to compensate for inferior organs. In 1910 he replaced the aggression drive with the concept of the masculine protest (Adler, 1929, 1945). The masculine protest, like the aggression drive, was the central dynamic principle of psychic life. It marked an important shift in Adler's thinking, because it constituted a step away from biologically oriented drive psychology towards a subjective psychology where feelings of inferiority provided the impetus for compensatory striving (Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956). The masculine protest entailed "... *the striving to be strong and powerful in compensation for feeling unmanly, for a feeling of inferiority*" (Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956, p. 45). In spite of this shift, however, Adler had not yet abandoned objective causality. He still saw objective, biological phenomena as giving rise to the subjective feelings of inferiority (Milliren et al., 2003). It should be borne in mind that the meaning of the term masculine protest was later to change, as mentioned in section 2.3.6.4.

Adler became president of the Viennese Psychoanalytic Society in 1910. By the following year, however, the differences between Adler and Freud had grown to the extent that collaboration between the two was no longer possible (Milliren et al., 2003). They disagreed about the role of sexuality and social factors in motivation and development, and Adler was leaning increasingly towards a focus on subjective perception as the basis for psychological growth, as opposed to Freud's acceptance of biological determinism or physiological causality (Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956). In 1911 Adler resigned from the Society. He was branded a heretic by Freud, who regarded his ideas as radically false (Corey, 2005).

The year 1911 was significant for Adler for another reason too. It was the year that Vaihinger's book (Vaihinger, 1925), previously mentioned in section 2.3.2, was published. The book had a significant impact on Adler, and its influence was clear in Adler's own book, *The neurotic constitution*, published in 1912 (Adler, 1912, 1921). Adler was now fully committed to fictional finalism (Milliren et al., 2003). While he was, from the beginning, inclined towards emphasising the unity and self-consistency of the personality, the concept of a fictional goal provided a governing principle for this unity. The striving towards this goal was the prepotent dynamic force in the life style. Acceptance of the fictional goal also meant that Adler had completely broken with physiological causality and embraced a teleological perspective (Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956).

At this stage of the development of Individual Psychology, individuals' fictional goals were always those of superiority (Adler, 1956). The striving towards the goal was compensatory, and originated in a feeling of inferiority. This dynamic, the striving from a perceived position of deficiency, from below, to a position seen as being superior or above, was to remain constant throughout Adler's writing. What was to change was the specific goal point (Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956). This is discussed below.

2.8.2 The concept of social interest

In 1912 Adler founded the Society for Individual Psychology. In 1914 he established his society's journal, the Journal of Individual Psychology. It was also during this period that Adler served as a doctor at the front during the First World War (Milliren et al., 2003). His return to Vienna following the war heralded a new phase in the development of Individual Psychology, with the introduction of the concept of *gemeinschaftsgefühl*, or social interest (Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956).

According to Ansbacher and Ansbacher (1956) Adler had, until this time, developed his theory with his psychologically maladjusted patients as his frame of reference, and had generalised to normal or healthy individuals from this perspective. He had seen the striving for superiority as being the same in all people. It was just less pronounced in healthy people whose feelings of inferiority were not as severe. While he retained his basic dynamic, the striving from below to above, and saw it as ubiquitous, the introduction of the term social interest meant that he distinguished, qualitatively, between the striving in unhealthy and normal people respectively (Adler, 1952, 1956, 1965). The healthy person's goal was different in that it:

... came to mean perfection, completion or overcoming, goal points which are no longer fully expressed in terms of the self but which can be applied to outside objects also. While overcoming may refer to internal obstacles, it usually refers to external ones; completion usually refers to a task; and perfection to an achievement or a product. (Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956, p. 102)

Maladjusted individuals then pursued a personal goal of superiority, while healthy people's striving was aimed at a goal that would benefit society. The difference was one of kind, and not merely degree, as had previously been the case. The concept of social interest allowed Adler to develop a criterion for normalcy and he could rework his theory of motivation in terms of the normal or healthy.

2.8.3 Influence on psychotherapy development

Following the war Adler became active in the schools of Vienna, holding child guidance clinics with teachers, parents and scholars, in what became known as the open forum model of counseling. These entailed, essentially, public demonstrations of counseling and were aimed at making psychology available to everyone (Milliren et al., 2003). By the 1920s there were 34 Adlerian groups or societies in existence, mostly in Central Europe, but elsewhere in the world as well. During this decade Adler began to travel to the United States where he lectured in public and at academic settings. He was well received and his ideas became extremely popular (Carlson et al., 2006). By the early 1930s many of his terms and concepts had filtered into common usage (Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956).

In 1935 Adler settled in the United States, and took up a position as Professor of Medical Psychology at the Long Island College of Medicine. He continued to practice, lecture and write. He died in Scotland, in 1937, while on a lecture tour (Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956).

Rudolf Dreikurs was an Individual Psychologist and co-worker of Adler who had been involved in the Viennese child guidance centers. In 1937 Dreikurs moved to the United States where he was very active in promoting and further developing Individual Psychology. The popularity of the approach in the United States in the 1930s owed a great deal to his efforts. He established child guidance centers in Chicago, and these were run along the lines of the open-forum model that Adler had initiated in Vienna (Milliren et al., 2003).

In spite of the growth of Individual Psychology in the 1920s and 1930s, by 1956 Ansbacher and Ansbacher (1956) could write that Adler's name appeared infrequently in the psychological and psychiatric literature of the day. It seems as if, by that time already, Individual Psychology as a school in its own right had gone into something of a decline, and was eclipsed by the many new theories and schools that were emerging. Perhaps, as

Carlson et al. (2006) have suggested, his ideas were out of step with the dominant metaphors of this time. Ansbacher and Ansbacher believed that his dwindling popularity was due to the fact that his writings were unsystematic and therefore made for unsatisfactory reading. Moreover the number of people who had learned directly from Adler had grown smaller, and there were fewer people to advance his work and spread his ideas.

If the popularity of Individual Psychology as a school had declined, the influence of Adler's ideas certainly had not. Ansbacher and Ansbacher (1956) suggested that the theories espoused by so-called neo-Freudians such as Frans Alexander, Erich Fromm, Karen Horney and Harry Stack Sullivan owed a lot more to Adler's ideas than Freud's, and that they should perhaps better be known as neo-Adlerians. Corey (2005) believed that nearly all contemporary therapies had incorporated some of Adler's ideas. He stated:

It is difficult to overestimate the contribution of Adler to contemporary therapeutic practice. Many of his ideas were revolutionary and far ahead of his time. His influence went beyond counseling individuals, extending into the community mental health movement ... Abraham Maslow, Victor Frankl, Rollo May and Albert Ellis have all acknowledged their debt to Adler. Both Frankl and May see him as a forerunner of the existential movement because of his position that human beings are free to choose and are entirely responsible for what they make of themselves. This view also makes him a forerunner of the subjective approach to psychology, which focuses on the internal determinants of behavior ... (Corey, 2005, p. 120)

Corey suggested that family systems approaches to therapy, learning theory, reality therapy, gestalt therapy, rational-emotive behaviour therapy, person-centered therapy, cognitive therapy, existential therapy, and the postmodern approaches to therapy had all incorporated some of Adler's basic ideas.

Individual Psychology as a school did not disappear, even if it lost ground during the decades between 1950 and 1980 to emerging schools. Dreikurs was still active in the 1960s and 1970s. In 1962 he established the International Summer School for the study of Adlerian Psychology. This operates to this day, and is now known as the International

Committee for Adlerian Summer Schools and Institutes (ICASSI). There are at least 24 different nationalities represented at each summer institute (Milliren et al., 2003). Dreikurs (e.g., Dreikurs, 1968, 1971) was also a leading proponent of Individual Psychology as a foundation for the teaching-learning process, and several major teacher education models are based on Adlerian principles. Furthermore, two leading parent education programmes in the United States are also based on Adlerian principles (Corey, 2005).

2.8.4 Contemporary status

Ansbacher remained a leading figure in Individual Psychology throughout the twentieth century. He was editor of the *Journal of Individual Psychology* until 1974 and continued to publish into the 1990s (e.g., Ansbacher, 1992). A number of Adlerian institutes continued to operate and the *Journal of Individual Psychology* maintained its outputs. Comparatively little research occurred during the 1950s and 1960s, however. That produced by Adlerians was generally the result of case studies rather than experimental designs. Surprisingly most cited studies involving Individual Psychology were produced by non-Adlerians (Milliren et al., 2003).

In the last thirty years Individual Psychology has enjoyed something of a revival. The amount of published Adlerian research has grown steadily since the 1980s, and much of it has been confirmatory (Corey, 2005; Milliren et al., 2003). The *Journal of Individual Psychology* has its editorial office at Georgia State University, although it is published by the University of Texas Press in Austin, Texas. It continues to publish four editions each year. The publication of books dealing specifically with Individual Psychology has also increased in the last two decades, with important and comprehensive texts by such authors as Carlson et al. (2006), Sweeney (1998), and Watts (2003). There are at least six Adlerian institutes or societies active in North America.

Contemporary Adlerians theorise and practice in a variety of ways. Some, such as Stein (e.g., Stein & Edwards, 1998) espouse a position very close to that of Adler, as

previously indicated in section 2.3. They might best be regarded as classical or orthodox Adlerians. Others such as Watts (2003) and Bitter (1996, 2007) have noted that the tenets of Individual Psychology resonate with postmodern perspectives, and practice in a way consistent with these contemporary views while retaining their identity as Adlerians. Some such Adlerians (e.g., Disque & Bitter, 1998; Hester, 2004; Schneider, 1998; Schneider & Stone, 1998) have adopted the narrative approach to therapy, as indicated in 2.7.4 above. It may well be that the emergence of postmodern perspectives has contributed to a resurgence of interest in Individual Psychology, as theorists and practitioners become increasingly aware that many of these “new” ideas were clearly outlined by Adler nearly a century ago. Sweeney (1998) has been an active contributor to the growth of Individual Psychology, and his efforts have focused on developing a neo-Adlerian model of wellness. Wellness in this context is conceptualised as a set of healthy characteristics manifested through such life tasks as spirituality, work, love and friendship. His work is therefore a natural extension of Adler’s, since it is entirely consistent with the key Adlerian concepts of holism and social interest, and Adler’s focus on healthy development (Sweeney, 1998; Sweeney & Witmer, 1991).

2.9 Summary

All individuals strive to overcome a sense of inferiority that is inherent in the human condition. This striving for superiority is the central dynamic of Adlerian psychology. In healthy individuals this striving is tempered by social interest and is reflected in co-operation with others. For those in whom the sense of inferiority is overwhelming, the striving for superiority is even more pronounced, and is aimed at personal gain and security rather than co-operation. Mental disturbance then, occurs in the context of an increased sense of inferiority and a lesser degree of social interest. It does not indicate a thwarting of the striving for superiority, but rather constitutes an exaggerated form of that striving. Psychological and physical symptoms, as well as emotions and general interpersonal styles, function in the service of the lifeline, helping the individual to safeguard against a sense of inadequacy, and achieving some measure of superiority, albeit in an idiosyncratic manner.

The apparent simplicity of Adler's theory, summarised above, belies the profundity of his philosophical and epistemological stance. It is only comparatively recently that his ideas have begun to find acceptance and support outside of Adlerian circles. Researchers and practitioners from widely divergent fields are now formulating theoretical positions that Adler anticipated many years ago. Unfortunately he is often not acknowledged or given credit in this respect (Carlson et al., 2006; Stein & Edwards, 1998; Weber, 2003).

This chapter has introduced the theory of individual psychology, traced its development and evolution, and compared it to contemporary thinking and research findings in related fields. The next chapter introduces Olive Schreiner, the subject of this research.

CHAPTER 3

THE LIFE OF OLIVE SCHREINER

3.1 Chapter preview

This chapter is concerned with the presentation of biographical information. The aim is to provide an overview of Olive's life. Since some facets of her life are controversial and have resulted in disagreement and debate amongst her biographers, it has been necessary to include a certain amount of inference and interpretation. It was, therefore, not always possible to present only historical facts. No attempt has been made to write a new biography. Rather, information has been drawn from existing biographies. The material is presented chronologically, and in terms of convenient and rather broad categories which constitute phases characterised by particular themes. These sometimes coincide, also conveniently, with geographic localities. Examples include *The years abroad* and *South Africa and social justice*.

The chapter begins with the introduction of Olive's parents, whose circumstances and respective personalities are regarded as being influential in terms of Olive's own development. A chronology of Olive's life is presented in Appendix A at the end of the study. Relevant aspects of this chronology are presented in tabular form at the end of the sections detailing the specific phases of Olive's life. These tables also indicate significant contemporary socio-political events or trends. This information has been obtained from biographies (Schoeman, 1991, 1992) and historical texts (Butler, 1960; Davenport, 2000; Giliomee & Mbenga, 2007; Hyam, 1976; Oliver & Atmore, 2005; Strage, 1973). A map showing Olive's movements during her years in South Africa is presented in Appendix B.

3.2 Olive's parents

3.2.1 Rebecca

Olive was born on 24 March 1855 on a mission station at Wittebergen, near present day Lady Grey. She was the ninth child of Gottlob and Rebecca Schreiner who, at the time of her birth, had been in South Africa for 17 years. Rebecca was married at the age of 19, and by that time she had been a member of the Moorfields Tabernacle for half her life. Her father, Samuel Lyndall, was a revivalist minister and she had been subjected to “... *a vigorous training in the religion of the evangelical revival and the middle-class morality it had helped to create*” (First & Scott, 1989, p. 35). Rebecca's Christianity emphasised piety, proper conduct and self-deprivation. It stressed the significance of duty and the sinfulness of pleasure and self-indulgence (Lewis, 2010). God was seen as vigilant, judgemental and wrathful. As First and Scott have put it: “*Rebecca's model of good behaviour was deeply puritanical and prohibitive*” (1989, p. 35). It was also not unusual for the time. This was the vision of Christianity that Rebecca transported to the mission fields of South Africa when she left England in 1837. It was a version of Christianity that was, as Schoeman (1991) has shown, inextricably and expressly bound up with colonialism, one that saw at least some of the missionary societies not only trying to win the hearts of the so-called heathen savages for God, but also trying to make them dependent on British colonial powers for their needs. This would create a peaceful union between the colonists and the black tribes, allowing the settlers to establish their colonies and, presumably, extend their efforts into the barren South African interior without too much opposition.

Olive's husband, Cronwright-Schreiner (also known as Cronwright or Cron), met Rebecca when she was seventy-five years old. He described her as a woman of intellect and charm, humorous and well read. By the time she met Cronwright, however, she had converted to Catholicism. He wrote about Rebecca's account of how she had become a missionary, which she concluded with: “*It was all claptrap and nonsense ...*” (in Cronwright-Schreiner, 1924, p. 7). This, along with her conversion to Catholicism,

suggests that she had become disillusioned with the protestant revivalist movement. There is, in fact, evidence to suggest that this process of disillusionment had begun much earlier. Cronwright recounted the Reverend Robinson's account of his visit to the Schreiners in 1862. Robinson said that Rebecca had been unhappy, and that she had lost her intensely evangelical attitude.

Friedmann (1955) suggested that Rebecca was harsh, cruel, and unloving to her family. According to First and Scott (1989), Olive saw her mother as cold and distant, a perception of Rebecca that was shared by Olive's siblings. She felt that her mother did not understand her. Moreover, Rebecca could be harshly punitive (Lewis, 2010). On one occasion when Olive used the Dutch word *ach*, she was beaten with a bunch of twigs tied together (Berkman, 1989). Dutch was a forbidden language, and this incident revealed as much about Rebecca's attitude towards other cultural groups as it did her views on child rearing. Olive believed that this beating, along with another similar incident, did her great harm and had a lasting influence on her life (Schoeman, 1991).

3.2.2 Gottlob

Gottlob seems to have been a gentle, rather simple and somewhat ineffectual man. Cronwright never met him because Gottlob died in 1876, long before Cronwright and Olive married. He wrote, however, that Gottlob must have been a very lovable man because long after his death his children could not speak about him without becoming emotional (Cronwright-Schreiner, 1924). He also recounted the observations of Reverend Robinson who described Gottlob as quiet and solitary and seemingly oblivious to what was happening around him. He had no social contacts with people outside his family.

Gottlob seems to have been passionate about two things: his work and his wife. The latter seems not to have reciprocated with feelings of equal depth (First & Scott, 1989). He was intense, idealistic and naïve. His work record was not impressive. In November 1865 he was forced to resign from the Wesleyan Missionary Society after having failed in his missionary duties, and in running the Wesleyan training institute at

Healdtown. He had also infringed the Society's regulations against private trading. Thereafter he set himself up in business, trading, but was insolvent by 1866 (Cronwright-Schreiner, 1924; Lewis, 2010; Schoeman, 1991). First and Scott described Gottlob as:

... an awkward outsider, ingenuous and artless, with a naïve and saintly view of the world, and a record of muddle and incompetence. He was tender and trusting, but a failure as a missionary and head of a household, if not as a loving father (1989, p. 45)

Olive's own comment about her father is revealing: "*When did Gottlob ever succeed in anything?*" (in Cronwright-Schreiner, 1924, p. 6).

3.3 Early years on the mission stations (1855-1868)

3.3.1 Wittebergen

As indicated above, the Schreiners had been in South Africa for nearly two decades by the time of Olive's birth, and nearly all of that time had been spent on isolated mission stations where conditions were harsh. Although Olive was Rebecca's ninth child, three had passed away by the time she was born. Albert Schreiner died in March, 1844, Oliver died at the age of 5 or 6 in March 1854, and Emile died just six months later (Schoeman, 1991). Rebecca was still grieving the deaths of Oliver and Emile when Olive (christened Olive Emilie Albertina in memory of her three late brothers) was born. The move to Wittebergen had occurred while Rebecca was pregnant. First and Scott (1989) suggested that Rebecca was depressed during the year in which Olive was born. Moreover she experienced episodes of fainting at the time, and was convinced that her own death was imminent. Schoeman (1991) suggested that she was frustrated by the difficult circumstances in which she was living and First and Scott believed that she must have resented her lot. She may already have become discouraged and disillusioned with her proselytising mission. Schoeman suggested that she had very little sympathy with the black people with whom she worked. Moreover she was becoming increasingly critical of Gottlob: "*... her husband's simple credulity and unreason in his sermons used to bring*

her to amusing and gentle if deadly comment” (Cronwright-Schreiner, 1924, p. 22). Gottlob, in spite of his love for Rebecca, had been unable to provide her with much security or support (Berkman, 1989).

Olive spent the first six years of her life at Wittebergen. Cronwright-Schreiner (1924) described Olive as having been a physically healthy child. He quoted one Oswald Briggs’ description of Olive, whom he met in 1861, as a “... *lively and intelligent child, physically powerful and healthy, unusually bright, very shy and sensitive and absorbed almost uncannily in her own thoughts*” (in Cronwright-Schreiner, 1924, p. 64). Schoeman (1991), however, reported that Olive was sickly as a baby, but enjoyed good health throughout the rest of her childhood.

From early childhood Olive showed signs of independence and rather striking individuality: “*What she showed from an early age was the determination, wilfulness and inflexibility that were to mark her whole life*” (Schoeman, 1991, p. 69). This was bound to bring her into conflict with Rebecca, whose views on child-rearing were rooted in the Wesleyan notion that the parents’ task was to break the self-will of the child and deliver her from original sin. According to Rebecca, Olive was: “... *still rather self-willed and impetuous, needing much patient firmness. It is however very pleasing to see the effort the dear little thing makes to conquer herself. She often asks, ‘Mama, have I been a little better today?’*” (in Schoeman, 1991, p. 70). First and Scott (1989) suggested, in response to this quotation, that Olive had already acquired a diffuse sense of guilt. Similarly Lewis (2010) stated that even from early childhood she was “... *abnormally conscious of her own imperfections...*” (p. 31). That Rebecca could be severe in meting out punishment has already been alluded to above, and Olive recalled the two beatings during her childhood with bitterness, and believed that they did her great harm.

Cronwright-Schreiner’s (1924) description of Olive as a child suggested a solitary, intense little girl who possessed an active imagination, and who lived in a fantasy world of her own making. Schoeman (1991) believed that she showed signs of a remarkable personality at an early age, and suggested that she was rather detached and

introverted, sustained by a rich imaginary life. Olive showed signs of awareness of, and concern with, her sense of self from an early age (Lewis, 2010). When she visited Wittebergen in later life she referred to: “... *the bushes with the funny smell under which I sat alone the first time I realized my own individuality and the mystery of existence*” (in Schoeman, 1991 p. 76). A passage in ‘Times and Seasons’ in *The story of an African farm* (Schreiner, 1995), according to Schoeman, reflected this experience:

One day we sit there and look up at the blue sky, and down at our fat little knees; and suddenly it strikes us, Who are we? This I, what is it? We try to look in upon ourself, and ourself beats back upon ourselves. Then we get up in great fear and run home as hard as we can. We can't tell anyone what frightened us. We never quite lose that feeling of self again. (Schreiner, 1995, p. 139)

3.3.2 Healdtown

At the end of 1860, Gottlob was appointed Governor of the Wesleyan Industrial Institution at Healdtown, and the Schreiners undertook the lengthy journey by ox wagon. This was the second of two such journeys which Olive experienced in her childhood, and took place when she was nearly six years old. The responsibilities and duties of Gottlob and Rebecca at Healdtown seem to have been very demanding. Rebecca had to look after and teach her children, the school's boarders, and the teaching staff (Schoeman, 1991). According to Schoeman:

Rebecca Schreiner's burden, albeit onerous, was essentially that of every nineteenth-century white woman, whose vocation it was to be a helpmeet to her husband and to care for her family, regardless of her circumstances; who had to submerge her own personality in her full-time role as housekeeper, cook, cleaner, nanny, seamstress, nurse and teacher. (1991, p. 95)

Her letters at the time indicate that she felt tired, depressed and weak. She was mourning the loss of Cameron, who had died just prior to their leaving Wittebergen. It has already been suggested that Rebecca was not emotionally available to Olive during her

childhood, and there are indications that Olive experienced a loss of Rebecca's affection as she grew older. Rebecca admitted in a letter to Katie that: "*my own poor children are greatly neglected*" (in Schoeman, 1991, p.98). It is possible that Rebecca was so preoccupied with her duties and her own despondency, that she did not feel she could spare much time or affection for any of her children who had achieved a modicum of independence (Berkman, 1989; Lewis, 2010).

Gottlob was also struggling with his responsibilities, as indicated in a letter to Katie written in April 1861: "*I am almost pressed down with the responsibility of my present position in taking charge of this institution*" (in Schoeman, 1991, p. 94). He failed adequately to perform his duties as a missionary and as governor of the Industrial Institution. Moreover he was forced to leave the ministry after violating the Missionary Society's regulations against trading. Requiring some kind of income, he started a business as a general dealer. By 1866 he was insolvent, probably because of his naiveté and lack of business acumen (Cronwright-Schreiner, 1924; First & Scott, 1989; Lewis, 2010). The family entered a period of extreme poverty, and the children old enough to do so, left home to fend for themselves.

Olive was six years old when she arrived at Healdtown, and lived there for five years. By this time most of her siblings had already left home. Fred had left for England to study and later to start his own school there. Theo had completed his studies in England and he returned to South Africa in 1862 to take up the position of vice-principle at Shaw College, Grahamstown. Katie had married John Findlay and was living in Fraserburg, and Alice had been sent to live with the Findlays, ostensibly to help her older sister, and possibly to recover from her broken engagement to George Impey. Alice married Robert Hemming in March 1863. Only the three youngest children remained at Healdtown (First & Scott, 1989; Schoeman, 1991).

In 1862 Ettie was twelve years old, Olive seven and Will, four. The years at Healdtown were lonely ones for Olive. Ettie was conscripted into the daily regimen of mission station life. Will seems to have had a little black playmate, and Olive, for the

most part, had to entertain herself. She created her own world which included an imaginary friend, and made up long stories which she shared with him. Lacking friends, and with her parents and siblings distracted by their obligations and their own difficulties, Olive needed an imaginary world to sustain her (Cronwright-Schreiner, 1924; First & Scott, 1989; Schoeman, 1991).

Olive received no formal education during her time at Healdtown. Schoeman (1991) pointed out that education was important to the Schreiners, and that Rebecca must have done for Olive what she could in this regard. He referred to the fact that Olive later said that her mother had taught her to read and that she had learned from books and from her parents' conversation. Schoeman recounted Reverend Robinson's recollections of Olive reciting Coleridge and Tennyson around 1862, which suggests that Olive's reading level was advanced for her age. Robinson appears to have been amazed at her precocity.

Schoeman (1991) suggested that Olive enjoyed a fair amount of autonomy with regard to her spiritual development. This is rather surprising considering Gottlob's vocation and Rebecca's religious dogmatism. Nevertheless she received some religious education, and Cronwright-Schreiner (1924) reported that as an adult she knew the bible very well. Two incidents occurred at Healdtown which were to influence Olive's spiritual development in profound ways. One concerned the disparity between Olive's understanding of the biblical ideal of how Christians should live on the one hand, and how she saw the adults in her life actually behaving, on the other. Cronwright-Schreiner described this incident:

... she came across the Sermon on the Mount in the fifth chapter of Matthew. She read it with amazement and delight; it reflected, put into definite language, much that she had deeply but vaguely felt. Here, so to say, was her creed formulated. She rushed off to her mother, who was sitting with some friends. So obsessed with her idea as to be quite oblivious of all else, she put the book before her mother with her finger on the passages in great excitement and said: "Look what I've found! Look what I've found! It's what I've known all along! Now we can live like this!" Her mother tried to put her off, but the child would not be denied, and with vehement pertinacity insisted upon the importance of her find in the Bible. It was only after some

time and cold word of reproof that the amazed child was silenced.
(Cronwright-Schreiner, 1924, p. 67)

This event is alluded to in *African farm*, in a sardonic and scathingly satirical fashion:

One day, a notable one, we read on the 'kopje', and discover the fifth chapter of Matthew, and read it all through. It is a new gold-mine. Then we tuck the bible under our arm and rush home. They didn't know it was wicked to take your things again if someone took them, wicked to go to law, wicked to-! We are quite breathless when we get to the house; we tell them we have discovered a chapter they never heard of; we tell them what it says. The old wise people tell us they knew all about it. Our discovery is a mare's nest to them; but to us it is very real. (Schreiner, 1995, p. 139)

There were clearly differences then, at least in the mind of the little girl, between the gospel that her father taught, and the way her parents and other adults lived. This led to “... doubts about the value of Christianity and the credibility of its adherents” (Schoeman, 1991, p. 109).

The other event concerned the death of her sister, Ellie. Ellie was born in March 1862 at Healdtown and died there the following year. In 1892 Olive was to write about this significant and obviously traumatic event in a letter to a Reverend F. T. Lloyd:

I think I first had this feeling with regard to death clearly when my favourite little sister died when I was nine years old. I slept with her little body until it was buried, and after that I used to sit for hours by her grave, and it was impossible for me then, as it is impossible for me now, to accept the ordinary doctrine that she was living on somewhere without a body. (Schreiner, 1987, p. 213)

Later, in 1907, she wrote that her love for Ellie and her death: “... first made me realize the falsity of what I had been taught and made a freethinker of me” (in Schoeman, 1991, p. 113).

Another factor, less acutely traumatic but perhaps more insidious, that influenced Olive's spiritual life was her parent's vision of God as wrathful and punitive. Allusion

has been made to this already. According to Schoeman (1991), Olive's childhood was "*dominated by consciousness of her own sinful state before a God of judgement and retribution*" (p. 109). This led to anxiety, guilt and her alienation from Christianity. Guilt and punishment appear as themes in all three of her novels. In *African farm* a watch torments Waldo as it condemns a multitude to hell: "... *even the ticking watch says, 'Eternity, eternity! Hell, hell, hell!'*" (Schreiner, 1995, p. 140). In *Man to man* Rebecca says: "*And if you hear the clock ticking **don't** think it means any of those dreadful things – it doesn't!*" (Schreiner, 2004b, p. 414, emphasis in original).

By the end of her stay at Healdtown Olive appears to have rejected Christianity and refused to attend church. Gottlob seems to have respected her stand. Rebecca's attitude in this regard at that time is unknown. Olive was to experience severe persecution at the hands of her siblings in later life, as will be revealed (First & Scott, 1989).

3.3.3 Summary of the early years on the mission stations

The overall impression gained of Olive during this period was that she was a strange, lonely girl, strong willed and precocious. She was something of a tomboy, wearing boys' clothes rather than dresses (Lewis, 2010). Moreover she seems not to have been very happy: "*My childhood was so bitter and dark*" (in Schoeman, 1991, p. 104), she wrote of her time in Healdtown. She later stated that it was only in nature that she found comfort, joy and companionship (Schreiner, 1987). Table 2 presents a summary of the most significant events during Olive's childhood.

3.4 Peripatetic teenager (1868-1874)

3.4.1 Cradock

At the end of 1867 Olive's brother Theo, who had been teaching at Shaw College in Grahamstown, was appointed to the post of headmaster at a school in Cradock. He and

Table 2

Chronology of Olive's early years on the mission stations

Date	Incident/event	Socio-political issues
1855	Olive Schreiner is born at Wittebergen on 24 March.	White settlers push across the northern and eastern frontiers of the Cape Colony and establish themselves in the interior. The Free State Republic is one year old.
1857	William Philip Schreiner (Will) is born at Wittebergen on 30 August.	Xhosa cattle killings inspired by Nongqawusa effectively end Xhosa independence.
1858	Theo Schreiner leaves for England. Alice Schreiner leaves for Cape Town.	Sotho-Free State war takes place and as a result 4000 Basotho take refuge in the Wittebergen reserve.
1860	Katie Schreiner marries John Findlay in August. Cameron Schreiner dies at Wittebergen.	Establishment of white authority in the interior leads to the undermining of traditional customs and the lifestyle of black tribes.
1861	The Schreiners leave Wittebergen in February; in March Gottlob takes up his post at the Industrial Institution at Healdtown.	Beginning of a serious drought in the eastern Cape Colony as well as a decade long economic recession that would essentially cripple business and industry.
1863	Alice Schreiner marries Robert Hemming in March. Theo Schreiner returns from England.	Various attempts to unify the Free State with either the Cape Colony or Transvaal Republic fail, and a sense of nationalism arises among the people of the Free State.
1864	Helen Schreiner (Ellie) is born at Healdtown in March.	Bloemhof is founded on the banks of the Vaal River when diamonds are found in the area.
1865	Ellie dies at Healdtown in August. Gottlob resigns from the WMS. The Schreiners relocate to Balfour.	The second Sotho-Free State war breaks out.
1866	Gottlob is insolvent by September.	A 21.25 carat diamond is discovered near Hopetown. By this time Protestantism worldwide is challenged by emerging scientific theories and by publications such as those by Darwin and Spencer.

Ettie moved to Cradock early in 1868. Only Olive and Will were left at home with Gottlob and Rebecca, who had moved to Balfour in 1866 after Gottlob resigned from the Wesleyan Missionary Society. At some point in 1868, however, Olive joined Ettie and

Theo in Cradock. This would give her some opportunity to receive formal education, and would relieve Gottlob and Rebecca, now almost destitute, of the burden of having to support her.

Olive moved to Cradock when she was thirteen years old, and lived with Theo and Ettie for more than two years. Her time in Cradock was not a particularly happy one. It seems as if Theo and Ettie were less tolerant of Olive's rejection of Christianity than her parents had been (Lewis, 2010; Schoeman, 1991). Both Theo and Ettie were "*fervently religious*" (First & Scott, 1989, p. 56). Cronwright-Schreiner (1924) suggested that Theo was stern, hard, puritanical and dogmatic in his religious beliefs, although he was unselfish and could even be tender. While Schoeman (1991) suggested that Ettie was "*characterised by a warm, spontaneous and loving nature*" (p. 167), he also pointed out that she was "*... more fervid and emotional, and even more rigid in her beliefs*" (p. 167) than Theo. Olive felt herself to be persecuted by Theo and Ettie for her religious beliefs, and this was confirmed by Ettie's remorse at her treatment of Olive, revealed in subsequent correspondence (Cronwright-Schreiner, 1924; First & Scott, 1989; Lewis, 2010).

First and Scott (1989) suggested that, had Olive lived in England or Europe, she would have had some framework or precedent for her freethinking. In South Africa her beliefs were, if not unique, then extremely rare. In Olive's circles such an attitude would have been unknown. This, they felt, would have contributed to her sense of being alienated from, and marginal to, the society in which she had grown up.

Not everything about Cradock could have been unpleasant for Olive, however. She appears to have undergone some formal schooling, and she had access to the books in the Cradock Library and various cultural activities. The landscape itself made a strong and lasting impression on her, and was to feature in her later writings (e.g., Schreiner, 1995). Moreover it was while she was in Cradock that she met Erilda Cawood, an older woman with whom she was to form a strong and enduring friendship (Schoeman, 1991).

3.4.2 Unsettled wandering

In 1870, when Olive was fifteen, Theo and Will left Cradock for the diamond fields at Pniel on the banks of the Vaal River (First & Scott, 1989; Schoeman, 1991). Olive, it was decided, would take up a position as governess to the children of the Orpen family in Barkley East (Elise Rolland, the daughter of Rebecca's half sister, Elizabeth Rolland, had married Joseph Orpen and was living near Barkley East). She spent some time with her older sister, Alice, in Burgersdorp before moving to the Orpens. This appears to have been a difficult period for Olive. Her diary suggested that she was depressed and discouraged (Cronwright-Schreiner, 1924). According to First and Scott:

Her feelings of guilt, despair, self-hatred and an obsession with death were expressed only in her diary. Unable to share her inner conflicts she maintained a precarious balance between health and breakdown even as a teenager: travelling from place to place, in contact with family and family friends, exciting general interest wherever she was, but anxious and self-doubting all the while. (1989, p. 58)

First and Scott recounted Alice's description of Olive at the time, and she portrayed her sister as acting rather strangely. She would talk to herself, pacing up and down all night and crying and laughing alternatively. The community regarded her as eccentric. It appears as if she was generally quite withdrawn, but could talk intelligently and intensely at social gatherings. Children were fond of her and she would make up long stories to tell them. Cronwright-Schreiner (1924) described her as having been in a nervous state at around this time, but qualified this by saying that Olive's emotional condition: "... was, I have no doubt, her normal state; it would seem very strange to anyone who did not know her" (p. 78). He described her as having a "... passionate intensity of temperament" (p. 68) which persisted throughout her life, and which was responsible for childish, uncontrolled actions. He reported that Olive had said that she was very shy as a child, and confirmed that even in adulthood she would hide away from strangers. Olive also told him that when she was distressed, she would hide under the bed and knock her head against the wall.

It was in this distressed state, in all likelihood stemming from her tense relationship with Ettie, that Olive reached the Orpen's home. When Olive left Cradock, she left behind: "... *her childhood and the security of her family circle ...*" (Schoeman, 1991, p. 182). This was the beginning of: "... *a pattern of restless, unstable wandering, of never being at home and never settling down ...*" (Schoeman, 1991, p. 182), a pattern that was to persist for the rest of her life. It was around this time, according to Cronwright-Schreiner (1924) that Olive, who had hitherto been known as Emily, indicated to her family and friends that she wished to be called Olive. Schoeman (1991) suggested that Olive was conscious of her growing independence, and changing her name was symbolic of this. He believed that for Olive, the name 'Emily' was associated with domesticity, and he referred to *Woman and labour* (Schreiner, 1914) where women with names like Emily or Sophia were always fainting, weeping and terrified, and by implication, always dependent. Olive was probably already concerned with the position of women in society at this time.

At the Orpen's Olive was still distressed, and it was clear that she would not be able to teach the children (First & Scott, 1989). In 1871 she spent some time with a Mrs Nesbitt at Kraai River, and later in 1871 she was sent to stay with Elise Orpen's mother, Mrs Rolland, at Hermon in the area known as Basutoland (present day Lesotho). Schoeman (1991) reached the conclusion that: "... *with all their cordiality and goodwill, nobody knew how to cope with this rather unmanageable girl, neither child nor adult, and that she was therefore farmed out as circumstances permitted*" (p. 186).

It was on this cart journey to Hermon that, according to Cronwright-Schreiner (1924), Olive's first asthma attack might have taken place. She was to be plagued by asthma for the rest of her life. Cronwright-Schreiner believed that the first bout of asthma occurred between October 1870 when she left Cradock, and November 1872 when she journeyed to Kimberley, and he thought that it might have occurred on this journey throughout the length of which it rained. As Schoeman (1991) pointed out though, Olive herself described her asthma as beginning later, after another lengthy journey by cart.

Olive's time at Hermon was quiet, and probably lonely. Samuel Rolland was seventy and, Schoeman (1991) suggested, probably senile. The only other company was the elderly Mrs Rolland and her daughter, Emmie Hope, who seems to have been ill at the time. A significant event occurred there, however, and that was Olive's meeting with Willie Bertram. Bertram was a magistrate's clerk, and was visiting the magistrates in the region. He was reported to be intellectual, and a freethinker. He lent Olive a copy of Herbert Spencer's *First principles* (Spencer, 1862, 2005), which she had three days to read, while he was away on business. The book had a profound impact on her. According to First and Scott (1989):

Spencer validated her doubts, but he also provided her with an alternative to nihilism. He introduced the possibility that religion expressed 'some eternal fact,' that 'positive knowledge' could never fill 'the whole region of possible thought': one always asked what lay beyond. Thus there would always be place, in his words, for something of the nature of religion, for its subject matter passed the sphere of the intellect. (p. 59)

In short, *First principles* gave a context, or a frame of reference to Olive's freethinking, and offered the possibility of spirituality independent of the punitive and dogmatic Christianity of her childhood, one not mutually exclusive to intellectualism or scientific thought (Lewis, 2010). Olive later acknowledged the impact of the book on her in a letter to Havelock Ellis:

I always think that when Christianity burst on the dark Roman world it was what that book was to me. I was in such complete blank atheism. I did not even believe in my own nature, in any right or wrong or certainty. (Schreiner, 1987, p. 36)

Waldo's stranger in *African farm* was modelled on Willie Bertram (Cronwright-Schreiner, 1924; First & Scott, 1989; Schoeman, 1991).

In August 1871 Olive visited the Hopes in Aliwal North, and later in that same month she moved to Dordrecht, where she stayed with the family of the Reverend Robinson. According to First and Scott (1989), Gottlob and Rebecca were not in a

financial position to support her, and were very conscious of depending on relatives and friends to provide a home for their daughter.

First and Scott (1989) suggested that Olive was quite happy staying with the Robinsons. They were kind to her, and she had the opportunity to read a variety of books in Robinson's personal collection. They pointed out that Robinson was impressed with how widely Olive had read, and the depth of her thinking. Dordrecht offered the possibility of an active social life, and according to Schoeman (1991), Olive socialised more at this time than in later life. Robinson's manse in particular was a venue for young people to gather, and it was probably here that Olive met Julius Gau, a local businessman, and his sister, with both of whom Olive became very friendly (First & Scott, 1989; Buchanan-Gould, 1948).

In 1872 Olive left the Robinsons and moved to the house of Julius Gau and his sister. There were a number of possible reasons for her moving. In February of 1872 the Robinson's daughter, Aggie, died. Since Olive had been teaching the two Robinson girls, a major reason for her being there ceased to exist (Buchanan-Gould, 1948). According to First and Scott (1989), Olive relocated to the Gau household to nurse Miss Gau through typhoid. Schoeman (1991), on the other hand, hinted at some impropriety on Robinson's part, and suggested that it might have been his sexual overtures which led to Olive's move.

3.4.3 Hertzog

When Miss Gau had recovered, Olive travelled back to Hertzog, a hamlet near Healdtown where Gottlob and Rebecca were then living, accompanied by Gau. As First and Scott (1989) pointed out, it was "... *unusual and improper for an unmarried woman to travel unchaperoned with a man*" (pp. 61-62). On 18th August 1872 Olive wrote to her sister Katie (Catherine Findlay) from Hertzog with the surprising news that she was engaged to be married to Gau. The letter was rather vague concerning the details of the forthcoming wedding:

I can't say just yet when we shall be married: it may be very soon, that is in four or five months, or it may not be for at least a year to come. I will be able to tell you more definitely next week. We shall not stay long in the Colony after we are married under any circumstances and Mr Gau told me last week that it was quite likely he might leave for Europe in January. (Schreiner, 1987, p. 6)

Buchanan-Gould (1948), who erroneously referred to Gau as Zaar, believed that Gau had seduced Olive, but that he did not want to commit himself to marrying her, hence the uncertain marriage plans. For Meintjes (1965) what happened was obvious: Gau had seduced Olive, she missed a period, and believed herself to be pregnant. Therefore, according to him, they had become engaged, but Gau did not really want to marry Olive and she in turn became disillusioned with him. According to First and Scott, there was insufficient evidence to reach such a conclusion, and: “*It is quite possible that it was nothing more than a broken tryst, but one which Olive had invested with great emotion*” (1989, p. 63). Schoeman (1991) too, was careful not to draw any conclusions other than that the affair proved to be traumatic for Olive. Lewis (2010) suggested the possibility of Olive having been seduced or even abused by Gau. For support she drew on material from Olive’s novels, particularly *Undine* (Schreiner, 2004a) and *Man to Man* (Schreiner, 2004b), which were so strongly autobiographical that she referred to them as “*faction*” (p. 63) rather than fiction. She described the Gau relationship as disastrous for Olive, who was left devastated in its aftermath. She was also hurt and disgusted by the gossip and scandal which the relationship sparked in the Dordrecht community.

Following her return to Hertzog Olive became withdrawn. She was not sleeping well, and did not eat much. It was also possibly around this time that she developed the chest condition that would trouble her for the remainder of her life (First & Scott, 1989). In 1884 she explained the onset of her chest condition to Ellis:

Did I ever tell you how my chest first got bad? I was four days quite without food, and travelling all the time; I had nothing but a little cold water all that time. I had no money to buy food. When I ate the first mouthful at the end of the time I got this horrible agony in my chest, and had to rush out, and for weeks I never lay down, night or day. I suffocated even if I leaned back. Ever since that, if I get to a place that is close, and damp, and hot, it comes

back. I have been to many doctors, some say it is an affection of the heart, some say it is asthma of a very peculiar kind. They all say they have never seen a case just like it, and I don't like to tell them how it began. Somehow one can't go back into the past without blaming those that are dearest to one (Schreiner, 1987, p. 44)

At another point she told Ellis that the condition had began when she arrived at home after a long cart journey from Kimberley. She had been received coldly, and was in pain after she had commenced eating. She had rushed outside and lain down on the ground. After this her family had been kinder to her (First & Scott, 1989). First and Scott suggested that the cause of her condition was primarily psychological:

In spite of her confusion [regarding the time of onset of the condition] it is unquestionably the case that her ill-health developed after the Gau episode, at a time when she was also without a stable home or family, and was needing to work and rework her sense of herself in relation to her parents and other adults. She was especially sensitive on issues of coldness and kindness: if you love, how do you show it? Her illness provided only the most neurotic of solutions, but it may have been necessary given the culture she had to negotiate. Only in the light of her dissatisfaction with the mothering she received and her subsequent guilt about love and attachment can we infer a relationship between her illness and the affair with Julius Gau. (1989, pp. 67–68)

3.4.4 The diamond fields

Soon after the Gau affair had ended, and possibly because she seemed so distressed, Olive was invited to join Theo and Ettie at the diamond fields. In December 1872 she arrived at New Rush, later to be called Kimberley (First & Scott, 1989; Lewis, 2010). Conditions at New Rush were harsh. Theo, Ettie, Will and Olive lived in cramped conditions in a tent. Water and fresh produce were scarce. Disease was rife. Olive's lot as a woman in the dusty mining camp was to keep house for the men who were working the claims. Olive, however, found the time to read, and she also began to write seriously. She began a story called *The ghost*, worked on *The story of a diamond*, and completed at least the first chapter of her first novel, published posthumously as *Undine* (Schreiner, 2004a).

She also began writing *Other men's sins* (Schoeman, 1991). Olive appears to have experienced bouts of confusion, self-doubt, and depression on the diamond fields. Cronwright-Schreiner quoted from her diary (a document which, according to Schoeman, Cronwright destroyed): "*I am down-down-down. I feel as though I could not do anything and I don't believe I ever will do anything in the world. I am a queer mixture of good and bad. I don't know what to make of myself*" (in Cronwright-Schreiner, 1924, p. 93).

3.4.5 Fraserburg

The mining at New Rush appears not to have been particularly profitable for Theo. According to Schoeman (1991), it might have been Theo's difficult financial position which necessitated Olive's leaving the fields. In either October or November 1873 she left the diggings to stay with her sister, Alice Hemming, in Fraserburg (First & Scott, 1989). Schoeman believed it possible that her first asthma attack followed this particularly lengthy journey by cart.

The Hemmings had prospered in Fraserburg, and Robert Hemming was a prominent member of society. They introduced Olive to a couple, Dr John Brown and his wife Mary, who were close friends, and who befriended Olive. They were later to help her have *The story of an African farm* published in England. The Browns seem to have made a significant impression on Olive, and she on them. Olive appears to have found a sympathetic listener in Dr Brown. He was a cultured and open-minded man, who was receptive to her rather unusual views (First & Scott, 1989; Schoeman, 1991). He may have encouraged her in her recently made decision to become a doctor. Generally, Olive seems to have had a pleasant stay in Fraserburg. She also had the opportunity to visit Cape Town with the Hemmings during that time.

Early in 1874 Olive returned to her parent's home in Hertzog. Rebecca and Gottlob were desperately poor at the time, and were unable to support Olive, who had no money of her own. Moreover the damp climate of the area exacerbated her chest condition, and it became clear to Olive that she would not be able to remain long in

Hertzog. She applied for the position of Governess with the Weakley family in Colesberg, and was accepted. She left Hertzog in May 1874, shortly after her nineteenth birthday, to take up the post (Schoeman, 1991).

3.4.6 Summary of Olive's peripatetic teenage years

Olive's teenage years were not easy ones. Forced to leave home at the age of thirteen, she was to spend the next six years living with any family member, friend or stranger who could offer support. This augured the establishment of a pattern that would persist for the rest of her life, one that was to be characterised by restless wandering. In addition Olive's religious views marked her as something of an oddity and led to persecution at the hands of family members. She also developed during this time the chest condition that was to prove debilitating for the rest of her life. Significant events from this phase of Olive's life are presented in Table 3.

3.5 Governess (1874-1881)

3.5.1 Colesberg

For a single woman of modest means there were limited possibilities for fulfilment and independence (financial and otherwise) in nineteenth century South Africa. A position as a governess offered one such opportunity (Berkman, 1989). According to Schoeman (1991), governesses were in demand on the isolated farms in the interior of South Africa, and they were called upon to act as a: "... *blend of private tutor, nursemaid, lady companion and maid-of-all-work*" (p. 304). First and Scott (1989) suggested that Olive, as a governess, became a higher servant: "*socially subservient but culturally superior*" (p. 71). They pointed out that in spite of the ambiguity of her social position and the loneliness that she must have experienced, the independence meant a great deal to Olive. Earning a salary enabled her to nurture her dreams of travelling abroad to study medicine.

Table 3

Chronology of Olive's peripatetic teenage years

Date	Incident/event	Socio-political issues
1868	Theo Schreiner takes up a position as school principle in Cradock, where Ettie joins him; Olive and Will join them later in the year.	Basotholand is annexed by the British. The Korana War breaks out along the Orange River.
1870	Theo leaves for the diamond fields. Olive visits the Hemmings in Burgersdorp and the Orpens in Avoca.	The diamond rush has begun and Cradock prospers as a result. Cradock offers a vibrant cultural life, and has a well-stocked library.
1871	Olive visits Mrs Nesbitt at Kraai River in April; she visits the Rollands in Hermon. Olive travels to Dordrecht to stay with the Robinsons.	"New Rush", later Kimberley, is established when diamonds are discovered at Colesburg Kopje.
1872	Agnes Robinson dies at Dordrecht in February. Olive moves to the Gaus in Dordrecht; she later returns to her parents' home at Hertzog. Olive joins Theo and Ettie on the diamond fields.	The Cape Colony is granted full internal self-government with ministers responsible to parliament. The franchise is non-racial and representatives are elected by people of all races.
1873	Olive works on <i>Undine Bock</i> . She leaves the diamond fields for Fraserburg where she arrives in November. Olive meets John and Mary Brown in Fraserburg.	Restriction and idealisation of women amongst white English settlers is the norm, hence Olive's disgust at Dordrecht.
1874	Olive travels to Cape Town with the Hemmings. In February she leaves Cape Town and returns to her parents in Hertzog.	Improvements in agriculture and stock farming bring a measure of prosperity to the Cape Colony.

Olive stayed with the Weakley's for the remainder of 1874. The demands on her were considerable. In the mornings she taught the children, and in the afternoons worked with Mrs Weakley in their shop. At night she helped Mrs Weakley with her needlework. Soon she was helping George Weakley correct the proofs for the local newspaper, which

he owned. She had very little opportunity for her own writing and reading. Her time in Colesberg seems not to have been a happy one. Extracts from her diary, published by Cronwright-Schreiner, indicate that she felt discouraged and disillusioned. On the 27th June 1874 she wrote; “... *Where is my old determination gone? Also less, less, less*” (in Cronwright-Schreiner, 1924, p. 102). The extract from the 1st July of the same year suggests that she felt depressed and frustrated with her inability to progress with her writing: “*I feel ever so down this afternoon. Days pass, weeks pass, and I am doing nothing. Oh! Our beautiful dream of life, how different from the reality ...*” (in Cronwright-Schreiner, 1924, p. 102).

In February 1875 Olive left the Weakleys. First and Scott (1989) suggested that she left following a sexual advance from Weakley. Schoeman (1991), referring to passages in her writing which he believed to be autobiographical (e.g., the account of the Shabby Woman in *Undine*, and also in *Man to man*), suggested that any attraction and sexuality in the relationship between Olive and Weakley were mutual.

3.5.2 Klein Gannahoek

Olive's next position was as a governess to the Fouché family on the farm Klein Gannahoek, near Cradock. She taught the children for thirty pounds per year. It was while she was there that she completed *Undine* (Schreiner, 2004a). *Undine* was Olive's first novel, written between 1873 and the end of 1876 (Schoeman, 1991). According to Friedmann (1955) it was: “... *undeniably poor stuff* ...” (p. 1). In fairness to Olive however, she never intended to publish the book. This was done by her husband who only became aware of the existence of the manuscript after her death. According to Rive (1977), the publication of the novel did nothing to enhance Olive's reputation.

Undine (Schreiner, 2004a) is the most strongly autobiographical of Olive's novels. According to First and Scott (1989): “... *it is harder to interpret than* The story of an African farm, *precisely because it is so raw, so unclearly differentiated from its author's experience* ...” (1989, p. 92). The novel suffers because of this. Olive was not

able to transmute her raw experience into a more convincing artistic form (Schoeman, 1991). The heroine is Undine Bock, the condition of whose life is one of repeated loss and misfortune (First & Scott, 1989; Friedmann, 1955). She suffers a miserable childhood, aware that she is different and peculiar, and perceives herself as wicked (Berkman, 1989). She craves happiness and truth but finding neither, she becomes a proud and defiant young woman. She seems indifferent, aloof and devoid of all feeling, but this is a mask beneath which she seethes with wild passion. After a life of loss and self-sacrifice, she dies on the diamond fields, finding at last some solace in a sense of belonging to the universe (Schreiner, 2004a).

The work contains many themes and even scenes that were to reappear in her later novels. One concerns the anguish caused by religious doubt and the subsequent rejection of God. Her criticism of conventional, contemporary Christianity is presented in several scathing satires. Another concerns the position of women in society and sexual oppression, also presented in satirical form. According to Schoeman (1991), Undine: “... *is in several respects the same personality as that depicted more fully in Lyndall, and thus, in a sense, as Olive herself*” (p. 401).

At this time, according to First and Scott (1989), Olive experienced episodes of ill-health which were due, in part at least, to her psychological state:

... she succumbed to a sense of claustrophobic isolation and a state of ill health that were mutually reinforcing. She only went into Cradock once in the first eight months of her stay and she longed for the day when she would live in a little room all by herself and be 'free, freer, freest.' On the other hand she was very 'ill and low-spirited' and ached for someone to look after her, for some mothering (p. 73)

Cronwright-Schreiner (1924) quoted from the diary that Olive kept at the time, and it confirmed that periods of happiness were interspersed with bouts of illness and discouragement, some of them of long duration. For example on 16th April 1875 Olive wrote: “*I am so happy; if only the calm would last for ever*” (in Cronwright-Schreiner, 1924, p. 115). However by May 23rd she felt very different:

I do long so for love and sympathy, I never longed so for it before, I am weary and sick of longing. I am feeling very ill and low-spirited ... I am tired of living, oh so tired. Everyone loves me here but I want to be loved down upon, not loved up to. (in Cronwright-Schreiner, 1924, p. 115)

By 29th July she was again feeling happy and well, although she had not written much.

One of the advantages of her position at Klein Gannahoeck was that she lived in close proximity to the Cawoods, who occupied a neighbouring farm. Olive had previously met and formed close relationships with the Cawoods and now she was able to walk to their home, and often spent weekends there. She stayed with them during her two-week June holiday. Cronwright-Schreiner (1924) presented some of the family's recollections of Olive. Mrs Cawood wrote that: "*She is not shy now. Since we last saw her she has travelled and, I suppose, solved and laid at rest many of the problems that troubled her poor little brain then*" (in Cronwright-Schreiner, 1924, p. 111). Mrs Stanley (Mrs Cawood's daughter) later wrote:

... At the Fouché's she wouldn't have a mirror in her room and never looked at herself in one if she could help it. She told my mother she was too ugly and I believe she thought so at the time ... She certainly was restive and eccentric, but I don't remember storms of violence or emotion. (in Cronwright-Schreiner, 1924, p. 113)

Olive was frustrated with her poor salary. She abandoned the idea of studying in America upon which she and Theo had decided, because she had insufficient funds. She rejected offers of financial assistance from her family, insisting on maintaining her independence. It was, in all likelihood, her desire for a better salary as well as an incident in which Annie Fouché hit her, that spurred Olive to give notice and accept a position as a governess with the Martin family in the Tarkastad area. She arrived at the Martin's farm, Ratelhoeck, in May 1876 (First & Scott, 1989; Schoeman, 1991).

3.5.3 Ratelhoek

Olive spent three years at Ratelhoek, where she lived in relative comfort and seemed to be quite content. Mr Martin was an intelligent, educated man. According to Schoeman, Olive: “*enjoyed the same stimulating blend of discipline, routine, solitude and freedom that had proved so salutary at Klein Gannahoek, but now with the added advantages of greater physical comfort and more intellectual companionship*” (1991, p. 363). Her salary, however, was no better than it had been with the Fouchés. Mr Martin had reduced her salary when she refused to give religious education (Schoeman, 1991). She continued to write during this time and in particular worked on *Thorn kloof*, which was possibly the prototype of *Man to man*. She was assailed by doubts, particularly with regard to her writing ability, and her progress in this respect was erratic (First & Scott, 1989).

It was while Olive was with the Martins that Gottlob died, on 24 August 1876. The period after his death was a difficult one for Olive, and it was characterised by self-doubt and loneliness. Her physical health was not good, and she believed that she too did not have much longer to live (First & Scott, 1989). In spite of this, however, she was to say of Ratelhoek that: “... *the time I have passed here has been the quietest and best of my life*” (in Schoeman, 1991, p. 367).

Olive left Ratelhoek in March 1879, probably because the climate was bad for her chest, with which she continually struggled while there. She was sad to leave the Martins, and a letter written on 26 February to Elrida Cawood in this regard is both revealing and prophetic:

... now that the time for leaving begins to come near I begin to feel a great pain at my heart; but I would have had to leave in a few months' time, and it would not have been easier then than now, but rather harder. I really do not think there are in the world two such sweet girls as mine. I never mean to stay at a place so long again; you get to care too much for everything and then you must just leave it. (Schreiner, 1987, p. 23)

There may have been another contributing factor to Olive's sadness. First and Scott (1989) suggested that Olive and Mr Martin were attracted to each other, and Schoeman (1991) speculated about the possibility of emotional entanglement between the two. Lewis (2010) believed that a physical relationship was initiated and that Olive, in consequence, realised that she had to leave. There is, however, no definite evidence in this regard.

3.5.4 Gannahoek

Olive had been invited by the Cawoods to spend three months with them at Gannahoek, and she arrived there on the 22nd of March. She taught the children, and enjoyed the companionship of Mrs Cawood, to whom she had grown very close (Schoeman, 1991). According to First and Scott (1989), the Cawoods had become a family to Olive, and offered her the warmth and support she did not receive from her own family. In spite of her tasks and other distractions, she was quite productive as far as her writing was concerned, and nearly completed *African farm* during her time there. On the whole she seems to have enjoyed her stay at Gannahoek, but she still showed signs of underlying discontent and unhappiness. She was anxious for approval and quite desperate for affection. She was confused at times, self deprecating, and showed a degree of pessimism about relationships which could only, according to First and Scott (1989), have arisen from "... *a very basic feeling of failure*" (p. 76).

3.5.5 Leliekloof

In August 1878, while Olive was still at Ratelhoek, Annie Fouché had written to ask her to consider returning to the Fouchés as a governess. Early the following year Mr Fouché actually visited Olive at Ratelhoek in an attempt to persuade her to take up her old post. The Fouchés had moved to the farm Leliekloof by this time. Mr Fouché offered to build a new schoolroom and bedroom for her. Furthermore he would increase her salary to fifty-five pounds per annum. Olive refused the position at the time, but after three months with the Cawoods she decided to accept the offer. She left Gannahoek in

June 1879, apparently on good terms with the Cawoods. Olive and Mrs Cawood had disagreed on Olive's religious beliefs, but there were no indications that these differences had harmed their relationship (Cronwright-Schreiner, 1924). It must have been a great shock to Olive then, when Mrs Cawood's letter, written on 25 July, arrived at Leliekloof. In it she told Olive that: "*I no longer love you, and cannot act hypocritically ... God in His goodness and wisdom used you as a means to show me what an awful soul destroying thing free-thinking is*" (in First & Scott, 1989 p. 78). She went on to say that her husband felt the same way and that they had told their children that Olive was God's enemy and they could not love God and Olive at the same time. Olive's reply to this letter gave little clue as to how devastating it must have been for her (Cronwright-Schreiner, 1924). The letter was "... *deeply wounding ... in its absolute rejection of Olive by a woman whom she had loved and needed ...*" (First & Scott, 1989, p. 79).

Olive remained at Leliekloof until just before she left South Africa for England, in March 1881. Her journal entries revealed her intention to travel to England, and her determination to work ever harder. They also revealed, as First and Scott (1989) pointed out, the enormous fluctuations in her mood and periods of intense self-deprecation. For example on October 18th 1880 she reported feeling well and determined to work (Cronwright-Schreiner, 1924). By October 23rd however, she wrote that:

I haven't done much writing to-day and am profoundly dissatisfied with myself. Hate myself. I'm going to work now. The spirit truly is willing, but the flesh is weak ... I mean to try and love every person and every thing and to look for the good. That at least I can do, if I am a miserable fool. (in Cronwright-Schreiner, 1924, p. 139)

On February 7th, 1881, two days before she left Leliekloof, she felt ill and discouraged:

I leave the day after tomorrow. I had hoped to get my book written out, but I can't as I am very sick today, very. I have been fighting as hard as ever I did in my life, but I've given in at last. I feel hopeless, so dissatisfied with myself. If I am sick in England. I am so tired ... It's such a bitter disappointment to me that I can't write ... I am so tired of it all, so tired of the future before it comes (in Cronwright-Schreiner, 1924, p. 143)

It was while at Leliekloof that she completed *The story of an African farm*, and sent it to the Browns who were living in England. They contacted a publisher who was encouraging about the novel, but returned it saying that it required editing. Olive also applied to train as a nurse at the Royal Infirmary in Edinburgh. According to First and Scott (1989), she had given up her idea of becoming a doctor. Cronwright-Schreiner (1924), however, believed that she wanted to study nursing with the intention of graduating, eventually, as a doctor.

Olive left Leliekloof early in 1881. Ill at the time, she travelled by cart to Grahamstown to say goodbye to Rebecca before leaving for England. On 8th March 1881 Olive sailed for England on the Kinfauns Castle. According to Schoeman (1991), she was: “... beset by bouts of despondency, worries about her health, and lack of confidence in herself” (p. 509). An extract from her journal while she was aboard the ship reads: “*I have not much hope. I shall **never** be well ... but I **will** strive, I **will***” (in First & Scott, 1989, p. 81, emphasis in original).

3.5.6 Summary of Olive’s years as a governess

This phase of Olive’s life was characterised by episodes of ill-health and periods of extreme despondency. There were, on the other hand, periods of peace, stability and happiness. In spite of struggling with her writing at times, these years were, in many ways, to be the most productive of her life. A summary of significant incidents and events from this period is presented in Table 4.

3.6 The years abroad (1881-1889)

3.6.1 Medical aspirations

Olive arrived in England on 30th March 1881. Her brothers, Fred and Will, with

Table 4

Chronology of Olive's years as a governess

Date	Incident/event	Socio-political issues
1874	Olive takes up a position as governess with the Weakleys in Colesburg, where she arrives in May.	At this time there is growing antagonism and mutual suspicion between Dutch and English settlers.
1875	In February Olive leaves the Weakleys. Olive takes up a position as governess with the Fouché family on Klein Gannahoek near Cradock.	275 white women in the Cape Colony are employed as governesses. The Black Flag rebellion takes place: white diggers refuse to disarm.
1876	<i>Undine</i> is completed. In May Olive accepts a position as governess with the Martin family on Ratelhoek near Tarkastad. Gottlob dies in August.	Most of the Dutch settlers live fairly primitive and isolated lives on farms. However, there is growing appreciation by the Dutch for education, and increasing use of governesses.
1879	In March Olive leaves Ratelhoek; she visits the Cawoods at Gannahoek. <i>African farm</i> is nearly completed during this period. On 25 th July Erilda Cawood writes her letter of rejection to Olive. In August Olive returns to the Fouché family, now at Leliekloof near Cradock.	There is an emerging sense of Afrikaner identity amongst the Dutch in the decade, heightened by such events as Britain's annexation of the Transvaal in 1877. British troops invade Zululand, they are defeated at Isandlwana.
1881	Olive visits her mother in Grahamstown in February. In March Olive leaves South Africa for England.	South African women, despite the restrictions of the time, have more freedom than most women in England or Europe where convention is more rigid than in Colonial society. Transvaal wins back independence with the treaty of Pretoria.

whom she stayed at Eastbourne, met her. By the end of April she was at Burnley with John and Mary Brown, and on April 29th they left for Edinburgh where Olive entered the Royal Infirmary to study nursing. Olive remained there only three days. According to Cronwright-Schreiner (1924), she was ill and felt unhappy. Fred travelled to Scotland to

collect her, and took her back to Eastbourne. Cronwright-Schreiner's comment on this episode is revealing: *"Anyone who knew Olive would have been able to predict with certainty that the plan would never answer; she was incapable of living with people under such conditions, quite apart from the matter of health"* (1924, pp. 149-150).

Olive decided to apply for medical training. Fred was to support her, and her immediate intention was to remain at Eastbourne while she prepared for her preliminary examinations (First & Scott, 1989). On May 5th 1881 she wrote to John Brown informing him of her intention to begin her studies as soon as possible, but also mentioning her fear that she would: *"... find myself a great fool when I come to measure myself, mind by mind, with other people"* (Schreiner, 1987, p. 33). Cronwright-Schreiner (1924) offered a commentary on this letter:

... anyone who knew Olive might have been quite sure she would never qualify as a doctor; no mere mechanical grind of study could hold her mind; 'getting up' any subject was impossible for her. Her mind was too restless, too original, too absorbed with thought. When she attempted anything alien to her nature, whether continuous study of some line of knowledge or anything practical ... It did not last long; she would soon be walking up and down, forgetful of everything. Moreover, she could not work with other people; they misunderstood her ... and she not only misunderstood them, but they became problems to her, and she began to think about them deeply. (p. 150)

According to First and Scott (1989), there is no record of Olive having sat the examinations. Her next attempt at further study occurred when she entered the Women's Hospital in London, again to study nursing. She was there for five days before she became ill with inflammation of the lungs (Cronwright-Schreiner, 1924) and withdrew. She spent the winter of 1881/1882 at Ventnor on the Isle of Wight. According to Meintjes (1965), Olive was involved with a man while at Ventnor, and *"This man turned out to be a sadist"* (p. 60). He attributed her ill health around this time to the ending of the affair. No significant information concerning this possible relationship is to be found in any other biography, although Lewis (2010) suggested the possibility of Olive being involved in an abusive relationship at that time.

In 1882 Olive enrolled to study again, this time at the London School of Medicine for Woman. She fell ill after the second lecture, and ceased attending. This was to be her last attempt to embark on a medical career (Cronwright-Schreiner, 1924; First & Scott, 1989; Meintjes, 1965).

3.6.2 Literary aspirations

Olive appears to have spent most of 1882 trying to have *African farm* published. She had sent the manuscript to Macmillan at the end of 1881, but it had been rejected. According to Meintjes (1965), her spirits were low and she was uncertain about her future. First and Scott (1989) indicated that she spent most of her time crying, ate very little, and took large doses of potassium bromide. They suggested that her mood, normally labile, was quite persistently depressed during the three years between 1881 and 1884. She was ashamed at having failed at the career of which she had dreamed for so long, and she was bewildered by her experience of a new country and a large city.

The story of an African farm was published early in 1883 by Chapman and Hall. The novel was strongly autobiographical. Apart from dealing with themes which were obviously important to Olive, it reflected clearly a number of incidents from her life (Barsby, 1995; Rive, 1977; Schoeman, 1991). Themes in the novel include the arbitrariness and cruelty of life, love and relations between the sexes, religion and loss of faith, guilt and punishment, alienation from family and society, violence to children and the position of women in society (Schreiner, 1883, 1995). One of the most significant themes of the book is a criticism of contemporary Christianity. This is mediated through the character Waldo, who experiences great anguish at losing his faith, but ultimately finds peace in an alternative, almost mystical, spirituality involving a sense of oneness with the universe. This reflects the influence on Olive of Herbert Spencer whose *First principles* had meant so much to her (Schoeman, 1991).

Another major theme is the position of women in society, articulated by the character Lyndall. Lyndall is bitter, self-absorbed, proud and defiantly independent.

Although beautiful, she is in some respects quite masculine. She wears men's jewellery and rides like a man. She is contemptuous of contemporary women who, with their aspirations constrained and denied voices of their own, have to use their charms to manipulate and wheedle their way, through marriage, into positions of power and influence (Schreiner, 1995).

Overall the tone of the novel, philosophical considerations notwithstanding, is deeply pessimistic. As the narrator says of life, it is: "*A striving, and a striving, and an ending in nothing*" (Schreiner, 1995, p. 107). The novel is : "... *disjointed in structure*" (Rive, 1977, p. 86) because Olive interrupts the flow of her narrative as a result of her urgent need to express her views, for which Lyndall and Waldo are mouthpieces. She communicates her ideas, but at the expense of her art, because she lapses into rhetoric, sermonising and polemics (Jacobson, 1995; Rive, 1977).

Responses to the novel were mixed, but it elicited favourable reviews from Philip Kent of *Life*, Charles Dilke, and the historian W. E. Lecky who, according to First and Scott (1989), would have supported its "*freethinking feminism*" (p. 121). The British Prime Minister, Gladstone, was impressed by the book, as was Canon MacColl, who also wrote a review of the novel. The book earned Olive some fame and not a little notoriety for what many felt was its questionable morality. Meintjies (1965) wrote that: "*Quite a procession of the young literary men of the day arrived in hansom cabs at the door of her Bloomsbury lodgings to pay their homage to the new genius ...*" (p. 51). Her landladies could not believe that the attention of so many men was the result of her literary talent, and regarded Olive with some misgivings (Cronwright-Schreiner, 1924; Lewis, 2010). As a successful author, she met other literary figures, such as the socialists Edward Aveling and Eleanor Marx, as well as Bryan Donkin who was to become her doctor (First & Scott, 1989).

3.6.3 Havelock Ellis

One of the men who responded to Olive after the publication of her novel was Havelock Ellis. Ellis was a medical student and literary critic. His early loss of faith and experience as a tutor on farms in the Australian bush meant that his background was not dissimilar to Olive's. He appreciated the freshness of style and outlook in *African farm*, and he understood the character Waldo. He wrote to Olive about her novel early in 1884 (First & Scott, 1989). They began to correspond, and did so for several months before they met in May 1884. According to Meintjies (1965) they: "... *fell in love with each other by post*" (p. 60).

The letters between Ellis and Olive were initially formal and intellectual. She addressed him as "*Mr Ellis*" (e.g., Schreiner, 1987, p. 35). They shared similar views regarding socialism, to which they were both sympathetic and yet cautious. They discussed the sexual theory and ethics of Hinton. Their mutual interest in physiology and sexuality allowed for the development of a degree of frankness which otherwise might have been unusual (First & Scott, 1989). The relationship quickly became intimate and intense. Some biographers such as First and Scott believed that their relationship was not a sexual one. Lewis (2010) however, suggested that they had a physical relationship, and implied that it was consummated. By July 1884 Ellis was addressed by Olive as "*Harry*" and "*dear one*" (Schreiner, 1987, p. 45). Later in the same month he was "*Dearest heart*" (Schreiner, 1987, p. 47). According to First and Scott, their relationship was an ambiguous one, and their "*absorption in their shared experience ... grew into a delight at a sense of shared self*" (1989, p. 132). Ellis became her confidant and even acted as a therapist to her. His interest in sexuality led him to make extensive notes of his communication with her, particularly regarding her sexual history. Their closeness and the extent to which Olive experienced Ellis as a part of herself were reflected in a letter written on 5th November 1884:

*You know I've wanted for so many years to die but I don't any more ...
When I first knew you I thought here is one person into whose relationship
with me no pain will ever enter because we are so near each other and*

understand each other so. Now it seems as if I was going to make you sad. If you could see deep into my soul you would see that the feeling that is yours is the most pure and perfect feeling that I have ever had for anyone – I mean the kind of feeling that can't go away. If I had passion for you perhaps I couldn't have this feeling ... It is no figure of speech when I say you are my other self. (Schreiner, 1987, p. 52)

First and Scott (1989) believed that Olive was in conflict about her sexuality and about her passion for Ellis, which she felt but suppressed. This is supported by another letter, written two weeks later:

I love you so, and yet when I kiss you or come near to you, I have a feeling that I am cruel and not quite true to you, and such agony – why, I don't, I can't understand it ... I feel as if you were part of my body. Then why do I feel as if to kiss you were wrong (Schreiner, 1987, p. 53)

Olive's love for Ellis was quite infantile in that it was egocentric. According to First and Scott:

They were absorbed, even exhilarated by their sense of likeness to one another, but in the course of their exploration of themselves each projected on to the other their sense of self to the point of obscuring and then obliterating the other's personality. Olive loved Havelock in that he resembled herself; he became an extension of her own narcissism, her self involvement. (1989, p. 139)

By the end of 1885 the relationship had cooled somewhat, particularly from Olive's side, and Ellis was most likely hurt by this. They were, nevertheless, to remain friends for the rest of her life (First & Scott, 1989).

Meintjes (1965) discussed the issue of Olive's sexuality. He believed that she had masochistic tendencies. According to him: "*A tendency towards masochism is clear in Olive's nature since childhood, and this is blatantly so in her early writings*" (p. 60). He also suggested that she had bisexual tendencies, pointing to a letter in which Olive described an incident with Ellis's sister Louise:

I have such a strong feeling for Louie [sic]. When she put her arm round me on the sofa, I wanted to cuddle close up to her, but I was ashamed. I liked it. I have such an odd feeling for her (Schreiner, 1987, p. 43)

He pointed to Olive's fondness for male clothing since childhood in support of his contention. First and Scott (1989) were doubtful and believed that apart from the Louise episode, there was no other evidence of erotic attachment to women. Olive's relations to women, and indeed to her own femininity, were complicated however. She had already developed in South Africa a general dislike of women. For example, in a letter to her brother Will, she said of Mrs Cawood that: "... *she is quite converting my woman hatred into woman love ...*" (Schreiner, 1987, pp. 18-19). She also told Ellis that she had something of a man in her nature. In doing so, First and Scott believed that she:

... made one of the most revealing statements about her sense of herself in relation to her society that a woman could make. Rejecting the powerlessness of the traditional female role, she chose an 'external' world of work for herself, yet could identify herself only as a deviant within the culture: a woman who adopted a man's pursuits: economic independence, creative work, freedom to travel, and a measure of sexual autonomy. (1989, p. 133)

In a letter to Edward Carpenter written in April 1888 she asked him not to hate women so much, although she admitted that she did herself, and reassured herself with the thought that she would stop being one in two or three more years (a reference to menstruation) and then she would be accepted by men as a comrade (Schreiner, 1987).

3.6.4 Ill health

Olive's physical and psychological health was poor around the time she was agonising over her feelings for Ellis. According to First and Scott (1989), she experienced a variety of symptoms, including nausea, dizziness, fever and pain. Her letters at the time show that she felt weak and tired, that her chest hurt, and that she cried uncontrollably at times (e.g., Schreiner, 1987). In a letter to Havelock Ellis written on 9th September 1884, she suggested a connection between her emotions and her physical state

when she said that: “*It’s as much my mind as my body that is ill*” (Schreiner, 1987, p.51). Another statement made to Ellis early in 1885 lent support to this insight: “... *it isn’t my chest, it isn’t my legs, it’s I myself, my life ...*” (in First & Scott, 1989, p. 144). She was using various drugs including bromide, morphia, quinine and chlorodyne, in an attempt to obtain some relief. According to First and Scott, she also had semi-hallucinatory experiences, which might have been related to the use of these drugs. Lewis (2010) believed that many of her symptoms, including her unhappiness, were the result of the medication she was taking.

By the middle of 1885 Olive was feeling somewhat better. She met a number of literary figures including Rider Haggard, Philip Marston, George Moore and Oscar Wilde. She was involved with the Fellowship of the New Life, an organisation founded by Thomas Davidson and devoted to the cultivation of perfect character and a new life, where she discussed her views on the equality of woman. This was obviously a subject that had occupied her thoughts since her adolescence in South Africa, as the inferior position of women in society was a theme in both *Undine* and *African farm*. She was a member of the Men and Women’s Club, a discussion group which met to discuss relations between the sexes (First & Scott, 1989). Other members included Bryan Donkin, her doctor, and Karl Pearson, of whom more will be said below.

Early in 1886 Donkin proposed marriage to Olive. She declined the offer, insisting that she needed to be free. Issues of dependence and independence had preoccupied her since South Africa, as indicated previously in 3.4 and 3.5. They had been prominent at the time she was so conflicted over her feelings for Ellis, and her distress at the time might have owed as much to this factor as confusion regarding her sexuality. She seemed to want to avoid others being dependent on her as much as she wanted to eschew dependence on others. She became ill and depressed after the proposal, and retreated to a Dominican convent in Kilburn (First & Scott, 1989).

3.6.5 Karl Pearson

Olive was, according to First and Scott (1989), at the time attracted to Karl Pearson. Pearson was Professor of Applied Mathematics at University College, and he was to become one of the fathers of modern statistics. He had also studied physics, law, engineering and languages (Lewis, 2010). He was a member of the Men and Women's Club and a relationship had developed between Olive and Pearson, with Olive helping him to gather information for his scientific study of women. He in turn became Olive's intellectual reference point. He had from the start set boundaries for their relationship, saying that it could only be a "*man to man*" friendship (in First & Scott, 1989, p. 159). The tone in Olive's letters to Pearson quickly became familiar, possibly inappropriately so considering the protocol of the time. There were also echoes of themes present in her correspondence with Ellis. For example she signed one letter as "*your man-friend OS*" (in First & Scott, 1989, p. 162). In the postscript to another letter she wrote: "*I'm not a woman, I'm a man, and you are to regard me as such*" (in First & Scott, 1989, p. 162). On 20 October 1886 she wrote to him: "*I am always conscious that I am a woman when I am with you; but it is to wish I were a man that I might come near to you*" (Schreiner, 1987, p. 108). At the end of the same letter she wrote to Pearson: "*I can't pity you: people don't pity their own brains*" (Schreiner, 1987, p. 108). This comment is suggestive of the same kind of identification that had previously occurred with Ellis.

Towards the end of 1886 the relationship between Olive and Pearson took a negative turn. Olive believed that Elizabeth Cobb, a friend of Pearson, had betrayed her confidence to him, and correspondence in this regard was exchanged between the three. Pearson seems to have withdrawn from her, and by December she was pleading for a response from him. In a letter showing her desperation and fear of rejection she wrote: "*My Man-friend, write to me. Find fault with me, please, if I am doing wrong; oh, my soul is so little, so little. Can't your larger one for a moment put out a hand to me ...*" (Schreiner, 1987, p. 115). Shortly after this she became ill again. Donkin remained with her for a week, believing that she constituted a danger to herself. He also believed that she was in love with Pearson, and told Pearson as much, urging him to act (First & Scott,

1989). Olive vehemently denied that her feelings for Pearson contained any element of sexual attraction (Schreiner, 1987). She was extremely distressed and her instinct, according to First and Scott, was to flee.

3.6.6 The Continent

Olive left England for Europe, spending time in Vevrey and Clarens in Switzerland, Alassio in Italy, and Paris. In a letter to Edward Carpenter she made a revealing comment when she wrote that: “... *There is **nothing** helps one like travelling when one is in pain*” (Schreiner, 1987, p. 127, emphasis in original). She seems to have been occupied with making sense of the traumatic episode in England, which had precipitated her flight. According to First and Scott (1989), her hostility toward Mrs Cobb was suppressed, and she blamed herself for what had occurred. The incident, nevertheless, had confirmed Olive’s mistrust of women. It also illustrated, as First and Scott pointed out, the conflict that Olive experienced regarding her sexuality. She failed to recognise her sexual attraction to Pearson, and her advocacy of sexual freedom for women seemed to be purely intellectual. On a personal level she denied her sexuality and seemed, consciously at least, to be in pursuit of idealised, sexless relations with men.

Olive had worked while in England, particularly on *From man to man* (Schreiner, 2004b). In Europe she took up her writing again with renewed intensity. She worked on *From man to man* and wrote a number of allegories that she sent to Pearson for his opinion. Fisher Unwin published these as *Dreams* (Schreiner, 1890, 1982) at the end of 1890. The allegories: “... *expressed the aspirations of feminism whether in terms of the vote or the co-operative movement*” (First & Scott, 1989, p. 185).

From man to man (Schreiner, 2004b) appears to have grown out of the novel originally entitled *Saints and sinners*. Olive seems to have started the book at Ratelhoek some time after 1st October 1876 (Schoeman, 1991). She worked on the novel for more than forty years, and it was still unfinished at the time of her death. It was first published by Cronwright-Schreiner in 1926.

The novel is strongly autobiographical (Schoeman, 1991). The two main characters, Rebekah and Bertie, reflect different facets of Olive's personality (Rive, 1977). Rebekah is a lonely, unhappy little girl at the beginning of the book. She is left to her own devices while her mother recovers from the birth of twins, one of whom dies. Her father is a vague background figure, distracted and unavailable. Rebekah wants to grow up quickly and know everything. In the meantime she lives in a dream world, talking to a make-believe friend and imagining a safe place where the wild animals look after her, and where she is not scolded for being wicked, or called strange.

Bertie recalls Em from *African farm*, and her: "... *conventional domesticity and femininity are pushed to the brink of parody ...*" (Schoeman, 1991, p. 405). Bertie's options in life exclude real, honest labour. Available to her, on the one hand, are domesticity and marriage; and on the other, prostitution. Both possibilities are depicted as contemptible. Seduced by her tutor at an early age, Bertie becomes damaged goods, and only the latter option remains for her.

Olive considered the essential topics of the novel to be prostitution and marriage (Schoeman, 1991). There are other themes. They include the development of society and a critique of social Darwinism; the Spencerian view of universal order, unity and coherence; relations between the sexes; art; the position and treatment of blacks; and Olive's exploration of an androgynous ideal, typified in this novel by the character Drummond.

From man to man, even more than the other two novels, suffers because of Olive's need to convey her message. The book has structural interpolations that seriously impede the rhythm and flow of the novel (Rive, 1977). A substantial portion of the book entails Rebekah's articulation of Olive's theories. *Man to man* is, according to Barsby (1995), essentially a novel of ideas.

Olive spent most of the rest of her time in Europe at Alassio, writing in solitude. She was ill at times, and on occasion her mood seems to have been depressed. A letter

written to Ellis on 18 March 1889 indicated that she felt lonely, despondent and suicidal (Schreiner, 1987). However, there were also periods of calm and cheerfulness. In April 1888 she wrote to Edward Carpenter saying that she felt peaceful: “... *as if a great hand were opened over you and all were so calm under it? I feel like that today*” (Schreiner, 1987, p. 139).

3.6.7 England

By the summer of 1889 Olive was back in England. She kept away from the Men and Women’s Club, and generally avoided attending the meetings to which she was invited. She lived in the East End for a while, apparently to discourage people from calling on her. Seemingly reclusive at the time, she nevertheless met Gladstone and Spencer, and was involved in helping others such as Alice Corthorn, a young woman for whom she helped raise funds to complete her medical studies. She had decided, however, to return to South Africa. She left England towards the end of 1889, and arrived back in South Africa on 6th November 1889 (First & Scott, 1989; Rive, 1977).

3.6.8 Summary of the years abroad

This phase of Olive’s life, spent mostly in England but which also included a lengthy visit to the Continent, was a chaotic one. Notable was her involvement in a great many projects and enterprises, none of which led to her accomplishing much. Also noteworthy were the intense relationships that she formed, and which created a great deal of conflict and turmoil for her. She was often ill and frequently in a state of despair. Her time abroad, however, must have been a very stimulating one for her. A summary of significant events from this period is presented in Table 5.

Table 5

Chronology of the years abroad

Date	Incident/event	Socio-political issues
1881	In April Olive visits John and Mary Brown at Burnley. Olive enters the Royal Infirmary to study nursing; she leaves after three days. In May Olive travels to Eastbourne to stay with her brother Fred. Olive again attempts to study nursing, at the Women's Hospital in London; after five days she becomes ill and withdraws. Olive spends the winter of 1881/1882 on the Isle of Wight.	Britain's government is a constitutional monarchy, a liberal government that had prevented revolution through reform. The Cambridge Tripos exams are opened to women.
1882	Olive spends much of this year attempting to have <i>African farm</i> published. Her mood is persistently and significantly depressed for much of this year.	In this decade the women's movement gains strength. The Married Women's Property Act is passed and it enables women to buy, own and sell property.
1883	<i>African farm</i> is published.	Paul Kruger becomes President of the South African Republic.
1884	Olive and Havelock Ellis begin to correspond early in this year; they meet in May. During the middle of this year Olive is quite seriously ill.	Third Reform Act and Redistribution Act extends the vote to agricultural workers, tripling the electoral basis in Britain.
1885	Olive attends meetings of the Fellowship of the New Life and involves herself in the Men and Women's Club.	Britain's economy is in decline and unemployment is widespread.
1886	Early in this year Bryan Donkin proposes marriage to Olive. During the first half of this year Olive develops a correspondence with Karl Pearson, and assists him in gathering information for his study of women. By December the relationship between Olive and Pearson has broken down; Olive becomes seriously ill, depressed and suicidal.	Socialism is becoming increasingly popular amongst intellectuals and organised labour. In South Africa gold is discovered on the Witwatersrand.
1887	Olive leaves England for the Continent.	During this decade Britain embarks on a policy of colonial expansion.
1889	Olive returns to England; she leaves England for South Africa.	Rhodes founds Consolidated Goldfields. London dock workers' strike occurs.

3.7 South Africa and social justice (1890-1910)

3.7.1 Matjesfontein

After her return to South Africa Olive spent a short time with her brother Will in Cape Town, and then settled in the village of Matjesfontein (Lewis, 2010). Matjesfontein was a Karoo hamlet on the main railway line from Cape Town. She lived there alone for several years and was, by all accounts, happy. She took pleasure in the arid landscape, and enjoyed the plants and animals (First & Scott, 1989; Schoeman, 1992). She was writing again, and it was there that she wrote the *Buddhist priest's wife* (Schreiner, 1923a, 1924). She also began work on a series of essays that would be published after her death, as *Thoughts on South Africa* (Schreiner, 1923b, 1927), though many appeared at the time as articles (Schoeman, 1992).

Will Schreiner was, at the time, legal advisor to the Governor of the Cape, and was soon to enter parliament himself. It was through him that Olive met many of the prominent figures in Cape politics and society. She developed close friendships with Mary Sauer and Jessie Innes, the wives of two prominent Cape politicians, and with Betty Molteno, a Port Elizabeth school teacher. She had become very interested in Cecil John Rhodes who became prime minister of the Cape Colony, and met him in 1890 when he stopped at Matjesfontein. There developed between them an intense friendship that ended two years later, rather abruptly. The ostensible reason for the break was Olive's objection to Rhodes' political views and, at this time in particular, to his support of the so-called Strop Bill (which gave white masters the right to lash African servants for minor offences), as well as the militant capitalism of his particular brand of imperialism (First & Scott, 1989). Schoeman (1992) suggested that the break might have had as much to do with Olive's personal feelings as it did with any ideological differences between them. He believed that Olive had entertained hopes of marriage to Rhodes. There were rumours at the time of a romance between them, which Olive denied. By 1892 she had severed all ties with Rhodes.

Olive had, since returning from England, become interested in Cape politics. She was concerned about the situation of the coloured community. Her opposition to the Strop Bill, even if it was exercised largely through the wives of politicians, marked her active involvement in political intrigue (Schoeman, 1992). First and Scott (1989) suggested that references to the indigenous population of South Africa made by Olive were: “... *firmly rooted in the racist stereotypes of contemporary ethnology which she was clearly unable to transcend*” (p. 195). Schoeman, however, pointed out that the fact that she was concerned about the plight of non-whites at all indicated the marked divergence of her views from those of the majority of her white peers. She argued for a unified nation, and warned against the dangers of segregation on a racial basis. She was particularly concerned about the divide between the Afrikaners and the English-speaking South Africans. Her essays at the time showed her to be a strong advocate for the Boers (First & Scott, 1989).

3.7.2 Marriage

Olive’s attention was first drawn to Samuel Cron Cronwright when she noticed an article, published in the *Midland News*, in which he had attacked Rhodes for supporting the Strop Bill (Schoeman, 1992). Cronwright (known and referred to hereafter, as Cron), for his part, had already heard of Olive. He said that his relationship with her began with his reading *The story of an African farm* in 1890. The book had made a deep impression on him and he vowed that he would marry the character Lyndall when he met her (Cronwright-Schreiner, 1924). At that time Cron was managing the farm Krantzplaats near Cradock. He learned that his neighbours on Gannahoek, the Cawoods, knew Olive and he made them promise to inform him of her next visit. They eventually met at Gannahoek in December 1892 (Cronwright-Schreiner, 1924).

Cron wrote about Olive’s personality and the impression which she initially made on him:

... All her being swept upon me, staggered and dumbfounded me at first, and then finally woke in me a force of feeling and a power to realize some phases of human nature which, but for her, would, I think, always have remained dormant. Olive Schreiner's intensely vivid personality, her wide mind which first opened the doors of my own cramped intellectual life, her large outlook over the whole range of humanity made her, to me, an absolutely unique individual ... I saw her, not as an individual, but as a symbol, a seer, a teacher with her intellect afire for all that was great and beautiful and her heart aflame with love and pity for those who were despised. It was characteristic of Olive Schreiner that, however much she was opposed to an individual or to a nation, so soon as they were attacked she championed their cause ... Olive always said she envied men and would rather have been a man than a woman; nevertheless she was the first who woke in me the knowledge of the glory of womanhood, which has never since left me. (Cronwright-Schreiner, 1924, p. 207)

Schoeman (1992) offered a description of Cron as being self-assured, arrogant, stubborn and lacking in humour and imagination. He pointed out nevertheless, that it was probably these qualities that attracted “... *the volatile and emotional Olive*” (p. 29) in the first place. Cron was, moreover, well read, a freethinker, and sympathetic to feminism. This would have made him something of a rarity in South Africa, where Olive was frustrated by the lack of intellectual stimulation (First & Scott, 1989). She was also attracted to him physically. Schoeman stated that, according to the evidence, Olive had a very strongly developed sexuality. He quoted Havelock Ellis in this regard:

She possessed a powerfully and physically passionate temperament which craved an answering impulse and might even under other circumstances – for of this I could have no personal experience – be capable of carrying her beyond the creed of right and wrong which she herself fiercely held and preached (in Schoeman, 1992, p. 29)

Schoeman went on to note that:

As a typical product of her time, however, she was for all her liberated ideas unable to acknowledge the fact and unable to cope with it, so that it had largely to be suppressed, denied or channelled in other directions. In the final analysis it may well have been sexual attraction on her part and sheer hero-worship on Cron's which were responsible for their marriage (1992, pp. 29–30)

Olive's letters at the time gave some idea of what Cron meant to her. As had been the case with both Ellis and Pearson, she seemed to experience Cron as an extension of herself. In a letter written to him in January 1893 she said: "*Yes, it is curious how like Waldo and Lyndall you are. The curious feeling I have toward you that you are a part of myself; it's such a curious, curious sort of feeling*" (Schreiner, 1987, p. 217). She admired his physical strength, energy, will power, clarity of thought, and what she felt was his clear moral sense (First & Scott, 1989; Lewis, 2010; Schoeman, 1992; Schreiner, 1987).

Despite her obvious attraction to Cron, she initially felt that marriage was not a possibility. During a six-month visit to England in 1893 she seemed preoccupied with this issue (First & Scott, 1989). By early 1894, however, she had decided to marry him. The ceremony took place on 24 February 1894. It was decided, at Olive's wish, that they use the surname *Cronwright-Schreiner* (Schoeman, 1992).

The relationship between Olive and Cron was not an easy one. Olive was plagued by ill health for much of their married life. She suffered from severe asthma and, according to Schoeman (1992), a heart condition. Moreover, she was subject to "*explosive nerve storms*" (Cronwright-Schreiner, 1924, p. 237) which could hardly have contributed to a state of conjugal bliss. Cron made a great many sacrifices for Olive. Shortly after they married, he gave up Krantzplaats because Olive suffered so much from asthma there. They moved to Kimberley, where Olive's health was good, and where she intended to complete two novels, *From man to man* and *The Buddhist priest's wife*. She hoped that her work would bring them financial independence (Cronwright-Schreiner, 1924; Schoeman, 1992). Cron felt it important to give Olive every opportunity to work:

... I have always felt, as a kind of religion, that I had her as a trust, and that, at whatever cost, it was my duty to give her, as far as lay in my power, the opportunity to complete her work as a great artist and one of spiritual insight. (Cronwright-Schreiner, 1924, p. 271)

By 1898, however, Olive had produced very little. Cron, frustrated, unemployed and with very little money, was forced to find employment. He took a position as an articled clerk to a law firm in Johannesburg (Cronwright-Schreiner, 1924; Schoeman, 1992). This was the second of many moves which they were to make during their years together.

In 1895 Olive gave birth to a baby girl. The baby lived through the night but was found dead the following morning. The child's death hurt Olive deeply, but she seems not to have spoken much about it, even to Cron (First & Scott, 1989; Lewis, 2010). According to Schoeman (1992), she was to grieve for this baby all her life.

Olive and Cron's marriage was marked by increasing difficulties caused, according to Schoeman (1992), largely by her, and "... borne heroically ..." (p. 31) by him. Lewis (2010), who was quite scathing about Cron, disagreed. She described him as "... a sour fellow and an obstinate, stern, inexpressive man and quick to take offence" (p. 163). Moreover, she depicted him as fussy, fastidious, demanding and difficult to please. Their relationship was also characterised by lengthy periods of separation occasioned by the circumstances in which they lived, Olive's ill health, and personal factors. By the time the Anglo-Boer war broke out in 1899, their relationship had changed:

By this time the emotion which had brought her and Cron together had lost much of its intensity, and their marriage appears to have been marked on his part by a certain restlessness, impatience and disillusionment, together with an increasing ruthlessness. He remained bound to her, however, by his unshakable loyalty and sense of duty, while she for her part had in many ways become completely dependent on him. He certainly respected her, and it is equally certain that she loved him deeply, but even when allowance is made for the inevitable difficulties of a close personal relationship it would not appear that their marriage was successful or even particularly happy. (Schoeman, 1992, p. 33)

3.7.3 Political involvement

Olive and Cron maintained their interest in politics, with Cron becoming particularly involved. They were both opposed to Rhodes and to the influential Afrikaner Bond. They prepared a paper which Cron presented in August 1895, at a meeting of the Literary Society in Kimberley (Lewis, 2010). This paper, outlining their views, was to be published as *The political situation* (Schreiner & Cronwright-Schreiner, 1896). The paper was anti-Rhodes, anti-capitalism and in particular, anti-Chartered-Company-monopolism. It advocated an anti-protectionist taxation policy, argued for parliamentary representation for women, criticised the exploitation of Native labourers, and recommended improving the lot of the Native (First & Scott, 1989; Schoeman, 1992).

The Jameson Raid took place at the end of 1895. This raid, led by Jameson, Rhodes' subordinate in the Chartered Company, was part of a plot to achieve British annexation of the Transvaal Republic. Rhodes, in addition to being Prime Minister of the Cape Colony, dominated De Beers Consolidated Mines as well as the Goldfields Company. He was the creator of the Chartered Company which was authorised by the British government to maintain an army and annex territory. It was a tool for British imperialism with Rhodes as a willing participant. His influence was enormous, and it was the monopoly of his Chartered Company to which Olive and Cron were so opposed (First & Scott, 1989). The raid failed. The Rhodes Cabinet fell, and Rhodes was forced to resign as Prime Minister. The raid caused deep division in the Schreiner family, with Rebecca, Ettie and Theo supporting Rhodes staunchly, while Olive and Cron remained opposed to him (Schoeman, 1992). Will Schreiner eventually broke with Rhodes and became Prime Minister of the Cape in 1898.

In 1896 Olive wrote the novella, *Trooper Peter Halket of Mashonaland* (Schreiner, 1897, 1974). This allegory criticised the actions of Rhodes and his Chartered Company towards the indigenous Matabele and Mashona people in Rhodesia. In particular it focused on the forceful suppression of the Matabele and Mashona rebellions in order to secure land for settlers in the colony that was named after Rhodes (First &

Scott, 1989). Olive's opposition to Rhodes alienated her from English speaking South Africans, and from public opinion in England. The attacks that affected her most, however, came from her family. She was deeply wounded by their response to her beliefs and politics, which affected her physical and emotional health. She seems to have been depressed, and suffered three miscarriages during this period. At least one of these she attributed to the pain she felt as a result of her family's attitude toward her (First & Scott, 1989; Schoeman, 1992).

At the end of 1896 Olive and Cron sailed for England to find a publisher for *Peter Halket*. It seems as if both Cron and Olive were aware of the possibility of war, for which they believed Rhodes would push to salvage his career. They attempted to warn influential individuals in England about Rhodes' machinations and the dangers of war. While some, notably the clergy, took their warning seriously, the majority of people in South Africa and England did not (Cronwright-Schreiner, 1924; First & Scott, 1989; Schoeman, 1992).

After the Cronwright-Schreiner's return to South Africa, Cron became more involved in politics. Since the fall of the Rhodes cabinet, and the withdrawal of Afrikaner Bond support for Rhodes, Cron aligned himself with the Bond and campaigned for their candidate in Barkly West (First & Scott, 1989). Olive's own political involvement indicated a highly developed social conscience, and as time was to prove, a highly developed social and political consciousness. Her views in these pre-war years were becoming clear, and Schoeman (1992) commented on them:

It was Olive's strong inherent sense of justice that moved her during the 1890s to take up a position diametrically opposed to that of the great majority of English-speaking South Africans, although her feeling of alienation from the latter in general and her mixed but intense personal feelings towards Rhodes in particular also played a part. During the course of the decade there was, however, a shift of emphasis which became more marked after the Jameson Raid. Opposition to Rhodes and to capitalism became opposition to Imperialism, and as the century drew to a close this in turn led to active and passionate championship of the Boer Republics and of the South African Boers as a race. (p. 39)

The Cronwright-Schreiners were living in Johannesburg by October 1898. They had moved for two reasons. The first, indicated earlier, was that Cron was forced to find employment to augment his fast dwindling capital. The second was that Olive's health had deteriorated in Kimberley. Olive hated Johannesburg. She was preoccupied with what she believed, quite rightly, was the imminent war between England and the Boer Republics. Her *An English South African's view of the situation* (Schreiner, 1899), in which she appealed to the English to avoid a war, was published in 1899 (First & Scott, 1989; Schoeman, 1992). At this time Olive's attention was diverted from the Native issue and focused on the more pressing matter of war. With uncanny prescience, however, she said of the native question that: "... *for the moment it is in abeyance; in fifty or a hundred years it will probably be presented for payment as other bills are, and the white man of Africa will have to settle it*" (in Schoeman, 1992, p. 45).

Olive's health did not improve in Johannesburg. She suffered constantly from asthma and bronchitis. Her doctor advised her to leave, and the Cronwright-Schreiners moved to Karreekloof, a farm belonging to Cron's cousin (Schoeman, 1992). From there she cabled newspapers abroad, appealing for peace. The New York Journal had requested that she act as war correspondent, but her ill health prevented this. She was at Karreekloof when the war broke out in October 1999. Late in that same month she travelled to Cape Town where she stayed with her brother Will and his wife (First & Scott, 1989).

In January 1900 Cron, at the suggestion of J. A. Hobson of the Manchester Guardian, sailed for Britain for a six-month lecture tour to campaign against the war. Olive was left alone in Cape Town. This was a difficult time for her. She missed Cron, and was attacked by the press. She was plagued by asthma which, according to Schoeman (1992), was triggered by her loneliness and depression. She seems to have been sustained by her correspondence with good friends such as Betty Molteno and her partner Alice Green, Mary Sauer and Isie Smuts, wife of Jan Smuts, the Boer statesman and general. She spent some time at Wagenaarskraal near Beaufort West, where she experienced relief

from her asthma, and managed to do some writing, mostly working on articles for English newspapers (Schoeman, 1992).

3.7.4 Hanover

Cron arrived back in South Africa in July 1900. According to Schoeman (1992), his return marked a change in their relationship: “... *after having sacrificed the better part of six years to what he had regarded as his ‘sacred trust’, he was beginning to free himself from the demands of his wife’s ill-health and her dependence on him*” (p. 11). By September 1900 they were living in Hanover, a village situated in the Cape interior, 1500 metres above sea level. Olive loved Hanover. She was free from asthma, and enjoyed the surrounding Karoo and its wildlife. She developed good relationships with the local inhabitants, many of whom were Boers or Boer supporters, and shared her political views. She managed to write, mostly letters to be read at women’s protest meetings held at Somerset East and Paarl, in which she outlined her views about, and objections to, the war. These earned her savage attacks from the Cape press (First & Scott, 1989; Schoeman, 1992).

In December 1900 Republican commandos invaded the Cape Colony. On 20th December Martial law was proclaimed at Hanover. Olive was confined to the village and Cron, in Cape Town at the time, was unable to join her (First & Scott, 1989; Schoeman, 1992). She was to spend five months without him. She occupied herself with charitable work in support of those suffering under martial law, and worked on her book *Man to man*. Gradually Olive withdrew herself from the public affairs in which she had been so actively involved. By the middle of 1901 her infatuation with Hanover had abated. She was lonely and suffered from “... *illness and mental anguish*” (Schoeman, 1992, p. 146). She was short of breath, felt tired and faint, and cried often (Cronwright-Schreiner, 1924). Her doctor attributed her illness to her enforced solitude, the shock of her brother Fred’s death (he died during her confinement to Hanover), and the strain of martial law. Cron’s diagnosis was nervous exhaustion, largely the result of isolation and loneliness. He received special permission to travel to Hanover to take care of her (Barsby, 1995).

Cron believed that Olive never quite recovered from this breakdown (Cronwright-Schreiner, 1924).

The war ended on 31 May 1902. The Cronwright-Schreiners remained in Hanover. Cron started a business as a legal agent. He became a member of parliament for Colesberg and then for Beaufort West. Olive led a quiet life. She limited her involvement in public affairs, received few visitors and occupied herself largely with domestic chores (Lewis, 2010). She seems to have been content, although Schoeman suggested that she was ill and depressed in the period following the war. She was writing: allegories, a short story entitled *Eighteen ninety-nine* (Schreiner, 1924), and she continued to work on *Man to man* (Schoeman, 1992).

Olive grew to dislike Hanover intensely. The strong bond that she had felt with the Afrikaners during the war had weakened. According to Schoeman (1992), she became disillusioned with developments amongst Afrikaners in general and rather frustrated at having to live at close quarter with them in Hanover in particular. She despised what she felt was the pettiness of small town life. She missed intellectual stimulation, and felt oppressed and stifled there. By 1904 she was again suffering from asthma, which she had not experienced at Hanover during the war (Schoeman, 1992).

While Olive may have been disillusioned with the Afrikaners, she retained an interest in the plight of Chinese labourers, the Indian community, and black people. Schoeman (1992) commented on this:

... Olive was a product of English-speaking missionary circles, and the daughter, moreover, of an English-born mother who retained all her inborn prejudices and loyalties, and the fact that she had overcome the limitations of her upbringing to espouse the Boer cause in spite of the unpopularity and hardship it caused her, says much for her honesty, her integrity and her sense of justice, even though the espousal may have been based on false premises. But while in championing the Boers she had crossed invisible but very real boundaries of race and language within the little world of white South Africa, in the years after the war that same honesty, integrity and sense of justice forced her logically further to cross the chasm separating

the white South African of her generation from the other races living in the same country. (1992, p. 208)

He went on to attribute her sense of justice towards blacks to the influence of her “... *selfless and other-worldly father*” (p. 209) rather than her “... *more egoistic and snobbish mother*” (p. 209).

Olive became concerned with, and campaigned for, female suffrage (Lewis, 2010). In 1907 she became Vice President of the Women’s Enfranchisement League, at its inception. She later withdrew from the League when it became clear to her that it was only interested in the enfranchisement of white women. She was vehemently opposed to a South Africa divided on the basis of race or colour. For once her family was in agreement on an issue; all the Schreiners shared Olive’s views in this regard (First & Scott, 1989; Schoeman, 1992).

3.7.5 De Aar

In 1907 Olive moved to De Aar, to join Cron who had started a business in that town and been there for some time. She lived there for six years. Olive seems not to have been particularly impressed with De Aar. She was lonely there, although the town was situated along the railway line, and this meant that she was less isolated from the affairs of the world than she had been at Hanover. It was while living in De Aar that she completed *Woman and labour* (Schreiner, 1911, 1914) which was published in 1911 in London (First & Scott, 1989; Schoeman, 1992).

Woman and labour was, according to First and Scott (1989), Olive’s definitive work on the female condition. It explored women’s relationships to war and work. It: “... *did no more than reflect that concern with the development of a new kind of woman, and, by extension, a new kind of life*” (First & Scott, 1989, p. 264). According to Schoeman (1992), this was to become her most influential work. He pointed out that Vera Brittain referred to the book as the Bible of the women’s movement (Brittain, 1967).

3.7.6 Summary of the ‘South Africa and social justice’ years

As in previous stages, physical and psychological ill-health remained characteristic features of Olive’s life. Another such feature was her propensity for movement, usually on account of her asthma, but reflecting a tendency that had been present since adolescence. Perhaps most obvious at this stage of her life, however, was her social conscience and the broadening of her social concerns. There were also periods of stability and happiness, such as during the early years of her marriage, and the initial time in Hanover. A summary of significant events in Olive’s life during this phase is presented below in Table 6 below.

3.8 The final decade (1910-1920)

3.8.1 England

Olive’s health deteriorated in De Aar. She decided to travel to Europe for medical assistance (Schoeman, 1992). Cron was adamant that he would not give up his business (Cronwright-Schreiner, 1924) and Olive left for England, alone, in 1913 (First & Scott, 1989). Schoeman suggested that after their difficult years together, Cron was probably relieved at her departure.

Olive made contact with many of her old friends after arriving in London. She saw Ellis and Carpenter, amongst others, and the reunion seemed to elevate her mood. By 1914, with the outbreak of the First World War however, she was living a lonely life in boarding houses, persecuted at times on account of her German surname. Ill and discouraged by the destruction of war, which must have shaken her faith in progress, she felt that only death could end her suffering. First and Scott believed that she had “... *lost a centre to her life*” (1989, p. 299), and the deaths of her friend Alice Greene and her brothers Will and Theo in short succession must have contributed to her sadness and sense of isolation (Barsby, 1995).

Table 6

Chronology of Olive's life during the 'South Africa and social justice' years

Date	Incident/event	Socio-political issues
1889	In November Olive arrives back in South Africa.	A Royal Charter awarded to the British South African Company effectively allows for the establishment of Rhodesia as a colony.
1890	Olive settles in Matjesfontein where she meets Cecil Rhodes, the Cape Prime Minister.	Rhodes becomes Prime Minister of the Cape Colony.
1891	Olive begins the <i>Buddhist priest's wife</i> .	The Strop Bill is introduced in parliament for the second time.
1892	Olive meets Samuel Cron Cronwright (Cron).	Rhodes and Jameson push for war against the Matebele to consolidate their hold on Rhodesia.
1894	In February Olive and Cron are married; they move to Kimberley.	The Glen Grey Act is passed. It sets a pattern of land holding in African reserves that effectively makes migrant labour available to white industrialists.
1895	In April Olive's baby girl is born and dies.	The Witwatersrand produces one quarter of the world's gold by this time.
1896	The Jameson raid takes place; its failure forces Rhodes to resign as Prime Minister. Olive writes <i>Trooper Peter Halket</i> .	The Schreiner family is deeply divided by the Jameson Raid, which also highlights divisions in white South African society.
1898	The Cronwright-Schreiners relocate to Johannesburg.	Tension between the South African Republic and Britain builds.
1899	Olive writes <i>A South African's view of the situation</i> . The Boer War breaks out in October. Olive spends time at Karreekloof and moves to Cape Town.	Boer commandos take the initiative and penetrate into Natal. A large British expeditionary force lands in November.
1900	Olive lives under martial law in Hanover.	Boer commandos penetrate deep into the Cape Colony.
1902	The Boer War ends.	Milner initiates post-war reconstruction of the Free State and Transvaal.
1907	Olive becomes vice president of the Women's Enfranchisement League. Olive moves to De Aar. She completes <i>Woman and labour</i> .	Miners strike at Knight's Deep against health conditions and imported Chinese labour.

By 1919 Olive and Cron had been apart for five years. This period was, according to First and Scott (1989):

... part of the pattern that was established within a few years of their marriage, and although Olive claimed that she wanted to be with him more than anything in the world, her life was so arranged that she was constantly travelling away from him, constantly professing her love for him. (p. 315)

Cron had sufficient money to retire by December 1919. Moreover, he was exhausted by his work schedule and felt desperately in need of a vacation (Cronwright-Schreiner, 1924). He sold his business and began preparing for a holiday in Europe. First and Scott indicated that the relationship between Olive and Cron was strained at this point. Cron in fact, while intending to see Olive, planned to find his own accommodations and spend at least part of his trip alone. He arrived in London in July 1920, and was shocked by Olive's appearance. She had aged and it was clear that she was very ill. He spent only one month with her before she left England on 13 August, for South Africa (First & Scott, 1989).

3.8.2 Cape Town

Olive spent the last few months of her life in Cape Town. She was weak, but able to care for herself, and appears to have been quite active. She saw her old friends, and members of her family (Lewis, 2010). She was still concerned about the future of black South Africans. She seemed to be at peace. Olive died on the night of 10th December 1920 (First & Scott, 1989). An autopsy indicated that she died of heart failure (Lewis, 2010). She had struggled with asthma for most of her life, was reported to have suffered from a heart condition since middle age (Barsby, 1995; Schoeman, 1991), and had been a heavy smoker since her first trip to England. This could only have exacerbated both of these conditions. She had almost certainly developed emphysema. She was buried in the Maitland Cemetery in Cape Town. On 13th August 1921 she was reinterred on Buffelskop near Cradock, with her baby daughter, in accordance with her expressed wish.

3.8.3 Summary of the final decade

Olive's last years were difficult ones. Frequently lonely and almost perpetually ill, she nevertheless remained actively involved in the lives of people until the end. Similarly, she continued to espouse a number of social causes until she died. Significant events during this phase of her life are presented in Table 7 below.

Table 7

Chronology of Olive's final decade

Date	Incident/event	Socio-political issues
1913	Olive leaves for England to seek medical assistance.	1913 Land Act lays down territorial segregation between blacks and whites. Tension builds between Britain and Germany.
1914	Outbreak of the First World War.	Afrikaner rebellion takes place in response to the invasion of German South West Africa.
1920	Cron, now retired, visits Olive in England in July. In August Olive leaves England for South Africa. Olive dies on the night of 10 th December in Cape Town; she is buried at the Maitland Cemetery.	Worldwide people are turning away from institutionalised religion. The ideas of Freud and Jung are becoming widely accepted and challenge traditional worldviews. In South Africa black workers are organising themselves and forming unions.
1921	On 13 th August Olive is reinterred on Buffelskop near Cradock.	Smuts has initiated a racial policy that earns him international disapproval.

3.9 Summary

Olive was an unusual and complex character who lived during a tumultuous period in South African and European history. Plagued by ill health and episodes of despondency throughout her life, she nevertheless made a significant contribution to the society in which she lived. These included an important work of fiction, serious non-fiction publications and support for various humanitarian movements, including the emancipation of women and obtaining rights for black South Africans.

This chapter has offered an overview of Olive's life. It has also presented controversial and debatable aspects of that life, as well as the respective views of those who have debated them. The next chapter entails a presentation of psychobiography, the method of research employed in this study.

CHAPTER 4

PSYCHOBIOGRAPHY AND RELATED CONCEPTS: A THEORETICAL OVERVIEW

4.1 Chapter Preview

This chapter is primarily concerned with defining and describing psychobiography as a method of research. By way of introduction, however, certain related concepts are presented and explained. These include the goals of scientific research, quantitative research methods, qualitative research methods, and the case study method of which psychobiographical research such as that employed in this thesis is a particular type. The advantages and disadvantages of the respective approaches to research are indicated.

4.2 Research in the social sciences

Psychological research has generally adopted the methods employed by the natural sciences, and the dominant research paradigm over the last century has been one characterised by logical positivism and the use of the scientific method. The essence of this approach is the insistence that all propositions be subjected to an empirical test, and that pronouncements not be accepted on the basis of faith, authority or intuition (Cozby, 2007). Scientific enquiry typically insists on objectivity and attempts to discover orderliness or underlying patterns in the universe by searching for relationships between variables (Gravetter & Wallnau, 1995). In particular, the controlled experiment has been held aloft as the epitome of the scientific method (Berry, Poortinga, Segall & Dasen, 1989; McAdams, 2006; Perry, 1995; Schultz, 2005a). This entails the identification of relevant independent and dependent variables, the manipulation of independent variables, the controlling or exclusion of extraneous variables, and the subsequent drawing of conclusions about cause – effect relationships. The analysis of such experimentation typically relies heavily on the use of statistics (Gravetter & Wallnau, 1995; Silverman,

2000). Using this method, psychology has attempted to develop universal laws of behaviour, a goal in line with developments in the fields of physical science (Kagitcibasi, 1992).

There are advantages to employing such quantitative research methods. The experimental method provides an objective set of rules for collecting, analysing and reporting information. As a result, research can be replicated and conclusions verified. In addition such methods allow researchers to speak with confidence about the reliability, validity and generalisability of results (Cozby, 2007; Gravetter & Wallnau, 1995). This is important because such rigour goes some way to ensuring accountability in a field that is not only an academic discipline, but a clinical profession as well (Edwards, 1998).

Not all researchers in the social sciences have agreed with this emphasis on experimental or quantitative research (e.g., Cozby, 2007; Silverman, 2000; Yin, 2009), and have argued for the use of qualitative methods of research. Cozby suggested that there were disadvantages to experiments and many good reasons for employing other methods. He listed four main disadvantages of the experimental method. The first was the possible artificiality of a laboratory experiment, which could limit the research questions being addressed, as well as the generality of the results. The second related to ethics: it was unethical to manipulate certain variables, for example, child rearing practices. The third concerned the need to study subject variables such as age, gender, marital status and personality. Such variables were characteristic of individuals, could not be manipulated, and were, by definition, non-experimental. The fourth disadvantage related to one of the primary goals of science, namely the description of behaviour. Issues addressed by experiments might not be relevant to this goal.

Not all quantitative research is experimental in the strictest sense of the word. Even quasi-experimental designs, however, approximate experiments to the extent that the variables under study permit. One of the strongest objections to all such research is that it is ill-suited to studying the ever-changing and elusive complexities of social and human phenomena (De Vos, Shurink & Strydom, 1998; Runyan, 2005; Schultz, 2005a).

Closely linked to this is the contention that quantitative methods may neglect the social and cultural construction of the variables that such research seeks to correlate (Silverman, 2000). Kagitcibasi (1992) maintained that the scientific method, with its emphasis on uniformity and commonality and its focus on proximal stimuli and immediate responses, was responsible for the abstraction of behaviour from its total environment. This has meant that the environmental context, including social and cultural variables, has been ignored or kept constant. The results of such research are therefore artificial. This echoes the point made by Cozby (2007), and presented above.

Silverman (2000) outlined other criticisms of quantitative research methods. The first was that it was naïve to believe that quantitative research involved merely the objective reporting of reality as researchers have purported to do, since value freedom in science was impossible, and perhaps, as Moustakas (1990) suggested, undesirable. The second also related to epistemological naiveté. Quantitative researchers have criticised qualitative research on the grounds that it employed the methods of everyday life (i.e., common sense) in defining, counting and analysing data, rather than using the scientific method. According to Silverman, however, the use of *ad hoc* procedures in much quantitative research to define, count and analyse variables, amounted to exactly the same thing. Third, and linked to the points made above, was the assertion that the desire to establish operational definitions at an early stage of social research could be an arbitrary process that diverted attention from the “*everyday sense making procedures of people in specific milieux*” (Silverman, 2000, p. 6). Finally, the insistence on the use of purely quantitative logic obviated the possibility of studying many interesting phenomena relating to what people actually did in their day-to-day lives, a point echoed by other theorists (e.g., McKee, 2004; Schultz, 2005a).

This researcher has adopted the view advanced by such theorists as Cozby (2007) and Silverman (2000) who claimed that there was a place for both quantitative and qualitative research, and that the choice of method depended on the aim of the research. The remainder of this chapter (and the next one) will present an argument for the use of

qualitative research, as well as strategies for ensuring that the research is conducted in a rigorous and disciplined manner, allowing conclusions to be reached with confidence.

4.3 Qualitative research

Qualitative approaches to research have been defined, broadly, as those approaches in which procedures are not as strictly formalised or controlled as in quantitative research, and in which the scope is more likely to be undefined. Statistical methods are not utilised to analyse data, and a more philosophical mode of operation is adopted (De Vos et al., 1998). An example of such research would be a psychotherapeutic case study in which the aim is the description of the therapeutic process, or the explanation of client dynamics in terms of a particular theory (Edwards, 1990, 1998).

There are a number of advantages to employing qualitative research methods. Such methods as case studies for example, offer the possibility of studying lived human experience (Runyan, 2005; Travers, 2001). Moreover, they give researchers access to dimensions of human experience not available to those employing quantitative methods. They allow researchers to study the ways in which subjects ascribe meaning, and in particular symbolic meaning, to their worlds (Moustakas, 1990). Qualitative methods allow researchers to describe and explain behaviour in ways which are not possible in experimental research (Cozby, 2007). They permit the study of individuals in specific milieux, allowing for the influence on behaviour of cultural or contextual factors, thereby avoiding the artificiality of much quantitative research (Schultz, 2005a; Silverman, 2000).

Criticisms of qualitative research include a number of assertions that have been succinctly presented by Silverman (2000). One is that qualitative research is descriptive or exploratory and therefore only useful in the earliest stages of research. A second is that qualitative methods are insufficiently rigorous to offer the possibility of reliability in research. A third is that the soundness of explanations derived from qualitative research can be questioned because of a tendency to anecdotalism. For instance a few examples of

a phenomenon might be used to support a particular view without analysing less clear or contradictory data. This means that the validity of such research is called into question.

Perhaps the most damning indictment of qualitative research is the assertion, frequently justifiable, that its results do not possess external validity. The belief is that conclusions reached on the basis of examining individuals or small groups, without the benefit of rigorous control and statistical analysis, will not be applicable to other individuals or groups (McAdams, 2005; Silverman, 2000; VanWynsberghe & Khan, 2007).

4.4 Case study research

4.4.1 Relevance for this study

Not all theorists agree as to whether psychobiographies constitute a form of case study or not, as will be indicated below. This researcher is of the opinion that they do. Regardless of whether or not this is the case, however, psychobiographies have much in common with case studies. The method and designs employed may be the same; they face the same methodological problems, and have received much the same criticism for methodology and design features. For these reasons it is believed that an examination of case study methods is warranted.

4.4.2 Definition

According to Yin (2009), a case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident. The case study enquiry (a) copes with the technically distinctive situation in which there will be many more variables of interest than data points, and as one result (b) relies on multiple sources of evidence, with data needing to converge in a triangulating fashion, and as another result, (c) benefits from the prior development of theoretical propositions to guide data

collection and analysis. In addition, Yin emphasised that case studies could include quantitative evidence, indeed could even be limited to quantitative data. He also pointed out that case study research could include both single- and multiple-case studies.

Hammersley and Gomm (2000) avoided a formal definition because, they argued: “‘*case study*’ is not a term that is used in a clear and fixed sense” (p. 2). Rather, they preferred to sketch the central components of the term’s meaning. They noted that the term *case study* was usually employed to identify a specific form of inquiry which contrasted with two other kinds of social research: the social survey and the experiment. Typically the case study dealt with a greater amount of detailed information about a smaller number of cases than the survey, and exercised little or no direct control over variables such as occurred in experiments. While Yin (2009) defined case studies as dealing with contemporary phenomena, Hammersley and Gomm (2000) included the study of historical events (for example a life history) within the ambit of case study research.

Cozby (2007) described a case study as a description of an individual. He pointed out though that while the individual was usually a person, it might also be a setting such as a business, a school, a neighbourhood or an event. Like Hammersley and Gomm (2000) he included historical accounts of organisations or individuals in his description. He specifically mentioned psychobiography as a type of case study.

Edwards (1998) described case-based research as the systematic examination of one or more cases of a phenomenon of interest with a view to achieving an understanding and developing or extending a theoretical framework. He defined a case study as a case-based research project that examined a single case, usually in considerable depth. He included retrospective studies of individuals within his definition of case study research.

VanWynsberghe and Khan (2007) defined case study as a “... *transparadigmatic and transdisciplinary heuristic that involves the careful delineation of the phenomena for which evidence is being collected* ...” (p. 2). They elaborated on their definition by

describing some of its key concepts. Transparadigmatic referred to the relevance of the study regardless of the paradigm adopted by the researcher for the study. Transdisciplinary, in this definition, meant that case study research was not limited to a particular discipline. The term heuristic referred, in general, to an approach that focused attention during the process of discovery, construction, learning, or problem solving. The authors also described a number of features that were characteristic of case studies. These included an intensive focus on the specific unit of analysis, a much smaller sample size than in survey or other quantitative research, the provision of a highly detailed and contextualised analysis of the subject, and the fact that case study research commonly took place in natural settings where control over behaviour and events was limited.

According to Runyan (1984), a case study was best defined as the systematic presentation of information about the life of a single unit. McAdams (2006), referring to this definition, pointed out that in the field of personality psychology the single unit was an individual life. Like VanWynsberghe and Khan (2007), cited above, he mentioned that case study research could be employed in many disciplines and that in some, such as social psychology or anthropology; the single unit might be a particular culture or subculture.

4.4.3 Utility of case study research

According to Yin (2009), the case study is one of several ways of conducting social science research. Each research strategy has advantages and disadvantages, and the choice of a particular strategy should depend on three conditions, namely: the type of research question, the degree of control an investigator has over actual behavioural events and the focus on contemporary as opposed to historical phenomena. He suggested that case studies were the preferred strategy when *how* or *why* questions were being posed, when the investigator had little control over events, and when the focus was on a contemporary phenomenon within a real-life context.

Case studies are ideally suited to studying individual lives. They offer the possibility of illuminating interpretations of single lives in progress or in the past, and allow researchers to understand human experience and learn from it (McAdams, 2006; McKee, 2004). A number of researchers have stressed the importance of studying lives. McAdams, for example, has pointed to a tradition in personality psychology that views the systematic and long-term study of individual lives as the essence of the personological endeavour. Runyan (2005) expressed similar sentiments. He stated: “... *the study of individual lives can move from being seen as a predecessor or an adjunct to scientific psychology, to being seen as one of the ultimate objectives of an appropriately scientific and humanistic psychology*” (p. 36).

Related to the significance of the study of individual lives, mentioned above, is the fact that case study research in psychology can play, and has played, a fundamental role in the development of theory and clinical acumen. One reason for this is that it offers the possibility of a thorough investigation of individuals, yielding complex, rich, qualitative information that abets an in-depth understanding of the phenomena being researched. This information can be utilised for the development, testing and reformulation of psychological theories (Edwards, 1990, 1998; McAdams, 2006; Runyan, 2005; VanWynsberghe & Khan, 2007).

Case study research is particularly useful for understanding cases that are characterised by a complex range of influences, and where there is little control over variables such as behaviour or events (McKee, 2004; VanWynsberghe & Khan, 2007). An example of this would be a human life. As Yin (2009) argued, case study research allowed for an investigation to preserve the holistic and meaningful characteristics of events as they transpired in real life.

4.4.4 Types of case study research

Historically case studies have been regarded as useful only at the earliest stages of research, appropriate perhaps for generating hypotheses that could be tested by more

sophisticated methods. According to Yin (2009) however, the idea that research strategies could be portrayed hierarchically was a misconception. He outlined three types of research; exploratory, descriptive and explanatory, and suggested that case studies could effectively be employed in all three areas. Edwards (1998) described the research process as having three major phases: a descriptive phase, a theoretical-heuristic or theory development phase, and a theory testing phase. Like Yin he believed that case studies could be utilised at every phase of the research process.

Edwards (1990) delineated four main types of case studies. He emphasised that these types represented points on a continuum rather than discrete categories, and that each would probably incorporate elements of the others. The first was the *exploratory-descriptive* case study, which provided a description of an individual case, and did not attempt to draw out general principles, develop a new theory, or test existing theory. The second was the *descriptive-dialogic* case study, in which the emphasis was also on the faithful description and portrayal of a phenomenon, but which, unlike the first type, was expected to embody general principles already articulated in the literature. Such a case was situated within existing theory, and might be used to debate conflicting points in that theory. The third type was the *theoretical-heuristic* study, which was concerned with the developing or testing of existing theory, and which would be employed during a later stage of the development of a theory than the two basically exploratory methods mentioned above. The fourth type was the *crucial* or *test* case study, employed as a crucial test of a particular theoretical proposition.

4.4.5 Validity in case study research

There has been a great deal of criticism directed at case study research. Most of it is associated with a general reliance on qualitative methodology and relates to two particular areas, namely a lack of rigour and a (resultant) lack of validity. In particular the problem of external validity or generalisability has received a substantial amount of attention (Donmoyer, 2000; Edwards, 1990, 1998; Gomm, Hammersley & Foster, 2000; Lincoln & Guba, 2000; McAdams, 2006; Schofield, 2000; Yin, 2009).

Lincoln and Guba (2000) were dismissive of the need to generalise research findings. According to them, the idea of generalisation being the aim of science was rooted in positivism, which, in turn, presupposed determinism, a paradigm which they believed was being replaced by indeterminism:

But of course the very idea of determinism rests, as we now understand, on shifting sand. Indeed ... determinism is rapidly being replaced by indeterminism in the 'new' paradigm; indeterminism is now the basic belief that determinism once was. And without the base of determinism on which to rest, the possibility of generalizability comes seriously into question. Generalizability becomes, at best, probabilistic. (p. 30)

They suggested that case study research produced “*working hypotheses*” (Lincoln & Guba, 2000, p. 38) that might be useful in understanding other cases. The degree of transferability from one case to another depended on the degree of similarity or fit between cases.

Stake (2000) argued that where the aim of research was to understand rather than to establish laws or explain phenomena; case studies would be the preferred method. They offered researchers and readers the opportunity to learn by vicarious experience. This learning could be transferred to other situations and constituted what he called naturalistic generalisation.

Like Lincoln and Guba (2000), Donmoyer (2000), arguing from a post-positivist position, stated that traditional views of generalisability were inconsistent with contemporary epistemology. He referred to the problem of complexity in social science research, and in particular to the changeability of culture, which rendered the ideal of a complete science of psychology implausible, if not impossible. He stated that human behaviour was constructed rather than caused. In this respect he stated that: “*Given the complexity of social purposes – given the concern with individuals, not just aggregates – it is unlikely that we will ever even approximate Thorndike’s (1910) dream of a complete science of psychology*” (2000, p. 6). Donmoyer concluded that for practitioners concerned with individuals rather than aggregates, research findings could never be

generalisable in the traditional sense. Research could function heuristically by suggesting possibilities but could not dictate action. He suggested that case study research might fulfil this function better than traditional methods, by expanding and enriching the repertoire of social constructions available to practitioners. It might be more useful, he argued, to think of generalisability more in psychological terms than in terms of mathematical probability.

While Donmoyer (2000) rejected the traditional view of generalisability, and while his views had something in common with those of the theorists discussed above, he felt that such concepts as *naturalistic generalisation*, *working hypotheses* and *transferability* were inadequate to describe the kind of experiential learning that a case study allowed, and that might be useful in understanding other cases. He argued that case studies were useful when generalisability was considered in the light of schema theory, and particularly in terms of the Piagetian concepts of *assimilation* and *accommodation*. Case studies provided the opportunity for vicarious experience that changed cognitive schemas, the results of which could be transferred to new situations. He stated:

... when generalizability is viewed from the perspective of schema theory, in other words, the role of the research is not primarily to find the correct interpretation. Indeed, the search for the correct interpretation may well be the search for a Holy Grail. Rather, from the schema theory view of generalizability, the purpose of research is simply to expand the range of interpretations to the research consumer. (Donmoyer, 2000, pp. 62-63)

Schofield (2000), like the researchers cited above, rejected the traditional view of generalisability. She did not, however, reject the idea that case study research could lead to useful general conclusions. She suggested that two useful questions be asked when designing case study research, namely: to what did the researcher want to generalise; and how could qualitative studies be designed to maximise generalisability in this respect. She argued that there were three useful targets for generalisation, namely: what is, what may be, and what could be.

Gomm et al. (2000) refused to reject the conventional function of research in producing generalisations. They argued that ignoring generalisability, or developing alternative (and in their opinion, inadequate) conceptions of generalisability such as the theorist cited above have attempted to do, might fail adequately to justify case study research. They claimed that: “... *there is no reason in principal why case study research should not provide the basis for empirical generalization*” (Gomm et al., 2000, p. 104), since it was a mistake to assume that such generalisation required the use of statistical techniques. They did, however, stress the need for appropriate methodological requirements to be met to enhance both internal and external validity.

Edwards (1990, 1998) criticised harshly the traditional insistence on the use of the experimental method and the attempt to develop laws in psychology. He argued that the ultimate task of science was not to map human behaviour and experience on to a vast matrix of variables from which predictions could be derived, as the ascendant positivist paradigm has attempted to do. Statistical models derived from this paradigm were, according to him, based on the untested assumption that human behaviour and experience could be modelled as a set of discrete variables that were mutually determined in a predictable way. As a result, such models bore only a limited relationship to real psychological and interpersonal processes. He acknowledged that the epistemological principles upon which case study research was based were different from those informing experiments or group based research employing multivariate statistics. Like Gomm et al. (2000) however, he seemed not to have rejected entirely traditional conceptions of research. He argued for increased rigour in case-based research, and the need to employ methods to increase both internal and external validity. Indeed he argued that because situational factors were not eliminated or kept constant in case study research, external validity might actually be increased.

For Edwards (1990, 1998) then, the case study seemed to constitute a method rather than a radically new paradigm, a distinction drawn by theorists (e.g., Hammersley & Gomm, 2000; Yin, 2009) to differentiate between those who argued for the rightful place of case studies within the positivist tradition on the one hand, and those like

Donmoyer (2000) on the other who adopted a post-positivist approach and who fell within the interpretive tradition. The distinction was not a clear one however (Travers, 2001). Edwards argued for increasing rigour and for increasing internal and external validity, yet he remained faithful to the Weberian notion that meaning was to be taken seriously, and that understanding was more important than explaining. His approach was rooted in the phenomenological and hermeneutic traditions.

For Yin (2009) the answer to the claim that case studies provided little basis for scientific generalisation was that they were generalisable to theoretical propositions and not to populations. The investigator's goal was to expand and generalise theories; that is, the goal was analytic generalisation, rather than to enumerate frequencies as in statistical generalisation.

Like some of the theorists cited above, VanWynsberghe and Khan (2007) pointed out that case study research did not aspire to universal generalisability in the positivist sense. This, they believed, was because generalisations were contextual. They had half-lives because contexts changed. Nevertheless, they believed that tentative generalisations beyond a single case were possible, as long as that case was compared and contrasted with others to establish similarity of context. They also supported Yin's (2009) idea of analytic generalisation because comparing and contrasting cases and the phenomena of interest within those cases, allowed researchers to expand the scope of the theory that guided inquiry into, or emerged from, the original case.

McAdams (2006), in reviewing the literature concerning the criticism of case studies as offering little or no external validity, suggested that responses to the critics had been two-pronged. One response was to criticise quantitative methods. The suggestion in this regard was that few correlation studies or single experiments could claim to have obtained representative samples. The external validity of such studies was therefore also questionable. The second response was to suggest how case studies might well have external validity, or to suggest how such research could be adapted to achieve it. For example, McAdams pointed out that external validity referred not only to the sampling of

subjects, but also of situations and topics. A case study might only sample one subject, but it sampled many topics or situations in that subject's life. Generalising to other situations might be possible with such research, while with experimental research very few situations were normally sampled. Another way of improving the possibility of generalising in case study research was to collect multiple cases that could be compared and contrasted, allowing the researcher gradually to build up representative samples.

4.5 Psychobiographical research

4.5.1 Description and definition

Psychobiography constitutes one branch of the field of psychohistory, and is concerned with the study of individuals. In fact the aim of psychobiography, according to Schultz (2005a), is quite simply the understanding of persons or individual lives. The other branch of psychohistory is group psychohistory, which deals with the psychological characteristics or formative experiences of historical groups (McAdams, 2006; Runyan, 1984).

Psychobiography may be seen as a special case of the case study method (Cozby, 2007; Runyan, 1984) and typically employs a single-case research design (Fouché, 1999). Such research is used to describe, explain and interpret data about the lives of people who have already lived. Often these are historical figures whose lives have been regarded as significant (Alexander, 1990; McAdams, 2005, 2006).

Psychobiographical research is usually morphogenic (Elms, 1994). It is therefore person-centred and allows for a holistic appreciation of the individual's uniqueness. It can be distinguished from those approaches in personality theory that are nomethic, essentially normative, and therefore comparative. In such quantitative approaches any sense of individuality is derived from the specific configuration of deviance from the statistical norm (Alexander, 1990; McAdams, 2005, 2006; Runyan, 2005).

According to Fouché (1999), any psychologist who systematically and self-consciously employed psychological theory in the process of understanding an individual's life story was engaged in psychobiography. Runyan (1984), similarly, defined psychobiography as "*The explicit use of systematic or formal psychology in biography*" (p. 202). McAdams (1994, 2006) defined psychobiography as the systematic use of psychological theory to transform a life into a coherent and illuminating story. McAdams is a theorist who features prominently in the psychobiographical literature. He is also associated with the narrative tradition in psychology (e.g., McAdams et al., 2006). In this respect he stated: "... *stories serve to integrate lives. We construct and live according to our own internalized and evolving narratives of self – the integrative life stories that constitute our very identities*" (2006, p. 483). He suggested that the narrative methodologies, and in particular a movement called the narrative study of lives, had a great deal to offer psychobiographers. The narrative study of lives sought to write, interpret and disseminate individual's life stories with a view to understanding those lives and stories (McAdams, 2005). The applicability and similarity of this movement to the psychobiographical endeavour are obvious. Also obvious are McAdams' interpretive and constructivist leanings in his definition of psychobiography (Blatner, 1997; Kerby, 1991).

4.5.2 History and trends

Psychobiographical research is generally regarded as beginning with Freud's publication of *Leonardo da Vinci and a memory of his childhood* in 1910 (Freud, 1910; McAdams, 2006; Runyan, 1988a). Runyan cited a number of pre-Freudian psychohistorical works, but these might be excluded from serious consideration as psychobiographical research because they did not involve the systematic application of formal psychology.

After Freud's publication of his work on da Vinci, and with the increasing popularity of psychoanalysis, psychobiographical studies proliferated throughout the 1920s and 1930s. The 1940s produced relatively few psychobiographies, but the 1950s saw a renewed production of such studies. This decade was significant and regarded as

heralding the modern period in psychohistorical and psychobiographical research because the publication of George and George's study of Woodrow Wilson (1956), and Erikson's study of Luther (1958) indicated a more rigorous and methodologically self-conscious approach to such studies (Runyan, 1984, 1988a). During the 1960s and 1970s there was an enormous increase in the production of psychobiographical studies, and there is reason to believe that this trend will continue (McAdams, 1994). McAdams (2006) has suggested that the study of lives is exhibiting something of a renaissance. Le Goff (1995) pointed to a particularly prolific revival in the field of historical biography in Europe, a movement fuelled by a reaction against the modernist emphasis on social and economic history. Schultz (2005a), reviewing trends in psychobiography, concluded that: "*What all this suggests is that since 1995 especially, and energized by books such as Runyan's (1982), Alexander's (1990), and Elms' (1994), psychobiography in its various guises has flourished – both in mainstream psychology ... and outside it ...*" (p. 16).

Currently psychobiographical research is conducted within a great many academic disciplines and professions. These include academic psychology, psychoanalysis, psychiatry, history, political science, literature, religion and anthropology. Psychohistory in general and psychobiography in particular then, do not constitute a unified tradition, but rather a number of semi-autonomous sub-traditions with researchers focusing on key figures in their respective fields (Fouché, 1999; Runyan, 1988a).

In 1995 psychobiography was initiated as a research project in the South African context at the University of Port Elizabeth (now Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University). Since then a number of studies at masters and doctoral level (e.g., Fouché, 1999; Stroud, 2004; Van Niekerk, 2007) have examined the lives of literary, political, religious and sporting figures and, like elsewhere, there appears to be an increasing trend to produce such studies. According to Fouché and van Niekerk (2010), psychobiography has evolved into an established research genre in South Africa. Most of the work has been conducted by researchers associated with the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University in Port Elizabeth, Rhodes University in Grahamstown and the University of the Free State in Bloemfontein, under the supervision of Roelf van Niekerk and Paul

Fouché (Fouché & van Niekerk, 2005; Fouché, Smit, Watson & van Niekerk, 2007). A list of completed psychobiographical studies at masters and doctoral level in South Africa is given in Table 8 below. It illustrates the increasing popularity of this particular research method.

4.5.3 Opposition to psychobiography

While it might seem logical to suppose that historical analysis would benefit from the insights of psychology and vice versa, the truth is that the relationship between the disciplines of psychology and history has, historically, been characterised by conflict (Gay, 1985; Le Goff, 1995; Runyan, 1988a; Schultz, 2005a). Psychobiography, moreover, has not been widely accepted within the field of personality psychology (McAdams, 2005, 2006). In fact psychobiographical research has received a great deal of criticism, primarily from two quarters. The one attack is based on ideological/philosophical grounds and comes from those who believe that biographical studies have no place in historical research. The other is based on theoretical/methodological grounds and stems from those who believe that psychobiography has no place in serious psychological research.

Antibiographical trends within historiography have typically centred on a distrust of emphasising the roles of individuals in history. Modernist history, with its emphasis on structures, moved towards a concern with economic, intellectual, social and demographic factors. Historians became critical of what they regarded as a crude *Great Man* theory of history (Le Goff, 1995), which focused on the influence of a relatively small number of prominent individuals, while disregarding the influence of the masses and other socio-political factors. In sum, critics of biography as a method of historical research believe that a focus on individuals is overly simplistic, reductionist and elitist (Runyan, 1988a).

Modernist psychology has, similarly, been wary of focusing on individuals. The field has been concerned with a search for general theories about the mind, and general

Table 8

South African master's and doctoral level psychobiographies

Subject	Researcher	Degree	Year
Cornelis Jacobus Langenhoven	Burgers, M.P.O.	M.A	1939
Louis Leipoldt	Burgers, M.P.O.	D.Litt	1960
Ingrid Jonker	Van der Merwe, L.M.	Ph.D	1978
Jan Christiaan Smuts	Fouche, J.P.	D.Phil	1999
Helen Martins	Bareira, L.	M.A.	2001
Bantu Stephen Biko	Kotton, D.	M.A.	2002
Balthazar John Vorster	Vorster, M.S.	M.A.	2003
Wessel Johannes (Hansie) Cronje	Warmenhoven, A.	M.A.	2004
Mother Teresa	Stroud, L.	D.Phil	2004
Albert Schweitzer	Edwards, M. J.	M.A.	2004
Cornelis Jacobus Langenhoven	Jacobs, A.	M.A.	2005
Karen Horney	Green. S.	M.A.	2006
Wessel Johannes (Hansie) Cronje	Warmenhoven, A.	Ph.D.	2006
Chris Barnard	Van Niekerk, R.	M.A.	2007
Ray Charles	Biggs, I.	M.A.	2007
Hendrik Verwoerd	Claasen, M.	M.A.	2007
Melanie Klein	Espinosa, M	M.A.	2008
Herman Mashaba	McWalter, M.A.	M.A.	2008
Isie Smuts	Smuts, C.	M.A.	2009
Helen Keller	Van Genechten, D.	M.A.	2009
Jeffrey Dahmer	Chéze. E.	M.A.	2009
Emily Hobhouse	Welman, C.	M.A.	2009
Ralph John Rabie	Uys, H.M.G.	M.A.	2010
Ernesto "Che" Guevara	Kolesky, C.	M.A.	2010
Frans Martin Claerhout	Roets, M.	M.A.	2010
Alan Paton	Greeff, M.	M.A.	2010
Paul Jackson Pollock	Muller, T.	M.A.	2010
Christiaan de Wet	Henning, R.	Ph.D.	2010
Bram Fischer	Swart, D.K.	M.A.	2010
Brenda Fassie	Gogo, O.	M.A.	2011

laws. To this end researchers have focused on groups of people in carefully controlled settings. Psychologists have therefore not typically been concerned with the study of individuals and have generally been critical of such studies unless they have been utilised for generating hypotheses to be tested by quantitative methods. Similarly, historical cases or events have largely been ignored or, if considered at all, regarded as useful only in the earliest stages of research (McAdams, 2005; Runyan, 1988a). One source of criticism

then is characterised by antiparticularism and the assertion that: “... *biographical methods of investigation ... are generally too unwieldy and subjective for clear and rigorous scientific study and that biographical examinations of the single case lack reliability and external validity ...*” (McAdams, 2006, pp. 498–501).

Another source of criticism is related to the fact that most psychobiography has been conducted within a psychoanalytic framework (Runyan, 1988b). There are a number of more specific objections in this regard. One, as Runyan has pointed out, is the belief by some that psychoanalytic theory is inherently flawed or unsound, and that any analysis or interpretations based on it must be called into question. Another is based on the charge that interpretations are based on inadequate evidence, evidence of the wrong kind (e.g., there is insufficient material from free associations or dream reports as there would be with a live patient) and insufficient evidence from certain periods such as childhood, which are often not well documented (Gay, 1988; Weinstein, 1988). A third stems from a tendency in psychobiography to reconstruct periods of life about which there may not be adequate evidence. Childhood experiences, for example, are often reconstructed based on information from later life. This is risky practice and conclusions derived in this fashion are likely to be invalid (McAdams, 2006; Runyan, 1988a; Schultz, 2005a).

A significant objection to psychoanalytic psychobiography is that its practitioners are guilty of reductionism. There are a number of variations on this particular theme. One concerns the overemphasis of psychological factors at the expense of social and historical influences (Gay, 1988). Another is concerned with psychobiography’s traditional focus on psychopathology, and the neglect of normality, health and creativity (Schultz, 2005a). A third concerns the tendency within psychoanalytic psychobiography to explain adult character and behaviour exclusively in terms of early formative processes and influences, an approach that contemporary theorists have challenged (Dawes, 1994; McAdams, 2006; Runyan, 1988b).

Finally, a criticism of psychobiography, psychoanalytic or not, is that the practice of assuming trans-historical and cross-cultural generality is a dubious one.

Psychobiographers have been accused of applying contemporary theories to people from historical periods and cultures other than those in which and on which those theories were originally developed. The implication is that such theories are not applicable. In short, the charges relate to ethno-centrism, temporo-centrism, and an unsound imposed-etic approach to cross-cultural analysis (Berry, Portinga, Segall & Dasen, 1989; Runyan, 1984).

4.5.4 Support for psychobiography

As mentioned above there has been a great deal of opposition to, and criticism of, psychobiography from a number of quarters. Psychobiography has its advocates, however, and many of them have provided cogent and compelling arguments for the rightful place of psychobiographical research. As far as its role in historiography is concerned, for example, Runyan (1988a) acknowledged that it was simplistic and reductionist to equate history with the sum of biographies of prominent historical figures, but he maintained that individual lives merited attention. He claimed that it was equally simplistic and reductionist to claim that: “... *an understanding of individual persons and their psychological processes has nothing to contribute to an analysis of the history of groups, social movements, institutions and nations*” (1988a, p. 38). He advocated a more sophisticated stance involving a search for the conditions under which individual actors did or did not influence historical events, and suggested that biographical methods had a significant role to play in this regard. Elsewhere he (Runyan, 1988c) argued that there were six different social system levels relevant to understanding historical processes, namely: persons, groups, organisations, institutions, nations and international relations. He believed that an understanding of psychological processes at each level could shed light on historical events. In a similar vein Le Goff (1995), in pointing to a renaissance in the field of historical biography, suggested that biography allowed for a study of the overwhelming complexity of history. This is something that modernist history, with its emphasis on the study of structures, neglected or oversimplified.

Psychobiography as a method of psychological research also has its advocates and defenders. Runyan (1988a, 2006), for example, responded to the thrust of antiparticularism by citing Kluckhohn and Murray's (1953) suggestion that psychology needed to be concerned with a continuum of different levels of generality. This included a consideration of (a) what was true for all human beings; (b) what was true for groups of human beings distinguished by such factors as gender, race, social class, socio-historical context and culture; and (c) what was true for individual humans in particular. His submission was that it was of practical and theoretical importance for psychology to explore the entire continuum of levels of generality, an argument in line with those proponents of the case study method, indicated earlier. Moreover he suggested that such an approach would facilitate a closer and more effective relationship between the traditionally nomothetic field of psychology, and the essentially idiographic discipline of history. Elsewhere, Runyan (2005) offered an alternative conception of the structure of personality psychology, one that suggested the possibility of integrating the study of individual lives with other research methods. His central idea was that the field be concerned with four major objectives. These were (a) developing general theories of personality, (b) studying individual and group differences, (c) analysing specific processes and classes of behaviour and experience, and (d) understanding individual persons or lives. Viewed in this way, the study of individual lives has a significant role to play in contributing to the field.

The study of individual lives has some vociferous proponents. A number of them (e.g., Elms, 1994; Runyan, 1988a; Schultz, 2005a) are psychobiographers who have emphasised the study of individual lives as a goal in its own right. Schultz stated quite emphatically that understanding individuals should be a priority of psychological research. He wrote:

... if psychology ought to strive for anything, if it hoped one sunny day to step away from its labs, one-way mirrors, instruments, and apparatus into the uncontrolled world of life, then saying something vital about people – not single-file nameless mobs, but actual individuals with a history – should be job one. (2005a, p. 3).

He went on to describe psychobiography as performing the most important function in personality psychology, namely making the person the focus of attention. Both Schultz and Elms (1994) have suggested that psychology in general, and personality psychology in particular, is irrelevant unless it allows for an understanding of real, individual lives. In a similar vein, other psychobiographers have suggested that traditional nomothetic research has offered trivial generalities and obsessed about methodological technicalities that have resulted in reductionism and simplistic conclusion about people (e.g., McAdams, 2005). McAdams (2006) suggested that the researcher adopting such techniques was:

... likely to be frustrated in his or her attempts to get a final read on any given life in progress, in that personality continues to be constructed and reconstructed across the lifespan, Any approach that attempts to fix the person in time – say by focusing too closely on unchanging traits – fails to convey the dynamic quality of lives (p. 491)

Studying lives then, allows for a holistic appreciation and understanding of people, something that experimental or quasi-experimental research does not. Psychobiography, like case study research, has a crucial role to play in keeping psychology appropriately humanistic yet scientific (McAdams, 2006; Runyan, 2005).

Runyan (1984, 1988b) has responded to criticism of psychobiography's traditional reliance on psychoanalytic theory by emphasising that such studies need not be conducted within a psychoanalytic framework. Psychological systems other than psychoanalysis can be employed. He suggested that psychobiographers draw on social psychology, cognitive psychology, developmental psychology and other non-analytic theories of personality. Similarly, McAdams (2005) warned that psychobiographers who tried to establish a fundamental psychodynamic pattern in subjects' lives ran the risk of oversimplifying those lives, and suggested that researchers draw on a number of theories that allowed for a multiplicity of interpretations. A human life, he believed, was just too complex to do otherwise.

The claim of insufficient evidence is one that Runyan (1984, 1988b) suggested be taken seriously, but did not constitute an insurmountable obstacle to the psychobiographer. There is, in fact, often a great deal of evidence. Sometimes the problem is one of having too much information. The researcher has access to information about subjects' entire lives, and therefore to a broader spectrum of behaviour across life spans. In addition the researcher may obtain information from sources other than the subjects themselves, and is therefore not limited to the subjects' self-reports. If the subjects are creative or literary figures their works can be analysed for expressions of psychological states. An analysis of such work may be a substitute for the analyst's typical reliance on free associations and dream material. Finally, the evidence used in psychobiography is available for public scrutiny and criticism, unlike that obtained in a clinical interview. For this reason interpretations and conclusions may be examined critically, going some way to ensuring rigour and reliability (Alexander, 1990; McAdams, 1994; Schultz, 2005a, 2005b).

Runyan (1984, 1988b) responded to criticism of the tendency within psychoanalytic psychobiography to reconstruct, or retrodict, childhood events or experiences, by acknowledging that such a practice was problematic and, in most cases, unjustified. Psychobiographers need not, however, engage in retrodiction. It is not fundamental to the psychobiographical endeavour *per se*, and in fact, according to Schultz (2005a), was an indicator of bad psychobiography.

Runyan (1988b) acknowledged that the charge of reductionism (e.g., Gay, 1988) was, in many cases, justified. He pointed out though, that social and historical factors need not be neglected, that studies could focus on strengths and health as well as pathology, and that formative influences throughout the life span could, and should be, considered. Both reductionism and pathography were also, according to Schultz (2005a), indicators of poor psychobiographical research.

As far as the stated arbitrariness of psychoanalytic interpretations was concerned, Runyan (1984, 1988b) suggested that the possibility of generating alternative

interpretations could be seen as a richness of psychoanalytic theory. However he warned that:

... interpretations need to be critically evaluated ... in terms of such criteria as (1) their comprehensiveness in accounting for a number of puzzling aspects of the events in question, (2) their survival of tests of attempted falsification, (3) their consistency not just with fragments of evidence, but also with the full range of available evidence, and (4) credibility relative to other explanatory hypotheses. (1988b, pp. 228-229)

Runyan (1984) has responded to charges of ethno-centrism and temporo-centrism by acknowledging that allegations in this respect were often valid, that psychobiographers had, in many instances, been unaware of cultural and historical differences and that this had biased their interpretations. The fact that this was a trend need not pose a barrier to this research however. The psychobiographer, he insisted, should learn about his or her subject's culture and historical context, and incorporate such factors into the analysis. Furthermore he suggested that the study of relevant comparison groups within the subject's social and historical world might facilitate a more accurate understanding of the individual.

A number of researchers (e.g., Edwards, 1990, 1998; McAdams, 2006; VanWynsberghe & Khan, 2007) have responded to claims that single case research such as psychobiography is too subjective, and so lacking in reliability and external validity as to be excluded from consideration as serious scientific research. They have argued that these charges are unfounded. Some of these arguments will be alluded to in section 4.5.5. In the next chapter (Chapter 5) specific strategies for ensuring rigour, and for maximising reliability, internal validity and external validity will be presented.

Finally, to conclude this section, it is worth noting a statement by Gay (1988). He was referring to the application of psychoanalysis to history, but his caveat is applicable to psychobiographers regardless of the theoretical positions they espouse. He stated:

The psychoanalytic historian must ... remember, too, that there are always more causes for historical events, more subtle inter-actions than he can comfortably accommodate by means of any rigid causal scheme. To introduce the instrument of psycho-analysis into history may be immensely helpful, but it is also dangerous, an invitation to prudence as well as to daring. (p. 120)

4.5.5 The utility of psychobiographical research

As previously indicated, psychobiography is typically morphogenic and concerned with individuals. This concern has been posited by some theorists (e.g., Runyan, 2005; Schultz, 2005a) as an important goal in its own right. Psychobiography differs from quantitative or nomothetic approaches that aim to establish a person's membership in a set of classes indicative of psychopathology, or descriptive of gross aspects of personality functioning. One difficulty with such approaches is that normal people are quantitatively indistinguishable from one another on the scales of the instrument employed (e.g., the MMPI). This is because any sense of individuality is derived from the specific configuration of deviance from the statistical norm. For this reason such quantitative research may be wholly unsuitable for personality research. According to McAdams (2006):

The life course of the individual should, therefore, be the long unit of analysis for personology. While it is feasible to examine the person's life at a particular moment in time, one must never forget that such a venture represents an arbitrary selection of a part from the whole. (p. 488)

Studying individual lives might be important for its own sake, but it clearly also offers certain specific methodological advantages in the field of personality research. The possibility of a unique and holistic description of the person under study means that important contextual information such as the subject's social, historical and cultural backgrounds can be taken into account. This obviates the artificiality of much quantitative research, and may increase external validity (Edwards, 1990, 1998; Schultz, 2005a; VanWynsberghe & Khan, 2007). Perhaps most important from the perspective of

personality theory is that psychobiography enables the researcher to address fundamental questions in the study of personality development by allowing for a description of the subject at referential points in time, and over the entire life span. This makes possible explanatory links between an outcome and the factors that were influential in producing it (Alexander, 1990; Fouché, 1999; Runyan, 1984). Furthermore, and related to the question of validity in research, Schultz has pointed out that psychobiography is likely to succeed at making sense of personality because it draws from large and public sets of data. Psychobiography may not be the best forum for testing general propositions or justifying general cause-and-effect relationships. It does, however, offer certain distinct methodological advantages over experimental and correlational designs when it comes to understanding real people living real lives, and for this reason it offers relevance (Elms, 1994; McAdams, 2006). It is worth noting Weinstein's (1988) contention that:

... it must be emphasized that positivist or 'objective' accounts have in turn constantly proved insufficient because neither the most precise description of objective events nor the most systematic accumulation and statistical analysis of objective ... data can allow for the interpretation of events independent of the perceptions and feelings of the people who gave them their unique shape.
(p. 168)

One of the most important functions of psychobiography is theory development. According to Runyan (2005): "*Personal life histories are ... involved in the creation and development of every tradition in psychology, including psychoanalysis, learning theory, behaviourism, humanist psychology, cognitive psychology, neuroscience, and the study of lives*" (p. 19). McAdams (2006) has pointed out that the context of discovery in scientific enquiry is a freewheeling realm. Psychobiography provides ideal ground for developing theories or hypothesis in a rigorous fashion. However its role is not only limited to discovery. Psychobiography is also useful for testing and refining theory, and is potentially useful at all stages of the research process (Carlson, 1988; Fouché & van Niekerk, 2005; McAdams, 2005; Schultz, 2005a).

Another significant function of psychobiography is the integration of psychological theories. According to Schultz (2005a), psychobiography allows for assimilation. Taking one life at a time and seeking to understand it by drawing on disparate bodies of knowledge makes this possible. He believed that psychobiographers were generalists, and as such could facilitate the integration of psychology's split halves, a point with which McAdams (2005) concurred.

Finally, psychobiography allows for an in-depth study of unique or rare phenomena. While psychobiographers can take anybody as subjects for their research, most such studies have focused on the lives of famous, talented, and controversial figures. Psychobiography permits an intense study of their talents and abilities and for this reason may shed light, for example, on the psychology of creativity, or on psychological health (McAdams, 2005; Schultz, 2005c).

4.6 Summary

This chapter has offered a definition and description of psychobiographical research and related concepts that are significant for this study. The researcher has, by drawing on the relevant literature, presented an argument for the use of qualitative and morphogenic methods in general, and psychobiographical methods in particular. These approaches, it has been argued, offer the possibility of understanding real lives in real milieux, something which is difficult, if not impossible, to do employing the experimental method. It has not been suggested, as some theorists have done, that traditional conceptions of rigour and validity be discarded, or that quantitative methods and generalisability have no role to play in psychological research. Disadvantages and valid criticisms of qualitative and psychobiographical methods have been noted. The next chapter deals specifically with these disadvantages, and is particularly concerned with addressing them in such a way as to ensure the validity of this research.

CHAPTER 5

PRELIMINARY METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

5.1 Chapter preview

In spite of the proliferation of psychobiographical studies over the past century, and in spite of the advances made in understanding lives and in refining qualitative methodologies, it remains a difficult and challenging task to write a good psychobiography. Researchers working in this area are faced with obstacles that do not confront those employing other methods. Much psychobiographical research has transgressed standards for rigorous research in the fields of both scientific psychology and history, and a great deal of the criticism directed against such research has been justified (Fouché, 1999; Gay, 1988; Runyan, 1988a, 1988b). This chapter outlines the challenges to psychobiographical research, and suggests measures that can be taken to deal with such threats.

5.2 Rigour

Rigour is a rather general term, and refers to a disciplined approach to data collection and interpretation, allowing the researcher to make inferences and reach conclusions with an acceptable level of confidence. Rigorous research maximises four significant aspects of any study, namely; internal validity, construct validity, external validity and reliability (Cozby, 2007; Yin, 2009). It improves the study's *trustworthiness*, a term used by some qualitative researchers (e.g., Chéze, 2009) to refer to research that is: (a) systematically congruent with the context of the study, (b) free from aberrations in the research process or the instruments employed, and (c) sufficiently objective to withstand charges of bias or prejudice (Guba, 1981; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Trustworthiness subsumes such concepts as *credibility*, *transferability*, and *dependability*. These terms are often employed by qualitative researchers in preference to the more traditional internal validity, external validity and reliability. This is because of the latter's associations with

positivist, experimental research. This researcher has retained the more traditional terminology in accordance with theorists such as Edwards (1990, 1998), Gomm et al. (2000) and Yin (2009) who, although critical of the insistence on the use of quantitative methods, have not rejected entirely the conventional function of research or its lexicon. Each of these concepts is addressed individually, after general strategies for ensuring rigour are discussed.

5.2.1 Design

According to Yin (2009), every empirical study has a research design which may be explicit or implicit. A research design is the logic that links the data to be collected to the initial study questions and ensures that those questions are addressed. Deciding on an appropriate design is an important early step in the research process. An appropriate, explicit design helps ensure internal validity, construct validity, external validity and reliability.

Yin (2009) offered a matrix for conceptualising the basic types of case study design. On the horizontal axis was a choice of single-case or multiple-case designs. On the vertical axis was a choice of either a holistic or an embedded design. A holistic design is concerned with a single unit of analysis, whereas an embedded design involves a focus on one or more subunits of a case or cases. For example the case under study might involve a single programme with an analysis of several sub-programmes.

A single case, holistic design may usefully be employed in psychobiographical research for a number of reasons. According to Yin (2009), “... *one rationale for a single case is when it represents the critical case in testing a well-formulated theory*” (p. 47). A second reason for choosing a single case is when that case offers the possibility of researching a unique phenomenon. This is often the case in psychobiographical research where the lives of unusual and accomplished people are the subjects of research. According to Yin a holistic design is useful when no logical subunits can be identified, and when the theory employed in the case study is itself of a holistic nature. It would

therefore be applicable when an entire life is under study and when a holistic theory such as Individual Psychology is employed to that end.

5.2.2 Principles of data collection

Yin (2009) suggested that three important principles be incorporated into the data collection phase of case-study research to improve the quality of such research. The first was the use of multiple sources of evidence. In other words, evidence was obtained from two or more sources, but converged on the same set of facts or findings. This particular principle is discussed in detail below in section 5.2.6, which deals with construct validity. The second principle involved the development of a case study database, or a formal assembly of evidence distinct from the final case study report. This is more applicable to contemporary case studies where raw data are obtained from subjects, but the principle can be adapted to life history research. This is discussed in section 5.2.8, which deals with reliability. The third principle entailed establishing a chain of evidence, or making explicit links between the questions asked, the data collected and the conclusions drawn. This principle will be implemented in the form of a data analysis matrix, and will be discussed briefly in sub-section 5.2.3 below, and in detail in Chapter 6.

5.2.3 General analytic strategy

Yin (2009) indicated that it was necessary for the case-study researcher to proceed according to a general analytic strategy, and that it was important to choose this strategy early in the research process. Such a strategy allowed the researcher to treat the evidence fairly, to produce compelling conclusions and to rule out alternative interpretations. He described two types of strategies. The first entailed a reliance on theoretical propositions. With such a strategy, the entire case was based on theoretical propositions which shaped the data collection plan, and focused attention on certain data while ignoring others. The propositions led to the posing of particular questions about the data, and allowed for the answering of such *how* and *why* questions. The second strategy entailed developing a case description. This merely referred to the development of a descriptive framework for

organising the case study. It might include, for example, the development of categories for organising, classifying and giving overall structure to data. This strategy is typically used in descriptive studies where theoretical propositions are not available. A psychobiographical study can benefit from a combination of the abovementioned strategies and this is made possible by the use of the data analysis matrix alluded to earlier. This will be discussed in detail in Chapter 6.

5.2.4 Modes of analysis

Yin (2009) presented several dominant modes of analysis. These included explanation building, pattern-matching, time series analysis and programme logic models. The particular mode of analysis employed in this study is explanation building. With this method the goal is to analyse the case study data by building an explanation about the case; for example, analysing Olive's life in terms of Adlerian Theory in order to facilitate the explanation of her life in terms of that theory. This is a process that is most useful in explanatory case studies. It has typically been employed in case studies that have taken a narrative form, or when links are complex and difficult to measure in a precise manner.

Using this particular mode of analysis, the explanation of the case was the result of a series of iterations (Yin, 2009). These included:

1. making an initial theoretical statement,
2. comparing the findings of an initial case against such a statement,
3. revising the statement or proposition,
4. comparing other details of the case against the revision,
5. again revising the statement or proposition,

6. comparing the revision to the facts of a second, third or more cases,
7. repeating the process as many times as is needed.

According to Yin these steps did not need to appear in the final report.

5.2.5 Internal validity and credibility

Internal validity refers to the establishment of causal relationships within cases. It is concerned with the quality of the arguments and evidence leading to conclusions about the relationships between factors or events (Edwards, 1998; Fouché, 1999; Yin, 2009). Establishing internal validity is of particular importance in explanatory or causal case studies where the aim is analytic generalisation rather than statistical generalisation. Analytic generalisation is often the aim of psychobiographical research such as this, and achieving it depends on demonstrating, by rational argument, the links between the data obtained about subject's life and the theory used to conceptualise it. Credibility is the qualitative counterpart of internal validity, and is perhaps the most important criterion for ensuring trustworthiness in a qualitative study (Chéze, 2009; Krefting, 1991). According to Patton (2002), it is based on the credibility of the researcher, the philosophical belief in the value of qualitative research and methodological rigour.

There are a number of potential threats to internal validity and credibility. Explanatory research may defeat its own ends in this regard by its very nature. Edwards (1998) for example, has pointed to the problem of the hermeneutic circle. The dilemma here is that the framework (or theory) is used to make sense of the data while the data are, in turn, incorporated into the framework. The result is circular reasoning that has the potential to become illogical, negatively impacting on the internal validity of the study. Edwards was arguing from the perspective of existential-phenomenology, and in this tradition it is a cardinal error to approach data with unacknowledged *a priori* assumptions. The point he made was, however, a valid one for any explanatory research.

The reliance on theoretical propositions for data analysis, advocated by Yin (2009) and adopted by this researcher, made this research particularly vulnerable to such errors.

A potential threat to internal validity is a failure on the part of the researcher to specify the temporal boundaries of the data collection process. This is usually a problem when cases are so large or complicated that they cannot be studied comprehensively. Researchers obtain data at a particular point in time, and treat that point as if it were identical with the entire case. A similar mistake is to collect data at a particular geographical point, or about a particular aspect of a case, and then confuse that particular point or aspect with the entire case. Such errors make it impossible to generalise within cases, let alone from one case to another (Gomm et al., 2000).

Significant threats to internal validity are the various forms of researcher bias. One concerns a tendency to idealise or denigrate a subject because of countertransference reactions which develop during the course of a study (Fouché, 1999). This impacts on the quality of the data collection process. Another involves a researcher's enthusiasm for a particular theoretical position or interpretation (Edwards, 1998). This impacts on the quality of the argument linking data to theory. There is a real danger in such cases of attempting to squeeze a fact to fit a theory.

A number of specific strategies may be employed to ensure internal validity in research of this nature. One is the use of a data analysis matrix as advocated by Yin (2009) and employed by Fouché (1999). This was mentioned earlier in sub-section 5.2.3 and will be discussed in detail in section 6.7. Such a matrix constitutes a coding and data reduction system that makes it possible to identify relevant data and present it. It also links theory to data, thereby facilitating a disciplined argument about the relationship between the two.

Another strategy for ensuring internal validity is the use of multiple sources of evidence. Drawing from different sources of information in this way allows for the development of converging lines of inquiry, contributing to the quality of the study by

enabling the researcher to make inferences or reach conclusions with more confidence than might otherwise have been the case (Duffy, 1987; Fouché, 1999; Yin, 2009). This process of triangulation can be incorporated into a data analysis matrix. Every cell of the matrix entails the researcher looking for evidence of a theoretical concept in a particular life stage. As far as possible, conclusions are reached when they are supported by evidence from several sources. The matrix is depicted in tabular form (Table 10) in Chapter 6.

In an attempt to avoid the threats to internal validity outlined by Edwards (1998), and posed by researcher bias, a researcher employing the psychobiographical method can discuss theoretical assumptions, thoughts and feelings about the subject with supervisors before presenting the data and conceptualising the case. In addition the study can be presented to an independent rater with formal training in the field in which the subject was active, and who is a registered psychologist. Such an audit (Chéze, 2009) allows for a commentary on the quality of the evidence and of the argument linking the theory and the data.

The fact that psychobiographical research typically involves a single subject whose life is studied in its entirety eliminates many of the problems associated with collecting data at particular points in time and space, mentioned by Gomm et al. (2000) above. Generalising within the case is therefore not as problematic as it might be when the case in question consists of a contemporary organisation or programme with numerous sub-programmes.

5.2.6 Construct validity, confirmability and neutrality

Ensuring construct validity entails establishing correct operational measures of the concepts being studied. Construct validity is of most importance during the data collection and composition phases of research (Fouché, 1999; Yin, 2009). It can be enhanced by the careful selection, clear conceptualisation and operational definition of the constructs or variables to be studied. It should also be ensured that these relate to the

original objectives of the study. Qualitative researchers often use the term confirmability. Confirmability refers to the extent to which findings are a function of the available data and conditions of the research (Chéze, 2009; De Vos, 2005). It speaks to the issue of *neutrality* in a study, which is achieved when interpretations are free from researcher bias and confirmable (Krefting, 1991; Lincoln & Guba, 1985, 2000). Achieving confirmability and neutrality in a study helps to ensure both construct validity and reliability, which is discussed in section 5.2.8 below.

A number of specific steps can be taken to ensure construct validity in psychobiographical research. The use of a data analysis matrix as already discussed is one such measure, because it allows for a clear presentation of all the variables under study. The operational definition of all such variables is another measure. These definitions are informed by the relevant literature and specified in terms of the life being studied. In other words the life stages in a study such as this should also be operationally defined in terms of their range. These steps have been implemented in this study and definitions are presented in Chapter 6.

The use of multiple sources of evidence is an important principle for ensuring construct validity (Yin, 2009). As indicated above, the process of triangulation can be employed in this regard. It addresses the potential threats to construct validity because different sources of evidence provide multiple measures of the same phenomenon, thereby allowing the researcher to discuss those phenomena with greater confidence.

Another principle for ensuring construct validity is establishing a chain of evidence (Yin, 2009). The data analysis matrix is again useful in this respect because it allows for the presentation of data as evidence, links the data to the theoretical framework being used, and facilitates the development of a disciplined argument in respect of those links. An independent audit such as mentioned in the previous section, is also useful in this regard. It can confirm the quality of the data, the coherence of the theoretical concepts employed and the plausibility of the final conceptualisation.

5.2.7 External validity and transferability

External validity refers to the generalisability of conclusions, reached in a research setting, to other settings or real situations (Yin, 2009). Qualitative researchers often prefer the term transferability to indicate the extent to which findings can be applied to other contexts (Chéze, 2009; De Vos, 2005; Krefting, 1991; Lincoln & Guba, 2000). Qualitative research methods in general, and case studies and psychobiographies in particular, have received a great deal of criticism for not establishing external validity (Donmoyer, 2000; Edwards, 1990; 1998; Gomm et al., 2000; McAdams, 2006; Runyan, 2005; Yin, 2009). The primary goal of much psychobiographical research is to offer an explanation of the life under study, and not to generalise from that life to other cases or the broader population. For this reason some theorists (e.g., Fouché, 1991; Stroud, 2004) have argued that external validity or transferability is much less significant in psychobiographies where the findings are considered to possess inherent descriptive worth. It is, however, worth making a number of points about generalisability. Edwards (1998) has suggested that case studies have better external validity than experiments because they: “... *examine people in or close to real situations and do not distort naturally occurring behaviour through experimental manipulation and the setting up of artificial conditions ...*” (p. 62). Similarly, Gomm et al. (2000) have stated that there is, in principle, no reason why case study research should not provide the basis for generalisation across cases, and that such generalisation need not be dependent on the use of statistical techniques. It is therefore not impossible that information obtained about a subject’s life might be useful in understanding other cases. Should researchers wish to generalise from a subject’s life, they would have to take into account a number of factors highlighted by Gomm et al. (2000). The most important would be to recognise that the more heterogeneous a population, the more difficult it is to generalise from a single case. Any attempt to generalise would have to take into account the relevant heterogeneity of the population under study. According to Gomm et al.:

... we need to think about how the case(s) we are studying might be typical or atypical in relevant respects – or, indeed, of what population it ... could be typical; and to use what is actually known about the cases and the wider

population to get a fix on where the former fits in terms of the diversity likely to be present in the latter. In short, it is necessary to compare the characteristics of the case(s) being studied with available information about the population to which generalization is intended. (2000, p. 105)

5.2.8 Reliability and dependability

Reliability is established by demonstrating that the operations of a study can be repeated, leading to the same results. According to Yin (2009):

The objective is to be sure that if a later investigator followed the same procedures as described by an earlier investigator and conducted the same case study all over again, the later investigator should arrive at the same findings and conclusions (Note that the emphasis is on doing the same case over again, not on “replicating” the results of one case by doing another case study). The goal of reliability is to minimize the errors and biases in a study. (p. 45)

In qualitative research where the goal is often to learn from information rather than to control data and rule out extraneous variables, researchers sometimes use the term dependability rather than reliability (Chéze, 2009). Like reliability, dependability can be established by ensuring that the study’s findings, recommendations and conclusions are consistent with the epistemological framework employed and the presented data (Krefting, 1991).

A number of procedures can be utilised to ensure reliability in qualitative research. These include documenting the procedures followed in the case, making as many steps as operational as possible, using a case study protocol, developing a case study database, and establishing a chain of evidence (Yin, 2009).

Specific strategies may be employed to ensure reliability in a psychobiography. The establishment of a chain of evidence, and the use of the data analysis matrix to this end, was mentioned above. This is not only important in respect of construct validity, but reliability as well. The principle is “... *to allow an external observer ... to follow the*

derivation of any evidence, ranging from initial research questions to ultimate case study conclusions ...” (Yin, 2009, p. 122). The data analysis matrix makes this possible because it allows for the presentation of data as evidence, and links the data to the theoretical framework in a very concise manner.

The creation of a case study database is another principle for ensuring reliability. This is concerned with the organising and documenting of the data collected for case studies. Yin (2009) has argued for the creation of a formal, presentable database, distinct from the evidence presented in the case study report or thesis. This is to allow other investigators to review the evidence directly, and not be restricted to written reports, thereby addressing the problem of reliability. In a psychobiographical study it may be impossible, or at least extremely difficult to create such a database. Most of the data may consist of documentation, and much of it will take the form of biographies which contain interpretations of data. Raw data are often scarce or non-existent. One way in which a researcher can attempt to ensure reliability is to use only published information that is available and accessible for public scrutiny. This achieves much the same effect as an accessible database.

Two other steps can be taken to ensure reliability in a psychobiographical study. The first entails the explicit documenting of the procedures followed. The second entails operationalising as many steps and concepts as possible. These steps will be presented in Chapter 6.

5.3 Inadequate evidence and the absent subject

Another criticism of psychobiography, and one related to its historical reliance on psychoanalytic theory, is the accusation that interpretations are based on inadequate evidence, the wrong kind of evidence and insufficient evidence from periods such as childhood (Runyan, 1984, 1988b). This charge has arisen, in part at least, because the psychobiographer is often or usually analysing the life of a subject with whom the researcher has no direct contact (Fouché, 1999).

To some extent this criticism is valid only if the researcher works within a psychoanalytic framework, where particular information (such as dream material and free associations) is required for interpretations to be made. Alexander (1990) and Runyan (1988b) have suggested, however, that an analysis of a subject's creative works can yield useful information, and may substitute for dream material or information obtained by free association. Moreover, the researcher, unlike the psychotherapist or psychoanalyst, usually has access to a variety of sources of information. These might include informants, biographies, published non-fictional works and fiction or other artistic creations. In addition the psychobiographer often has access to autobiographical information such as published autobiographies, diary extracts and letters (Runyan, 1984, 1988b). Psychobiographers often have access to information about subjects' entire lifespans (Elms, 1994). This means that they can note behavioural patterns longitudinally and as a result, provide balanced descriptions of subjects (Chéze, 2009; Fouché, 1999).

5.4 An infinite supply of data

As suggested in the previous section, a far more pressing methodological challenge to the psychobiographer than insufficient evidence is one of a surfeit of data (Chéze, 2009; McAdams, 2006). Where the researcher is faced with too much information particular strategies have to be employed to sort and analyse it. One strategy proposed by Alexander (1988) was to select significant data on the basis of nine principle identifiers of salience. These were (a) primacy, (b) frequency, (c) uniqueness, (d) negation, (e) emphasis, (f) omission, (g) error or distortion, (h) isolation, and (i) incompleteness.

Another strategy entails asking the data specific questions, thereby ensuring that the research remains focused and that unnecessary material is excluded (Alexander, 1990; Fouché, 1999). This strategy can be adopted for psychobiographical research and incorporated into a data analysis matrix (Yin, 2009). Every theoretical construct or proposition on the vertical axis of the matrix constitutes a question, and every cell of the matrix involves a search for answers to that question within a defined period.

5.5 Reconstruction and retrodiction

Psychobiographical research has been criticised because of the tendency of psychoanalytic psychobiographers to attempt to reconstruct their subject's childhood experiences based on information about their later lives (McAdams, 2005). This often occurs because of a paucity of documented information concerning early childhood. Runyan (1988b) has acknowledged that this tendency to retrodict childhood events or experiences is problematic and unjustified. Such retrodiction is not, however, fundamental to the psychobiographical endeavour *per se*, and should be avoided. Interpretations should only be made when there is sufficient information available to allow the researcher confidently to do so.

5.6 Reductionism

Psychobiography, and psychoanalytic psychobiography in particular, has been accused of reductionism, and there are three principle concerns in this respect (McAdams, 2005; Schultz, 2005a). One entails the historical overemphasis of psychological factors at the expense of social, cultural and historical influences. A second is the traditional overemphasis of psychopathology and the neglect of health and creativity. The third is the tendency to explain adult character and behaviour exclusively in the light of early formative processes and influences (Gay, 1988; Runyan, 1988b).

The choice of a theory such as Individual Psychology addresses two of the criticisms outlined above. The theory takes into account social, historical and cultural influences as indicated in Chapter 2. Moreover it provides a framework for conceptualising healthy development, and for defining operationally healthy behaviour and attitudes (Adler, 1952, 1958). It is true that Adler emphasised childhood as a critical period in the development of personality, and this constitutes a potential weakness of his theoretical framework. Bitter (2007), however, took issue with the general Adlerian insistence that the lifestyle was developed and set during early childhood. He believed that growth and development occurred throughout life, in response to varied and new

stimuli and influences, and that it was possible to utilise Individual Psychology without accepting that life goals were fixed in childhood. Moreover a study may look for evidence of all key theoretical concepts across the lifespan, and take into account influential factors throughout the subject's life.

5.7 Analysis across time and culture

As indicated in the previous chapter psychobiography, and psychoanalytic psychobiography in particular, has been accused of ethno-centrism and temporo-centrism. Essentially the charge relates to the application of contemporary theories to people from other historical periods and cultures. The implication is that such analysis constitutes unsound academic practice because the theories might not be valid and the results not generalisable across time or culture (Fouché, 1999; Runyan, 1984). The use of a theory developed at the same time and within the same milieu as the subject may eliminate such threats to the validity of the research (Kagitcibasi, 1992). In a similar vein the researcher can reduce threats to internal validity by undertaking historical research that is sufficiently extensive to allow for an understanding of the subject's culture, thereby facilitating empathy with that subject (Fouché, 1999; Runyan, 1988a).

5.8 Elitism and easy genre

Psychobiography has had to defend itself against the charge of elitism. This criticism is related to the method's traditional focus on great or famous people, such as heads of state, royalty or extremely accomplished individuals and its neglect of the experiences of the ordinary masses (Chéze, 2009; Fouché, 1999). A focus on outstanding persons, however, offers some significant advantages to the researcher. McAdams (2006), referring to the work of Simonton (1994), has indicated that a great deal can be learned about personality by focusing on eminent figures who often leave behind diaries, memoirs and creative works. This offers the opportunity to study unusual and significant phenomena (McAdams, 2005; Schultz, 2005a, 2005b). Moreover, there is no reason why psychobiographies should not be conducted on persons from all social strata.

Membership of any particular social stratum need not constitute a criterion for the choice of subject (Runyan, 1988b), and as Fouché has pointed out: “... *an interest in the experiences of ordinary people is not an adequate reason for preferring quantitative to biographical studies since both kinds of analysis can be done and need to be done for all social groups*” (199, p. 156).

Another anti-psychobiographical view is the opinion of some critics that it constitutes an easy research genre. The essence of this criticism is that psychobiography is an easy form of research with an obvious shape based on the birth, development and death of the subject (Chéze, 2009; Fouché, 1999; Runyan, 1988b). Moreover there is usually only one subject, which obviates the need for obtaining a sample and analysing results using complex statistical procedures. While Runyan acknowledged that a superficial psychobiography could easily be written, he pointed out that a good and serious psychobiography was very difficult to write and required consulting a range of sources, in-depth knowledge of the subject’s socio-historical context, extensive psychological knowledge and well developed literary skills. His views accord with a number of other theorists (e.g., Gay, 1988; McAdams, 2005, 2006; Schultz, 2005a, 2005b) who have devoted a considerable amount of effort to ensuring that such research can be conducted in a rigorous manner.

5.9 Summary

This chapter outlined the threats to methodological rigour in psychobiographical research, as well as general criticisms of such research. The researcher indicated the strategies that might be implemented to ensure rigour, reliability, internal validity, external validity and construct validity, as well as steps which can be taken in respect of more general criticisms. The next chapter entails the presentation of the specific research method and design employed in this study.

CHAPTER 6

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

6.1 Chapter preview

This chapter is concerned with the presentation of the research design and research method. The research aims and procedures employed for data collection, extraction and analysis are described. In addition, the psychobiographical subject and the theory utilised are briefly introduced, along with the respective reasons for their selection.

6.2 Problem statement

The problem with which this study is concerned is to offer an explanation of Olive's life in terms of the theory of Individual Psychology. A great deal of biographical material concerning Olive has been published. Many of the works have offered interpretations of her life (e.g., Berkman, 1989; Schoeman, 1991, 1992). Some of these interpretations are based on formal psychological theories (e.g., First & Scott, 1989), but with the exception of a small number of psychobiographies (e.g., Friedmann, 1955), they have not entailed the application of theory in a systematic manner. Psychobiographies such as Friedmann's have not utilised established or even explicit methodologies for their qualitative research. Moreover, they have unquestioningly applied psychological theories in ways that may not be appropriate. The aim of the study is to offer an illuminating account of Olive's life, personality and behaviour by the systematic application of the principles of Individual Psychology.

6.3 Research design and method

This study can be described as life history research (Runyan, 1984, 1988a). It employs a single case, holistic design, and it entails a psychobiographical study of a case over an entire lifespan. The research is explanatory (Cozby, 2007; Edwards, 1990, 1998;

Yin, 2009). The research method adopted is qualitative, and statistics are not employed in the analysis of the data. The study entails the analysis of Olive's life in terms of the theoretical propositions of Individual Psychology, and the careful construction of an argument linking the life to the theory. The construction of this argument reflects a deductive approach to the study (Fouché, 1999).

The research is morphogenic, since it focuses on the life of a particular individual, and attempts to understand, explain and appreciate that life in all its uniqueness. This approach can be distinguished from nomothetic approaches that are concerned with the general rather than the particular, and which are normative, comparative, and reliant upon statistics for the analysis of data. (Alexander, 1990; Elms, 1994; Hurlburt & Knapp, 2006; McAdams, 2005, 2006; Runyan, 2005).

6.4 Subject

The subject of the research is Olive Schreiner (referred to throughout as Olive), a South African writer who lived from 1855 to 1920. She was selected as a subject for a number of reasons:

1. Olive's life and work were of particular interest to the researcher.
2. A pilot literature study of her life indicated that she was an exceptional figure, unusual and accomplished in many respects. This informal study revealed that Schreiner, although well known for her contribution to literature and society, remained something of a puzzle to researchers and theorists who have struggled to reconcile seemingly contradictory aspects of her life. The possibility of offering an additional and new explanation of her life, while highlighting her historical and psychological significance, made her an interesting and suitable candidate for a study of this nature.

3. A wealth of published material concerning Olive's life was available. This included biographies, biographical material in other books, and various texts devoted to an analysis of her work. There were also her own published works as well as autobiographical material in the form of published letters and diary extracts. Essentially then, there were sufficient data available to conduct the study.
4. There was little or no research that attempted to explain Olive's life by the application of formal psychological theories in a systematic manner, and which also employed established psychological research designs and methodologies.
5. There were no psychobiographical studies that took into account Olive's health, as well as focussing on her more obvious psychological difficulties, for which she was well known.
6. The study offered the opportunity not only to understand Olive's creativity, but also to try and explain the moral development of somebody who took a strong (and often unpopular) stand against what she felt were social evils of her time.

6.5 Theory

The theoretical framework chosen for this research is Adler's theory of Individual Psychology. It was selected for the following reasons:

1. The researcher had a particular interest in the theory.
2. Alfred Adler is generally regarded as one of the founding figures of modern psychology, and his theory has had a significant influence on the field of psychology in general, and on clinical practice in particular.

Paradoxically however, his ideas have received comparatively little attention from theorists, and have not been developed to the same extent as those that originated at the same time (Carlson, et al., 2006; May, 1991). The study seemed a good opportunity to present Adler's ideas, as well as the views of more contemporary Individual Psychologists.

3. Individual Psychologists have traditionally employed the case study method for research purposes. The autobiographical nature of the Adlerian concept of lifestyle means that the theory is suited to case study and psychobiographical research (Clark, 2005; Pearson & Willborn, 1995; Shelly, 2006). Such research, moreover, is consistent with the underlying principles of Adler's theory, which stresses holism, subjectivism, and the uniqueness of human beings (Carlson et al., 2006; McAdams, 2006).
4. An initial, informal study of Olive's life revealed facets of her personality that seemed suited to conceptualisation in Adlerian terms. On the other hand there seemed to be aspects of her life that, at first reading, resisted explanation in such terms. For this reason the study was judged to be an interesting opportunity to explain her life and present Individual Psychology.

6.6 Data collection

The data for this study consists of published material written about and by Olive Schreiner. Most of the material consists of books, but post-graduate theses and articles are also included. Three types of data from multiple sources are utilised. The three types include biographical material, autobiographical material, and Olive's creative works.

The collection of data entailed searching through the libraries at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan and Rhodes Universities, and utilising the information-system services at those institutions to obtain material via inter-library loans. Some of the

references (e.g., Cronwright-Schreiner, 1924) were housed in the Protecta division of the libraries. These were not available for private loan, and had to be read in the library. Additional information was obtained from the library, database and bookstore of the National English Literary Museum in Grahamstown.

As indicated above, only published data and research theses are utilised. There are a number of reasons for this. Published materials constitute stable data sources because they can be reviewed repeatedly. They are useful for verifying details such as the correct spelling of names and titles. They make available specific details to corroborate information from other sources. They are relatively easy to access and retrieve, and therefore offer the researcher the convenience of studying them in his or her own time. Most important from a methodological point of view, however, is that published material can be accessed by any other researcher who is interested in the study. This means that their use approximates as closely as possible the database concept employed by case study researchers, and is an important step in ensuring reliability (Fouché, 1999; Gomm et al., 2000; Yin, 2009). Table 9 below shows examples of prominent data sources arranged by type.

One major disadvantage of relying on written or published materials, according to Yin (2009), is possible author-bias. This involves the reporting or documenting of material or data in a biased fashion. The psychobiographer relying on published material such as biographies does not, then, have access to raw data, but to interpretations of data. The method used in this study to minimise the impact of author bias and enhance internal and construct validity, is data triangulation. This method, alluded to above, uses multiple sources of evidence in order to allow for conclusions to be reached with greater confidence than might otherwise be the case.

Table 9

Prominent data sources and types

Type	Title	Author	Date
Biography	<i>Olive Schreiner: an introduction</i>	Barsby	1995
Biography	<i>Not without honour: The life and writings of Olive Schreiner</i>	Buchanan-Gould	1948
Biography	<i>The life of Olive Schreiner</i>	Cronwright-Schreiner	1924
Biography	<i>Olive Schreiner</i>	First & Scott	1989
Biography	<i>Olive Schreiner: A woman in South Africa</i>	Schoeman	1991
Biography	<i>Only an anguish to live here: Olive Schreiner and the Anglo-Boer war</i>	Schoeman	1992
Biography	<i>Olive Schreiner: The other side of the moon</i>	Lewis	2010
Autobiography	<i>Olive Schreiner: Letters 1871-99</i>	Schreiner	1987
Creative Works	<i>The story of an African farm</i>	Schreiner	1883, 1995
Creative Works	<i>Undine</i>	Schreiner	1928, 2004
Creative Works	<i>From man to man</i>	Schreiner	1927, 2004

6.7 Data extraction and analysis

One of the most difficult tasks confronting the psychobiographer is the reduction of the huge amount of information at the researcher's disposal. This entails the examination, selection, extraction and categorisation of the appropriate data which must then be analysed. The researcher must have a strategy to facilitate this process (Alexander, 1990; Fouché, 1999; McAdams, 2006; Yin, 2009).

Yin (2009), as indicated in Chapter 5 (see section 5.2.3), has outlined two such strategies, and this researcher has combined both for the purpose of this study. The first approach entails a reliance on theoretical propositions and the second involves the development of a descriptive framework for organising the case study. The use of a data analysis matrix makes it possible to combine both strategies, as also indicated in Chapter 5. On the vertical axis are the theoretical propositions, taken from the theory, and

operationally defined. On the horizontal axis are the categories for describing the case. These represent stages in Olive's life, presented chronologically. They constitute periods of time characterised by particular themes derived from a reading of the relevant biographical literature (e.g., First & Scott, 1989; Lewis, 2010; Schoeman, 1991, 1992). They do not reflect phases of development since Adler (e.g., 1952, 1956, 1958, 1965) posited no sequential developmental stages, although one, *Peripatetic teenager*, corresponds to a large extent with what contemporary developmental theorists (e.g., Craig & Dunn, 2009) call *Adolescence*. They are essentially descriptive categories designed to organise the case material, and divide it into analysable units. For the sake of consistency the categories are the same as those employed in Chapter 3 to present an overview of Olive's life. The phases are operationally defined in terms of their temporal range and characteristic themes.

Each theoretical proposition poses a question, the answer to which is sought in each life phase. The use of such questions constitutes another data reduction method (Alexander, 1990; Yin, 2009). Within each cell of the matrix evidence of three types (as indicated in section 6.6) is obtained from numerous sources in a process known as data triangulation (Duffy, 1987; Yin, 2009). The data analysis matrix constitutes a data coding and reduction system which facilitates data analysis, and the conceptualising of the case. This matrix is presented in Table 10 below. Also shown in the table is the way in which the matrix lends structure to Chapter 7. The operational definitions of the theoretical propositions and the descriptive categories follow.

6.8 Definition of terms

6.8.1 Theoretical concepts

6.8.1.1 The sense of inferiority

This refers to individuals' perceptions of themselves as being inferior or deficient in some respect. It entails a sense of lack in people (Adler, 1952, 1958, 1996a). The sense

Table 10

Data analysis matrix

Individual Psychology: Theoretical Concepts	Life of Olive Schreiner						
		Early years on the mission stations	Peripatetic teenager	Governess	The years abroad	South Africa and social justice	The final decade
	The Sense of Inferiority	7.2.1.1 Biography Autobiography Creative Work	7.3.1.1 Biography Autobiography Creative Work	7.4.1.1 Biography Autobiography Creative Work	7.5.1.1 Biography Autobiography Creative Work	7.6.1.1 Biography Autobiography Creative Work	7.7.1.1 Biography Autobiography Creative Work
	Life Goal	7.2.1.2 Biography Autobiography Creative Work	7.3.1.2 Biography Autobiography Creative Work	7.4.1.2 Biography Autobiography Creative Work	7.5.1.2 Biography Autobiography Creative Work	7.6.1.2 Biography Autobiography Creative Work	7.7.1.2 Biography Autobiography Creative Work
	Striving for Superiority	7.2.1.3 Biography Autobiography Creative Work	7.3.1.3 Biography Autobiography Creative Work	7.4.1.3 Biography Autobiography Creative Work	7.5.1.3 Biography Autobiography Creative Work	7.6.1.3 Biography Autobiography Creative Work	7.7.1.3 Biography Autobiography Creative Work
	Style of Life	7.2.1.4 Biography Autobiography Creative Work	7.3.1.4 Biography Autobiography Creative Work	7.4.1.4 Biography Autobiography Creative Work	7.5.1.4 Biography Autobiography Creative Work	7.6.1.4 Biography Autobiography Creative Work	7.7.1.4 Biography Autobiography Creative Work
	Schema of Apperception	7.2.1.5 Biography Autobiography Creative Work	7.3.1.5 Biography Autobiography Creative Work	7.4.1.5 Biography Autobiography Creative Work	7.5.1.5 Biography Autobiography Creative Work	7.6.1.5 Biography Autobiography Creative Work	7.7.1.5 Biography Autobiography Creative Work
	Social Interest	7.2.1.6 Biography Autobiography Creative Work	7.3.1.6 Biography Autobiography Creative Work	7.4.1.6 Biography Autobiography Creative Work	7.5.1.6 Biography Autobiography Creative Work	7.6.1.6 Biography Autobiography Creative Work	7.7.1.6 Biography Autobiography Creative Work
	Discouragement/ Inferiority Complex	7.2.1.7 Biography Autobiography Creative Work	7.3.1.7 Biography Autobiography Creative Work	7.4.1.7 Biography Autobiography Creative Work	7.5.1.7 Biography Autobiography Creative Work	7.6.1.7 Biography Autobiography Creative Work	7.7.1.7 Biography Autobiography Creative Work

of inferiority is experienced by all human beings and is not inherently pathological, but usually a stimulant to healthy development (Adler, 1956; Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956).

6.8.1.2 Life goal

The life goal is that goal or ideal which arises in young individuals' minds to help them overcome the difficulties and the sense of inferiority with which they are presently beset, or are experiencing. Goals are the creations of individuals. They help to orient

people in the world (Adler, 1952, 1956, 1958; Orgler, 1963). The life goal often subsumes a number of sub-goals. In this study the sub-goals were dealt with individually, and the Chapter 7 headings in this respect take the plural form, i.e., *Life goals*.

6.8.1.3 Striving for superiority

The striving for superiority refers to the efforts made by individuals to reach those goals established as a result of the sense of inferiority. When the sense of inferiority is exaggerated to the extent that it constitutes an inferiority complex, so too is the striving for superiority exaggerated. The striving is an attempt to compensate for what people perceive as their disadvantaged positions (Adler, 1952, 1956, 1958; Carlson et al., 2006).

6.8.1.4 The style of life

The style of life refers to the consistent way in which individuals move towards the goals set in response to the sense of inferiority. In other words it entails the pattern of individuals' striving and life. It comprises the drawing together of all psychological processes in a self-consistent or holistic organisation in the striving towards the goal. The style of life becomes evident in childhood, and constitutes the prototype of the later personality (Adler, 1952, 1970).

6.8.1.5 The schema of apperception

The schema of apperception refers to individuals' conceptions or views of the world and themselves. A particular form of the schema of apperception is the antithetical schema of apperception. This refers to the view of the world held by psychologically disturbed individuals. It is characterised by rigidity and an idiosyncratic logic which is at variance with common sense or reality (Adler, 1952, 1956, 1970; Orgler, 1963).

6.8.1.6 Social interest

Social interest refers to individuals' co-operation with, and commitment to, other human beings. It is based on a sense of empathy for others, and involves meeting the challenges presented by the need to live in society, to work, and to love. It includes a concern for nature, as well as spiritual development (Adler, 1952, 1956; Bottome, 1957; Carlson et al., 2006; Leak, 2006; Orgler, 1963; Stein & Edwards, 1998).

6.8.1.7 Discouragement

This is also known as the inferiority complex, and refers to an exaggerated or overwhelming sense of inferiority. Adler referred to all forms of psychological disturbance as discouragement. Accompanying the increased sense of inferiority in discouraged individuals is an exaggerated striving for superiority and a decrease in social interest. The increased striving for superiority is typically associated with an idiosyncratic logic which is at variance with common sense (Adler, 1952, 1958, 1970, 1996a, 1996b). Various symptoms are utilised by discouraged individuals to safeguard a sense of self-worth (Adler, 1956; Carlson et al., 2006).

6.8.2 Life stages

6.8.2.1 Early years on the mission stations

This category refers to the first 12 years of Olive's life. It is a convenient designation because it constitutes the period during which Olive lived at home with her parents on the mission stations in the South African interior (Schoeman, 1991). She was essentially a child, dependent on her parents and family for the satisfaction of her needs. It spans the period from 1855 to 1868.

6.8.2.2. Peripatetic teenager

This phase refers to the years from 1868 to 1874, when Olive was aged 13 to 18. During this period she moved often and lived with relatives, friends and, sometimes strangers. She was dependent on them for her livelihood as she was not economically independent (Schoeman, 1991).

6.8.2.3 Governess

This period spans the years from 1874 to 1881, when Olive left South Africa for England. She was aged 18 to 26. What characterised this period of her life was her gainful employment as a governess. She was, for all intents and purposes, economically independent. She was no longer living at home, or with relatives or friends (First & Scott, 1989; Schoeman, 1991). In Olive's culture at that time she was, essentially, a young adult.

6.8.2.4 The years abroad

This period spans the years 1881 to 1889, and is conveniently designated by the years that Olive spent abroad, mostly in England but also on the Continent. This period has commonly been treated, or at least referred to, as a discrete phase by her biographers (e.g., First & Scott, 1989; Schoeman, 1991, 1992).

6.8.2.5 South Africa and social justice

This period spans the years from 1890 to 1910, when Olive was aged 34 to 55. She lived in South Africa for this entire period, which was also sandwiched between lengthy trips abroad. This phase of her life was characterised by increased social involvement and a striving for social justice (Berkman, 1989; First & Scott, 1989; Lewis, 2010; Schoeman, 1992).

6.8.2.6 The final decade

This period refers to the last 10 years of Olive's life, and spans the years 1910 to 1920. Most of this time was spent in England (Barsby, 1995; First & Scott, 1989).

6.9 Creative works as data sources

As indicated above, three types of data were obtained from numerous sources. One of these was creative works. A number of theorists (e.g., Alexander, 1990; McAdams, 1994; Schultz, 2005c; Runyan, 1988b) have indicated that creative works are useful sources of information about the author's psychological state because they entail the expression of projective material. Such an analysis is entirely consistent with an Adlerian approach to patients or subjects because it is believed that the goal and the lifestyle are the governing principles of mental life, and in terms of the underlying dynamic unity of psychic life, it will be expressed in everything they do (Adler, 1952, 1956, 1970, 1996a).

Three of Olive's novels (i.e., all of her published novels) were selected for analysis. Based on the Adlerian (Adler, 1952, 1956, 1970) view that the style of life will inevitably be expressed in such work, it was decided that three works would provide sufficient evidence, while allowing for the cross-checking of themes which might emerge from one novel against those in the other two, as well as against biographical and autobiographical material. Her short stories were not included for analysis because sufficient information ought to have been obtained from the novels, and because an exhaustive analysis of all material produced by her would have been outside the scope of this research.

6.10 Ensuring internal validity

A number of potential threats to internal validity are presented by the very nature of psychobiographical research. The use of the data analysis matrix, as indicated in the

previous chapter and in Table 10, addressed some of these challenges. In an attempt to avoid those outlined by Edwards (1998), and posed by researcher bias, the researcher (a registered clinical psychologist with formal training in history and English literature) discussed his theoretical assumptions and his thoughts and feelings about the subject with his supervisors before presenting the data and conceptualising the case. After the case had been conceptualised in Adlerian terms the case material, conceptual framework and the conceptualisation were presented to the supervisors for comment. They were also given to an independent rater with formal training in literature and a master's degree in clinical psychology to comment on the quality of the evidence and of the argument linking the theory and the data.

The use of Individual Psychology reduced some of the threats to validity associated with research of this nature, as indicated in Chapter 5. Two such threats to internal validity are ethno-centrism and temporo-centrism. These result from analysis across time and culture. The theory employed was also useful in this regard. Adler and Olive were contemporaries. It is perhaps more than just an interesting coincidence that Adler was influenced by Smuts' thoughts on Holism (Smuts, 1926), that the two corresponded and that Olive and Smuts were friends. At least some of the ideas that influenced Adler were accessible to both. In addition both were concerned about the plight of women in society, and both were sympathetic to the socialist cause. The point is that Individual Psychology was not developed in a milieu totally different from that in which Olive was raised. In addition the researcher read historical texts (e.g., Davenport, 2000) and other works by Schreiner's contemporaries (e.g., Rolland, 1987) to understand better the socio-historical context in which she lived.

6.11 Ethical considerations

The practice of psychobiography raises some obvious ethical questions, because intimate details from lives are documented and employed in offering interpretations of those lives. Elms (1994) has pointed to the paucity of ethical guidelines for

psychobiographers. Two such guidelines, stipulated by the American Psychiatric Association in 1976, and presented by Elms are:

1. Psychobiographies may be conducted on deceased individuals. Those individuals should preferably have been deceased for some time, and should have no surviving relatives who could be embarrassed by the material documented or published,
2. Psychobiographies may not be conducted on living individuals unless they have given their consent for the study to take place.

Elms has also suggested that the researcher treat all intimate details of the life under study with respect.

A number of principles were implemented to reduce threats to ethical practice in this study. First, the research relied on material that had already been published, thereby obviating the need to obtain informed consent from surviving family members. Second, the participant's life was treated with empathy and respect. Third, the social and scientific value of the research was judged to outweigh the ethical risks posed by the study (Elms, 1994; Fouché, 1999; Wassenaar, 2006).

6.12 Summary

This chapter has presented the research design and methodology employed in this study. Specific attention was paid to the methods of data collection, extraction and analysis utilised in this research. The chapter is preparatory to Chapter 7, which entails the presentation of the data in terms of the strategies outlined above, and an explanation of Olive's life in terms of Individual Psychology.

CHAPTER 7

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

7.1 Chapter preview

This chapter has three aims. The first is to present the data derived from an examination of Olive's life. This is done in accordance with the data analysis matrix presented in the previous chapter (see section 6.7). The use of this matrix makes it possible to offer a theory-by-life-stage presentation of the relevant data. In other words, it allows the researcher to find evidence for particular theoretical concepts in each stage of Olive's life. Every attempt was made, when looking for evidence, to draw on three types of data from multiple sources. The three types, as mentioned in Chapter 6, are biographical material, autobiographical material, and creative works. It should be pointed out though, that it is not possible to obtain data of all three types for all life stages. Olive, for example, wrote no novels during her childhood or old age, and there are limits to the use of such creative material when presenting data from these stages. Similarly, there is a relative paucity of biographical material concerning her later years. This means that for some life stages there is a greater reliance on certain types of information than on others, and some types are not utilised at all.

It should also be pointed out that while the simple presentation of data in terms of the theoretical constructs for each life stage is one aim of this chapter, this is not always possible. The reason for this is that some concepts are not easy to define operationally and are not clearly distinguishable from the factors or conditions that contributed to their existence in the first place. An example would be the schema of apperception. Other concepts such as the style of life have to be inferred. This means that certain information presented in respect of these concepts is the result of at least some interpretation.

The second aim of this chapter is to explain Olive's life in terms of the theory of Individual Psychology. This discussion or conceptualisation will take place for each life

stage, and it will follow immediately after the findings or data for a particular life stage. The conceptualisation will therefore be facilitated by the data presented in preceding sections. For the sake of consistency the discussion sections will be structured in the same way as the findings sections. In other words the same theory-by-life-stage format will be employed. It should be mentioned that the distinctions drawn between the various key concepts are, in a sense, artificial. The concepts are related. For example the sense of inferiority is an aspect of the schema of apperception, and both are subordinate to the style of life. The distinctions have been made to facilitate analysis and explanation.

The final aim is to offer a commentary on the conceptualisation. The particular focus is on the extent to which Individual Psychology offers a framework for interpreting Olive's life. Specific attention is paid to areas of the life for which the theory appears inadequately to account. Suggestions for further research are also made.

7.2 Early years on the mission stations

7.2.1 Findings

7.2.1.1 The sense of inferiority

Olive's biographers were in agreement concerning the unhappiness of her childhood (Barsby, 1995; Berkman, 1989; First & Scott, 1989; Lewis, 2010; Schoeman, 1991). Olive herself, in later years, referred to the darkness and bitterness of her childhood (Friedmann, 1955), and the narrator in *African farm* says: "... *let us never again suffer as we suffered when we were children*" (Schreiner, 1995, p. 43). The reasons for her unhappiness, and in particular those that spoke to her sense of inferiority, will be explored in this section.

Olive's correspondence and her novels suggest a sense of having been deprived of parental care and affection as a child. In a letter to Cron written in 1893 Olive stated that: "... *my mother has never been a mother to me; I have had no mother*" (Schreiner, 1987,

p. 218). According to Schoeman (1991), Rebecca was, for much of Olive's childhood, burdened with the rather onerous duties of a missionary's wife, poor health, numerous pregnancies, and responsibilities to the other children. First and Scott (1989) believed that Rebecca was depressed for at least part of Olive's childhood, that Olive experienced her as cold and distant, and that she felt misunderstood by her mother. As Schoeman (1991) was at pains to point out, however, the lack of an adequate father figure was just as significant. Gottlob might have been a gentle and loving man, but as a father he was as ineffectual as the character Otto in *African farm* (Schreiner, 1995). Olive's sense of parental deprivation is perhaps best portrayed in the "Prelude" to *Man to man* (Schreiner, 2004b). Rebekah is a lonely, unhappy little girl. She is left to her own devices while her mother recovers from the birth of twins. Her father is a vague background figure, distracted and unavailable. Schoeman (1991), commenting on this, stated that these parental figures, obviously modeled on Gottlob and Rebecca Schreiner, were "... *so vaguely portrayed and contribute so little to the plot that Rebekah and Bertie might as well be orphans*" (p. 57). The orphan motif is also present in the other two novels. This sense of being parentless, according to First and Scott (1989) led to a persistent sense of alienation in Olive, and a view of herself as marginalised.

While Rebecca Schreiner may not have been quite as abusive as some of her biographers (e.g., Friedmann, 1955) have portrayed her to be (Beeton, 1987; Schoeman, 1991), she was capable of meting out harsh punishment (Lewis, 2010). Olive was to refer to the two great whippings during her childhood which: "... *did me such immense harm that I think they have permanently influenced my life*" (in Schoeman, 1991, p. 55). Just how severe the punishment was in reality is not known, but for Olive it caused great bitterness, anger and hatred. Furthermore, it engendered a sense of being weak and helpless in the face of someone much more powerful, and who was capable of wielding power in an arbitrary fashion. In *African farm* the proudly defiant Lyndall is forced, in a position of helplessness, to acknowledge her weakness, and this prompts her vow to "... *hate everything that has power*" when she herself becomes strong (Schreiner, 1995, p. 93).

Rebecca viewed God as judgemental and wrathful. Her vision of Christian propriety was puritanical and prohibitive, her views on child-rearing distinctly Wesleyan. She considered it her duty to break the self-will of her children (Schoeman, 1991). First and Scott (1989) suggested that as a result Olive had, by an early age, already acquired a diffuse sense of guilt. It is revealing in this respect that Waldo in *African farm*, Rebekah in *Man to Man*, and the eponymous heroine Undine are all plagued by guilt, by a sense of being wicked.

It was this version of Christianity that Olive was to reject in a process which started fairly early in her childhood. The rejection of Christianity was extremely painful for her (Lewis, 2010). In a letter to a Reverend Lloyd, written in 1892, she stated, referring to her religious conflict, that: “*The agony of my childhood, especially from the time I was 9 till I was fourteen, was the impossibility of reconciling this direct perception from which I could never shake myself free, with what I was taught* (Schreiner, 1987, p. 212). This process is portrayed in *African farm* where Waldo’s anguish at his alienation from the God in whom he had believed, is made clear. Olive’s rejection of Christianity exacerbated her sense of guilt, and contributed to an existing sense of being strange and different. One reason for this was that: “... *this crisis of faith had occurred in a particularly closed culture, in which a system of theology co-terminous with family authority had not yet been challenged*” (First & Scott, 1989, p. 56). There was therefore, in her milieu, no alternative framework within which to locate her emerging beliefs (Schoeman, 1991).

A factor contributing to Olive’s sense of inferiority was her femininity. At the time a woman was expected to accept, and be content with, her physical and mental inferiority to men (Schoeman, 1991). Olive became aware of this at an early age: “*When I was a young girl and a child I felt this awful bitterness in my heart because I was a woman ...*” (in Schoeman, 1991, p. 210) she later wrote to Havelock Ellis. This bitterness is clearly articulated by Lyndall in *African Farm*, who also points to its origins:

We sit with our little feet drawn up under us in the window, and look out at the boys in their happy play. We want to go. Then a loving hand is laid on us. "Little one, you cannot go," they say; "your face will burn, and your nice white dress be spoiled." We feel it must be for our good, it is so lovingly said; but we cannot understand; and we kneel still with one little cheek wistfully pressed against the pane. (Schreiner, 1995, p. 189)

The treatment of girls and women at the time was inextricably bound up with more general principles of child rearing within the particular religious milieu. Barsby (1995), referring to *Undine*, stated that: "*The novel thus highlights how religious discipline was especially harsh for girls, combined as it was with Victorian notions of appropriate feminine behaviour. In a colonial context, such pressures on women are intensified*" (p. 13).

Another factor which appears to have contributed to Olive's sense of inferiority was her perception of herself as different or odd. As indicated above, First and Scott (1989) believed that Olive felt alienated and marginalised because of her sense of being parentless, and in particular, because of Rebecca's distance and coldness. Similarly, Berkman (1989) referred to Olive's dislocated and marginalised position within her culture. Schoeman (1991) suggested that she was a rather odd child. That Olive experienced herself as such is supported by the fact that Undine feels that she is odd and in fact is referred to in the title of Chapter 1 as "*A queer little child*" (Schreiner, 2004a, p. 5). Rebekah too, in *Man to man* is frequently referred to as strange. Moreover, it is very hurtful for her when old Ayah calls her "*'n snaakse kind*" (Schreiner, 2004b, p. 427).

Olive's childhood then, seems generally to have been lonely and unhappy. There is evidence for her having experienced a sense of inferiority. Several factors contributed to this. One was her frustration at the restrictions imposed on a girl at that time and in that culture. Another factor was the sense of sinfulness that arose from her parents' religious views and their associated parenting style. A third factor was her sense of being strange and different.

7.2.1.2 Life goals

One of Olive's goals appears to have been goodness or virtue. As a child Olive acquired a sense of guilt and experienced herself as wicked (Lewis, 2010). The earliest evidence for this and for the establishment of a goal to overcome her sense of inferiority in this respect comes from Rebecca Schreiner. She reported that Olive, at the age of three, in response to her obviously strict disciplinary measures, said: "*Mama have I been a little better today?*" (in First & Scott, 1989, p. 48). For Olive, virtue or goodness was set up as a goal in counterpoint to her sense of wickedness. While the evidence for this conclusion may seem flimsy at this stage, the theme was to become more apparent in Olive's life as she grew older.

Olive's sense of weakness in the face of arbitrarily wielded power has been mentioned in 7.2.1.1, above. The two great whippings, alluded to in that section, were significant in this respect. Although they caused her a great deal of anger and bitterness, they also gave rise to the: "... *deep resolve I made when I sat on the box beside the bed to spend all my life in helping weak things against strong ...*" (in Schoeman, 1991, p. 56). When Olive later gave her childhood Bible to Karl Pearson, she drew his attention to a note on the first page, apparently written as a reminder to her to be compassionate to the weak when she herself had become rich and strong (First & Scott, 1989). In a similar vein Lyndall in *African farm* vows that: "*When that day comes, and I am strong, I will hate everything that has power, and help everything that is weak*" (Schreiner, 1995, p. 93). Strength and compassion, then, were her goals, and they corresponded with her desire to be good and virtuous, mentioned above.

Another goal stemming from Olive's childhood appears to have been a yearning for wisdom and knowledge. The earliest record of this comes from her time at Balfour, when she wrote that her goal was "*To be clever, to be wise*" and "*To know*" (in Schoeman, 1991, p. 175). Undine expressed the same wish to her pet monkey, Socrates (Schreiner, 2004a). Similarly Waldo's craving for knowledge is made apparent in his dream of a box full of books that will: "... *tell me all, all, all ...*" (Schreiner, 1995, p.

97). The lonely Rebekah in *Man to man* comforts herself with her dream of an island where she is queen, and where she can live with her books and her microscope (Schreiner, 2004b). Lyndall says that nothing helps “‘... *but to be very wise, and to know everything – to be clever*” (Schreiner, 1995, p. 45).

Perhaps the most traumatic event in Olive's childhood was the death of her infant sister, Ellie (Schoeman, 1991). The death of infants appears as a theme in all three novels, indicating the impression made on Olive by this experience. According to Berkman (1989), the death of Ellie was decisive in Olive's ambition to become a doctor. In 1884 Olive wrote to Havelock Ellis saying that: “*The dream of my life always was to be a doctor: I can't remember a time when I was so small that it was not there in my heart*” (Schreiner, 1987, p. 39). To be a healer then appears to have been a goal which Olive set for herself at an early age, and it accorded with the decision she made to be compassionate and tender to all things weaker and less fortunate than herself.

Freedom, as abstract an ideal as it is, appears to have been another goal of Olive's. This was in all likelihood due to all those constraints that led to her sense of inferiority. First and Scott (1989) wrote about her desire to liberate herself from the “... *constraints imposed upon her by the times in which she lived*” (p. 339). Berkman (1989) has similarly referred to her desire to free herself from the fear and guilt which arose from her upbringing, and Schoeman (1991) referred to her independent spirit as a child. As a little girl Rebekah in *Man to man* is comforted by her dream of an island where: “*No one will ever scold you ... and you can do just what you like*” (Schreiner, 2004b, p. 413).

Olive, as indicated above, established a number of goals during her childhood. They included virtue, strength, knowledge and freedom from the constraints of her situation. These goals, moreover, appear to have arisen in response to her feelings of inferiority, and were set in an attempt to compensate for those feelings.

7.2.1.3 Striving for superiority

Olive spent her life striving to liberate herself from the sense of inferiority that arose from the cultural and familial constraints of her childhood (Berkman, 1989; First & Scott, 1989). It makes sense, in terms of both Adlerian theory (e.g., Adler, 1956) and the general pattern of her life that this striving should have begun in her childhood. There is, however, a paucity of data in this respect. The scant evidence that does exist will be presented in this section. It is not possible to discuss or prove her striving towards all the goals mentioned in the previous section.

It was mentioned above that one of the reasons for Olive's sense of inferiority during childhood was her femininity. She was clearly aware of the limitations imposed on her gender from an early age. There is no evidence that the liberation of women in general or of herself as a woman in particular, had become a goal that she had definitely articulated during childhood. She had, however, as indicated in the previous section, expressed a desire to be strong. It is possible that even as a small child Olive had identified herself to some extent as masculine and that this was one manifestation of her striving towards her goal of being strong. Schoeman (1991) for example, mentioned that Olive preferred to wear boy's clothing. This may have been because it gave her more freedom of movement. It was possibly also an act of rebellion against the constraints imposed by her femininity. Rebekah too is frequently called a tomboy (Schreiner, 2004b). This is a theme that was to become more prominent at a later stage of Olive's life, and is discussed in greater detail below.

It has already been suggested that Olive had acquired a sense of guilt at an early age, and that one of her childhood goals was to overcome her sense of wickedness (First & Scott, 1989). According to Rebecca, Olive was: "... *still rather self-willed and impetuous, needing much patient firmness. It is however very pleasing to see the effort the dear little thing makes to conquer herself. She often asks, 'Mama, have I been a little better today?'*" (in Schoeman, 1991, p. 70). Commenting on this Lewis (2010) stated that: "*Before Olive turned seven, the seeds were sown for a lifetime of striving after truth*

and perfection ...” (p. 35). Olive tried hard to be better, to be good. In spite of her willfulness and independence of spirit, she wanted to please her mother.

There are then, some indications of Olive’s striving to achieve her childhood goals. However, the lack of information makes it impossible to show her striving towards all of the goals mentioned in 7.2.1.2. There is much more evidence for her upward striving in later life stages and this will be presented in the relevant sections.

7.2.1.4 The style of life

Childhood is usually the period of a subject’s life about which the least information is likely to be available (Runyan, 1988b). There is, again, a paucity of data regarding this area of Olive’s life. It is also worth noting that the style of life must be inferred from the available data. While this section is primarily concerned with the presentation of data, a certain amount of interpretation is unavoidable, particularly where concepts such as the style of life are concerned. Aspects of the emerging style of life will be presented below, and will be elaborated upon in subsequent sections dealing with other stages of Olive’s life.

Olive’s childhood, as indicated above, was not very happy. One source of her unhappiness was her sense of guilt, of being wicked. This derived, at least partially, from her independence, determination and willfulness, which brought her into conflict with her parents, and particularly with Rebecca (Schoeman, 1991). That Olive was rebellious is suggested not only by Schoeman and Rebecca, as indicated above, but also by the characters in her novels. Lyndall in *African farm* is proudly defiant, and so is Undine. Rebekah, after seeing her baby sister for the first time, escapes outside, into the hot sun: “*She knew she ought not to be there in the hot sun; she knew it was wicked; but she liked the heat to burn her that morning*” (Schreiner, 2004b, p. 408). Lewis (2010) has also indicated that the seeds for a lifetime of rebellion were sewn during her early childhood. While her sense of wickedness undoubtedly caused her great pain, her rebelliousness could also be viewed as the embryonic form of her later attempts to liberate herself and

her contemporaries from the constraints imposed on the basis of religion, gender and ethnicity.

Olive's childhood was lonely and painful. She persistently felt misunderstood (First & Scott, 1989). She might have wondered, as Undine did: "*Would she have to walk on alone, alone, unloved, misunderstood, right on to the end?*" (Schreiner, 2004a, p. 35). In response she developed, and was sustained by, a rich imaginary world (Lewis, 2010; Schoeman, 1991). Rebekah is comforted by her daydreams and the stories she makes for herself (2004b). It is also worth noting what Olive was later to refer to as her earliest memory:

One of the first things I can remember, when I can't have been more than three, was walking up and down in a passage with cocoanut matting on the floor and making stories to myself: and I can remember the other children laughing at me (in Schoeman, 1991, p. 70)

As a little girl Olive was telling herself stories and this was clearly to continue for the rest of her life. A retreat into an inner world of fantasy and ideas emerged at an early age as part of Olive's style of life. So did protest, and this was also to persist throughout her life.

It can tentatively be concluded that two features of Olive's lifestyle emerged during these early years. One was her rebelliousness, arguably the origin of her later protests against injustice. The other was her recourse to a fantasy world which, in later years, could be seen as informing and inspiring her writing.

7.2.1.5 The schema of apperception

Olive's sense of alienation has been referred to above. According to Schoeman (1991), "*She grew up as an outsider and observer*" (p. 100) and experienced a sense of "*rejection and alienation*" (p. 100). First and Scott (1989) suggested that she felt excluded from, and marginal to, her family and culture. They believed that this arose, at least in part, because of her sense of herself as orphaned, and particularly because of her

view of herself as a motherless child. This sense of parental deprivation was, as Schoeman (1991) pointed out, perhaps “... *the keynote of her youth ...*” (p. 57). That Olive felt this way was supported by statements in her later correspondence and by the themes in her novels, some of which have been quoted above.

Another theme from Olive’s childhood was her sense of guilt (First & Scott, 1989; Lewis, 2010) which is clearly articulated by the central characters in all three novels, as indicated in the preceding sections. Schoeman (1991) suggested that Olive’s childhood was “... *dominated by consciousness of her own sinful state before a God of judgment and retribution*” (p. 109). This, as he pointed out, was portrayed in “Times and Seasons”, in *African farm* (Schreiner, 1995). Olive was later to say that this version of Christianity had made her childhood very bitter (Schoeman, 1991). Her subsequent rejection of Christianity exacerbated her sense of guilt, and her sense of alienation (First & Scott, 1989; Schoeman, 1991).

It has been indicated above that Olive felt herself to be misunderstood (First & Scott, 1989; Friedmann, 1955), as did her character Undine (Schreiner, 2004a). Allied to this was a sense of being mistreated, which emerged during childhood, and developed into a sense of persecution in later life (Beeton, 1987). In Olive’s earliest memory, quoted in the preceding section, it is significant that she is laughed at by the other children. Both Undine and Rebekah are portrayed as unfairly treated. Undine asks: “*Would it be so wherever she might go, that her hand should be against every man, and every man’s hand against hers?*” (Schreiner, 2004a, p. 35). Both Beeton (1987) and Schoeman (1991) have pointed out that Rebecca Schreiner may not have been quite the parental monster that she has sometimes been made out to be. She could, however, be harsh. The two great whippings mentioned above left Olive bitter and outraged at what she felt was a “... *punishment unreasonable and disproportionate to the supposed offence ...*” (Schoeman, 1991, p. 56). Olive’s sense of being persecuted may have had some basis in reality. First and Scott (1989) suggested that Olive’s freethinking prompted social persecution. Gottlob and Rebecca seem to have been surprisingly tolerant of her religious views, but

this was not the case with all her siblings. Her persecution, particularly at the hands of Ettie and Theo, was only to emerge clearly during her adolescence (Lewis, 2010).

Another theme from Olive's childhood was her sense of weakness and, at times, helplessness. Support for this has been given above in 7.2.1.1. Further evidence is the helplessness of the three children in *African farm* at the hands of Tant Sannie and Bonaparte Blenkins, both of whom are cruel and malicious (Schreiner, 1995). It appears to have stemmed, in part, from her powerlessness in the face of parental authority, which could be wielded in an arbitrary fashion (Lewis, 2010). The two great whippings are significant in this respect (First & Scott, 1989), and it is noteworthy that Waldo is savagely whipped by Blenkins. A further contributing factor to her sense of weakness was her gender, with all the associated expectations of a girl living in that time and place. That this had already become an issue for Olive during her childhood was strongly suggested by her correspondence and by the occurrence of the theme in her novels, as mentioned above (Barsby, 1995; Schoeman, 1991; Schreiner, 1995, 2004a).

There were, in sum, a number of important aspects concerning Olive's view of herself and the world at this early stage of her life. One was a sense of being different to, and excluded from, her family. Another was that she experienced herself as sinful or wicked, and consequently felt guilty. She believed herself to be weak in the face of parental authority which could be wielded arbitrarily and harshly, and this gave rise to a sense of being mistreated and misunderstood from an early age.

7.2.1.6 Social interest

Olive could not, as a child, have solved all the challenges presented to her by the need to live in society, to work and to love. She did, however, show early signs of developing social interest. These are presented in this section.

Olive became disillusioned with the religion of her parents, and at some point in her childhood at Healdtown began the process that would lead to her rejection of

Christianity (Schoeman, 1991). Considering the time and place in which she lived, this was unusual and remarkable, as First and Scott (1989) have pointed out. It caused her a great deal of anguish and guilt. It must also have taken a great deal of courage to reject Christianity formally as Olive did (Lewis, 2010), and something of this act is portrayed by Undine when she defies her grandfather and finally, adamantly, refuses to go to chapel. Although this in itself was not necessarily indicative of social interest, it was the beginning of her development of an alternative spirituality that was to become clear during her adolescence, and which can be regarded as a sign of social interest, as previously mentioned in Chapter 2.

It has already been suggested in 7.2.1.2 that Olive, in response to feeling weak and powerless, had vowed to help all those weaker than her when she become strong. This indicated a degree of compassion and empathy, and a desire to be helpful. As such, and considering that such sentiments were to persist into later life stages, as will be shown, it can be considered as the beginning of a style of life characterised by a desire to be of service. It can therefore be seen as an early sign of social interest.

Another indication of social interest during childhood was Olive's affinity for nature, which Schoeman described as "... *so intense that one might almost call it mystical ...*" (1991, p. 104). First and Scott (1989) also believed that Olive's appreciation for nature had a spiritual quality. They suggested that she defined God in terms of her feeling for nature, and that this feeling gave rise to her belief in a form of pantheism. Berkman (1989) noted that nature was a source of succour for Olive, and Olive herself was later to write that:

My childhood was so bitter and dark, but I cling to the memories of it and especially the places I lived at. They were so unutterable lovely and it was in nature I found all the joy and help I had in those lonely years. (in Schoeman, 1991, p. 104)

Olive, then, exhibited some features of social interest from an early age. One was her rejection of Christianity, significant not only because of the moral courage that this required, but because it augured her development of an alternative spirituality. Another was her love of nature, which offered her comfort and would inform the above-mentioned spirituality. A third was her capacity for empathy and the related desire to help others.

7.2.1.7 Discouragement

This section is concerned with presenting evidence of early signs of an inferiority complex in Olive. Relevant data will include evidence of an increased sense of inferiority, or of discouragement, and signs and symptoms of psychological disturbance.

According to Berkman (1989), Olive experienced self-hatred from an early age. Friedmann (1955) suggested that: *“From the time we have any description at length of it, her behaviour was neurotic: she did not seem able to deal appropriately with her environment, and her behaviour did not seem to result in satisfaction of her needs”* (p. 21). Similarly, Schoeman (1991) indicated that, from her childhood, she showed the signs of inflexibility that were to characterise her whole life.

Olive’s references to the darkness, bitterness and agony of her childhood gave an indication of the depths of her despair during those years (First & Scott, 1989; Lewis, 2010; Schreiner, 1987; Schoeman, 1991). So too did her novels. As indicated in 7.2.1.1 above, the narrator of *African farm* pleads: *“... let us never again suffer as we suffered when we were children”* (Schreiner, 1995, p. 43). Little Rebekah’s discouragement is clear when she says: *“... its not any use! – I have tried! – I have tried – Oh, I wish I was dead – I wish I was dead – I wish I was dead!”* (Schreiner, 2004b, p. 431). Undine says the same as a child: *“Oh, I wish I was dead! I wish I was dead! There is nobody like me, and nobody loves me. Oh, I wish I was dead”* (Schreiner, 2004a, p. 18).

The information given above, then, seems to indicate that as a child, Olive was rather more than just moderately unhappy. It has already been indicated (in 7.2.1.1 and

7.2.1.2) that Olive's childhood was characterised by unhappiness, guilt, a sense of weakness, a sense of being different or odd, and by a sense of alienation from family and culture. Her biographers, her later correspondence, and her novels indicate that her sense of inferiority was great enough to constitute discouragement or an inferiority complex. She also appears to have exhibited maladaptive behaviour from her childhood.

7.2.2 Conceptualisation

7.2.2.1 The sense of inferiority

According to Adler (1952, 1956, 1958, 1996a), the central dynamic of psychological growth and personality development is the striving to overcome perceived deficiencies, or individuals' sense of themselves as inferior. The sense of inferiority is ubiquitous and is not necessarily pathological because it constitutes, in most cases, a stimulant to healthy development. In some individuals the sense of inferiority is exaggerated to the extent that the person is regarded as having an inferiority complex. Such a person is also referred to as discouraged.

That Olive experienced herself as inferior from early childhood is quite clear. Perhaps the most significant factor contributing to this was a sense of alienation that arose from her experience of parental rejection and deprivation. Her perceptions in this respect, as indicated in 7.2.1.1 above, appear to have had some basis in reality. From her early childhood Rebecca seemed to have been ill, depressed and distracted by her not inconsiderable duties as a missionary's wife (First & Scott, 1989). Gottlob, while loving and gentle, was hardly an adequate father figure (Schoeman, 1991). Her family environment would be regarded by Adlerians (e.g., Adler, 1965, 1970, 1996a) as one characterised by neglect. Such a family atmosphere may engender feelings of worthlessness, discouragement and a sense of basic mistrust not only towards primary care-givers, but to the rest of society as well. This seems to have been the case for Olive. Associated with this sense of alienation, moreover, was her experience of herself as different and odd (Berkman, 1989).

Rebecca was capable, at times, of being harshly punitive (Lewis, 2010). Olive certainly experienced her as such, and this caused her a great deal of anger, bitterness and hatred, as well as engendering a sense of being mistreated, weak and helpless in the face of arbitrarily wielded power (Friedmann, 1955). Associated also with Rebecca's Wesleyan style of parenting, her vision of a punitive and wrathful God, and her puritanical and pious conception of propriety, was Olive's sense of herself as wicked (First & Scott, 1989). She acquired, early in her childhood, a sense of guilt. This was exacerbated by her later rejection of Christianity, an agonising process which, considering the time and place, also contributed to her sense of being strange and different (Schoeman, 1991).

A particularly significant factor contributing to Olive's sense of inferiority was the limitations imposed on her because of her gender. It is clear, from her later novels and correspondence (Schreiner, 1987, 1995, 2004a, 2004b), that she was keenly and bitterly aware of the restrictions placed upon her by virtue of her femininity, and experienced the weakness of her position as a female in her culture (First & Scott, 1989; Schoeman, 1991).

Olive suffered an unhappy childhood and developed a sense of inferiority from an early age. This stemmed from her guilt feelings (Berkman, 1989; First & Scott, 1989), her femininity and her perception of herself as alienated from her family (Barsby, 1995; Friedmann, 1955). Associated with this sense of alienation was Olive's view of herself as strange, different and misunderstood (Schoeman, 1991).

7.2.2.2 Life goals

Arising from the feeling of inferiority is the establishment of a self-ideal or goal. This self-ideal may be visible as a number of sub-goals. The goal is subjective or fictional. It helps to orient individuals in their phenomenal worlds (Adler, 1952, 1956, 1996a, 1996b). By offering the possibility of success in the future, it helps to assuage the present sense of inferiority, which would otherwise be unbearable.

That Olive established certain goals during her childhood seems clear, and evidence for this was presented in section 7.2.1.2. What is important to note is that these goals were related to her sense of inferiority, established, in fact, in counterpoint to her sense of herself as lacking or deficient. For example, as a child Olive acquired a sense of guilt and experienced herself as wicked (First & Scott, 1989). In response to these feelings, associated in all likelihood with Rebecca's views on appropriate childhood behaviour and discipline, Olive tried hard to be better, to be good. Virtue or goodness became a goal that was to remain important to her throughout her life (Lewis, 2010).

Olive's sense of weakness arising from her experience of parental power has been mentioned. It gave rise to her desire to be strong, and also prompted her vow to be compassionate to the weak once she had become powerful. Her aspirations in this respect corresponded with her desire to be virtuous, mentioned above. Perhaps also associated with her desire for strength was Olive's yearning for wisdom and knowledge (First & Scott, 1989; Schoeman, 1991; Schreiner, 1995, 2004b). As a goal this was evident from her childhood, although its relationship to her style of life would only emerge clearly in later life stages

Freedom from the cultural and familial constraints that had contributed to Olive's sense of inferiority during her childhood was another important goal, although it would only emerge as such in later years. There is no clear evidence from her earliest years, that the liberation of women in general or of herself as a female in particular, was an articulated or concrete goal. However, her desire to be strong, previously mentioned, and her tomboyish behaviour (Schoeman, 1991) might well be seen as early evidence for having posited a goal of independence in this respect.

Finally, it seems that love, affection and approval constituted another goal which was important to Olive from her earliest years, but which became particularly prominent during her early adulthood. This will be discussed in greater depth below.

7.2.2.3 Striving for superiority

The goal that is set early in life becomes the governing principle of mental life. The sense of a goal, and the movement towards it, gives meaning to the individual's activities (Adler, 1952, 1958). The striving towards the goal is an attempt to compensate for what the individual perceives as his or her disadvantaged position (Adler, 1956; Lemire, 2007).

Features of Olive's striving to achieve the goals established in response to her early sense of inferiority became apparent in her childhood. Her initial attempts to free herself from the familial, religious and social restrictions of her childhood are, perhaps, best represented by her early acts of rebellion (Lewis, 2010). Her striking individuality and desire for independence brought her into conflict with Rebecca (First & Scott, 1989; Schoeman, 1991). This was a significant aspect of her lifestyle and, as such, will be discussed in the next section. In spite of her willfulness and rebelliousness, but perhaps also because of it, Olive had acquired, by early childhood, a sense of guilt. In response she established a goal of goodness or virtue, as mentioned in 7.2.2.2 above. Her striving in this regard is indicated by her attempts to better herself. This was also an important feature of her style of life and will be discussed below.

7.2.2.4 The style of life

The orientation and striving towards the goal that the individual has established, and particularly the manner in which this occurs, is called the style of life or the lifestyle. The style of life is linked to the schema of apperception or, in the case of the psychologically disturbed person, the antithetical schema of apperception. This is because the sense of inferiority, and the goals to which it gives rise, are subjective (Adler, 1956, 1970, 1996a). The movement towards the goal is a holistic process because all psychological processes are drawn together in a consistent unity to achieve the goal. In other words all psychological part functions are subordinate aspects of the individual's style of life (Carlson et al., 2006). Once the style of life has been established, at an early

age, it influences the individual's perceptions because it acts like a set of lenses, which the person uses to organise experience (Adler, 1952; Mosak, 1984; Orgler, 1963).

A significant feature of Olive's early lifestyle was her rebelliousness. Her early acts of rebellion may be seen as the prototype of her later attempts to free herself and her contemporaries from societal constraints imposed on the basis of ethnicity, gender and religion (Lewis, 2010). This tendency, seen against her life in its entirety, may have constituted the beginning of a lifestyle of protest.

Olive's childhood sense of guilt arose in all likelihood from her parents' disciplinary style, informed as it was by their religious views in general, and by Rebecca's vision of a vengeful and prohibitive God in particular. Olive's guilt and her sense of wickedness were significant features of her early sense of inferiority, and in response she aimed at virtue and selflessness. These were key features of her personal goal of superiority, but also meant that this striving was tempered by a need to be of use to others. This process was particularly apparent in Olive's rejection of Christianity. Olive could not accept her parents' vision of God; narrow, dogmatic and restrictive as it was. The guilt she felt at rejecting their religion, however, was translated into a striving for truth and virtue on such an elevated plane that the tenets of Christianity, by comparison, were discarded as ignorant superstition. In this way she could reject Christianity and feel, if not good, then at least superior about having done so.

Olive experienced her parents as being absent. This led to a sense of alienation, which, as Schoeman (1991) has pointed out, was a keynote feature of her youth. She felt unloved and misunderstood. This, coupled with her perception of herself as mistreated because of Rebecca's periodic episodes of tyranny, led to a sense of being persecuted that would become even more prominent in later life. Her sense of being unloved, oppressed and marginalised was, to some extent, translated into compassion for those whom she saw as underdogs. However, these feelings also had long lasting, negative, consequences. (Friedmann, 1955). Her craving for love, affection and approval, and her self-doubt dogged her for the rest of her life.

One way for Olive to deal with her sense of rejection and her loneliness was to retreat into a world of fantasy (Schoeman, 1991; Schreiner, 2004b). As a little girl she was making up and telling herself stories. This was a significant feature of her lifestyle from an early age. These stories can be seen as the precursors to the fictional writing of her adolescence and early adulthood.

7.2.2.5 The schema of apperception

The schema of apperception refers to individuals' perceptions of themselves and of the world. It arises from childrens' early experiences of the environment (Adler, 1952, 1956). In the discouraged individual the schema of apperception is characterised by an exaggerated sense of inferiority, and by rigidity and an idiosyncratic logic which is at odds with reality (Adler, 1970; Orgler, 1963).

Olive's sense of alienation has been mentioned in 7.2.1.1 above. She felt different to, and rejected by, her family. As a result she grew up feeling like an outsider, initially in respect of her family, but later with regard to her culture too (Schoeman, 1991). Her conflict with Rebecca and the latter's vision of God and related views on child-rearing, led to her experiencing a sense of guilt that would persist into later years. She felt that she was ill treated by her family and while her views in this regard might have been at least partially realistic, they developed into a sense of being persecuted which, in later years, had little basis in reality. Olive felt herself to be powerless in the face of parental authority, and this was exacerbated by her experience of weakness as a girl (First & Scott, 1989). As a consequence of her sense of being neglected she believed herself to be unloved and unlovable (Friedmann, 1955).

While the depths of Olive's despair were indicative of discouragement, it should be pointed out that she retained a sense of agency and determination. This was indicated by the goals that were established during her childhood, previously mentioned in 7.2.1.2 and 7.2.2.2. Particularly important in this regard was her vow to help the weak when she

herself was strong (Schreiner, 1995). An explanation of how this arose in response to the conditions of her childhood is offered in the next section.

7.2.2.6 Social interest

Social interest is present when the individual's upward striving is aimed not only at a personal goal of superiority or perfection, but also produces benefits for, or a contribution to, society. It is indicated by co-operation with, and commitment to, other human beings. It is based on a sense of empathy for others, and involves meeting the challenges presented by the need to live in society, to work, and to love. It may include a concern for nature, as well as spiritual development (Adler, 1952, 1956; Bottome, 1957; Leak, 2006; Orgler, 1963). For Adler, social interest was an indicator of mental health.

As a child Olive could not solve all the problems associated with living in society, working and loving. From the earliest time of which there is any record of her behaviour, however, she showed signs of social interest. Her early striving for strength, borne of her sense of weakness and powerlessness, was tempered with a desire to help others who were weak. There are then, indications that from an early age Olive had the capacity to transmute her own sense of weakness and her own experience into empathy for others. The Christian milieu in which she was raised may well have been significant in this respect, even if paradoxically so. Olive rejected Christianity during her childhood, and struggled to develop an alternative spirituality (Berkman, 1989; First & Scott, 1989; Schoeman, 1991). This in itself can be regarded as an indication of social interest, as will be indicated later. The rejection of Christianity caused Olive to feel a great deal of guilt for which she compensated by the establishment of an ethic of selflessness. As an ideal it was very likely, in part at least, the product of the Christian and Victorian gender ideals of service to others that were so prevalent in her childhood home.

It is important to mention Olive's affinity for nature in a discussion of her social interest. Again, this can be seen as evidence of social interest in itself (Stein & Edwards, 1998). Also, nature offered her great comfort during her lonely and unhappy childhood

years. Moreover her affinity for nature was so intense as to be mystical (Schoeman, 1991). In fact Olive's feeling for nature appears to have informed her definition of God, and led to her belief in a form of pantheism (Berkman, 1989; First & Scott, 1989).

7.2.2.7 Discouragement

Psychopathology, according to Adler (1952, 1956, 1996a, 1996b), occurs when an individual experiences a greatly increased sense of inferiority (i.e., an inferiority complex), associated with which is a corresponding increase in the striving for superiority. The inferiority complex, or discouragement as it is also known, cannot be viewed as separate from the style of life. Indeed discouragement and the attendant increase in striving for superiority constitute the style of life. This exaggerated striving is generally aimed at personal gain and security, and is based on idiosyncratic or private logic. This means that the discouraged individual generally exhibits a lesser degree of social interest. Very often discouraged people set goals which are so elevated that they have to protect themselves from their own aspirations, while at the same time looking for security and preserving their self-esteem. Specific symptoms serve a purpose in this regard.

Olive's early sense of inferiority and the unhappiness of her childhood years have been mentioned in 7.2.1.1, as have the factors that were influential in the development of these feelings. That her unhappiness and her sense of inferiority were so pronounced as to constitute an inferiority complex is suggested by Olive's biographers (Barsby, 1995; Berkman, 1989; First & Scott, 1989; Friedmann, 1955; Schoeman, 1991) as well as by Olive's own correspondence and novels (Schreiner, 1987, 1995, 2004a, 2004b). Her unhappiness was present, in varying degrees, from childhood onwards. While there were already indications that her behaviour in childhood was maladaptive, that she was inflexible and unable to deal appropriately with her environment, there is a relative paucity of information about this stage of her life which makes interpretation difficult. A more comprehensive conceptualisation will be offered in sections dealing with later life phases.

7.3 Peripatetic teenager

7.3.1 Findings

7.3.1.1 The sense of inferiority

That Olive experienced a sense of inferiority during her teenage years was indicated by her diary, a document which, according to Schoeman (1991), Cron destroyed. Cron reported that it was during this phase of her life that she wrote: *“I feel as though I could not do anything and I don’t believe I ever will do anything in the world”* (in Cronwright- Schreiner, 1924, p. 93). Her self-doubt is evident in these lines. First and Scott (1989), reflecting on her diary, suggested that she experienced guilt, despair and self-hatred, and that she was preoccupied with death. The rest of this section will discuss the factors which were influential in this regard.

Olive had formally rejected Christianity during her childhood. This was to lead to a great deal of unhappiness when, at the age of thirteen, she moved to Cradock to live with Theo and Ettie. Both were fervent and dogmatic in their Christian beliefs, and must have tried to impose their respective wills on Olive (Lewis, 2010). She felt herself to be persecuted by them (First & Scott, 1989). Olive, in her milieu, had no one who shared her beliefs, and no one who could comfort her in her spiritual torment. This was certainly the case until she met Willie Bertram (Schoeman, 1991). The consequence of this was an exacerbation of the sense of alienation which she had experienced as a child.

By the early 1870s Olive’s life had become one of constant movement (Barsby, 1995). This was in all likelihood a result of Gottlob’s insolvency, which, according to Schoeman (1991), plunged the family into poverty and insecurity. First and Scott (1989) stated that his bankruptcy effectively brought the Schreiner family home to an end. The Schreiners could simply not afford to look after Olive and at the age of thirteen she had gone to live with Theo and Ettie in Cradock. This move initiated a period of wandering:

For the next four years she would be a guest in the houses of virtually unknown relatives and friends, acquaintances and strangers, passed from hand to hand, from Basutoland to the Diamond Fields, from Fraserburg to Cape Town, before she could return briefly to her parents. A pattern of restless, unstable wandering, of never being at home and never settling down, was established in these sensitive years of her development that was to mark the rest of her life. (Schoeman, 1991, p. 181)

Having no home to call her own would, in all probability, have contributed to Olive's sense of alienation. Movement would also emerge clearly as a symptom of her discouragement in later life, although at this stage it was more of a contributing factor to her sense of inferiority.

Another factor contributing to Olive's sense of inferiority was her position as a female in the society of her time. It was previously argued that Olive's femininity was a source of her sense of inferiority during childhood, and this theme was developed during her teenage years. In 1875 Olive wrote to her brother Will and spoke of her "*woman hatred*" (Schreiner, 1987, pp. 18–19). While this letter was written during her early adulthood, it clearly referred to a sentiment that had existed for some time. Undine says that: "... *I wish I was not a woman. I hate women; they are horrible and disgusting ...*" (Schreiner, 2004a, p. 26), a statement which Schoeman attributed to Olive's experience as a teenager in Dordrecht. It was there that she was exposed to "... *the cramped little women's world of tea parties and gossip ...*" (Schoeman, 1991, p. 230). Her disgust at what Schoeman referred to as the oppressive triviality of a woman's life is portrayed clearly in *Undine* (Schreiner, 2004a) and *Man to man* (Schreiner, 2004b). According to Schoeman (1991): "... *in Olive's youth, the social position of women was highly restrictive*" (p. 210). It is clear that Olive was keenly aware of this.

The exact nature of Olive's relationship with Julius Gau is not known, but it is clear that their brief engagement and the subsequent break-up were very distressing for her (First & Scott, 1989; Lewis, 2010). According to Schoeman (1991), the relationship was a "*major traumatic experience to her ...*" (p. 228). Olive was in despair after the engagement ended, and this could not have contributed to her confidence or self-esteem.

The impression made on her by this incident is further suggested by the repeated appearance of the Gau figure in her novels. In *Undine* there is Albert Blair; in *African farm*, Lyndall's stranger; and in *Man to Man* there is Rebekah's husband, Frank (Schoeman, 1991).

Olive's sense of inferiority persisted into her teenage years. As in her childhood, these feelings arose from her sense of alienation from family and culture, her sense of oddness at holding views different from her contemporaries, and her experience of weakness as a girl in Victorian colonial society.

7.3.1.2 Life goals

This section presents the evidence for Olive's setting of life goals during her teenage years. Material from *Undine* is frequently utilised to support various assertions. This is because the novel was started at this stage of Olive's life, and completed very early during her adulthood. It is perhaps the most strongly autobiographical of the three novels (First & Scott, 1989; Schoeman, 1991).

That Olive was aware, from childhood, of the limitations imposed on her by her gender, is clear. Her woman hatred, associated with the experience of female convention that had so disgusted her during this period, has also been indicated. According to Berkman (1989), Olive's feminist consciousness was precociously evident during her teenage years, and from this time she was to try and free herself from female powerlessness (First & Scott, 1989). This goal was made very clear in *Undine*: "*Why should a woman not break through conventional restraints that enervate her mind and dwarf her body, and enjoy a wild, free, true life, as a man may?*" (Schreiner, 2004a, p. 117). It seems that by adolescence, Olive's childhood goals of strength and freedom had become linked in a rejection of conventional femininity and its associated weakness and powerlessness. The emerging goal was of an alternative conception of femininity.

Olive's childhood goal of wisdom and knowledge was presented earlier, in 7.2.1.2. According to First and Scott (1989), intellectual growth, associated with independent work, was for Olive a solution to feminine paralysis. That this goal was still important to Olive during her teenage years is indicated by her correspondence. In a letter to Catherine Findlay written in 1873, she expressed her wish to study at a college in America (Schreiner, 1987). The goal of her childhood then had been given more concrete form.

It was mentioned above that a goal emerging during Olive's childhood was virtue or goodness. By her teenage years, this goal had emerged more clearly in Olive's search for an alternative morality, and in her desire to be selfless. In fact, as First and Scott (1989) indicated, selflessness was a mission in Olive's life. This was best portrayed in *Undine*, whose story is one of total self-sacrifice. This theme is so prominent that it indicates a great deal of self-pity on Olive's part (Berkman, 1989), and mars the novel. As far as her search for an alternative morality is concerned, it is significant to note that for Undine, to continue going to chapel would make her a hypocrite, just as the gossiping Miss Mell and Mrs. Goodman are hypocrites. Insofar as Olive's formal rejection of Christianity was symbolised by Undine's refusal to attend chapel, so too did it indicate for Olive the need to make, literally, a virtue out of what for her was a necessity. As guilty as she felt about rejecting Christianity, she had to find a way to feel good about doing so. This is a theme that became clearer in the writings of her early adulthood. It is also possible to regard Olive's vow to help the weak, made on the cusp of adolescence, as linked to her goal of selflessness and service.

Olive's goals during this phase of her life included intellectual growth, virtue or selflessness, and femininity liberated from the conventional restrictions of society. They indicate that her self-ideal was consistent with that established during her childhood and, as was also the case during her childhood, it was established as a result of her sense of inferiority or weakness.

7.3.1.3 Striving for superiority

The evidence for Olive having established goals during her teenage years was presented in the previous section. This section deals with her striving to achieve those goals. This is another area for which there is a paucity of data.

Olive spent her life striving to liberate herself from the constraints of her youth (Berkman, 1989; First & Scott, 1989). Her efforts in this respect were illustrated by her rejection of Christianity and her attempts to free herself from the suffocating limits imposed upon women (First & Scott, 1989). Her striving for freedom is portrayed in *Undine*, particularly when, after Undine has returned to Africa, the narrator exclaims: “*Now she had broken through conventional restraints and was free ...*” (Schreiner, 2004a, p. 117). According to First and Scott (1989), “*For the woman writer, intellectual growth and independent work were to be the way out of the feminine paralysis*” (p. 333). Olive, trying to liberate herself from the powerlessness of the conventional female role, “*... would struggle in the external world of work for economic independence*” (First & Scott, 1989, p. 333). This process began during her teenage years. Olive’s efforts towards achieving intellectual growth were illustrated by her wide and serious reading while in Cradock, and particularly in Dordrecht (First & Scott, 1989; Schoeman, 1991). Her career as a writer also began during this phase of her life. It was while on the diamond fields that she first started writing seriously.

Olive’s struggle for independence was perhaps best symbolised by her changing her name after leaving Cradock. Until that point she had been known as Emily, but she decided that she would henceforth be called Olive. According to Schoeman (1991), leaving Cradock initiated a new phase in her life. He noted in this regard that: “*Olive for the first time ... assumes for posterity a face and a voice of her own, both in her letters ... and in the recollections of people whom she met ...*” (p. 183).

The evidence does suggest then that Olive strove to achieve her goals, and this was shown in her attempts at self-education and her early writing. Both reflect her efforts at achieving independence, a process symbolised by her changing her name.

7.3.1.4 The style of life

According to Adler (1970), the style of life was established at an early age, and generally persisted throughout life. In this section reference is made to those aspects of the lifestyle for which there is evidence at this stage of her life. All those patterns that constituted the entire style of life were not yet visible, given the relative paucity of information, and will become apparent in a consideration of later life stages.

One of the most significant features of Olive's life during her adolescence was her traveling. By the early 1870s her life had become one of constant movement (Barsby, 1995). She spent her teenage years traveling from place to place (First & Scott, 1989), or as Schoeman (1991) put it, being passed from "... *hand to hand* ..." (p. 181). She spent these years living on the good will of relations, friends and strangers, much as Undine does. The restlessness suggested in her earliest memory, by her walking up and down, was present in an exaggerated form as she moved from town to town, and family to family. While this movement was initially imposed upon her, it constituted the beginning of a significant pattern in her life (Beeton, 1987; Lewis, 2010). This period of restless wandering began with Olive having to leave the security of her family circle (Schoeman, 1991), and this could have done nothing to ameliorate her sense of alienation and rejection. Different and odd, she occupied a position on the margins of society. This seems to have been at least partly due to her unusual views, and partly because of her contempt for aspects of that society (Friedmann, 1955; Schoeman, 1991).

Olive's sense of alienation and rejection appears to have been associated with a growing perception of herself as mistreated and persecuted (Beeton, 1987; Friedmann, 1955). Like Undine she felt misunderstood (Schreiner, 2004a). Lonely and hurt, Olive drew on her inner world of fantasy for comfort, as she had during her childhood. She

consoled herself with her dreams of the future (Schoeman, 1991). As Lyndall says to Waldo, “... *we will not be children always; we shall have the power too, someday*” (Schreiner, 1995, p. 127). Her goals, as indicated above, included independence and freedom from the constraints of her youth (First & Scott, 1989; Berkman, 1989). The rebelliousness of a willful child emerged as acts of protest against the more pervasive cultural constraints of her teenage years. Her striving was, however, tempered with a desire to be helpful. It was on the brink of her adolescence that Olive wrote the note in her bible reminding her to help the weak (First & Scott, 1989; Schoeman, 1991). In a similar vein, Lyndall vows, when she has power, to “... *help everything that is weak*” (Schreiner, 1995, p. 93).

Another feature that emerged during this phase of Olive’s life, and which was to become a pattern, was her tendency to lapse into periods of discouragement, despair and illness (Berkman, 1989; First & Scott, 1989; Schoeman, 1991). More detailed evidence of this is presented in 7.3.1.7 below.

Olive’s style of life was characterised, even at this early age, by movement, protest and episodes of discouragement. These features of her lifestyle were to persist throughout her life. Also evident was her tendency to retreat into fantasy, a mechanism that helped her cope with her sense of alienation and rejection. Another feature of her lifestyle was a desire to help others.

7.3.1.5 The schema of apperception

Olive’s teenage years were characterised by a sense of alienation and rejection, both from her family and from the broader culture (First & Scott, 1989; Friedmann, 1955; Schoeman, 1991), evidence for which has been presented above (in 7.3.1.1 and 7.3.1.4). Associated with this was her sense of being ill-used and persecuted (Beeton, 1987) which has also been described above. This appears to have been part of an emerging pattern, for which further evidence will be presented in later sections. As such, it approximated Adler’s (1956) antithetical schema of apperception. In discussing Olive’s subjectivity, it

is significant to note that Olive's style of life involved a retreat into a world of fantasy. Significant in this regard was perhaps what Schoeman (1991), sounding very much like Adler, referred to as Olive's:

... tendency to represent what had happened to her as she experienced and recalled it, rather than the way it had actually and verifiably occurred. Of course most people's recollections are to some extent distorted; but they do, as a rule, fit into the general framework of reality. (1991, p. 70)

Schoeman then, was suggesting that Olive's experiences and recollections did not fit reality, and he was therefore referring to something like Adler's idiosyncratic logic or private intelligence, a perspective somewhat at odds with common sense. Cronwright-Schreiner made similar assertions about Olive (Schoeman, 1991). This might be particularly relevant in the light of Olive's emerging sense of being persecuted.

Two significant aspects of Olive's schema of apperception at this age, then, were her sense of being misused, and the fact that her experience did not always correspond with objective reality. Both of these features will be discussed in subsequent sections dealing with later life stages.

7.3.1.6 Social interest

A significant feature of Olive's adolescence was the development of friendships, in particular with Erilda Cawood and Mary Brown (First & Scott, 1989; Schoeman, 1991). They are mentioned here because they indicate that, in spite of her sense of alienation, Olive was capable of developing strong and enduring relationships, and also because her friends were affirming and nurturing (Berkman, 1989). Olive's friendships with Mary Brown and her husband John were particularly important, and they were to be so for the rest of her life. Mary Brown later wrote about their friendship and "*... the constancy of an affection which has been one of the greatest possessions of my life*" (Brown, 1967, p. 25). Erilda Cawood also made an impression on Olive, who was later to

write that: “*She is such a dear noble-hearted woman, she is quite converting my woman hatred into woman love*” (Schreiner, 1987, pp. 18–19).

Olive was, in spite of her generally retiring nature, quite capable of being gregarious. She is recorded as having been very entertaining at social gatherings in Dordrecht, which she dominated with her brilliant and animated speech (First & Scott, 1989). She was particularly fond of children and thrilled them with her imaginative stories (Schoeman, 1991).

Another significant contact during this phase of Olive’s life was that with Willie Bertram in Barkly East. Bertram was the model for Waldo’s Stranger in *African farm* (Schreiner, 1995), and although they met only briefly; “... *he managed to win her confidence as the Stranger did Waldo’s; to gauge her potential; and to sound her needs*” (Schoeman, 1991, p. 192). He introduced her to Spencer’s work and this had a tremendous impact on Olive: “*He helped me to believe in a unity underlying all nature; that was a great thing ...*” (Schreiner, 1987, p. 36) she later wrote to Havelock Ellis of Spencer. To Betty Molteno she wrote: “*When I was sixteen and doubted everything, his First Principles showed me the unity of existence ...*” (Schreiner, 1987, p. 277). Olive’s “*spiritual revolution*” (Schoeman, 1991, p. 132) had begun during her childhood, but Spencer gave her a framework for her beliefs. He helped give rise to an alternative spirituality, a freethinking theism characterised by a belief in an integrated cosmos. This was to inform her political, social and moral views (Berkman, 1989).

It is perhaps not possible to discuss Olive’s spiritual development without referring to her affinity for nature. Her freethinking was informed by mysticism and her mysticism by her feeling for nature (Schoeman, 1991), in which she developed her own definition of God (First & Scott, 1989; Lewis, 2010). The natural world was still a source of comfort to her during her adolescence, and the impression that it made on her is evident in her writing, which she started during this phase of her life (Berkman, 1989; Schreiner, 1995, 2004a, 2004b).

Olive's sense of being weak was apparent during her teenage years, but so too were her attempts to transcend this sense of inferiority. From this phase of her life it becomes clear that her own feelings of pain and weakness were transmuted into a capacity for empathy with others who were oppressed. This was most evident in her criticism of conventional femininity, and her articulation of an alternative femininity (Berkman, 1989; First & Scott, 1989).

There were other more concrete indications of Olive's social interest during her teenage years. While in Dordrecht she stayed with the Robinsons and, of her own initiative, began teaching their two little girls. On the diamond fields she taught the black diggers during the evenings. She read widely and seriously during this phase of her life, and also started to write in earnest. At the diamond fields she began *Other men's sins* and *Undine Bock*, and also wrote a story called "New Rush" (First & Scott, 1989; Schoeman, 1991).

In spite of her unhappiness and sense of alienation, Olive displayed many signs of social interest during this phase of her life. These ranged from such practical examples as making good friends and working, to more theoretical concerns such as articulating an alternative femininity and formulating a new conception of spirituality. She was sustained by her appreciation of nature, and showed her ability to transform her own pain and weakness into a capacity for empathising with others.

7.3.1.7 Discouragement

Olive's teenage years were characterised by frequent bouts of despair and discouragement (Berkman, 1989). Cronwright-Schreiner (1924) described her as having been in a nervous state during these years, and First and Scott (1989) referred to her feelings of guilt, despair, self-doubt, self-hatred, and an obsession with death. According to Friedmann (1955), her behaviour was neurotic and self-defeating. Schoeman (1991) stated that these years constituted a period of "... *constant tension and crises* ..." (p. 347), and suggested that while at Dordrecht she developed anorexia as a neurotic reaction to

the cumulative stress of this period. He also believed that she yearned for death and contemplated suicide. Something of the depths of her discouragement during this phase of her life is evident in a diary entry, later published by Cronwright-Schreiner:

July 17, 1873 ... I am down-down-down. I feel as though I could not do anything and I don't believe I ever will do anything in the world. I am a queer mixture of good and bad. I don't know what to make of myself. (in Schoeman, 1991, p. 269)

One factor which contributed significantly to Olive's despair was the relationship with Julius Gau. First and Scott (1989) indicated that it "... *had a highly destructive effect on her*" (p. 61), and Schoeman (1991) referred to it as "... *a major traumatic experience ...*" (p. 228). The aftermath of this relationship saw Olive back in Hertzog with her parents. She slept badly, had little appetite, was socially withdrawn and felt very despondent (First & Scott, 1989; Schoeman, 1991).

It was at some point during her teenage years that Olive first developed the asthma which was to plague her for the rest of her life. The role of asthma in Olive's life, and the exact nature of its relationship to her psychological disturbance cannot be viewed simplistically, and will be interpreted in a later section (7.5.2.7), after further evidence is presented. It is mentioned here because nearly all her biographers (e.g., Berkman, 1989; First & Scott, 1989; Friedmann, 1955; Schoeman, 1991, 1992) and Olive herself (e.g., Schreiner, 1987) recognised some kind of link between her asthma and her emotional state.

Two other factors relating to Olive's discouragement should be indicated here. One is the pattern of constant wandering which had clearly emerged during Olive's adolescence, and which was to continue until the end of her life. It is mentioned here because it was a factor which appears to have contributed to her discouragement, and because it was to become a characteristic and maladaptive response to stressors in her later life (First & Scott, 1989; Schoeman, 1991). The other is the sense of persecution,

based perhaps initially in reality, which was also part of an emerging pattern that was to be problematic during later life (Beeton, 1987; Friedmann, 1955).

The extent of Olive's suffering during her teenage years is indicated in *Undine*. It has already been suggested that the book is strongly autobiographical (First & Scott, 1989; Lewis, 2010). Olive started writing the novel during this phase of her life, and completed it during early adulthood. According to Schoeman (1991), much of her adolescent experience was recreated in *Undine*, and it was the novel in which she attempted to assimilate and sublimate the emotional events of her youth. As Friedmann (1955) pointed out, the book is preoccupied with painful experience. Overall, and in spite of Olive's message regarding the unity underlying all life, the book is not an optimistic one. The heroine's death at the end is consistent with the miserable state of the rest of her life.

Olive's teenage years were characterised by periods of despondency and despair. Upon this her biographers agree, and her unhappiness is reflected in her writing from this time. Associated with her discouragement for the first time was her physical illness. This was to become a central feature of her life and will be discussed in subsequent sections.

7.3.2 Conceptualisation

7.3.2.1 The sense of inferiority

Olive's sense of inferiority persisted into her teenage years and early adulthood, and from these periods comes a substantial amount of evidence confirming the pattern suggested by the information derived from her childhood. Very prominent was her self-doubt and lack of confidence in her abilities. She felt unloved and seemed to doubt whether she could be loved. The guilt that she felt at her rejection of Christianity was particularly apparent during her adolescence, probably because she had no framework or precedent for her freethinking, and no one to whom she could turn for comfort in her spiritual struggle (First & Scott, 1989; Schoeman, 1991). Family members moreover,

persecuted her for her religious views. This contributed to her existing sense of alienation, and her experience of being mistreated and misunderstood (Berkman, 1989; Friedmann, 1955). It did not help that she had, during this time, no real home, and that she was passed from family to family, being essentially a guest in the home of any relative, friend, acquaintance or stranger who would support her (Cronwright-Schreiner, 1924).

Olive's early frustration at being a girl crystallised into a hatred of women, and disgust at the oppressive triviality of a woman's life in the colony (Berkman, 1989; First & Scott, 1989; Schoeman, 1991). She was keenly aware that the social position of women was restricted, and bitter about the powerlessness of her own role as a woman in society (Schreiner, 1987, 1995, 2004a, 2004b).

7.3.2.2 Life goals

By her teenage years Olive was very much aware of the inferiority of her position as a woman in society, and in response she was to try and free herself from female powerlessness (Berkman, 1989). The goal of an alternative conception of femininity was clear in her novels, particularly *Undine*: “*Why should a woman not break through conventional restraints that enervate her mind and dwarf her body, and enjoy a wild, free, true life, as a man may?*” (Schreiner, 2004a, p.117). It also seems that by this time, Olive's respective childhood goals of strength and freedom had merged and reflected her rejection of the sense of weakness that arose from familial and cultural constraints. Associated perhaps was Olive's goal of wisdom and knowledge, first evident in her childhood, and which persisted into later life. According to First and Scott (1989), intellectual growth and independent work offered Olive a solution to the feminine paralysis of her formative milieu.

Also still present as a goal, and previously mentioned, was Olive's desire to be virtuous or good (Berkman, 1989; First & Scott, 1989; Schreiner, 2004a). This was evident in her quest for an alternative morality, and a desire to be selfless and to help the

weak. This may have arisen as a response to her childhood guilt, as indicated above. It may also have reflected the influence on her of the Christian and Victorian ideals of her childhood home and culture.

Love, affection and approval constituted another goal which was important to Olive from her earliest years, but which became particularly prominent during her teenage years and early adulthood. Her childhood and adolescence were characterised by a sense of rejection and alienation. She was frequently lonely during these years. This gave rise to a yearning for friendship, love, approval and recognition (Schoeman, 1991) that was clearly indicated in her correspondence, and was also a theme in her novels (Schreiner, 1987, 2004a).

7.3.2.3 Striving for superiority

Olive's goals have been mentioned above. One was an alternative conception of femininity. Her striving in this regard was shown in her struggle to free herself from the powerlessness of the conventional female role and achieve a measure of independence. This began during her teenage years and was illustrated by her serious attempts at self-education, her initial attempts at writing, and by her teaching (First & Scott, 1989). Her struggle for independence was symbolised by her changing her name from Emily to Olive during this phase of her life (Schoeman, 1991). Another goal was an alternative morality, a model of virtue independent of the Christianity which she could no longer accept. Her painful struggle in this respect was indicated in 7.3.1.1.

While the striving for superiority was fueled by a sense of inferiority that stemmed from Olive's negative experience of her early environment, it was shaped or given direction by more positive factors in that same environment. Rebecca was an intelligent woman who valued education and did what she could to teach and stimulate Olive during her early years. Moreover, as previously mentioned in 7.3.2.2, the combination of Christianity and Victorian gender ideals of service, as well as Olive's guilt at rejecting Christianity, led to the striving for an ethic of selflessness.

7.3.2.4 The style of life

Olive's craving for love, affection and approval, and her self-doubt dogged her for the rest of her life. It was during her teenage years and early adulthood that the role of her illness in this regard first emerged. On being coldly received by her family after a long journey by cart, she developed a severe asthma attack. After this they were kinder to her. Illness, which was nearly always associated with episodes of emotional distress, was later to gain her sympathy from family members and friends (First & Scott, 1989). It was to become a significant aspect of her life style which served other functions for her too, and is a theme that will be dealt with in greater detail in 7.3.2.7, as it was a feature that was incorporated into her lifestyle in a maladaptive way. It is mentioned here because according to Individual Psychology (e.g., Adler, 1996b; Bottome, 1957; Fall, 2005), physical symptoms and illness may serve a purpose in the individual's lifestyle.

As a child Olive had dealt, in part at least, with her sense of rejection and loneliness by retreating into a world of fantasy and creating stories. These stories, as previously mentioned in 7.2.1.4, were the precursors to her later writing. Olive began to write in earnest during her adolescent years, and it became a means for her to assimilate the painful experience of her youth; a means of configuring and refiguring that raw experience to her lifestyle (Schoeman, 1991) and adapting it to her life script. As such it constituted a mechanism for turning her own pain into a capacity for empathy and compassion for others, another significant feature of her life.

Travel had become a significant aspect of Olive's life by her adolescent years, and it was to remain so for the rest of her life (Lewis, 2010). Its function in her lifestyle was only to emerge later, however, and it will be discussed in greater detail below, in 7.3.2.7.

7.3.2.5 The schema of apperception

Olive's adolescence was characterised by a sense of alienation and rejection that had begun during childhood. This arose from her experience of parental rejection and

deprivation, and from her sense of weakness in the face of parental authority, informed as it was by a vision of a punitive and wrathful God, and with its perceived mandate to stamp out original sin (First & Scott, 1989; Friedmann, 1955; Schoeman, 1991). These are factors that Individual Psychologists (e.g., Adler, 1996a; Orgler, 1963; Stein & Edwards, 1998) would regard as being examples of family dynamics and societal influences that could contribute to a sense of inferiority, and in Olive's case the evidence suggests that they did. Olive's sense of oddness was compounded by her rejection of Christianity, a painful process that led to very real persecution during her teenage years. By this stage she had, in consequence, come to see herself as occupying a dislocated and marginalised position, not just in her family, but within the broader culture as well. The fact that her immediate family could not take care of her, and that she was dependent on the good will of family, friends and strangers, exacerbated this perception.

7.3.2.6 Social interest

The same themes or features of social interest that were noted during Olive's childhood were present during her teenage years. By this stage, however, her rejection of Christianity was complete. She had met Willie Bertram, encountered the work of Spencer (1862, 2005), and found a framework for her beliefs. Spencer's *First principles* helped give rise to a belief in an integrated cosmos that informed her freethinking theism. This would be regarded as a sign of social interest by Adlerians (e.g., Leak, 2006), particularly since these beliefs, although perhaps more cerebral than deeply felt at this stage of her life, had begun to inform her social and moral views. This was to become more evident during her adulthood.

Olive's ability to draw on her own pain and transform it into empathy and compassion for others whom she saw as similarly oppressed, was also still evident during these years. This was particularly the case in her early criticism of conventional femininity, and her initial attempts at articulating an alternative femininity (Berkman, 1989; First & Scott, 1989). There were also other, more concrete indications of Olive's social interest, such as her teaching, her attempts at self education, and her first serious

attempts at writing fiction (Schreiner, 2004a). Furthermore, she developed good and enduring friendships (Schoeman, 1991).

7.3.2.7 Discouragement

Olive's sense of inferiority persisted into her adolescence, and during these years and her early adulthood she was haunted by self-doubt and self-hatred (Schoeman, 1991). She felt unloved, and yearned for affection and approval, but doubted whether she was, in fact, lovable. She was afraid that others would be disappointed in her. Her negative self-image was in part the result of her sense of parental deprivation during both childhood and these years. It was exacerbated by the traumatic break-up with Gau. The sense of being mistreated that had arisen during her childhood was perpetuated by such factors as her treatment by Ettie and Theo, and the sense of alienation that arose from her social situation. It crystallised into the belief that she was persecuted. Her views in this respect went beyond the reality of her situation. As a result of her discouragement she strove to achieve her goals, and much of her despair and desperation seems to have arisen because they were unobtainable. She frequently experienced bouts of despondency. At various times she was unable to sleep, lost her appetite, and became socially withdrawn (First & Scott, 1989; Friedmann, 1955). In terms of Individual Psychology, she therefore showed clear signs of an inferiority complex (Adler, 1952, 1956, 1958; Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956).

It was late during this phase that particular symptoms clearly emerged. These were part of Olive's style of life and, consistent with the tenets of Individual Psychology (Adler, 1952, 1956, 1996b), served particular functions in respect of her upward striving. The symptoms moreover, persisted throughout her life and formed a pattern, which, as later sections will reveal, constituted a significant feature of her lifestyle. Her asthma, for example, began during these years. Her illness obtained sympathy for her at times. Olive had craved love and affection since childhood. She wanted to be treated like a child at times, loved and cared for in spite of her desire for independence. Illness helped her negotiate this paradox, and offered an excuse for adopting a more conventional role in

society (First & Scott, 1989). It served other functions too, as will be indicated in later sections.

7.4 Governess

7.4.1 Findings

7.4.1.1 The sense of inferiority

Olive's sense of inferiority persisted into this life phase. Her biographers suggested that she lacked confidence in herself, doubted her abilities, felt lonely and unloved, and frequently became despondent. At times she despaired of ever achieving anything. She continued to feel alienated from her family and from society (Beeton, 1987; First & Scott, 1989; Schoeman, 1991). Something of her insecurity was revealed in her letters during this period. In 1878, for example, she wrote to Erilda Cawood concerning the prospect of teaching her children, stating; "... *I'm not a bit a bright, pleasant person to have in a house. I can't bear to think of your being disappointed in me in any way. Can you understand the feeling?*" (Schreiner, 1987, p. 21). A year later, again in a letter to Mrs. Cawood, she wrote: "*I am getting to be such a selfish miserable creature. I wish I were as good as you. Perhaps if I saw you I would get like you*" (Schreiner, 1987, p. 23). Olive also remained keenly aware of her inferior position as a woman in society. In *African farm* Lyndall says: "*Suppose a woman, young, friendless as I am, the weakest thing on God's earth. But she must make her way through life. What she would be she cannot be because she is a woman ...*" (Schreiner, 1995, pp. 215-216). At times Olive became significantly discouraged. Evidence for this will be presented in 7.4.1.7 below.

There is evidence then that Olive continued to experience herself as inferior. Her feelings in this respect again stemmed, in part at least, from her sense of alienation from family and society, and her awareness of her weakness as a woman in society.

7.4.1.2 Life goals

According to Schoeman (1991), Olive, at some point during her early adulthood, found some direction and “... *developed a new sense of purpose and determination ...*” (p. 447). There were clear indications of her yearning to escape from the confines of her situation, and to achieve something better (Beeton, 1987; Schoeman, 1991). This section entails the presentation of the goals for which there is evidence during this phase of Olive’s life.

Olive had begun to write seriously during her adolescence, and continued to do so during this phase of her life. She completed *Undine* (Schreiner, 2004a) and *The story of an African farm* (Schreiner, 1995). It might have been during this period that she clearly formulated for herself the possibility of achieving something as a writer (Schoeman, 1991). First and Scott (1989) suggested in this respect that she had articulated, to herself at least, her aspiration to be a writer as a means to achieving economic independence. She certainly hoped to publish because in 1880 she sent the manuscript of *African farm* to the Browns to find a publisher.

Independence, and financial independence in particular, was definitely a goal of Olive’s during this phase. In a letter to Catherine Findlay dated February 1875, she wrote:

... *I made up my mind when I was quite a little child that as soon as I was able I would support myself, for I see no reason why a woman should be dependent on her friends any more than a man should and as long as I am well enough I shall.* (Schreiner, 1987, p. 15)

To her brother Will she wrote in October 1875 that “*I must wait for that pleasure till the golden day comes, when I live in a little room by myself, and be free, freer, freest ...*” (Schreiner, 1987, p. 18). It also seems clear that the goal of financial independence was inextricably linked to Olive’s desire to free herself from the constraints of conventional femininity. The above-mentioned correspondence recalls the satisfied statement made by the narrator in *Undine*, previously quoted in 7.3.1.3, and concerning Undine’s having

broken through conventional restraints to achieve freedom. (Schreiner, 2004a). Economic independence would give Olive the freedom to live an independent life; in effect, the kind of life that a man might lead. In rejecting the weakness and powerlessness of conventional femininity, and aspiring to independence, economic and otherwise, Olive was essentially identifying herself as masculine. First and Scott (1989) suggested that, to some extent, she experienced herself as a man. In this respect it is significant to note that Undine, with her “*extraordinary views and manners*”, is regarded as “*unwomanly*” (Schreiner, 2004a, p. 67). Lyndall too, in spite of her great beauty, is portrayed as masculine in some ways. She rides like a man and wears men’s jewelry (Schreiner, 1995).

Education remained one of Olive’s goals during this phase of her life. With John and Mary Brown she formulated her plan to study medicine, although by January 1881 she was considering nursing as a career option because it would cost less (Schreiner, 1987). Schoeman (1991) referred to Olive’s desire for further education, which was fairly unusual at the time, and which supports the notion that she was yearning for better and higher things. Her aspirations in this respect were also consistent with her ideal of economic independence, mentioned above.

It was suggested in previous sections (7.2.1.2 and 7.3.12) that virtue or goodness was one of Olive’s childhood goals, established in counterpoint to her sense of wickedness. This appeared to be the case during this phase too, and seemed to be associated with a desire to be helpful and compassionate, also developed earlier. For example, in a letter to Erilda Cawood she wrote: “*I would like to be so good that everything that I loved and that loved me was better and nobler and stronger for that love ...*” (1987, p. 23). In a similarly noble vein Undine sacrifices everything for others (Schreiner, 2004a). Such is the extent of her self-sacrifice that she is scarcely believable as a character. In *African farm* Lyndall is less altruistic but, according to Jacobson (1995), is “*... shown to us as never finding anyone worthy of her own high emotions ...*” (p. 23). In the allegory of the hunter in *African farm* (Schreiner, 1995), the protagonist searches for truth, compared to which the comforting tenets of Christianity are revealed

as the products of ignorant superstition. In rejecting them the hunter is portrayed as noble and also as self-sacrificing (Schreiner, 1995). The allegory strongly suggests that Olive, in spite of the guilt she felt at rejecting Christianity, was trying to translate the act into one of high moral courage which helped her to feel better, or virtuous, about having done so. It is perhaps this, as well as her espousal of other causes, to which Jacobson referred when he wrote that:

... the effect of these espousals would be to transcend the torments of the present by a feat of moral and rhetorical levitation which ultimately strikes the reader as having an inner meaning and impulsion quite opposite to that intended. It begins to appear as strangely selfish, uncaring, preoccupied more with reassuring the speaker (Jacobson, 1995, p. 19)

He went on to describe this tendency as a “*mode of lacerated self-exaltation*” (Jacobson, 1995, p. 19).

It has already been indicated that Olive’s emotional life during her youth was turbulent and that she lapsed into periods of despair and hopelessness. Berkman (1989) has suggested that she used her imagination to heal the psychic pain stemming from her youth. Friedmann (1955) believed that “... *she wrote in an unconscious attempt to set at rest conflicting impulses in her personality ...*” (p. 57). This is consistent with Schoeman’s (1991) assertion that *Undine* was written in an attempt to assimilate the distressing experiences of Olive’s adolescence, and the fact that the same painful material is present in all three novels. While resolution of the pain of Olive’s youth may not have been clearly articulated as a goal, the evidence suggests that it was something at which Olive aimed.

Another of Olive’s goals appears to have been affection, and linked to this, approval and recognition. It has been mentioned that she was frequently lonely during those years, and this gave rise to a yearning for friendship and love (Schoeman, 1991). To Erilda Cawood she wrote “*I’m not content to love. I want to be loved back again*” (1987, p. 23). In this regard it is worth noting Undine’s assertion that “*I’m miserable, and nobody loves me*” (Schreiner, 2004a, p. 15).

Finally, in discussing Olive's goals, it is important to indicate just how high her aspirations were. Schoeman (1991) referred to the "... *grandiose plans and aspiration* ..." (p. 509) that she formed during these years and Beeton (1987) spoke of her yearning to "... *master the highest ideals* ..." (p. 33) and her "... *search for perfection* ..." (p. 25). Olive's desire to become a doctor is indicative of this because, as she wrote to Havelock Ellis in 1884, the "... *doctor's is the most perfect of all lives* ..." (Schreiner, 1987, p. 39). It is also worth noting that Lyndall's lover says to her: "*It is all very well to have ideals and theories; but you know as well as anyone can that they must not be carried into the practical world*" (Schreiner, 1995, p. 237).

There is compelling evidence for Olive having pursued goals during this phase of her life. These goals were associated with her desire to free herself from the restrictions of her situation. They included writing and education, economic independence, relief from her psychological pain, and the capacity and ability to help others.

7.4.1.3 Striving for superiority

This section presents evidence for Olive's attempts to achieve the goals which she set for herself during this period, or goals which had been established before and which were still important to her. One indication of her striving to achieve those goals was the specific behaviour in which she engaged. Her desire to free herself from the constraints of conventional femininity and achieve economic independence was indicated by the fact that she took up several salaried positions as a governess on farms in the area (Schoeman, 1991). Also important in this regard was her desire to be a writer. At this she worked very hard, if sporadically. She finished *Undine* and *The story of an African farm* during this period (although the latter novel would need some revising, and this would take place at a later life stage), and worked on *Man to man*. In 1880 the manuscript of *African farm* was sent to John and Mary Brown who attempted to find a publisher for the novel (First & Scott, 1989).

Just how much effort Olive expended in achieving her goals is suggested by the language used by her biographers to describe this process. As far as achieving health was concerned, Berkman (1989) referred to her “... *climb toward self-affirmation* ...” (p. 10) and stated that “... *she strove to liberate herself from the guilt and fear her upbringing instilled*” (p. 16). Moreover she asserted that Olive’s attempts to overcome her self-hatred and self-alienation “... *remained a turbulent lifelong struggle*” (p. 10). With regard to her desire to free herself from convention, First and Scott (1989) spoke of the “... *gigantic leaps* ...” (p. 339) that she took away from the constraints of her time. They suggested that this struggle for freedom was indicated by the striving of the heroines in Olive’s novels. It is significant in this respect that the narrator in *African farm*, referring to life in general, says that it is a “... *striving, and a striving, and an ending in nothing*” (Schreiner, 1995, p. 107).

Olive herself gave very clear evidence of her striving during this period. At Leliekloof, working on her book, she said: “*I have been fighting as hard as I ever did in my life, but I have given in at last*” (in Schoeman, 1991, p. 503). On another occasion, also at Leliekloof, she wrote: “*I’ll work harder than ever, not wasting a moment* ...” (in Schoeman, 1991, p. 457). The entry in her diary just before she reached England revealed her despondency, but also her determination to achieve her goals: “*I have no hope in the future, but I will strive, I will*” (in Schoeman, 1991, p. 509). When the Fouchés urged Olive to stay on at Leliekloof for a wedding, she declined because “... *be it to me death or what, I can’t wait, I am driven on*” (in Schoeman, 1991, p. 504).

There is then clear evidence that Olive invested a great deal of energy in achieving her goals. Her actions, her own words and those of her biographers show that upward striving was a notable feature of her life at this stage.

7.4.1.4 The style of life

Evidence for Olive’s sense of inferiority during this phase has been presented in section 7.4.1.1 above. Dissatisfied with herself and the condition of her life, she yearned

and strove for better things (Beeton, 1987; Schoeman, 1991). As Beeton suggested, however, she became frustrated because of her inability to achieve her lofty ideals (1987, p. 33). She frequently lapsed into periods of discouragement (First & Scott, 1989; Schoeman, 1991), evidence for which will be presented in 7.4.1.7.

Associated with Olive's discouragement were a number of significant trends. One was her peripatetic lifestyle (Lewis, 2010). Her constant movement may have been imposed on her by her father's occupation during her childhood, and by her family's financial situation during her adolescence. By early adulthood, however, her traveling had become a product of her own will. Also during this phase of her life there emerged the first inkling of the function of this movement and its relation to her mood state. Beeton (1987) suggested that "... *this enforced wandering encouraged her to move on as a solution to life's immediate problems*" (p. 27). Olive herself wrote at this point that: "*I never mean to stay at a place so long again; you get to care too much for everything and then you must just leave it*" (1987, p. 23). The constant movement of her earliest memories, previously mentioned, was translated in later years into endless traveling which may, in part at least, have been an adaptive response to pain, or a means of avoiding it. As Schoeman (1991) suggested, Olive typically evaded crises by trying to escape from them, by hiding.

Olive's need to be loved has already been mentioned. According to Friedmann (1955), she exhibited, at this stage of her life and to the end of her days, a craving for love. First and Scott (1989) suggested that in her personal relationships, she gave up control and lapsed into childlike behaviour. In other words, she acted helpless in order for somebody else to take care of her. Significant in this regard is Beeton's statement that: "*The search for perfection and the great good that would come through the agency of the fairy prince are expressed in the two strangers of An African Farm ...*" (1987, p. 25). Similarly, Schoeman has indicated her need to surrender herself to a caring paternal figure, and quoted her as saying "*I wish for the next six months someone would treat me like a baby ...*" (in Schoeman, 1991, p. 58). In support of his argument he pointed to the

characters in her novels: “*Undine, like the Shabby Woman and Lyndall are all taken on their lover’s laps and cuddled like little children ...*” (Schoeman, 1991, p. 58).

By this stage asthma had become a significant factor in Olive’s life. The relationship between her asthma and her discouragement has to be explored very carefully, and will be interpreted in subsequent sections (e.g., 7.4.2.7). The condition is noted here because it had become an important part of the pattern of Olive’s life, and because her biographers have suggested that it served a purpose for her. First and Scott (1989), for example, suggested that her illness was linked to her need, mentioned above, to be powerless. Sickness, they believed, acted as a counterpoint to the force of her protest, and enabled her to assume a more conventional role in society. Schoeman (1992) also indicated that illness provided Olive with an excuse for not achieving her full potential.

Protest had been a feature of Olive’s style of life during her earlier years (Lewis, 2010). This was also apparent during this life phase, and is clearly evident in her writing. Themes include the position of women in society, and a critique of contemporary Christianity (Berkman, 1989; First & Scott, 1989; Rive, 1977; Schoeman, 1991; Schreiner, 1995, 2004a, 2004b).

Features of Olive’s lifestyle during this phase included episodes of despair, physical illness, a need for love and affection, and protest against the restraints of her society and culture. Most of these features were to remain significant aspects of her life, and will be elaborated upon in subsequent, relevant, sections.

7.4.1.5 The schema of apperception

This section is concerned with the presentation of data concerning Olive’s view of herself and of her world during this phase of her life. There are, by this stage, some emerging themes that were not mentioned earlier because of insufficient evidence.

Olive's sense of inferiority persisted into adulthood. She entertained doubts about herself, her abilities, and her capacity for obtaining the affection of others (Schoeman, 1991). Love was something that she craved, as indicated above, but she still saw herself as alienated from family and society. Her journal entries indicate that she felt very much alone (Beeton, 1987). The picture she painted of herself in her correspondence was hardly flattering. An example of this was the letter to Erilda Cawood, written in 1878 and quoted in 7.4.1.1 (Schreiner, 1987).

By this stage of her life, Olive had developed a belief in a unity underlying all of nature (Schreiner, 1987). Her views are depicted in her novels (Schreiner, 1995, 2004a, 2004b). This alternative spirituality might have helped assuage the guilt that arose from rejecting Christianity, because it was certainly less evident at this stage of her life. Her belief in an integrated cosmos, according to Berkman (1989), informed her moral views. It is possible, however, that her views in this respect were more cerebral than deeply felt. Paradoxically perhaps, there is also in her work a sense of the “*awful universe*” (Berkman, 1989, p. 19), of the arbitrary cruelty of life and of being pursued relentlessly by chance (Friedmann, 1955). In the novels this is best depicted in *African farm* when the stars look down at Waldo, see his anger, bitterness and suffering, and laugh at him ironically (Schreiner, 1995). This theme is present elsewhere in her fiction too (e.g., Schreiner, 2004a). As Friedmann has stated, “*Olive was temperamentally disposed to perceive life as a bitter struggle, and one circumstance after another was to confirm her in her perception*” (1955, p. 48).

Also present during this phase was a sense of being persecuted (Friedmann, 1955). According to Beeton (1987), she showed at this stage of her life an early form of “*a persecution mania*” (p. 30) which, he believed, was part of a “... *repetitive sense of persecution that dogged her life ...*” (p.19). Her diary entries supported this. On 3rd August 1876 she wrote that someone in Tarkastad had been talking against her (Beeton, 1987). The theme is also present in her novels. Undine feels persecuted (Schreiner, 2004a) and Waldo, like Undine, feels that “*Every man's hand was against his – his should be against every man's*” (Schreiner, 1995, p. 119).

Olive had been contemptuous of aspects of traditional femininity since her adolescence. Her woman hatred has already been mentioned, and Friedmann (1955) suggested that her relationships with women in general were problematic, and characterised on her part by distinct hostility. First and Scott (1989) suggested that, in rejecting the powerlessness of conventional femininity, she identified herself with men, and experienced herself to some extent as masculine. In this regard it is significant that Undine hates women and is herself “*unwomanly*” (Schreiner, 2004a, p. 67). Lyndall is similarly depicted as masculine in some respects (Schreiner, 1995).

Olive’s schema of apperception was characterised by a sense of her own inferiority and a belief that she was persecuted. While she had found some peace in a spirituality based on a belief in cosmic unity, she also saw the world as a difficult and dangerous place. Her sense of alienation was most obvious in her relationships with women, and she could not identify with traditional femininity.

7.4.1.6 Social interest

Olive enjoyed, during this time on the remote farms of the interior, periods of relative peace, happiness and stability. As Schoeman (1991) has noted: “*In many ways the next six years, spent on remote and isolated farms in that district, were to be the most fruitful period of her life*” (p. 316). Olive herself, in a letter to a Miss McNaughton, wrote from Klein Gannahoek:

... the six months I have passed here have been the most uninterruptedly happy of my whole life. I feel, I am sure must look, like another human being and a very different one from the miserable misanthropic life-sick creature I was (1987, p. 18)

Olive had secured gainful employment as a governess, and while the work was at times difficult, it is clear that she derived some satisfaction from her duties. In 1875 she wrote to Catherine Findlay from Klein Gannahoek: “*I am getting on very quietly and*

pleasantly in my work ... My pupils are advancing wonderfully, and though I shall never be fond of teaching, I like it better than I ever thought I could" (Schreiner, 1987, p. 16). She also managed a great deal of writing during this period, particularly at Klein Gannahoek and Ratelhoek. She finished *Undine* (Schreiner, 2004a), wrote *The story of an African farm* (Schreiner, 1995), and worked on *Saints and sinners*, later to be called *Man to man* (Schreiner, 2004b).

Apart from the fact that she was engaged in creative work, the themes dealt with in the novels also indicate social interest. They include religion, love, freedom and the position of women in society (First & Scott, 1989). Feminism, according to Berkman (1989), was her preeminent social cause, and this is clearly evident in *Undine*, *African farm*, and *Man to man*. The novels, which obviously deal with Olive's own pain, show her capacity for transmuting that pain into an understanding of others (Brown, 1967; First & Scott, 1989). Jacobson (1995) would probably not agree. He suggested that her treatment of such topics as the condition of women constituted not so much an act of engagement with the world around her as a sanctioned escape from it, and reflected selfishness rather than selflessness. He rather caustically referred to it as "*lacerated self-exaltation*" (p. 19). He might be right in some respects, particularly insofar as Olive had a need to assert her superiority. However, the fact that she dealt with such topics at all, at that time and in that place, was remarkable (Berkman, 1989; First & Scott, 1989; Schoeman, 1991). As Beeton has stated "... *she really did want to be of use*" (1987, p. 33).

By this stage Olive appeared to have resolved, to some extent, the guilt that she had experienced at rejecting Christianity. Her spiritual revolution (Schoeman, 1991) was nearly complete. She had found an alternative spirituality in a sense of the unity underlying all nature (Schreiner, 1987). This is clearly indicated in her novels. What is significant with regard to her social interest is not only the fact that she had found some peace in her alternative spirituality, but that her "... *metaphysics provided the stable axis uniting her moral, social and political views and empowered her in times of personal agony*" (Berkman, 1989, p. 44).

Also significant to mention from the perspective of social interest were her friendships during this period. The Cawoods and the Browns were still close to her, as they had been during her adolescence. Important too was her appreciation of nature, which sustained her in difficult times (Berkman, 1989; Brown, 1967). Schoeman (1991) pointed out that an awareness of landscape first became apparent in her diary at this stage.

Olive showed definite signs of social interest at this time. As in her teenage years they included practical and concrete acts of work and service on the one hand, and more abstract concerns with social issues on the other.

7.4.1.7 Discouragement

Although this phase of Olive's life was characterised by periods of what was for her unprecedented happiness, peace, stability and productivity, she still experienced episodes of discouragement (Berkman, 1989). For example, in July 1874 she wrote in her diary: "*I feel so wretchedly ... weak mentally*" (in Beeton, 1987, p. 32), and a few days later: "*I feel as though I would like to lie and cry ...*" (in Beeton, 1987, p. 33). First and Scott (1989) suggested that she became melancholy and desperate because her goals were unattainable. They also stated that she frequently felt lonely and isolated, and longed for love, comfort and care. She felt persecuted at times and according to Schoeman (1991), her relationships were "*bedeviled by misgivings, doubts and suspicions*" (p. 362). Something of her negativity at the time is reflected in *African farm*, where life is depicted as a process of constant striving, ending in nothing (Schreiner, 1995). The denouement of the novel with Waldo's death is, philosophical and spiritual considerations notwithstanding, deeply pessimistic.

By early adulthood asthma had become a significant feature of Olive's life. A careful study shows frequent episodes when mood symptoms and asthma were co-morbid. All Olive's biographers have suggested a link between her mood state and her physical condition, but they did not concur with regard to the nature of the relationship

between the two. First and Scott (1989) depicted her mood state and her physical illness as being mutually reinforcing, but they generally seemed inclined to the view that the asthma served a neurotic (their term) function in Olive's life, and offered some solution to her psychic conflict. Schoeman (1991, 1992) suggested a link between her emotional state and her asthma, and also indicated that physical illness might have functioned as an excuse for her. Barsby (1995) seemed to think that Olive's despondency was the result of her asthma. Berkman (1989) acknowledged that interpersonal stressors, and in particular disapproval from family members, exacerbated her symptoms, but she generally portrayed Olive as soldiering on bravely in spite of her physical condition. Lewis (2010) adopted the contemporary view of asthma as an allergic reaction to allergens such as dust, pollen and fur. However in describing Olive's life as "... *fraught*" (p. 71) in this context, she suggested that the condition was exacerbated by stress. Olive herself seemed to blame her family for the onset of the asthma (Schreiner, 1987).

An interpretation of the relationship between Olive's mood state and physical illness cannot be attempted in this section. The asthma is mentioned because it was so often present when Olive was discouraged and because, according to Individual Psychology, physical symptoms may serve a purpose for the discouraged individual (Adler, 1952; Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956; Bottome, 1957).

In spite of periods of happiness and contentment, Olive showed definite signs of discouragement during this phase of her life. These included episodes of despair and a sense of being persecuted. Associated with her discouragement was her asthma.

7.4.2 Conceptualisation

7.4.2.1 The sense of inferiority

A sense of inferiority remained a feature of Olive's life at this stage. It originated in her childhood, arising from events both real and perceived, as mentioned previously (7.2.2.1). It was perpetuated by events during her early adulthood. These included such

incidents as her rejection by Erilda Cawood, and such conditions as her restricted position as a woman (First & Scott, 1989; Schoeman, 1991). By this phase however, Olive's sense of inferiority had become entrenched and, in accordance with Individual Psychology (e.g., Adler, 1952, 1956; Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956; Carlson et al., 2006), predisposed her to see the world and herself in terms of her perceived deficiencies. As such it was a significant aspect of her schema of apperception, and inextricably linked to her discouragement during those years. Both are discussed in more detail in 7.4.2.5 and 7.4.2.7 respectively.

7.4.2.2 Life goals

There is evidence for Olive having established goals during her formative years, and these were apparent during this phase of her life. They were related to her sense of inferiority and appear, as previously indicated, to have been set up in response to her inferiority feelings (First & Scott, 1989). They were thus developed in compensation for her feelings of inferiority or inadequacy and served to assuage those feelings (Adler, 1952, 1956, 1958, 1965, 1970; Orgler, 1963; Stein & Edwards, 1998). Significant also is the fact that her goals, from childhood to early adulthood, were consistent. Their existence constituted a pattern that began in her earliest years and persisted with some modifications into her early twenties. They were elevated, in many instances, to the point of being unrealistic. Some of these goals are discussed below.

By early adulthood Olive entertained aspirations of being an author. This appears to have been associated with her desire for economic independence, a goal that Olive clearly articulated in her correspondence and through the mouthpiece of the characters in her fiction (Schreiner, 1987, 2004a). Striving for independence, financial and otherwise, constituted a rejection of the weakness and powerlessness of conventional femininity and suggests, according to First and Scott (1989) that Olive was identifying herself, to some extent, as masculine. In this respect Olive showed evidence of what Adler (1956) called the *masculine protest*. It was part of a pattern that had existed since her childhood, and which was to become particularly apparent in later years. It entailed, essentially, the

adoption of certain male characteristics to compensate for her inferior position as a woman. Consistent with her goal of knowledge and wisdom, and with her desire for economic independence, was her hope for further education. For this she carefully planned during her early adulthood in South Africa.

Also still present during this phase was her goal of virtue or goodness, linked to her desire to be helpful and compassionate. This goal may well have arisen in reaction to the guilt which she experienced during childhood, and possibly also because of the influence of the Christian ethos of those years, as well as the Victorian ideals of female self-sacrifice of her childhood milieu (Berkman, 1989; First & Scott, 1989). What is evident, as shown in the previous chapter (7.5.2) is that it existed as one of Olive's aspirations. An examination of this theme in her works (Schreiner, 1995a, 2004a) suggests ideals on the part of the author that are so elevated as to be self-serving. As Jacobson (1995) has pointed out, it constitutes a "... *feat of moral and rhetorical levitation* ..." (p. 19) that seemed to be aimed more at reassuring the author than with genuine concern for others. It is important to point out that, in general, Olive's aspirations, hopes and ideals were elevated to the extent that they were unrealistic, and this was to cause her a great deal of misery in later life (Beeton, 1987; Schreiner, 1987).

The evidence from this life stage suggests that the resolution of the psychic pain and conflict of Olive's youth was something at which she aimed. This was not clearly articulated as a goal, and was in all likelihood an unconscious ideal. The themes of her writing and its autobiographical nature are, however, strongly indicative that this was the case (Schreiner, 1995, 2004a, 2004b). Most of her biographers (e.g., Berkman, 1989; First & Scott, 1989; Friedmann, 1955; Schoeman, 1991) agree on this point.

Finally, it seems that love, affection and approval constituted another goal which was important to Olive from her earliest years, but which became particularly prominent during this phase. Her childhood and teenage years were characterised by a sense of rejection and alienation. She was frequently lonely during these years, and this persisted into later life stages. This gave rise to a yearning for friendship, love, approval and

recognition that was clearly indicated in her correspondence, and was also a theme in her novels (Schoeman, 1991; Schreiner, 1987, 2004a). Her maladaptive attempts at obtaining these were previously mentioned in 7.2.1.4 and 7.2.1.7, in the context of her illness and its functions. This was to become a significant aspect of her lifestyle and will be discussed again in greater detail. It should be mentioned though that she had developed real and enduring friendships that were maintained throughout this period, and that these cannot be regarded merely as the products of an unhealthy style of life.

7.4.2.3 Striving for superiority

Olive's striving to achieve her goals during this phase was a marked feature of her lifestyle. Olive's own words (e.g., Schreiner, 1987), those of her fictional characters (Schreiner, 1995, 2004a), and those of her biographers (Beeton, 1987; First & Scott, 1989; Friedmann, 1955; Jacobson, 1995; Schoeman, 1991) illustrate this, and show that her striving was aimed at transcending her psychic torment and sense of inadequacy. In this respect these sources provide evidence, in Olive's life, for Adler's (1952, 1956, 1996b) contention that the life goals and associated striving are aimed at overcoming a sense of inferiority.

Two significant aspects of Olive's striving were the elevated nature of the goals that she pursued (previously indicated in 7.4.1.2), and the urgency with which she pursued them (evidence given in 7.4.1.3). Both meant that she placed herself under tremendous pressure. Paradoxically, this made her vulnerable. Should she fail to maintain her self-imposed programme, the feelings of inadequacy that she sought so desperately to overcome would be exacerbated. In this respect Olive employed symptoms as safeguarding measures (Adler, 1956). One of these, her physical illness, has already been mentioned (in 7.4.1.7). This, as well as other safeguarding mechanisms will be elaborated upon in subsequent sections.

7.4.2.4 The style of life

Illness had become a notable aspect of Olive's style of life by this stage. It served the purpose of obtaining sympathy, and helped her negotiate her conflict regarding her need for independence on the one hand, and for love, care and nurturing on the other. In this respect it was related to other prominent features of her lifestyle. According to First and Scott (1989), intellectual growth, associated with independent work, was a solution to the paralysis engendered by the position of women in society. Independence, financial and otherwise, was definitely a goal. Achieving this would mean that Olive had broken through the suffocating restraints of conventional femininity. In aspiring to a free life and economic independence, however, Olive was to some extent identifying herself as masculine. Her rejection of conventional femininity meant that she was adopting essentially male characteristics. In support of this position was not only Olive's tomboyish behaviour as a child, but also her hatred of women, her disgust at the triviality of their lives, and the fact that the female characters in her novels are usually unwomanly or masculine in some respects (Schoeman, 1991; Schreiner, 1995, 2004a, 2004b). This, as previously mentioned, can be regarded as an example of what Adler (1956) called the masculine protest. Olive was searching for an alternative conception or vision of femininity, but doing so could have done nothing to ameliorate her existing sense of oddness. This must have created conflict for her, the solution to which according to First and Scott was, at least partly, her illness. Sickness, they suggested, acted in counterpoint to the force of her protest, and enabled her to assume a more conventional role in society. Physical symptoms, then, enabled Olive to pursue her goal of superiority, and yet enjoy the benefits of a traditionally dependent role without giving up her ideals, and while preserving her sense of worth.

Writing had become an important part of Olive's life by early adulthood, and like her other goals offered a means for her to overcome her sense of inferiority. As indicated in 7.2.2.4, she had compensated for the sense of alienation in her childhood by retreating into a world of fantasy and making up stories. This developed into the fictional writing of early adulthood. Writing served a number of functions for her. On a conscious level it

offered the possibility of financial independence in a world where such opportunities for women were limited (First & Scott, 1989; Schoeman, 1991). As such it constituted one avenue for overcoming the restrictions of her position as a woman, and the sense of inferiority that this engendered in Olive. Unconsciously it may have offered recognition and affirmation, both of which she had ardently desired since childhood. It allowed Olive to achieve in fantasy what she wished for in reality as a result of her sense of inferiority. Thus her fiction can be seen, on one level, as wish-fulfilling or compensatory fantasy that enabled her to transcend her sense of inferiority through her characters. Examples of this were mentioned in 7.4.1.2. In a similar vein, it entailed acts of self expression through a medium which allowed her to rework her sense of herself and resolve some of the issues that had tormented her during her formative years. It was therefore a means for her to heal herself. This notion is confirmed by a number of her biographers (e.g., Berkman, 1989; First & Scott, 1989; Friedmann, 1955; Schoeman, 1991).

A significant feature of Olive's life, and of her lifestyle, was her constant traveling. There is a certain restlessness revealed in her earliest memories that portends her later movement, but it is probably safe to say that her movement during childhood was due to Gottlob's occupation, and during her teenage years to his insolvency and subsequent poverty. By early adulthood, however, travel had developed into a solution to life's problems, an adaptive response to psychic pain, and a means of avoiding such pain (Beeton, 1987; Schoeman, 1991). As such it constituted a very literal example of what Adler (1956) called safeguarding through distance. In Olive's case it seemed to involve, at this stage of her life, the flight from emotional intimacy and, at times, emotional entanglements in order to avoid the pain of loss, or the complications of certain relationships. By adulthood she seemed to expect these negative consequences of relationships. Factors which may have contributed to her expectations in this regard were the loss of her little sister, Ellie; her break-up with Gau, the details of which are not known, but which was traumatic; and her rejection by Erilda Cawood.

7.4.2.5 The schema of apperception

Olive's schema of apperception, which in many respects might better be considered an antithetical schema of apperception (Adler, 1956) because of her discouragement, took origin in her interpretation of the events and incidents of her childhood. It was sustained by her experiences during early adulthood. However, by this stage of her life her perceptions had crystallised to some extent, and functioned like a set of lenses that shaped those later experiences. These did not always accord with reality. So, for example, the sense of being mistreated and ill-used that was based to some extent on actual events during her early years, led to an anticipation of persecution that found confirmatory evidence in her environment. An instance of this occurred in Tarkastad, and was mentioned in 7.4.1.5

In general, notable aspects of Olive's schema of apperception included her sense of inadequacy and marked self-doubt, her sense of being persecuted, and her mistrust and hatred of women that contributed to her experience of herself as masculine. These were detailed previously in 7.4.1.5. There was, however, a more positive component to her schema of apperception. She had found some peace in a belief in the unity underlying all nature (Schreiner, 1884b), and she had a sense of agency and purpose. While at times this seemed to be more of a desperate striving given impetus by her need to compensate for a sense of inadequacy, she really did believe that she could be of service to others (Beeton, 1987).

7.4.2.6 Social interest

During her time as a governess in the South African interior, Olive continued to exhibit signs of social interest, and the way in which she did so suggests a fairly consistent pattern originating in her childhood. She secured gainful employment and derived satisfaction from her teaching duties. She wrote a great deal, completing *Undine* and a draft of *African farm*, as well as working on *Saints and sinners*. As acts of creative work these can be seen as evidence of social interest, as can the important social concerns

that she addressed in her writing. Themes in her work include religion, love, freedom and the position of women in society. Feminism was Olive's preeminent social cause at the time and the focus of much of her thought and writing (Berkman, 1989; First & Scott, 1989; Schoeman, 1991). The novels, which reflect Olive's own pain, also show her ability to convert that pain into empathy with others. The idealism of the novels has prompted Jacobson (1995) to suggest that Olive's lofty aspirations were indicative not so much of an intention to engage with the world as they were an escape from it. He believed that the espousal of such elevated ideals was largely self-serving. There would appear to be some validity to his contention, and it is entirely consistent with Adler's (1952, 1956, 1958, 1996b) views on the compensatory purpose of goals. Olive had a need to establish a rather exaggerated personal goal of superiority in order to assuage the tremendous sense of inferiority that developed during her painful childhood. However, the fact that she dealt with such topics at all was remarkable, and viewed against her life in its entirety, is indicative of a pattern of desire to be useful (Beeton, 1987) that was not merely limited to theoretical abstraction, but which included helpful actions.

By this stage of her life Olive appears to have resolved, to a large extent, the conflict surrounding her religious beliefs with its associated torment and guilt. She found peace in an alternative spirituality emphasising cosmic unity. Her views in this regard constituted a stable metaphysical axis that allowed her to integrate her social, political and moral views, and comforted her during times of crisis (Berkman, 1989; First & Scott, 1989).

7.4.2.7 Discouragement

While Olive enjoyed periods of peace, happiness and productivity during these years, she also experienced episodes of discouragement and these were, at times, severe. This was previously indicated in 7.4.1.7. Although this unhappiness stemmed to a large extent from the sense of inferiority that had been present since her earliest years, it was exacerbated by experiences at this time, experiences that were shaped by her own views which had become entrenched. An example of this was her belief that she was persecuted

(Beeton, 1987; Schoeman, 1991), previously mentioned in 7.4.2.5. Contributing to her despondency and desperation were the unattainable goals that she had set, and the harsh regimen that she imposed on herself in order to achieve them (First & Scott, 1989). It was in this respect that she utilised particular symptoms as safeguarding mechanisms.

One such symptom was Olive's asthma. As previously indicated in 7.3.2.7 and 7.4.2.4, it served a number of functions for her. It may have offered her an excuse not to work. In other words it may have protected her from her own grandiose aspirations and the demanding schedule she imposed upon herself. It is not suggested that Olive conjured up the symptoms of her asthma, or that it was an imaginary condition designed to achieve her neurotic ends. It is also not disputed that the primary aetiological factors in the development of her condition were physiological, nor that it constituted an allergic response to allergens in her environment (Lewis, 2010). There is compelling evidence, however, that there was a link between Olive's asthma and her emotional state, and this was evident from the onset of the condition. When she was ill she became despondent, and when she was distressed she often developed asthma (First & Scott, 1989; Schoeman, 1991). Rather, what is suggested is that Olive so impressed herself with the severity of her symptoms that she incapacitated herself to a greater degree than was necessary, in order to achieve particular ends. These ends included an excuse to rest from the incessant striving towards her elevated goals; an excuse for not achieving those goals; and comfort, care and sympathy. Thus illness allowed Olive to lay aside her striving for independence and achievement, and by offering her an excuse for doing so, protected her already tenuous sense of worth. The use of symptoms in this way was referred to by Adler as *moving backwards* (Adler, 1956), and as a strategy it entailed, for Olive, a retreat from what she saw as life's challenges and threats.

Another safeguarding mechanism, as mentioned in 7.4.2.4 was Olive's traveling. Travel had, by this stage, developed into an adaptive mechanism, a means of avoiding the possibility of emotional pain in interpersonal relationships, and a way of dealing with it when it did arise (Beeton, 1987). It constituted a protective, albeit immature, device that in Adlerian (1956) terms could best be regarded as safeguarding through distance.

7.5 The years abroad

7.5.1 Findings

7.5.1.1 The sense of inferiority

Olive arrived in England in 1881, and remained dogged by the sense of inferiority that had been characteristic of her youth. In her letters to Havelock Ellis she expressed her doubts about her worth, and her ability ever to achieve anything (e.g., Schreiner, 1987). Olive also seemed still to doubt the possibility of anyone loving her. Mary Brown was one of her oldest friends, yet she was apprehensive about meeting her again because she feared that Mary would not love her. This is perhaps understandable after her rejection by Erilda Cawood in South Africa, which could hardly have bolstered her self-esteem (First & Scott, 1989; Schoeman, 1991). Olive also entertained doubts about her intellectual ability. With regard to her plans to study medicine she wrote to John Brown: *“I hope my health will remain good enough to justify all expectations but I have half a fear I shall find myself a great fool when I come to measure myself mind by mind with other people”* (Schreiner, 1987, p. 33).

With regard to her writing Olive seems to have been haunted by self-doubt, and fears about its possible inadequacy (Beeton, 1987). In 1889 for example, she wrote to Edward Carpenter saying that the prospect of publishing seemed to *“... kill out my power of work”* (Schreiner, 1987, p. 148). Similarly in a letter to Havelock Ellis, also written in 1889, she expressed her horror of publishing because *“... terrible as it is to show them my work at all, the thought of throwing it to them to be trodden underfoot is double desecration of it”* (Schreiner, 1987, p. 154). She seemed to be as terrified about exposing herself and making herself vulnerable through her work as she was about the quality of her writing (Schreiner, 1987).

In England Olive again felt keenly a sense of inferiority at being a woman. She seemed frustrated because her femininity placed limits on her capacity to relate, as an

equal, to men. This was clear in her correspondence. To Karl Pearson she wrote: “*If I were a man friend you would forgive me for asking such a question, but you never forget I am a woman*” (Schreiner, 1987, p. 108). In 1887 she wrote to Edward Carpenter saying: “*I wish I was a man that I might be friends with all of you, but you know my sex must always divide*” (Schreiner, 1987, p. 126). A year later, again in a letter to Carpenter, she said: “*You mustn’t hate us women so much (though I do it myself!)*” (Schreiner, 1987, p. 139).

It is evident then that Olive retained the self-doubts and sense of inadequacy that had been key features of her youth. Her sense of inferiority was very much present at this stage. Its relationship to her lifestyle in general will be discussed in subsequent sections below.

7.5.1.2 Life goal

During her early years in England Olive continued to entertain her medical aspirations (Barsby, 1995; First & Scott, 1989). In 1884 she wrote to Ellis saying that the life of a nurse was sweet, but not as perfect as a doctor’s, which would satisfy both her cravings for knowledge and to be of service (Schreiner, 1987). She attempted to study, at different times, nursing and medicine but her goals were unrealistic (Schoeman, 1991) and she gave up both on account of her poor health (Barsby, 1995). She finally decided to focus on literature, and in this regard said to Ellis that: “*... I have made up my mind that scribbling will be my only work in life*” (Schreiner, 1987, p. 39).

According to Friedmann (1955), Olive wrote in an attempt to resolve the conflict and ease the psychological pain that had been such obvious features of her life. There is evidence that such healing had been one of Olive’s goals during her earlier years, and this has been presented in 7.4.1.2 above. That this remained the case during her adulthood in England is indicated by the contents of the “Prelude” to *Man to man*, (Schreiner, 2004b), written when Olive was thirty-three. As Friedmann has pointed out, Olive had not escaped the pain of her childhood even at this stage of her life.

It is significant that writing was not only a goal in itself, but also a means to achieve other goals, such as health. Olive, comparing herself to George Eliot, wrote to Havelock Ellis that: “*Her great desire was to teach, mine to express myself, for myself and to myself alone*” (Schreiner, 1987, p. 154). It is interesting that Berkman (1989) has suggested that it was just this willingness to express herself that mitigated, to some extent, Olive’s pain. She and Barsby (1995) suggested that Olive sublimated her medical ambitions into her writing, central to which pursuit was the desire to heal her own and society’s ills.

That Olive was concerned about the plight of society is evident from the themes in her novels, and in her correspondence. She was still preoccupied with the position of women in society, and in particular, the relations between men and women. She wanted very much to relate to men as an equal. As Berkman has indicated, she was driven by an anti-hierarchical vision of society, and sought “... *healthy social intercourse*” based “... *upon equality of races, classes, and sexes*” (1989, p. 5). In 1886 Olive wrote to Karl Pearson: “*I am always conscious that I am a woman when I am with you; but it is to wish I were a man that I might come near to you*” (Schreiner, 1987, p. 108). In rejecting the traditional role of a woman and aspiring to be on an equal footing with men, Olive had to identify herself to some extent as masculine (First & Scott, 1989). Apart from her feminism and desire for a new social order, she also expressed a more general desire to be of use (Beeton, 1987). In her correspondence she articulated her belief that her responsibility was to love and comfort others (e.g., Schreiner, 1987).

Olive herself was in need of love and comfort, and to this end she often lapsed into childlike behaviour (First & Scott, 1989). She was, at times, almost totally reliant on her brother Fred, whom she referred to as her Dadda (Schoeman, 1991). This need was also evident in other relationships, and particularly with Ellis. For example, in September 1884 she wrote to him:

I feel so weak and I feel so tired, love. Put your arms around me. Yes I know you do and it helps me so. I am unwell and have such pain in my body. I feel so weak as if I wanted someone to stroke my hair. (Schreiner, 1987, p. 51)

One of Olive's goals was a career. Initially this was to be in medicine although she later, and probably sensibly, relinquished her dreams in this regard and decided to focus on literature. Writing was an important goal in its own right, but it also pointed to other significant aspects of Olive's self-ideal, namely the respective desires to heal her own and society's ills. Comfort and love remained goals, as they had in earlier life stages.

7.5.1.3 Striving for superiority

The previous section entailed the presentation of Olive's goals during this phase of her life. This section presents general evidence for her striving for superiority, as well as information regarding the particular way in which she strove for the above-mentioned goals.

That Olive's goals were unrealistically high was suggested by her biographers, and clearly indicated by her own actions and in her correspondence. Schoeman referred to her "*grandiose plans and aspirations*" (1991, p. 509) and her "*highflown enterprises that ultimately came to nothing*" (p. 338). Olive herself provided evidence for this view. In November 1884 she wrote a letter to Ellis, saying: "*I was right in An African farm, Henry. A striving and a striving and an ending in nothing ... I know now that I shall never be well again*" (Schreiner, 1987, p. 53). Later, in a letter to Mary Sauer, she wrote that her sadness always stemmed from her inability to live up to her ideals (Schreiner, 1987).

Olive's striving to achieve her ambition of a medical career is indicated by the various attempts she made to study in this direction. She registered to study nursing twice, and also began attending lectures at the London School of Medicine for Women. None of these attempts lasted long. On each occasion she gave up because of her poor health (Barsby, 1995; First & Scott, 1989).

After giving up her aspirations of a medical career, she resolved to concentrate on her writing (Barsby, 1995; First & Scott, 1989; Schreiner, 1987). While her efforts in this

regard were interrupted by frequent bouts of illness and emotional crises, she worked very hard at times. She spent a considerable amount of time on *Man to man*, and while in Italy wrote a number of allegories which were, in 1890, to be published as *Dreams* (Schreiner, 1890, 1982).

The content of Olive's writing indicates, as previously mentioned, that she was trying to resolve her own conflict, and address important concerns of the period (Barsby, 1995). Of particular importance was her concern about the position of women in society and their relations with men (Berkman, 1989). On a personal level Olive, in striving to overcome her sense of weakness and powerlessness as a woman, and in trying to relate as an equal to men, had to identify herself to some extent as masculine (First & Scott, 1989). She told Ellis that she had something of a man in her nature, and in doing so, "... *made one of the most revealing statements about her sense of herself in relation to her society that a woman could make*" (First & Scott, 1989, pp 132-133). By rejecting the weakness and powerlessness of the conventional female role, and choosing to live an independent life, she assumed a man's role in society. This was clear in much of her correspondence, some of which has already been indicated. Further evidence for this is revealed in a letter to Edward Carpenter, written in April 1888:

I won't be a woman in a couple of years. I began to be one when I was only ten so I dare say I will leave off being one in about two or perhaps three more, and then you'll think I am a man, all of you, won't you? Karl Pearson and everyone, and will be comrades with me! (Schreiner, 1987, p. 139)

Also significant in this respect was her flouting of feminine convention in other ways. She was impervious to fashion, and started smoking while she was in England. Consistent with Olive's desire for men and women to relate as equals, was her exploration of asexual relations between the sexes. First and Scott (1989) suggested that, to this end, Olive denied her sexuality. This was to cause her no end of difficulty, as will be discussed in section 7.5.1.7, which presents evidence for her discouragement during this period.

Olive's attempts at achieving the love, affection and approval which she had always craved seemed, paradoxically, to lead her back into the kind of weakness and helplessness that she so ardently strove to overcome. (First & Scott, 1989; Friedmann, 1955; Schoeman, 1991). This became a significant feature of her lifestyle and her discouragement during these years, and will be explored in greater depth in the sections which deals with those key concepts.

Olive clearly strove to achieve a number of goals during this phase of her life. While her striving was goal oriented it also seemed, paradoxically, to be somewhat aimless. Her efforts seemed inconsistent and, in some cases such as where her need for affection was concerned, unhealthy and self-defeating.

7.5.1.4 The style of life

The years abroad were chaotic ones for Olive. They were characterised by frantic activity and periods of compulsive work. In spite of this she achieved very little. Schoeman (1991) has referred to this period as: “... *her lengthy, frenetic sojourn in England in the eighties, with its many confused and fruitless relationships, crises, and highflown enterprises that ultimately came to nothing*” (p. 338). As Olive herself said in a letter to Havelock Ellis, previously quoted, her life seemed to entail incessant striving, to no particular end (Schreiner, 1987). Similarly, in a telling statement to Karl Pearson she wrote: “*I think and think, and think, and stand motionless*” (Schreiner, 1987, p. 70).

An obvious feature of this phase of her life was her constant movement. Schoeman (1991) has referred to her: “*Restless wandering from one boarding house or private hotel to another, one city to another, one country to another in quest of health, happiness and peace of mind*”(p. 509). According to Barsby (1995), travel was Olive's strategy for dealing with her anguish. It certainly seemed to be a characteristic response to crises, and this was nowhere more clear than in the aftermath of the Pearson affair, which found Olive preparing to flee to Europe (First & Scott, 1989; Lewis, 2010)). As

Olive herself wrote in a letter to Edward Carpenter: “*There is **nothing** helps one like traveling when one is in pain*” (Schreiner, 1987, p. 127, emphasis in original).

Another persistent feature of Olive’s time in England was her illness. The nature of the relationship between her physical and emotional symptoms, not to mention, as Lewis (2010) indicated, the influence on her of the numerous drugs she was taking in an attempt to find relief, is difficult to discern and will be one of the foci of subsequent sections (e.g., 7.5.2.7). What seems clear from the pattern that emerged, however, is that there was a relationship (Barsby, 1995; First & Scott, 1989; Friedmann, 1955). Olive herself felt this to be the case. She wrote, “*Oh it isn’t my chest, it isn’t my legs, it’s me, myself. What shall I do? Where shall I go?*” (in Jacobson, 1995, pp. 14-15). Associated with both physical and psychological ill-health was, as Berkman (1989) pointed out, a tendency to lapse into self-pity. For example, in a letter to Ellis, parts of which have been quoted in 7.5.1.2 above, she wrote:

Henry, I just feel in despair. I AM so weary of roving about. I shall do no work, I shall do no good in the world if I can never find a place to rest in now; for the next week or ten days till I am settled I shall not be able to put pen to paper ...I feel so weak as if I wanted someone to stroke my hair. (Schreiner, 1987, p. 51)

What also seems clear in this respect is that Olive’s illness obtained for her a measure of sympathy; from Fred, Ellis and Bryan Donkin, just as it had from her family when she first developed asthma (First & Scott, 1989).

Olive’s style of life during this stage was characterised by frantic activity and desperate striving, neither of which resulted in her accomplishing very much. Other significant features of her lifestyle were frequent movement, physical illness and discouragement.

7.5.1.5 The schema of apperception

It is clear that on occasion Olive experienced herself as weak and powerless. This is evident in her correspondence. In July 1886 she wrote to Karl Pearson: "*I am weaker than you, and my weakness is of a much more terrible kind*" (Schreiner, 1987, p. 99). Later in the same letter she noted: "*Three or four years ago I broke down utterly, floating like a cork on the water with will, reason, all powerless*" (p. 99). She frequently doubted herself and her abilities, and saw herself, in some respects, as destined never to achieve her aims in life (First & Scott, 1989; Schoeman, 1991). For example, in a letter to Ellis she wrote: "*I've no courage left. I want to die so much. Harry, I'll never be like I used to be ... never be worth anything*" (Schreiner, 1987, p. 56).

Her sense of alienation throughout her youth has been mentioned. Jacobson (1995) suggested that this was still evident during the years in England, that her rootlessness and expatriation created a great deal of strain for her, and that she experienced a sense of belonging nowhere and to no one. This must have been further exacerbated by her rejection of conventional femininity which led, according to First and Scott (1989), to her sense of being deviant within her culture. In an attempt to validate herself, she identified herself to some extent as masculine, and experienced herself as a man. Evidence for this has been presented in previous sections, but another example of this is her assertion, in a letter to Karl Pearson, that: "*I'm not a woman, I'm a man, and you are to regard me as such!*" (in First & Scott, 1989, p. 162).

Associated, perhaps, with her identification with men, were her difficulties with women. Her woman hatred has already been mentioned, as has her sense of being persecuted. In England the two seemed to combine and caused Olive no end of distress. She felt persecuted by her landladies and, after the Pearson affair, seemed to regard women in general as predators (First & Scott, 1989). On at least one occasion she lapsed into despair after an altercation with a landlady. Some of her feelings about women were made quite clear in a letter to Ellis, dated December 1884: "*She dislikes me very much. I am completely innocent of ever having done anything to injure her ... Other women will*

never let me alone. It doesn't matter who or what I care for, they are jealous ..." (Schreiner, 1987, p. 60).

In spite of Olive experiencing herself as weak and powerless at times, she must have entertained some sense of agency. Paradoxically perhaps, in the same letter to Pearson, quoted above, she wrote: *"I am very strong, I can stand quite alone, my reason and will govern my actions ..."* (1987, p. 99). She certainly had a sense of purpose. This is evident in the themes of her novels, and also in her correspondence. For example, she wrote to Havelock Ellis: *"I want, in my life's work, if I work much and live long, to show what a wonderful power love has over the physical and through it over the mental nature ..."* (Schreiner, 1987, p. 48).

Olive still clung to her belief in the unity of nature (Schreiner, 1987), first sensed during her childhood and more clearly articulated during her adolescence and early adulthood. These views informed her morality and her sense of purpose, as indicated previously (Berkman, 1989).

Olive experienced herself as weak and powerless. She felt alienated from society and persecuted by women, and her sense of herself as masculine could not have done much to ameliorate her feelings in either respect. Paradoxically she experienced a sense of agency and purpose which, together with her belief in the underlying unity of nature, informed her morality.

7.5.1.6 Social interest

It would be easy, when examining Olive's time abroad, to focus exclusively on her despair and her illness, because it was so very evident. This would be a mistake however. In spite of the turmoil and chaos, there were clear signs of social interest. As First and Scott (1998) pointed out:

... she was not a defeated woman. Though she was no political organizer she inspired those in Britain who were – suffragettes, co-operators, and socialists, both during her lifetime and after it. Though she was debilitated by illness she was fully immersed in her life. (p. 340)

While Olive may during times of illness and despair have cut a somewhat pathetic figure, it is also important to point out that she was respected and liked by a number of prominent literary and political figures, ranging, as Jacobson (1995) has indicated, from Gladstone to Shaw and Oscar Wilde. Also significant in this respect is Mrs. Cobb's evaluation of Olive in a letter to Karl Pearson. She described her strength, kindness and genius, and took pains to point out that she was in no way superficial (Beeton, 1987). She developed close and stimulating friendships and some, such as those with Havelock Ellis and Edward Carpenter, were to last until the end of her life (Barsby, 1995; First & Scott, 1989; Schoeman, 1991).

Olive also enjoyed periods of health, happiness and relative tranquility during these years. Her letters from Europe, written late in 1888 and early in 1889, for example, indicated this and also that she was quite productive as far as her writing was concerned (Schreiner, 1987). It was during these years that *African farm* was published. Although the book was written in South Africa, it was revised and edited in England, prior to publication. The book was immediately successful, and Olive became a celebrity virtually overnight (Schoeman, 1991). She received numerous letters from people whom the book had helped. According to Barsby (1995) the novel was so successful because it addressed important social, religious, political and philosophical concerns of the period. It was praised by a number of eminent figures of the day (Jacobson, 1995). Olive also, during these years, wrote many of the allegories that were to be published as *Dreams* (First & Scott, 1989; Schreiner, 1890, 1982). She worked, compulsively, as Schoeman (1992) has pointed out, on *Man to man*.

What also emerges in an examination of these years is a softening on Olive's part, as well as clear evidence of her ability to empathise with others. For example, in 1884 she wrote to Ellis saying, as previously quoted in 7.5.1.5, that through her work she wanted to

demonstrate the power of love over the physical and mental nature (Schreiner, 1987). Also significant in this regard is a letter to Karl Pearson in which, referring to a previous breakdown, she said: “*This is all I have gained, that now no form of human weakness raises in me contempt, only infinite love and a sense of oneness*” (Schreiner, 1987, p. 99). That Olive’s espousal of love was more than just an abstract ideal is indicated by Mary Brown, who later wrote:

If I were asked what was the greatest characteristic of her nature, greater even than her genius, I would say her capacity for loving. Her love knew no distinction of party, caste or creed. Its measure was according to human needs. Her own suffering, instead of hardening her, made her the more tender and lenient to all pain. (Brown, 1967, p. 30)

Also significant in this respect is the very practical way in which she helped others. For example, she was trying to raise funds for a young woman, Alice Corthorn, to study medicine. She also assisted prostitutes, amongst whom she was conducting research, to find alternative employment (Berkman, 1989; First & Scott, 1989).

Olive then showed definite signs of social interest during this period. These included the capacity to empathise with others, as well as more practical and concrete endeavours such as writing and publishing, and the provision of material support to others.

7.5.1.7 Discouragement

The years between 1881 and 1889, spent in England and on the Continent, were tumultuous ones for Olive. In spite of: “... *fame, intense friendships, fervid polemics and hectic activity, the years abroad were, all in all, a time of loneliness and physical suffering ...*” (Schoeman, 1991, p. 509). Olive frequently became discouraged. During the first three years she spent much of her time crying (Cronwright-Schreiner, 1924) and Jacobson (1995) suggested that her expatriation, her rootlessness and her sense of not belonging placed her under great strain. Her despair at this time and during subsequent crises is evident in her correspondence written between 1884 and 1886 (Schreiner, 1987).

Some examples are the letters to Havelock Ellis and Karl Pearson, quoted in 7.5.1.2, 7.5.1.3 and 7.5.1.4 above.

Olive was frequently ill and her symptoms included fever, dizziness, nausea, pain, swelling, spitting blood, asthma, headaches and other chest complaints including congestion of the lungs and inflammation of the lungs (First & Scott, 1989; Jacobson, 1995; Schreiner, 1987). To find relief she was taking a variety of drugs, the side effects of which, as First and Scott pointed out, were difficult to distinguish from the symptoms of her illness. Lewis (2010) suggested that much of her despair at this time was a result of the side effects of the numerous drugs she was taking. She certainly made a good point. However this does not account for her unhappiness prior to meeting Havelock Ellis, whom Lewis depicted as over-medicating Olive: “... *until she was almost out of her mind ...*” (Lewis, 2010, p. 98). Her physical symptoms often seemed to be associated with her episodes of despair. Olive certainly felt this to be the case. To Ellis she wrote: “*I never felt like this before. It’s so awful. Harry, what does make me feel like this? It’s as much my mind as my body that is ill*” (Schreiner, 1987, p. 51).

A significant factor contributing to Olive’s discouragement and her periods of physical illness was her relationships with men. Those with Ellis and Pearson were particularly important in this respect. Both left her distressed and the aftermath of the Pearson debacle, in particular, left her in a state of collapse (First & Scott, 1989). To both men she had reacted in what seems to have become a characteristic fashion, enthusiastically and impulsively pushing for intimacy. Typically, the initial intensity of the relationships turned to disappointment (Schoeman, 1991). Some of her biographers have suggested that the failure of these relationships was due to Olive’s conflicted sexuality. First and Scott (1989) for example, suggested that:

She was trying to get to a higher state, an ideal, and in that reason was culturally validated, feeling had to be controlled ... she typified, to the point of neurosis, the condition of the Victorian woman, seeking a sort of sexual freedom by denying her sexuality. Her assertion of women’s sex needs was exclusively intellectual ... she was looking, at source, for a theory of sexual evolution. In herself, as her personal relationship with Pearson was to

show, she seemed to want freedom from sex or the risk of being considered and treated as a sexual object. (pp. 151–152)

They pointed out, however, that in spite of Olive's ostensible desire for an equal, working relationship, she wanted more than this, and it was her confusion in this respect that ultimately ruined the relationship with Pearson. Barsby (1995) has taken issue with this view of Olive as neurotic. What is missing from such accounts of Olive's relationships, she believed, was her attempt to relate to men in a free and open manner. Even she admitted, however, that Olive: "... *was torn between the need to satisfy her sexual and emotional desires and to achieve acceptance in a male-oriented intellectual culture*" (Barsby, 1995, p. 30). According to Lewis (2010), Olive's correspondence to Pearson betrayed her as flirtatious from the start, yet she did not recognise her own emotions in this respect.

Olive typically responded to such crises by fleeing, and by becoming helpless, ill and suspicious. Evidence for this has been presented above. At times she lapsed into self-pity, as Berkman (1989) has indicated. That she was capable of this, and of appealing for sympathy, is suggested by a letter to Pearson, written after their misunderstanding, and which she ended with: "... *walking about in my wet lanes at Harrow and sitting in my wet clothes in the train. I am better now*" (in First & Scott, 1989, p. 167).

It is evident that Olive was particularly prone to discouragement during this phase of her life. This is indicated by her episodes of despair and hopelessness. Associated with her discouragement were her physical illness and her tendency to flee as a means of avoiding interpersonal difficulties.

7.5.2 Conceptualisation

7.5.2.1 The sense of inferiority

Olive arrived in England in 1881 with a great many elevated aspirations, and a great deal of self-doubt. She retained the sense of inferiority that had been characteristic

of her youth in South Africa. She doubted her worth, her ability ever to achieve anything, and the possibility of anyone loving her. Her sense of inadequacy was clearly expressed in her correspondence (Schreiner, 1987), and it was exacerbated during that period by such factors as her failure to achieve her aims, her keen sense of the restricted position which she occupied as a woman in society, and the interpersonal difficulties that developed.

The years abroad were in many ways difficult ones for Olive, and were characterised by a number of interpersonal crises, usually of Olive's own making (First & Scott, 1989; Schoeman, 1991). Her deep sense of inferiority and her elevated goals were related. The goals, consistent with Individual Psychology's principles in this respect (e.g., Adler, 1952, 1956, 1996b), were established because of her feeling of inadequacy. Moreover they influenced each other in a reciprocal manner that compounded both. For example Olive set unrealistic goals, such as becoming a doctor, because of her sense of inferiority. When she could not achieve them her inferiority feelings were exacerbated and she flung herself into a new enterprise. Associated with this process was a host of symptoms that will be discussed later, in the appropriate sections. What was particularly daunting for Olive, especially at the beginning of this period, was that she felt, after nurturing her dreams and aspirations in the isolated interior of South Africa, that she was to be put to the test (Schreiner, 1987).

7.5.2.2 Life goals

Olive aimed at a number of goals during this period, although their respective importance to her varied across time. They included further education, writing and publishing, and more abstract aims such as the formulation of an alternative femininity. She was also still desperate for care and affection. There were two significant features of Olive's goals during this period. The first was that they were consistent with those established during earlier years to assuage her sense of weakness and inadequacy. They functioned in the same way at this stage. Being a doctor, for example, represented the most perfect life to Olive (Schreiner, 1987) because it offered the possibility of financial

independence, the acquisition of knowledge, and a means of being of service to others. All of these promised freedom from her sense of powerlessness as a woman in society (First & Scott, 1989).

The second important feature in respect of her goals was that they were elevated to the point of being unrealistic. Schoeman (1991), in this respect, referred to her plans and aspirations as grandiose. Studying medicine, for example, was not realistic considering Olive's lack of formal education, her restless nature, and her difficulties with people (Cronwright-Schreiner, 1924). This meant that although Olive's goals were established in order to overcome her sense of inferiority by offering a sense of purpose and the possibility of success (Adler, 1956), she set herself up for certain failure against which she had to defend herself. It was in this respect that she developed the symptoms that are discussed in 7.5.2.4 and 7.5.2.7 below.

7.5.2.3 Striving for superiority

The most obvious evidence for Olive's striving during this period was the amount of energy that she spent attempting to achieve her goals. Her involvement in various activities and endeavours at this stage was almost frantic (Schoeman, 1991). She attempted to study medicine and nursing, wrote compulsively at times, entered numerous relationships, and joined societies in her attempt to formulate and articulate an alternative femininity (First & Scott, 1989). In spite of this Olive achieved very little, and seemed to spend as much energy and time being ill and despondent and fleeing from interpersonal crises as she did on anything constructive. This would seem to refute the Adlerian contention that the goal of superiority is the governing principle of mental life and that all psychological processes form a self-consistent organisation in the movement towards that goal (Adler, 1956, 1970, 1996a). Olive's striving seems not to have been goal oriented in any organised sense, and her behaviour in many respects, self defeating.

Olive's behaviour was self defeating. Her goals, as previously indicated in 7.5.2.2, were unrealistically high. They were established to assuage her sense of

inferiority, but they also meant that she was certain to fail, and this in turn would threaten her self-esteem. In response she employed symptoms such as illness, and behaviour such as flight, as safeguarding mechanisms to shore up her sense of self-worth. Viewed in this way her actions and striving were consistent with her need to overcome her sense of inferiority, even if they were predicated upon idiosyncratic logic and were not constructive.

7.5.2.4 The style of life

The years abroad were chaotic and entailed, for Olive, frenetic activity, episodes of compulsive work, and involvement in various enterprises and projects. In spite of her great expenditure of energy, she accomplished very little (Schoeman, 1991). It was a phase of her life that was prefigured in her fictional works, particularly *African farm*, where life is depicted as a process of continual striving, ending in nothing (Schreiner, 1995). To Karl Pearson she said, as quoted in 7.5.1.4, that she seemed to think and think and yet remain motionless (Schreiner, 1987). Olive's own words provide evidence for what Adler (1956) called standing still. This refers to a tendency to become, metaphorically at least, paralysed in the face of obstacles that are perceived as tests of a person's worth. It entails the use of symptoms and traits to remove oneself from such challenges. As such it was part of Olive's style of life that generally relied on safeguarding her sense of worth through distancing. Interesting in this respect, and consistent with the stationary theme, is the assertion by First and Scott (1989) that Olive's asthma served to give her an excuse to rest and to be still.

It was mentioned above that standing still is a metaphorical concept. This is stressed because Olive's life was anything but tranquil during these years. Physically she moved a great deal. This was a significant feature of her life, and had been for years. The function of this traveling was clear at this stage, however. It had become her characteristic response to crises (Lewis, 2010). As Olive said to Edward Carpenter in a letter previously quoted in 7.5.1.4, nothing helped her as much as travel when she was in

pain or anguish (Schreiner, 1987). This constitutes a very practical example of how Olive put distance between herself and situations that threatened her sense of worth.

It was mentioned in a previous section that Olive, in striving for freedom and independence, had adopted, essentially, a man's way of life. This masculine protest (Adler, 1956), a response to her sense of weakness as a woman, was particularly evident during her years in England as indicated in 7.5.1.3. She frequently, explicitly, referred to herself as masculine (Schreiner, 1987). Adler, in referring to the masculine protest as a cluster of over compensatory traits, suggested that it was an inherently pathological condition. As Barsby (1995) pointed out with regard to Olive's difficulties with men however, what was missing from most accounts was an appreciation of her striving to explore new ways of relating to men and of her striving for an alternative conception of femininity. In these terms her masculine protest can be seen as constructive. Admittedly however, these attempts on Olive's part did lead to some serious difficulties. Her idealism in respect of her relationships with men meant that she denied her own sexuality, while retaining a need to satisfy her sexual and emotional desires (Beeton, 1987; First & Scott, 1989). It was this that led to some of her crises, most notably with Pearson but, to a lesser extent, with Ellis as well.

7.5.2.5 The schema of apperception

There is evidence that Olive experienced herself, at times, as powerless and ineffectual (Schreiner, 1987) and that she believed herself destined for failure (First & Scott, 1989; Schoeman, 1991). Her lack of self-worth and her despondency were severe on occasion, worse than at any other stage of her life. At times she longed for death (Schreiner, 1987). These episodes resulted from a failure to achieve her ideals, ideals that were, in fact, originally established because of her sense of inferiority.

Still present was the sense of alienation that had been a feature of her youth. This was exacerbated by the strain of her expatriation (Jacobson, 1995) and perpetuated by the rejection of conventional femininity and identification with masculinity that were, in part

at least, consequences of this alienation in the first place. Associated were Olive's hatred and mistrust of women, mentioned in 7.5.1.1, which led to a sense of being persecuted (Beeton, 1987; First & Scott, 1989; Schreiner, 1987). As in previous life stages, this sense of persecution was based partially in reality. However, it went beyond that and was an example of what Individual Psychologists (e.g., Adler, 1958; Carlson et al., 2006; Stein & Edwards, 1998) would regard as an antithetical schema of apperception. It entailed rigidly held beliefs based on idiosyncratic or private intelligence and did not correspond entirely with reality.

Olive's schema of apperception was, by adulthood, a habitual way of viewing herself and the world, and which found evidence in the environment to sustain it. It constituted a positive feedback mechanism that reinforced itself, and predisposed her to the crises at that time. For example, Olive felt the weakness of her position as a woman. In consequence she identified herself as masculine and pursued idealised, sexless relationships with men. When these failed, because of her idealism and the denial of aspects of her personality, it led to a deep sense of failure, of being misunderstood, and of being weak because of her femininity. It also contributed towards her sense of alienation.

7.5.2.6 Social interest

It is important, when discussing Olive's style of life during this stage, to point out that not all of her upward striving entailed illness, unhappiness and maladjustment. She enjoyed, at times, stability, happiness and the ability to work productively. She developed close and stimulating friendships and some, such as with Havelock Ellis and Edward Carpenter, were to last until the end of her life. These positive aspects of her life were detailed in 7.5.1.6, and provide evidence for what Adlerians (e.g., Adler, 1952, 1956, 1965; Bottome, 1957; Stein & Edwards, 1998) call social interest.

Olive's three chief concerns were her writing, an articulation of an alternative femininity, and a need to be of service to others. These aims were consistent with the goals established in earlier life stages as a result of her sense of inferiority. They were

similarly motivated by her sense of weakness during this phase. Moreover, there is evidence that Olive was able to draw on her experience of pain and weakness during these years, and use it to inform her feeling for, and aid to, others at this time (Schreiner, 1987). This was a continuation of the pattern established during her childhood and was consistent with her early vow to help the weak when she herself was strong. It also lends support, in Olive's life, to the Adlerian concept of an enduring lifestyle (e.g., Adler, 1956; Carlson et al., 2006), and of the possibility of social interest as a feature of such a lifestyle.

7.5.2.7 Discouragement

This period was characterised by frequent episodes of extreme discouragement, as mentioned in 7.5.1.7. A notable feature was the great many interpersonal crises that occurred during these years. Olive invariably responded to them by lapsing into illness and despair, and by fleeing. The function of flight, or travel, at this stage has been discussed in 7.5.2.4 above. The role of illness and its function in respect of her lifestyle has also been considered in previous sections (e.g., 7.4.2.7). Olive's illness was severe at times during this phase of her life. Distinguishing between her physical and emotional symptoms, as well as the side effects of the numerous drugs that she was taking is difficult, if not impossible. What is important, however, is that Olive herself (e.g., Schreiner, 1987) and her biographers (First & Scott, 1989; Friedmann, 1955) noted that there was a relationship between her respiratory complaints and her mood state.

Olive attempted to study, both medicine and nursing, on several occasions. On each she gave up on account of her poor health. It is possible that her hopes in this regard were unrealistic given her lack of formal education. Her goals in general were certainly elevated to the point of being unrealistic (Schoeman, 1991). However it also evident, considering a letter written to John Brown (Schreiner, 1987), and quoted in 7.5.1.1 above, that Olive was anxious to avoid threats to her already tenuous self-esteem. The possibility of illness, mentioned in the letter as it is in the context of her anxiety, suggests that it was entertained, unconsciously at least, as an excuse that Olive could use to shore up her

sense of worth should she fail in her enterprise. As such it was another example of what Adler (1956) called safeguarding through distance, and it entailed her use of symptoms as an excuse for withdrawing from personal or social obligations. Olive must have been particularly anxious about putting her intellect to the test, about being proven “... *a great fool* ...” (Schreiner, 1987, p. 33), since she had placed such emphasis on wisdom and knowledge as one of her life’s goals. Intellectual development as a goal had been incorporated into her life script, into her sense of herself, and a feeling of superiority in this respect must have assuaged, to some extent, the inferiority feelings of her early years. Becoming ill allowed her to cling to this cherished goal without having to put herself to any real test, without having to compete against other minds. What is also clear from the letter, and which must have increased her anxiety, was that she felt under a great deal of pressure as a result of “... *all expectations* ...” (Schreiner, 1987, p. 33), presumably which she perceived as those of others, as well as those she held for herself.

Illness, which was a significant feature of Olive’s life during these years, served another function as well. As insistent as she was about maintaining her freedom and independence, she still craved love and comfort. To this end she often lapsed into childlike behaviour. Illness enabled her to do this. By allowing her to give up her striving and claims to control (First & Scott, 1989, p. 335), it provided some relief from the pressure and the contradictions of her situation. Being ill obtained for her sympathy and comfort in a way that did not necessitate her giving up her ideals.

7.6 South Africa and social justice

7.6.1 Findings

7.6.1.1 The sense of inferiority

There is little evidence, at least in the form of explicit statements on Olive’s part, to support the contention that she felt herself to be inferior at this stage of her life. It seems safe to conclude, however, that she returned from England feeling unfulfilled and

disappointed at not having achieved more as a writer (First & Scott, 1989). She may have felt herself to be a failure in this respect. She certainly doubted, at times, the influence of her work on society (Schoeman, 1992). It was perhaps doubt about herself in general, and about her abilities as a writer in particular, that delayed or prevented publication of her work. To Mary Sauer she wrote:

I'm in the middle of something interesting but that takes a lot out of one to do. I'm not selfish, but if you knew what an agony it was to a nature like mine to have to uncover itself to the world, you would understand that I feel it better not to (1987, p. 197)

She became, at times, discouraged and ill. There was, however, a different quality about these episodes compared to the crises in Europe. This will be explored in 7.6.1.7.

It is highly likely that Olive's sense of inferiority, so much a feature of her life during earlier years, persisted into this phase of her life, in spite of a paucity of confirmatory data. Her episodic discouragement, to be discussed in 7.6.1.7, lends some support to this contention.

7.6.1.2 Life goals

Olive returned to South Africa in November 1889, and initially settled in Matjesfontein. Feminism remained a concern, and the emancipation of women was still an important goal (Berkman, 1989; First & Scott, 1998; Schoeman, 1992). It is clear that writing was also still important to her (Barsby, 1995), and that at various times she planned to publish. What is interesting to note in this regard, is Berkman's suggestion that "*literary perfectionism*" (1989, p. 32) delayed publication of her work, indicating that Olive's aspirations in this respect were rather elevated. What was perhaps most characteristic of this stage of her life, however, was the broadening of her concerns to include a number of socio-political issues. As Brittain (1967) has stated:

Olive Schreiner's influence upon her successors was not confined to the women's revolution. Progress, like peace, appeared to her as indivisible;

she saw feminism, socialism, slave emancipation, and the liberation of subjected races as fundamentally inseparable from the campaign against war. (p. 126)

Similarly, Berkman has suggested that Olive intended, with her writing, to address and heal a range of social ills. More specifically, Olive's goals during this period included the elimination of Rhodes' Charter Company monopolism together with his brands of capitalism and imperialism (First & Scott, 1989; Schoeman, 1992), justice for the Boers (Schoeman, 1992), the prevention of the Anglo-Boer War (Beeton, 1987; First & Scott, 1989), federalism (Barsby, 1995; Berkman, 1989), and improving the lot of black South Africans (Berkman, 1989; Lewis, 2010; Schoeman, 1992; Schreiner, 1987). The last issue is particularly significant.

Olive hoped for, and aimed at, a broadening of the electoral basis and the enfranchisement of all South Africans. In a letter to her brother Will written in 1898, she stated:

I am a one adult one vote man. I believe that every adult inhabiting a land irrespective of race, sex, wealth or poverty, should have the vote; and that is a power more needed by the poor, the weak, and feeble than the wealthy or strong. (Schreiner, 1987, p. 330)

In another written to the politician J. X. Merriman, her concern for the natives and her antipathy to capitalism were also evident: "*There are two and only two questions in South Africa, the native question and the question - Shall the whole land fall into the hands of a knot of Capitalists*" (Schreiner, 1987, p. 278).

Olive's idealism, previously mentioned, remained a characteristic feature of her goal setting. The elevated nature of her goals, and the effect of this on her psychological state, is revealed in a letter that she wrote to Mary Sauer:

My own sadness always rises from my own weakness, from my inability to live up to my ideal. When I can do that, all is well. Nothing saddens me, nothing depresses. If we held fast to the high ideals of just doing our work,

and never even allowing our hearts to go out hungering after love or any return from our fellows, nothing would depress us. (Schreiner, 1987, p. 194)

It is evident then that Olive aimed at a number of goals during this phase of her life. They included writing and publishing, and the realisation of a broad range of socio-political ideals. As in previous life stages, she was idealistic and her goals were elevated to the point of being unrealistic.

7.6.1.3 Striving for superiority

Olive's striving to achieve her literary goals is evident in the fact that she was writing during this period. After settling in Matjesfontein she wrote *The Buddhist priest's wife* (Schreiner, 1923a, 1924), as well as several essays on South Africa that were later to be published as *Thoughts on South Africa* (Schreiner, 1923b, 1927). Other works written during this time included *Woman and labour* (Schreiner, 1914); the novella, *Trooper Peter Halket of Mashonaland* (Schreiner, 1897, 1974); short stories or allegories such as *Eighteen-ninety-nine* (Schreiner, 1923a); *An English South African's view of the situation* (Schreiner, 1899); and, with her husband, *The political situation* (Schreiner & Cronwright-Schreiner, 1896). She also worked, periodically, on *Man to man* (Barsby, 1995; Schreiner, 2004b).

Her attempts to achieve her social and political aims were evident in the various social causes which she publicly espoused, and which constituted the subjects of her writing. Her feminist concerns, for example, were evident in her joining the Women's Enfranchisement League, an organisation of which Olive was vice-president and established with the aim of obtaining women's enfranchisement in South Africa, and particularly in *Woman and labour* (Schreiner, 1914), which was first published in 1911. This was, according to First and Scott (1989), Olive's "... *definitive work on the female condition*" (p. 265). Brittain (1967) referred to it as the bible of the feminist movement, and the book was highly influential at the time.

Another example was Olive's vigorous opposition to Rhodes' monopoly of resources, exercised through his Charter Company, and to his capitalist and imperialist policies. This was evident in *The political situation* and, particularly, in *Peter Halket*. This allegory or novella was an indictment of Rhodes' actions and policy in Rhodesia. Her opposition to Rhodes in general and the book in particular cost her a great deal since it alienated her from English-speaking South Africans, and from her own family (First & Scott, 1989; Schoeman, 1992).

A final example of Olive's striving to achieve her social goals was her and Cron's desperate attempts to avert the Boer War. As early as 1896, during a visit to England, they had tried to warn influential individuals about the possibility of war. In 1899 *An English South African's view of the situation* (Schreiner, 1899) was published, and it was a last-minute attempt to avert the coming conflict (First & Scott, 1989; Schoeman, 1992). Olive was concerned about the plight of the Boers and she was, in spite of "... *her anger and the frequent violence of her language, a confirmed pacifist*" (Beeton, 1987, p. 49).

Olive clearly put a great deal of energy and effort into achieving her goals. This was evident in the numerous social causes that she so vociferously espoused, the volume of her writing, and the subjects dealt with in her works.

7.6.1.4 The style of life

Perhaps the most obvious feature of Olive's life during this period was her striving for justice (Schoeman, 1992). According to Mary Brown (1967): "... *there was always her brave defense of what she deemed just and right, and a passionate vehemence against any form of wrong or injustice ...*" (p. 31). This was evident in her espousal of numerous social and political causes, some of which have been mentioned in 7.6.1.3 above. Her social involvement was based on her concern for the oppressed and her compassion for the weak (First & Scott, 1989; Schreiner, 1987). There is little evidence to indicate that her striving in this respect was linked to her own sense of inferiority at this stage of her life, but it was consistent with the vow made in her youth to help the

weak when she herself was strong. It recalls Lyndall's promise, quoted in 7.2.1.1, to hate everything that is powerful and help everything that is weak (Schreiner, 1995).

Another significant aspect of Olive's life during this time, as it had been in the past, was her repeated moving from one town to another. This was usually, ostensibly, on account of her asthma, from which she was always in search of relief (Barsby, 1995; First & Scott, 1989). This continued after her marriage to Cron, and according to Barsby, set "*... a pattern for their marriage which was increasingly characterized by repeated moves and lengthy separations*" (1995, pp. 37-38). Her movement had seemed, in the past, to serve a psychological function for her; it became a way of dealing with problems and crises, as previously indicated. Beeton (1987) suggested that the pattern became entrenched, that she was unable to settle down, and that she moved in response to life's problems. This may be a somewhat simplistic interpretation, however. There were clearly places which seemed to trigger or exacerbate Olive's asthma, even when she felt happy and fulfilled, and at least one occasion when Olive resisted moving, even though her asthma was severe, and the doctor insisted that she do so (Cronwright-Schreiner, 1924; Schoeman, 1992).

Bouts of despair remained a feature of Olive's life at this stage although, admittedly, to a lesser extent than in England (Brown, 1967; First & Scott, 1989). For example, in March 1898 Olive wrote to Betty Molteno saying: "*I have got so silly, crying all day and all night for nothing ...*" (Schreiner, 1987, p. 327). She was frequently ill, and as in the past, her attacks of asthma often coincided with episodes of emotional pain. For example, in a letter to Isie Smuts, written during August 1899 she wrote: "*I have been ill ever since I came back from Pretoria that day, never able to lie down at night with asthma, or I would have come over ... I am feeling so anxious and almost hopeless about public matters*" (1987, p. 372). Schoeman (1992) has suggested that her physical symptoms might have been of psychological origin and that she failed to achieve her potential, or utilise the opportunities available to her because "*... she retired as usual into ill-health ...*" (p. 217). For him, her illness constituted, at least on occasion, an excuse for not engaging as fully with life as she otherwise might have.

Olive's style of life was characterised by a striving for justice and her championing of a number of social causes. As in the past constant movement remained a significant aspect of her lifestyle, and so did illness and discouragement. These features will be discussed in more detail in 7.6.1.7 below.

7.6.1.5 The schema of apperception

Olive saw herself as a champion of the oppressed. This was evident in her actions at the time, and also in her correspondence. For example, in a letter to her brother Will previously quoted, she expressed her concern for the poor and weak rather than the strong or privileged (Schreiner, 1987, p. 330). In a statement that, according to First and Scott, was both sentimental and patronising, she described herself as always being “... *with the underdog, not with the top dog. When people are very big and successful ... I don't feel very much interest in them. They don't need me!*” (in First & Scott, 1989, p. 339).

Some of Olive's biographers (e.g., First & Scott, 1989; Schoeman, 1992) have suggested that, by this stage of her life, she felt herself to be a failure, particularly insofar as her fictional writing was concerned. Her description of herself as “... *a broken and untried possibility ...*” (Schreiner, 1987, p. 370) in a letter to Havelock Ellis, has often been quoted to lend support to this contention. It does seem to have been the case that Olive felt disappointed at not having achieved more, and that she had doubts about the power of her work to influence people. In spite of this however she was not, as First and Scott have pointed out, a defeated woman. The above-mentioned statement has frequently been quoted out of context, and it is worth noting some of the rest of that letter:

... in my poor little handful of life which consists now mainly of cooking and house-cleaning I shall know few things; I am only a broken and untried possibility ... but this I have, that I can sympathize with all the lives, with all the endeavours, with all the accomplished work, even with all the work attempted and not accomplished, of other men. I love Nature and I love men; I love music and I love science; I love poetry and I love practical labour; I like to make a good pudding and see people eating it; and I like to

write a book that makes their lives better. I can do very little, and have never been so situated that I could do my best – but I can live all lives in my love and sympathy! All that is sad is that life is short and one can live so little of its beauty oneself (Schreiner, 1987, p. 370)

In terms such as those that Maslow (1962) might later employ to describe the self-actualised person, Olive described herself as having, for a time at least, achieved a measure of peace and self-acceptance. It also seems clear that she still felt herself to have a purpose in life.

Olive believed that she was persecuted at times. This had some basis in reality. Her opposition to Rhodes and her Boer sympathies led to harsh satire from the press, as well as criticism from members of her own family (First & Scott, 1989). Some of their letters in this respect led to “... *mental agony and worry* ...” (Schreiner, 1987, p. 294), to which Olive attributed at least one of her miscarriages. The old paranoia was there at times, however, such as when Olive felt slighted by the teachers and schoolgirls in Hanover (Schoeman, 1992).

Olive seemed to hold contradictory or paradoxical views in respect of her self-image at this time of her life. On the one hand she felt disappointed in herself and unfulfilled at not having accomplished more. On the other hand she also seemed to have achieved a measure of self acceptance that was previously lacking. A significant feature of her schema of apperception was her sense of duty towards those whom she saw as oppressed or unjustly treated.

7.6.1.6 Social interest

According to Berkman (1989), Olive’s return from England saw her as having: “... *clearly emerged from the rocky self-esteem and social isolation of her youth, as well as from her interpersonal upheaval in England, into a confident, resourceful woman who was respected and formed friendships with considerable ease* ...” (p. 38). Her return to South African certainly saw an almost immediate improvement in her mood state. She

settled in Matjesfontein where she enjoyed relief from her asthma, took great pleasure in the Karoo, and was generally quite productive as far as her writing was concerned (Barsby, 1995; First & Scott, 1989; Jacobson, 1995).

In 1892 Olive met Samuel Cron Cronwright. They were married early in 1894. By all accounts their marriage was, during the early years at least, exceptionally happy. Berkman (1989) suggested that she had resolved her conflict surrounding attachment and intimacy versus autonomy, both in her writing and through her previous experience of relationships, to such an extent that marriage to Cron was possible. Jacobson (1995) stated that her relationship to Cron offered more happiness and fulfillment than had any other in her life. In a letter to Edward Carpenter, written in October 1894 Olive said:

With regard to my own marriage, dear, I will not only say it is an ideally happy one, but I will say much more; I believe it is satisfactory and for us both not in the narrow but in the highest sense the best thing that ever happened to either of us. The most satisfactory thing is, that it becomes increasingly satisfactory; not less so. (Schreiner, 1987, p. 242)

The following year she could write to Mary Sauer, stating: “As for my life with my husband it seems to grow more beautiful to me each day ...” (Schreiner, 1987, p. 247).

The most obvious sign of Olive’s social interest during this period was her active involvement in a number of social and political causes. This was informed by her sense of justice, and her compassion and empathy for the weak and oppressed (Berkman, 1989; Brown, 1967; First & Scott, 1989). Her attitude in this respect, and the guiding principle of her life, was indicated in a letter to Havelock Ellis, written in 1899:

What a man may do, each soul, is to exert a tiny influence in the direction good and beautiful to him; and then he dies peaceful, having attained his end, whether it be making fairer one soul, waking one impulse of tenderness and love in another soul (Schreiner, 1987, p. 370)

To this end Olive opposed capitalism and imperialism, espoused the cause of the Boers, tried to avert the Anglo-Boer War, entered the public debate concerning the new

constitution, and fought for the enfranchisement of women and black South Africans (Barsby, 1995; Berkman, 1989; Schoeman, 1992). She was concerned about the plight of Jewish people, and in 1905 she read *A letter on the Jew* (Schreiner, 1906) at a meeting organised to protest against the Kishinev Pogrom in Russia (Jacobson, 1995). The Kishinev Pogrom was an anti-Jewish riot that took place on 6–7 April 1903 in the Bessarabia province (now Moldova) of the Russian Empire, and left 47 Jews dead and many more injured. Apart from her more abstract social and political concerns, she was also involved in alleviating suffering on a very practical level. Through her network of friends she collected provisions and funds to help the victims of martial law in Hanover and the women and children imprisoned in British concentration camps. This she did in spite of the fact that she herself was confined to Hanover as a result of martial law (First & Scott, 1989).

Olive developed and enjoyed a number of important friendships during this period. Her friends included the statesman Jan Smuts and his wife Isie Smuts; the wives of a number of prominent politicians including Mary Sauer, Jessie Rose-Innes, Alletta Jacobs and Marie Koopmans de Wet; the Port Elizabeth schoolteacher Betty Molteno and her partner, Alice Greene; her sister-in-law, Frances Schreiner; her nieces, Lyndall Gregg and Ursula Scott; and the humanitarian, Emily Hobhouse. These relationships, the “... *most unembittered emotional ties of her life*” (Berkman, 1989, p. 35), indicate that she was no longer the lonely, alienated misfit of her youth (First & Scott, 1989; Schoeman, 1992).

This period of Olive’s life also saw episodes of productivity as far as her writing was concerned. She was writing during the tranquil time in Matjesfontein, and in 1895 she wrote to Mary Sauer from Kimberley: “... *I am very strong and well, more really well than I have ever been since I was sixteen. I never have asthma any more, and am very busy writing all the time*” (Schreiner, 1987, p. 247). Immediately before the outbreak of the Boer War she wrote to Frances Schreiner from Karee Kloof, stating: “... *I sit there all day at a nice desk and write almost all day from the moment I get up ... I have done more work in the month here than in the last year*” (Schreiner, 1987, p. 385). She managed to

write after the war when she was sick and despondent in Hanover, where she completed *Eighteen-ninety-nine* (Schreiner, 1923a), a story about the suffering of women during war time.

Olive's writing at the time included non-fiction, such as her work on social and political issues, mentioned previously, as well as some fiction, mostly short stories and allegories (Barsby, 1995; First & Scott, 1989; Schoeman, 1992). Perhaps her most significant publications were *Trooper Peter Halket of Mashonaland* (Schreiner, 1899), an allegory in which she expressed her opposition to Rhodes' policy in Rhodesia, and *Woman and labour* (Schreiner, 1914), her definitive work on feminism.

Olive displayed clear evidence of social interest at this stage of her life. The most significant features in this regard were her writing, her involvement in a number of socio-political causes, and her development of enduring, sustaining relationships, including her ability to make a marriage that was, in the early stages at least, a viable one.

7.6.1.7 Discouragement

Olive became very ill at times during this stage of her life. She also experienced episodes of discouragement and depression. As indicated in 7.6.1.4, her physical and emotional symptoms sometimes coincided (Berkman, 1989; First & Scott, 1989). One example occurred at the end of 1900, when Olive was alone in Hanover, confined there by martial law. She became ill and believed that she was suffering from a nervous breakdown. She felt tired and weak and cried constantly. Cron, who obtained special permission to join her, diagnosed nervous exhaustion brought on by loneliness, the strain of living under martial law, persecution by loyalists and the shock of her brother's (Fred), death (Cronwright-Schreiner, 1924). Schoeman (1992) suggested that at least some of her asthmatic attacks were partly of psychological origin. He also suggested that her poor health constituted, at times, an excuse for not accepting some of the opportunities available to her.

Olive's episodes of depression during this period seem to have been different to those emotional crises which had occurred during her years in England. There was not the conflicted quality of those years, and none of the interpersonal complications. Much of her despondency stemmed from really distressing circumstances, for example; the war, martial law, the state of the country, the death of her baby in 1895, and the ideological rifts in her family (Barsby, 1995; First & Scott, 1989). Perhaps most significant, however, was her disillusionment at not being able to live up to her own ideals, and also at seeing her hopes for the country dashed. She wrote to Mary Sauer, as previously indicated in 7.6.1.2, that her sadness always arose from her own weakness, and her inability to live up to her ideals (Schreiner, 1987). Mary Brown (1967) was later to write: "*These terrible years of mental and physical suffering broke Olive Schreiner's life. It was not only war at one's very door, with the indignities and privations which inevitably accompany war, but it was the shattering of ideals and hopes*" (p. 37). In a similar vein, there was a very wistful quality to a letter which Olive wrote to her brother Will in 1892. In it she stated that she could have done something great with her life if she had only been healthy (Schreiner, 1987).

Perhaps one of the issues that most disappointed Olive was her failure to achieve her aims as a writer and, in particular, at not completing *Man to man*. She worked on the novel during these years but as Schoeman (1992) pointed out, she found writing "... *increasingly difficult and often virtually impossible ...*" (p. 32). Berkman (1989) suggested that her literary perfectionism delayed publication of her work. This is perhaps the only really tragic aspect of her life, considering how good some of the writing, and particularly the "Prelude", in *Man to man* is. As Jacobson (1995) said: "*It is impossible to read From Man to Man without a sense of talents wasted in a way that appears to have been helpless and yet deliberate too*" (p. 17). Similarly, Beeton (1987), referring to her writing, has said that it "... *may induce a sense of sadness as we recall how in years that followed she persistently frustrated those possibilities, how she set about destroying the talent so clearly augured in these early lonely days*" (p. 31).

The relationship between Olive and Cron seems to have deteriorated somewhat by the time the Boer War broke out. Although Cron remained steadfastly loyal to her, he seemed to have been irritated and impatient with her ill health, her constant moving, and her failure to produce more as a writer. He had made a great many sacrifices for her, but when he returned from England in 1900 he seemed determined to resume his own career, “... leaving Olive to her own devices in the Karoo or wherever else her health and her fancy drove her” (Schoeman, 1992, p. 111). Olive certainly loved Cron, and he remained considerate of her, but the emotional intensity of their marriage had gone, and a pattern of increasingly lengthy separations was established (Barsby, 1995; First & Scott, 1989).

While Olive seemed to have grown since her time in England, and while her relationships seemed generally to be more mature and healthy, discouragement remained a feature of her life. Associated in particular with her episodes of despair were her ill health and her disappointment borne of her idealism, both in terms of her own life and her hopes for her country.

7.6.2 Conceptualisation

7.6.2.1 The sense of inferiority

There is comparatively little evidence for Olive having experienced a sense of inferiority during this phase of her life. She returned to South Africa in November 1889, and her repatriation saw an immediate improvement in her mood state (Berkman, 1989). The salutary Karoo environment, the absence of pressing demands, and her celebrity status must have ameliorated, to some extent, her sense of inadequacy. There were still signs of a sense of inferiority however (e.g., Schreiner, 1987). Factors contributing to this included her disappointment at not achieving her literary aims, doubts about the influence of her work on society, and the war (First & Scott, 1989; Schoeman, 1992). These constituted challenges to her core convictions or schemas (Carlson et al., 2006) and re-activated the sense of inferiority, or exacerbated it, sometimes to the extent that she

became extremely discouraged. At other times though, and in the absence of stressors, she showed few signs of having felt inadequate or inferior.

7.6.2.2 Life goals

An examination of Olive's life at this stage provides evidence for her having aimed at a number of goals. One was to write and publish. The elevated nature of this particular goal (Berkman, 1989; First & Scott, 1989) was very likely fueled by her sense of disappointment at not having achieved more in this regard whilst abroad. It was to create difficulties for her, and these will be discussed as symptoms under the heading *Discouragement* below (see section 7.6.2.7).

Olive aimed at social and political change during this life phase. Her goals in this respect were numerous, and were indicated previously in 7.6.1.2. There is little evidence of a direct relationship between her sense of inferiority and the social causes she espoused at this time. However, they were consistent with the goals that she established in earlier life phases as a result of her sense of inferiority. It would probably not be true to say that her goals were totally unrealistic, at least in the long term, but she was definitely idealistic about them (Schreiner, 1987). This was to predispose her to bouts of discouragement as it had in the past. So while her ideals were indicative of social interest, her idealism, paradoxically, was suggestive of underlying feelings of inferiority (Adler, 1952, 1956, 1996a, 1996b).

7.6.2.3 Striving for superiority

The most prominent feature of Olive's striving during this phase was her fight for justice. This was revealed in the numerous social causes she espoused, mentioned in 7.6.1.3 and 7.6.1.6, and evident in her writing (e.g., Schreiner, 1897, 1899, 1914, 1923b, 2004b; Schreiner & Cronwright-Schreiner, 1896). In this respect her efforts were aimed at a self-ideal (Adler, 1956) that entailed a vision of herself as self-sacrificing, as being of service, and as protesting against injustice. This ideal constituted a goal of superiority

that was largely indicative of social interest (Adler, 1952, 1958; Carlson et al., 2006; Stein & Edwards, 1998), although perhaps elevated to the extent that much of Olive's energy and striving was aimed at defending herself against possible failure, and protecting her self-image and sense of worth. Illness and travel were important aspects of her striving in this regard and will be discussed in 7.6.2.4 and 7.6.2.7 below.

7.6.2.4 The style of life

The most notable feature of Olive's life during these years was her striving for justice and equality, evident in her broadening concerns with, and espousal of, numerous social and political causes (Berkman, 1989; Brown, 1967; First & Scott, 1989). Her social conscience represented a thread that had run through her life since her youth, and was consistent with her vow to help the weak when she was strong enough to do so. Two other aspects of her life that were less healthy, but no less consistent, were her illness and her travel. Both served psychological functions for her, as will be discussed in 7.6.2.7. The enduring presence of these notable trends in Olive's life lends support to the Adlerian view of a stable lifestyle in her case (Adler, 1956; Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956; Stein & Edwards, 1998).

7.6.2.5 The schema of apperception

Olive had a definite sense of purpose during this phase of her life. She saw herself as a champion of the oppressed. This was evident in her efforts to achieve justice for groups such as the Boers, black South Africans, and victims of martial law (First & Scott, 1989), in her correspondence (e.g., Schreiner, 1987) and in her writing (e.g., Schreiner, 1897, 1974). Her view of herself in this respect was consistent with aspects of her lifestyle that had been present since her childhood, and with the social interest that she displayed throughout her life. As such it can be regarded as part of a healthy schema of apperception, one consistent with common sense (Adler, 1958, 1965; Carlson et al., 2006). On the other hand her failure to produce more fictional work resulted in a sense of disappointment and failure (Schreiner, 1899b). This stemmed from her idealism and was

exacerbated by the symptoms that she employed to defend herself from her elevated aspirations. In this respect her thinking was less consistent with the Adlerian view of common sense or reality, and it was indicative of the unhealthy rigidity characteristic of the antithetical schema of apperception (Adler, 1956; Stein & Edwards, 1998). Her sense of being persecuted, while having some basis in the harsh criticism leveled at her by the press and her own family, went beyond objective reality (Beeton, 1987; Schoeman, 1992) and was further evidence of her rigidity of perception. This was another enduring aspect of her lifestyle, although it was less prominent during this life stage than it was at other times.

7.6.2.6 Social interest

Olive displayed many features of social interest during this phase of her life, as indicated in 7.6.1.6. One notable feature in this regard was her social involvement, previously mentioned, which had become a permanent and significant aspect of her lifestyle. Another was a capacity for healthy relationships. Although Olive became discouraged at times during this period, these episodes were different to the emotional crises that had occurred in England. There was not the conflicted quality of those years, and few of the interpersonal complications. It seems probable that she had grown and learned from the crises in England, and it is likely that her writing afforded her the opportunity to work through some of the conflict (Berkman, 1989). *The Buddhist priest's wife* (Schreiner, 1923) for example seemed to deal with the Pearson affair, appeared to be her rejoinder to that interpersonal tangle (First & Scott, 1989).

In 1892 Olive met Samuel Cron Cronwright. They were married in February 1894. By all accounts (e.g., Schreiner, 1987) their marriage was, during the early years at least, very happy. Her marriage would be regarded by Individual Psychologists (Adler, 1952, 1956; Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956; Stein & Edwards, 1998) as a sign of social interest, and it indicated that she had solved, to some extent, what they regard as one of the chief problems of life, that is, the capacity to love.

7.6.2.7 Discouragement

Olive experienced episodes of discouragement during this phase of her life, although, as previously mentioned, they differed from the crises during her years in England. Often she became depressed as a result of really distressing circumstances such as war, martial law, the death of her baby, the political situation in the country, and the ideological rifts in her family (Barsby, 1995; First & Scott, 1989). Physical illness and her emotional state were still, generally, indistinguishable. These episodes, moreover, still seemed to serve a purpose for her in that they provided an excuse to distance herself from opportunities (Schoeman, 1992) or situations that she perceived as posing a challenge to her sense of worth. In this way she could avoid such challenges or threats while still feeling good about herself. In this context it is important to mention her literary aspirations.

Olive had made her reputation as a novelist with the publication of *African farm* in 1883. She never published another novel during her lifetime, this in spite of her plans to publish *Man to man*, and the fact that she worked on it compulsively for nearly forty years. Lewis (2010) was of the opinion that Olive never intended publishing another novel, but this view is not shared by other biographers, and neither is it consistent with comments made by Olive in her correspondence, some of which has been mentioned above (e.g., in 7.6.1.1). According to Berkman (1989), Olive's literary perfectionism delayed publication of her work. This perfectionism was an example of her generally elevated aspirations, against which she had to defend herself. Moreover, she had a horror of revealing herself, of making herself vulnerable, which is how she perceived publication (Schreiner, 1987). Releasing a book to the public for criticism could bring back all the inferiority feelings she had invested so much energy in overcoming. Associated with her fears in this regard was what she must have felt were the expectations of her as a result of the success of her first novel, not to mention the pressure that she felt to publish for financial reasons. This was exacerbated in all likelihood by Cron's growing impatience with her lack of progress, particularly towards the end of the century. Her literary ideals then also served as an excuse to delay publication, thereby

avoiding what for Olive must have become one of the most significant challenges to her sense of worth. Non-fiction, allegories and other polemical works posed no such threat to her. They required less of her, and they were not the stuff of which her reputation was made. The publication of such works owed less to artistic ability than to the espousal of the social causes about which she felt so strongly and which she felt it her duty to advance. She could accept criticism of her striving for justice and equality. While it might hurt her deeply, it was almost to be expected as part of her lifestyle of protest, and she could still claim the moral high ground and console herself with the belief that she was espousing a higher truth. Criticism of her novels, however, would have been experienced as a direct attack on her worth as a person, and this she had to avoid. As such, her behaviour represented an example of what Adler (1956) called a hesitating attitude. This entails the postponing of a decision or action until it is too late. The individual thereby avoids threats to her self-worth. This is another example of Olive's tendency to safeguard her self esteem by distancing herself from perceived threats. Significant also in this respect is a statement that Olive made to her brother Will in 1892. She said: "*If I had had health I should have made a great thing of my life*" (Schreiner, 1987, p. 208). Such a statement might have come directly from an Adlerian test (e.g., Adler 1956) where it would be used as a typical diagnostic indication of the use of poor health as an excuse by the patient to avoid threats to her self worth, and the employment of a strategy entailing safeguarding of the self esteem through distancing.

Previously, her movement had served a clear psychological function. During this phase of her life, however, it is a little more difficult to interpret. It seemed to remain a way for her to deal with emotional pain, and as such it had been a significant aspect of her lifestyle for years. Lewis (2010) referred to her tendency to flee from difficulties as: "... *the old familiar defence mechanism ...*" (p. 104). It was, perhaps, also a way of coping with the mutual disappointment that crept into the Cronwright-Schreiner marriage towards the turn of the century. It might well have been a way for her to avoid having to face the fact that the reality of the relationship could not measure up to her ideals. Her movement was usually, ostensibly, on account of her asthma, which in turn generally corresponded with episodes of emotional pain. Her illness served as an excuse not to

engage as fully with life as she otherwise might have, and allowed her to distance herself from challenges to her self-esteem. Traveling, associated with her illness as it was, may well have constituted a literal and physical act of safeguarding through distance (Adler, 1956; Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956), as it had in the past.

7.7 The final decade

7.7.1 Findings

7.7.1.1 The sense of inferiority

There is relatively little research about this phase of Olive's life, and even less that speaks to her sense of inferiority at this time. That which does exist suggests that this was a very difficult period for her. She was growing older and increasingly infirm (Lewis, 2010). Many friends and family members passed away during these years. She seems to have been lonely on account of her geographical and ideological positions, respectively. Cut off from family and friends in South African by the outbreak of the First World War while she was in England, she found herself holding different views about the war to many of her old English friends. She was a pacifist and, at times, attacked for her views (Jacobson, 1995). The war, moreover, eroded her faith in social progress. She seemed not to understand the society in which she lived, and doubted her ability to make a contribution to it (First & Scott, 1989).

Olive seems also to have been disappointed and frustrated by her inability to complete some of her life's projects, and by the realisation that she probably never would (Lewis, 2010). This engendered in her a sense of failure (First & Scott, 1989). Furthermore, many of the old doubts were still there. As Schoeman (1992) stated, her "... *constant doubts about herself and about her capacity for gaining the affection, appreciation or even approval of others would dog her to the end of her life ...*" (p. 320).

In spite of a paucity of data about this phase of Olive's life, it seems plausible to conclude that her sense of inferiority persisted into this life stage. Moreover, it would appear as if these feelings were exacerbated by Olive's sense of failure at not having achieved many of her life goals.

7.7.1.2 Life goals

There is no evidence for Olive having established new goals during this phase of her life. Yet while she may have despaired of ever seeing some of her personal projects come to fruition, she still entertained hopes for a just society. To this end she remained concerned about the emancipation of women and the rights of black South Africans. Of particular importance to her was peace, for which she campaigned during the First World War (Barsby, 1995; Beeton, 1987; Berkman, 1989; Brittain, 1967; Brown, 1967; Schoeman, 1992). Also, on at least one occasion during these years, she considered the possibility of completing *Man to man* (First & Scott, 1989).

There is again relatively little information about this facet of Olive's life during this life stage. It seems, however, that many of the goals previously established remained important to her.

7.7.1.3 Striving for superiority

Olive was inspired by a vision of a just society, as previously indicated. There were a number of social causes, or goals, which motivated her. Her striving to realise these goals was indicated by her actions during this phase of her life. For example, while in England, she became involved in the public meetings of the Union of Democratic Control, a British pressure group which aimed at a more responsive foreign policy, one subject to democratic overview. She delivered an address on conscientious objection, advocated equal pay for women who did the same work as men, and wrote a small book about war and pacifism (Barsby, 1995; First & Scott, 1989). Her striving for justice has been portrayed by Schoeman (1992) as a brave struggle:

Rising above the limitations of period, place and gender, of her bad health, poverty and imperfect education, and above all of her inherited and inculcated prejudices as a white South African woman, erratic, emotional, impetuous and often ridiculous as she was, she strove splendidly and fearlessly for justice, beginning by espousing the cause specifically of the Boers against the British Empire, but finally, during those despairing war years in London, transcending all national or racial considerations. It is perhaps the courage and the nobility of that lonely struggle which gave meaning to a life that was on a personal level only too often characterized by failure and frustration. (p. 217)

On the other hand, however, Schoeman also suggested that she never took advantage of all the opportunities for fulfillment that were available to her, and that her efforts to achieve her goals were not as concerted as they might have been. For example, he described her as “... *always searching and striving, energetically but aimlessly, but with little tenacity and without developing any strongly pronounced sense of purpose*” (p. 217).

Olive was guided by a vision of justice and social progress, as she had been in earlier life stages. In spite of her infirmity, and although her efforts seemed to lack consistency and organisation, she continued to expend a great deal of energy trying to realise her vision.

7.7.1.4 The style of life

An obvious feature of Olive’s life during her final years was her striving for justice, and her protests against inequality, as indicated in the previous section. She was still for the underdog, as she had been since her adolescence (Barsby, 1995; Brown, 1967; First & Scott, 1989; Schoeman, 1992).

Another conspicuous feature of her life, as it had been since childhood, was her restless wandering (Beeton, 1987; Schoeman, 1992). Olive traveled to England in 1913, leaving Cron in South Africa. Her reason for leaving was to obtain medical treatment for her deteriorating health (First & Scott, 1989). She was to be separated from Cron for

seven years. Much of Olive's movement during her adult years had, ostensibly, been on account of her poor health, but, as First and Scott pointed out:

... this separation was part of the pattern that was established within a few years of their marriage; and although Olive claimed that she wanted to be with him more than anything in the world, her life was so arranged that she was constantly traveling away from him, constantly professing her love for him. (1989, p. 315)

Beeton (1987), referring to the origins of her peripatetic lifestyle in her youth, stated: "*Later she was simply unable to settle down, something Cronwright discovered to his cost. I believe that this enforced wandering encouraged her to move on as a solution to life's immediate problems*" (p. 27). For whatever reason Olive may have moved, it seems clear that it was part of an established pattern, and that it was not exclusively related to her physical symptoms.

A significant aspect of Olive's life at this stage, as at others, was her frequent bouts of illness (First & Scott, 1989; Jacobson, 1995; Lewis, 2010). Associated at times with her illness were periods of despair and demoralisation (Berkman, 1989). It has already been suggested that Olive's illness served a function for her, and it is worth repeating First and Scott's assertion in this respect:

Olive became a sick girl, and then a sick woman. Sickness, as it were, brought her back into society as a powerless individual; it provided a counterpoint to the force of her writing and of her unconventionality. As far as she herself was concerned, illness signified and prompted only flight, stillness, and a yearning for rest. She did not – indeed could not – interpret her illness to include the role that the pattern of her relationships played in reinforcing or colluding in it. (1989, p. 336)

To what extent their contention is valid will be reflected on in 7.7.2.4. The evidence strongly suggests, however, that illness and movement were associated; that both were significant features of Olive's life, and that she was not quite as helpless a victim upon whom this pattern was foisted by fate as she might like to have believed.

An aspect of Olive's life that had emerged by this stage was her failure to complete her proposed literary projects. This refers to her fiction, and *Man to man* is an obvious example. She worked compulsively at this novel for forty years, but never completed it. After *The story of an African farm* she produced little other fiction of lasting value (Schoeman, 1992). She persistently frustrated herself in this regard. Both Beeton (1987) and Jacobson (1995) have suggested that she wasted her literary talents, and both implied that there was something deliberate about the way in which she did so. Schoeman's comments about her aimless striving and her lack of tenacity, presented in 7.7.1.3 above, are perhaps most pertinent in this respect.

The essential features of Olive's lifestyle during her old age had been present during earlier life stages. They entailed constant movement, infirmity and despair and, related to all of these, a failure to live up to her ideals and to achieve her goals. She still pursued a vision of a just society and social progress remained important to her.

7.7.1.5 The schema of apperception

A feature of Olive's life, and a significant aspect of her sense of herself during these years, was her frustration and disappointment at not having completed some of her projects (Lewis, 2010). She felt herself to be a failure in some respects, and she doubted herself and her ability to make a contribution to society (First & Scott, 1989). However, her many social concerns and her attempts to support the oppressed and achieve social justice, as well as the comments made in this regard made by her biographers, friends and admirers (e.g., Brittain, 1967; Brown, 1967; Schoeman, 1992) suggest that she must, to some extent at least, have perceived herself as an agent for social change.

Another feature of her life, and one which had been present since her youth, was a sense of being persecuted and misused, particularly by women (Beeton, 1987; Friedmann, 1955). To some extent she was justified in these beliefs. For example she was denied accommodation in Chelsea on account of her German surname (Jacobson, 1995). In general, however, her experience of different landladies was reminiscent of the

problems she had experienced during earlier years in England, and was part of the pattern of her life. She also became possessive of Cron and suspicious of his relationships with other women (First & Scott, 1989). Lewis (2010) has suggested that Olive had good reason to suspect Cron of cheating on her with other women. For support she outlined the actions of the character Frank and his treatment of Rebekah in the novel *Man to man*. There is no definite evidence to support this view however. Even if Lewis is correct, and Cron's behaviour contributed to Olive's paranoia, it does not explain a lifelong pattern of mistrust towards other women. On the other hand Lewis acknowledged that Olive's letters revealed "... *paranoid preoccupations*..." (2010, p.166), but these she attributed to the medication that Olive was taking, drugs which she believed resulted in emotional outbursts, impaired concentration and behaviour that was erratic. There can be little doubt that these drugs had a negative effect on her. However if this was to the extent that she was paranoid, emotionally labile and her behaviour disorganised (i.e., almost psychotic), as Lewis has suggested, it is difficult to understand how she maintained so many other close and satisfying relationships at the same time. These will be outlined in 7.7.1.6 below.

In discussing Olive's schema of apperception, it is important to note, once again, how significant her private, subjective view of the world was, and how it often differed from reality. That Olive was capable of exaggeration has been suggested by First and Scott (1989) with reference to her mistrust of and unreasonable obsession with, other women. Similarly Schoeman (1991), as previously indicated, has stated that Olive tended to represent situations as she experienced them, rather than as they had objectively occurred, and that her assertions owed more to "... *subjective or psychological truth* ..." (p. 207) rather than hard facts.

Olive's view of herself comprised a composite picture that entailed, on the one hand, a sense of hopelessness and powerlessness, and on the other, paradoxically, a sense of purpose and agency. An increasingly significant aspect of her schema of apperception as she grew older was a sense of being persecuted. Olive's view of herself and the world was characterised at times by a marked divergence from objective reality.

7.7.1.6 Social interest

The most obvious indication of Olive's social interest at this time was her involvement in several social causes. These included women's rights, the position of blacks in society and pacifism, as previously mentioned (Barsby, 1995; Beeton, 1987; Berkman, 1989; Brittain, 1967; Schoeman, 1992). She also did some writing, and produced a book called *The dawn of civilization* (Schreiner, 1923a, 1924), which dealt with war and contained Olive's views on pacifism. It was later published in a volume of short stories. Her social involvement was not purely intellectual. After her return to South Africa in 1920, she collected money for the defense of Samuel Masabalala, who had been arrested for his role in organising the strike of black municipal workers in Port Elizabeth (First & Scott, 1989).

Perhaps even more important, from the perspective of social interest, than her social and civil rights campaigns were her relationships at this stage of her life. She has been depicted as a defeated, lonely and difficult old woman, but this, clearly, was not the entire picture (Beeton, 1987; Berkman, 1989; First & Scott, 1989). She enjoyed many friendships, and these sustained her during the difficult years in England. First and Scott have pointed out, with regard to these relationships, that: "... *for someone as ill and as demoralized as Olive was, she had a great deal of energy for the details of their lives*" (1989, p. 307). Beeton provided further support for this view of Olive as concerned about, and involved in, the lives of her friends. He referred to a letter written by Olive in August 1918 to her friend Joan Hodgson. It was an affectionate, kindly letter indicating her concern for the Hodgsons, and telling them about her nephew, Oliver Schreiner's, engagement. Commenting, Beeton stated: "*One doubts that this is the simulated affection and concern of a selfish, tyrannical, self-absorbed egoist. Written just over two years before Olive's death, it shows much more than the morbid introspection of a twilight celebrity*" (1987, p. 54). Referring to other letters written during this period, he stated that they:

... are important because they permit a different portrait from that of the hard-surfaced, fiercely loving woman celebrated in legend and biography. Had Olive towards the end of her days softened out of recognition, and had she lost the self-pity of which she had so often been accused? (Beeton, 1987, p. 55)

Berkman (1989), as previously indicated, has suggested that Olive returned from her first visit to England, in her thirties, as a confident woman who had managed to resolve the conflict and self-hatred that had created so much misery for her during her youth. Regarding the end of Olive's life, she wrote:

If Schreiner on the night before she died had gazed into a mirror, as had Lyndall in African Farm, she would not have experienced her childhood self-disgust and alienation from herself. Those who met with her during the final weeks and days of her life found someone reconciled to herself and to impending death. She exuded cheer and humor. (p. 41)

Berkman was more concerned with presenting Olive's thoughts, and tracing the development of her ideas, than she was with writing a biography, and she might have overstated the case concerning Olive's psychological health. Nevertheless, she made an important point and Olive, during her last days, did seem at peace. She was sociable, entertaining and cheerful, and enjoyed those days in the company of friends and family (Barsby, 1995; Berkman, 1989; First & Scott, 1989).

For all her sense of failure and periodic despondency, Olive continued to exhibit features of social interest during old age. She still espoused the causes that had always been so important to her, and she remained involved, in concrete and practical ways, in the lives of other people.

7.7.1.7 Discouragement

The last years of Olive's life were undoubtedly very difficult ones for her. Perhaps this was what prompted Mary Brown (1967) to refer to her as "... a broken and

suffering woman” (p. 26). In spite of her friendships she was frequently lonely. She was ill, and this demoralised her (Berkman, 1989). She lapsed, at times, into depression and despair (Lewis, 2010). First and Scott (1989) discussed the “... *depressing realities of her life: ill health, her inability to work, the deaths of family members and friends, and her growing awareness of ageing and fears of becoming a burden to others*” (p. 299). Contributing to her emotional distress was the knowledge that much of her work was unfinished, and the realisation that it would never be completed. In this regard Olive felt herself to be a failure (Schoeman, 1992). The war led to a great deal of disappointment, because it eroded her faith in human progress, and shattered her social hopes and ideals. She was, moreover, persecuted for her German surname, and disappointed that some of her friends (such as Ellis and Pearson) did not share her ideological position (First & Scott, 1989; Jacobson, 1995).

She spent these years, as she always had, in constant movement. That this movement served a particular function for her, and constituted a way for her to deal with problems, was suggested in previous sections (e.g., 7.7.1.4). Evident too was her sense of being persecuted, which also seemed to have become an established pattern in Olive’s life (Beeton, 1987). Neither of these factors had a salutary effect on Olive and Cron’s marriage. Their relationship had begun to deteriorate years before (Schoeman, 1992), and while it seems clear that Olive loved Cron to the end, it is also apparent that by 1919 they were estranged. This was something that Olive, with all her idealism about personal life, could not admit to herself (First & Scott, 1989).

Olive wrote nothing of enduring value during this period and Schoeman (1992), summing up Olive’s life, stated that: “... *one is struck by a depressing sense of promise never fulfilled and potential never fully realized – in the words she had written in African Farm as a young woman ... ‘a striving, and a striving, and an ending in nothing’*” (pp. 216-217).

Despondency remained a feature of Olive’s life until the end. Associated with her discouragement, as they had been for most of her life, were her movement and her illness.

Disappointment at not living up to her ideals and not achieving her elevated goals was a key contributing factor to her despair during these years.

7.7.2 Conceptualisation

7.7.2.1 The sense of inferiority

Olive remained haunted by the self-doubt that had been a constant feature of her life since her youth (Schoeman, 1992). The presence of these feelings in her last years was indicative of a sense of inferiority (Adler, 1956, 1996a, 1996b). Contributing to her sense of inadequacy at this stage was her disappointment at not obtaining her ideals, her frustration at her inability to complete some of her life's projects, and the realisation that she never would achieve some of her goals. An example of one such incomplete project was her novel *From man to man* (Schreiner, 1927, 2004b), on which she worked for 40 years and which, even in old age, she contemplated finishing. It was published posthumously in its unfinished state by her husband. In this respect, and others, she felt herself to be a failure (First & Scott, 1989).

7.7.2.2 Life goals

The limited information from this phase of Olive's life suggests that she aimed at a self-ideal characterised largely by concern for others. She hoped and worked for a just society, and her goals included the emancipation of women and rights for black South Africans (First & Scott, 1989). There is no indication that Olive established new goals during this phase. Her aspirations in general and some of her goals in particular had remained constant since her youth, providing evidence in her life for the Adlerian notion of an enduring lifestyle (Adler, 1956). Some of her less healthy behaviour, to be discussed in 7.7.2.3, 7.7.2.4 and 7.7.2.7 below, suggests that her goal of superiority was aimed at overcoming feelings of inadequacy and inferiority, and that there was at least a component of her self-ideal that was idiosyncratic and privately motivated (Adler, 1996a,

1996b). By and large, however, the goals that she pursued were indicative of social interest.

7.7.2.3 Striving for superiority

Olive's healthy striving for superiority can be seen in her efforts to achieve her social goals, to realise her vision of a just society. Her activities in this respect were detailed in 7.7.1.3. However, Schoeman's (1992) comment about her incessant striving that lacked any real aim or purpose, also mentioned in 7.7.1.3, is suggestive of less healthy striving. In this regard it is also important to mention her illness and her traveling. These aspects of her lifestyle, present since her youth and aimed at protecting her from her idealism and a sense of failure, showed that a great deal of her energy was expended on a personal goal of superiority, one that entailed safeguards against her sense of inferiority (Adler, 1956, 1996a, 1996b). These will be elaborated upon in 7.7.2.4 below.

7.7.2.4 The style of life

A key aspect of Olive's life during these final years was her striving for justice and equality. She was still a voice for the oppressed and firmly on the side of the underdog, as she had been since her teenage years (Barsby, 1995; Brown, 1967; First & Scott, 1989; Schoeman, 1992). Her actions in this regard, previously detailed in 7.7.1.2, 7.7.1.3 and 7.7.1.6, indicate that protest was a significant and enduring feature of her lifestyle. It was based on her own experience of oppression and weakness and her ability to translate this into a capacity for empathy with others with whom she could identify. In this respect her sense of inferiority motivated her to strive in a way that was socially useful and is evidence of social interest (Adler, 1956; Stein & Edwards, 1998).

Olive spent her final years, as she always had, in constant movement. Travel remained a way for her to deal with life's problems (Beeton, 1987; Lewis, 2010). Ostensibly on account of her ever-present illness, movement (and illness) enabled her to avoid problems and evade crises, thereby putting distance between herself and challenges

to her fragile self-esteem. In other words, she was still employing the strategy of safeguarding through distance (Adler, 1956; Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956) that she had used throughout her adult life. An example of this can be seen in her marriage, where traveling probably helped her to avoid admitting to herself the estrangement to which it had contributed in the first place (Schoeman, 1992). Her ideals in this respect could therefore remain intact.

7.7.2.5 The schema of apperception

Olive still saw herself as an agent for social change and a champion of the underdog. Her views in this regard might, as First and Scott (1989) mentioned, have been somewhat condescending during her earlier years, but they informed her actions and these actions included very real attempts to be of service to others.

A marked feature of Olive's life, particularly during this phase, was her sense of frustration, disappointment and failure at not having completed some of her life's projects (First & Scott, 1989; Lewis, 2010). This was inevitable considering her idealism and the elevated and unrealistic nature of her goals and her self ideal (Schoeman, 1992). Elevated aspirations, as Adler (1956) has indicated, are established as a consequence of, and in response to, an increased sense of inferiority. In Olive's case they predisposed her to failure as previously mentioned, and exacerbated her sense of inferiority.

An aspect of Olive's life that had been present since her youth, but which became more prominent in her final years, was her sense of being persecuted and misused (Beeton, 1987; Friedmann, 1955). As in previous years, her beliefs in this respect had some basis in reality. She was, for example, denied accommodation in England on account of her German surname. However by old age her mistrust of, and unreasonable obsession with, other women was clearly at odds with reality (First and Scott, 1989). There is therefore evidence in Olive's life for what Adler (1956) called an antithetical schema of apperception. A more detailed discussion of Olive's sense of persecution is presented in 7.7.2.7.

7.7.2.6 Social interest

A significant feature of Olive's life, in spite of her woes, was her ongoing striving for justice, particularly evident in her concern about the emancipation of women and the rights of black South Africans. Despite the old doubts about herself and, at times, her paranoia, she enjoyed many close friendships. It is very clear that Olive put time and effort into these relationships, and that she cared deeply about a great many people. She might have been demoralised and self-doubting to the end, but she was not so self-absorbed that she could not contribute to others, and mean a great deal to them (Beeton, 1987; First & Scott, 1989). Her social interest (Adler, 1956; Carlson et al., 2006; Stein & Edwards, 1998) at this time showed that the ideals established during her youth were still important. She still strove to be compassionate and to love others. This was a pattern throughout her life and was, if anything, more significant in her later years. A concern for other human beings was less a theoretical abstraction as she grew older, and more a matter of practical involvement, indicating that she was not as motivated by an inferiority complex as she had been in her youth when her elevated social goals were self-serving (Jacobson, 1995).

7.7.2.7 Discouragement

Olive experienced periods of extreme discouragement during her old age. Predisposed to this by her ever-present self doubt and her underlying sense of inferiority, these episodes were precipitated by such very real stressors as the deaths of friends and family members, and the outbreak of war (Lewis, 2010). This is consistent with the Adlerian model of psychological maladjustment as a response to stressors posited by Carlson et al. (2006), and outlined in 2.4. Also contributing to her despondency was her disappointment in herself for not having achieved her goals, and the erosion of her faith in human social progress. This latter factor became prominent with the outbreak of the First World War, which meant the shattering of many of her social hopes and ideals. Her idealism, as previously mentioned, also made her extremely vulnerable to episodes of discouragement.

Olive responded to both stressors and to her discouragement, as she always had, by traveling and becoming ill. It should be mentioned that illness was a very real feature of her life at this stage, and was probably as much a stressor and source of despair as it was a response to her despondency (Berkman, 1989; First & Scott, 1989; Lewis, 2010). Also prominent, as indicated in 7.7.2.5, was Olive's mistrust of others, particularly women, and her sense of being persecuted by them (Beeton, 1987). The development of her paranoia is worth considering in some detail.

Olive's mistrust of women had originally arisen, in all likelihood, from a sense of being failed by her mother in her earliest years, and almost certainly from her sense of being rejected, misunderstood and mistreated by Rebecca in later childhood. This was exacerbated by her real persecution at the hands of Ettie. Erilda Cawood's rejection of her could only have confirmed her feelings of being unloved, unlovable, rejected and mistreated. Olive's wariness of women may well have constituted a defense against further rejection and the pain of loss. She must have been understandably sensitive in this respect. According to Adler (1956, 1996a, 1996b), increased sensitivity is a characteristic feature of discouraged individuals. In Olive's case it constituted a state of excessive alertness to the possibility of confirmation of her own underlying sense of worthlessness, and a readiness to defend herself against this. Her sense of being persecuted may also have served to absolve her of any complicity in the interpersonal tangles in which she quite often found herself. Her protestations of innocence in some such cases, previously mentioned, support this. Having built her identity around the espousal of love for fellow human beings and social progress, and with these as her highest ideals, she might well have had difficulty in admitting when she was at fault during an altercation. Her belief that she was persecuted entailed, essentially, an accusation of others. By blaming others she was able to shore up her fragile self-esteem by avoiding responsibility for her actions in such cases (Olson & Hergenbahn, 2010).

7.8 Commentary

7.8.1 Life and theory: degree of fit

The theory of Individual Psychology appears, in many respects, ideally suited to making sense of Olive's life. Her own words, as well as those of her narrators, fictional characters and biographers, seem to provide convincing evidence for key Adlerian constructs as central features of her life. For example, she experienced a sense of inferiority and in response developed a number of life goals towards which she continually strove. The relationship between her inferiority feelings and goals, and the associated striving, constituted a pattern that was discernable throughout her life. This suggests a fairly consistent life style. Aspects of this life style included, on the one hand, a tendency to sublimate or transmute her own inferiority feelings into a capacity for empathising with others; and on the other, an inclination to set such high goals in response to those feelings that she had, persistently, to defend herself against the threats to her self-esteem that such elevated goals created.

7.8.2. Olive in sickness and in health

There is a feature of Olive's life however, for which Adlerian theory appears not to offer an adequate explanation. This entails making sense of the seemingly contradictory evidence in respect of her psychological maladjustment on the one hand, and her social interest on the other. For Adler (e.g., 1956, 1958, 1970) the presence of social interest was the most significant indicator of an individual's psychological health. An attempt to conceptualise Schreiner's life in terms of Individual Psychology then, begs the obvious question of how somebody who demonstrated obvious features of social interest could also exhibit such clear signs of psychological maladjustment. There are a number of possible answers that are worth considering.

Perhaps the most obvious is provided by Stein and Edwards (1998), who stated that people might show signs of maladjustment in certain areas of their lives, and on

certain levels, but might be quite healthy and exhibit social interest in others. This notion may have partial validity when considering Olive's life. For example, it was argued in previous sections that a notable instance of her maladjustment was evident in the persistent thwarting of her literary aspirations because of her need to guard against her inferiority feelings. This would appear to be an area of her life in which she was particularly discouraged. However, there were other areas in which her behaviour was also self-defeating and where she was discouraged (First & Scott, 1989; Schoeman, 1991). It is simply not possible to see her difficulties and struggles as being circumscribed, or limited to particular facets of her life.

Another related possibility is that Olive was discouraged at certain times of her life, but not at others. This essentially was the position advanced by Berkman (1989), who suggested that Olive's youth was characterised by torment, conflict and unhappiness, but that she returned from England a more mature and happier person. It is true that upon her return to South Africa in 1889, Olive seemed happier, more at peace, and less conflicted about relationships than she had previously been. She had definitely changed and in many respects, showed fewer signs of psychological maladjustment. This, however, was not the whole story. There were unhealthy aspects of her lifestyle that persisted into this period, and some that appear to have deteriorated. She was, for example, unable to produce fictional work as she had in the past. The success of *African farm* might have bolstered her confidence on one level, but she also felt herself to be under a tremendous amount of pressure with regard to any possible future publications. This, together with her already elevated goals and aspirations, meant that she had to defend herself against threats to her self-esteem by avoiding situations, such as publication, where it might be at risk. The point is to indicate that the relationship between time and discouragement was not a simple one in Olive's life.

Another possible explanation is that Olive's ostensible social interest was really self-serving and not true social interest at all. This possibility has been suggested by Jacobson (1995), who indicated that the various causes espoused in her fictional works, and in *African farm* in particular, were less examples of social engagement than

theoretical abstractions that served as a form of sanctioned escape. He believed that their purpose was to elevate Olive's sense of virtue. There would appear to be a great deal of truth in his contention, as previously stated. It should also be pointed out that, according to Adler (1956), the purpose of the goal is to help the individual feel superior by imagining a desired outcome in the present when inferiority feelings predominate. This is entirely consistent with Jacobson's position regarding Olive during her late adolescence and early adulthood. However, it should also be mentioned that the causes espoused by Olive at the time, and the goals towards which she strove, were part of a style of life that persisted over time, and which included very real and concrete humanitarian acts that were truly indicative of social interest.

The converse of the above position is also worth considering, and in this respect it should be asked if the episodes of unhappiness and despondency experienced by Olive could be called discouragement in the Adlerian sense of the word, which was synonymous with the term *neurotic* (e.g., Adler, 1996b). Might she have been legitimately and understandably unhappy about such traumatic events as war, the death of her child and physical illness, without resorting to a flight from responsibility or engaging in unhealthy interpersonal strategies designed to shore up her fragile self-esteem? There would, in fact, appear to have been examples of such episodes in her life, as previously discussed. Nevertheless it is not possible to explain all episodes of psychological distress in these terms, and this position would appear to be only partially valid. The question of whether psychological distress necessarily constitutes discouragement, and the exact criteria for diagnosing maladjustment within the Adlerian framework, requires further study and more precise definition.

In a similar vein, it is worth reflecting on the extent to which Olive's distress was a consequence of her social interest. For example, she championed causes and held ideological positions that were unpopular with the majority of her peers and this earned her a great deal of criticism, not least of which came from family members and close friends. This wounded her deeply and, at times, seemed to trigger episodes of depression and physical illness. This might be seen as a feature of her lifestyle, one in which protest

played an integral part. The criticism engendered by her protest might, as previously argued, even have enabled her to feel virtuous. Nevertheless it also caused very real pain. This view, again though, neither accounts for nor offers an explanation of all facets or incidents of discouragement in Olive's life.

The possibilities mentioned above have entailed, essentially, attempts to reconcile the apparent paradox of the presence, in Olive's life, of features of both psychological health and psychological ill-health. It should be stressed, however, that these attempts are concerned with the theoretical framework employed, and not with the life under study. Olive's life was, after all, just what it was. She showed signs of psychological health and of psychological disturbance, and understanding the relationship between the two is difficult. As Beeton (1987) has noted: "*In dealing with a temperament such as hers one simply has to try to come to terms with paradox*" (p. 21). If Adlerian theory is applied to Olive's life as a set of rigid, mutually exclusive categories such as *social interest* versus *psychopathology*, it can never do justice to the complexity of that life. Social interest may not be the definitive criterion for establishing health, even if it is a very important one. This might hold true for other lives as well, and deserves further consideration and study.

In fairness to Adler (e.g., 1956), he was opposed to rigid categorisation in any form. He insisted that assumptions be bracketed and applied judiciously, and warned that any theoretical position might not hold true for a particular individual. In a case such as Olive's life then, the psychobiographer can always take refuge in this phenomenological attitude, and see a construct such as social interest as a useful heuristic device, but not one that has to be imposed dogmatically.

7.8.3 Asthma and its relationship to Olive's life

A number of Schreiner scholars (e.g., Friedmann, 1955; First & Scott, 1989) have interpreted Olive's ill health, and in particular her asthma, as being a significant aspect of her psychological difficulties. First and Scott, for example, referred to the condition as a neurotic solution to her life's problems. This interpretation is consistent with Adlerian

views on such physical conditions as asthma and their relationship to the broader life style (e.g., Adler, 1956; Bottome, 1957). It might however, also reflect a comparative paucity of knowledge about asthma at the time of writing. While current research does not entirely rule out a relationship between stress or emotional factors and asthma, it also does not indicate a direct relationship between the two (Bienenstock, 2002; Huovinen, Kario & Koskenvuo, 2001; Rietveld, Everaerd & Creer, 2000). For this reason the researcher has been rather circumspect about interpreting its role in Olive's life style. This hesitation has not excluded the argument for an association between asthma and periods of emotional stress, since an examination of Olive's life has revealed evidence for a relationship between the two. Rather, the researcher has avoided unfounded claims, such as those made by some early Adlerians (e.g., Bottome, 1957) and Schreiner scholars (e.g., Friedmann, 1955), about physical conditions such as asthma being produced by the individual in the service of an unhealthy lifestyle, or as a result of psychological conflict. Asthma has not been interpreted as having primarily a psychological or intrapsychic aetiology. Instead, Olive's reactions to the asthma and the use which she made of her symptoms in the context of her lifestyle have been emphasised. This approach is, moreover, also consistent with even classical Adlerian theory as discussed in Chapter 2.

7.8.4 Alternative interpretations

A number of Schreiner's biographers (e.g., First & Scott, 1989; Friedmann, 1955) have employed psychoanalytic theory to understand her life, and have consequently focused on her intrapsychic conflict. Such dynamics have received little attention in this research. This is because the use of a particular theory leads to a selective focus on certain aspects of a life, and certain kinds of data that are consistent with the framework are employed. Validity is established according to the coherence and consistency of the conceptualisation, and based on adequate supporting evidence. Individual Psychology, while a psychodynamic approach, emphasises holism and therefore rejects the notion of intrapsychic conflict (Adler, 1956; Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956; Gold, 2005).

There are, however, many possible ways to interpret Olive's life and all of these could conceivably offer interesting and illuminating perspectives. A psychoanalytically oriented psychobiography, for example, might be helpful in shedding light on the development of her sex-role identity. Another approach to Olive's life that might be particularly informative would be a narrative psychobiography. The similarities between Individual Psychology and a narrative approach have already been mentioned. The term life script has been employed at times in this study, and used as synonymous with lifestyle. It was also mentioned that much of Olive's life was prefigured and reflected in her fictional work. The study, however, was not conducted from a narrative perspective. A study of her life and literature, employing this method, and examining her life and texts for plot and narrative structure, would be extremely interesting. It might also shed more light on the relationship between her life and her writing, even if such a separation of life and language would be considered anathema by extreme social constructionists.

Another interesting study might entail a specific focus on the development of Olive's feminism. This facet of her life has been discussed throughout the study as an important aspect of her lifestyle. However it was regarded as one characteristic of her style of life and conceptualised in fairly orthodox Adlerian terms, rather than from a feminist perspective. Adler (e.g., 1956), as previously indicated, was sympathetic to feminism and his theory took into account the effects on women of an entrenched and pervasive view of their inferiority. However, this is not a feature of the theory that has been well developed. Using Individual Psychology to understand better Olive's feminism, while at the same time developing this component of the theory, could conceivably result in useful research.

7.9 Summary

This chapter, as one of its aims, has presented data, drawn from the different stages of Olive's life, in support of the respective key concepts of the theory of Individual Psychology. On the whole there was a substantial amount of such data, although for specific life stages, such as old age, there was less information available. Overall the data

allowed for a composite picture of a complex character. In some respects the data was contradictory, reflecting the paradoxes in the life of the subject under study.

Another aim of this chapter has been the conceptualisation of Olive's life in terms of the principles of Individual Psychology. Olive suffered a lonely, painful childhood and developed, for a number of reasons already mentioned, a sense of inferiority that dogged her for her entire life. In response she established goals towards which she strove throughout her life. To a large extent she was able to draw on her own painful experience and translate it into a capacity for empathy with, and compassion for, other people. Her concern for others, her social interest, was evident in her goals and in her striving to achieve them. In other respects, however, she had to resort to physical and psychological symptoms in order to protect herself from her elevated aspirations and to shore up her tenuous sense of worth. The chapter has explained this process and offered an attempt to make sense of the seemingly contradictory or paradoxical aspects of Olive's lifestyle.

A final aim of this chapter has been to offer a commentary on the relationship between Olive's life and the theory used to explain it. In general the conceptualisation of the life was judged to be coherent and consistent, although areas in which the theory failed adequately to explain the life were highlighted and discussed. Suggestions for further research were made. The next chapter concludes the study.

CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 Chapter preview

This chapter finalises the thesis. It revisits the research objectives and discusses the extent to which they were met. The value of the study is considered, as are its possible weaknesses and limitations. Recommendations for further research are made. It offers a brief concluding summary of the study's findings, Olive's life and the theory of Individual Psychology.

8.2 Study objectives revisited

8.2.1 Problem statement

The study was concerned with offering an explanation of Olive's life in terms of Individual Psychology. No psychobiographies with Olive as a subject, employing formal theories of psychology applied in a systematic manner and using established methodologies, had previously been conducted.

8.2.2 Aim

The aim of the study was to conceptualise Olive's life in terms of the principles of Individual Psychology, thereby offering an illuminating account of her life. The research was therefore psychobiographical. In order to ensure acceptable standards of rigour in the conceptualisation of the life, and to draw conclusions with confidence, the researcher searched for evidence of key theoretical constructs in the different phases of Olive's life, and drew on three types of data from multiple sources in a process known as data triangulation (Duffy, 1987; Yin, 2009). The use of a data analysis matrix facilitated this process (see sections 5.2.3 and 6.7).

8.3 Summary of findings and conceptualisation

Olive appears to have felt inferior from an early age. While many Adlerians (e.g., Adler, 1952, 1996b; Orgler, 1963; Stein & Edwards, 1998) view childhood as inherently frustrating, there were a number of specific factors that contributed to her feelings in this respect. They included her perception of her parents as distant and rejecting; the judgmental and prohibitive religious climate of her childhood home, associated with which were episodes of harsh punishment, and which led to a sense of guilt in Olive; and the restrictions placed on her as a girl in white colonial South Africa (Barsby, 1995; First & Scott, 1989; Friedmann, 1955; Lewis, 2010; Schoeman, 1991). This sense of inferiority persisted throughout her life, and while its intensity varied, it was generally severe enough to constitute what Adlerians (e.g., Adler, 1956, 1958, 1996a; Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956) call an inferiority complex or discouragement. Olive's sense of inferiority was perpetuated and exacerbated by various experiences during later life stages.

In response to her inferiority feelings, and to assuage those feelings, Olive established a number of life goals. While they varied with time and circumstances, there were certain consistent themes across her lifespan. For example, the childhood goal of virtue or goodness, set in response to her early sense of guilt, led to a desire to be useful to others. Self-sacrifice and a commitment to helping others was a significant feature of Olive's life until she died.

A notable characteristic of Olive's goals was their elevated nature. Consistent with Adler's (e.g., 1956, 1965) views in this regard, these goals reflected the depth of her inferiority feelings, feelings which they were designed to overcome. Olive's idealism in this respect meant (a) that her compensatory striving for superiority was compulsive in nature, and (b) that she set herself up for certain failure because her goals were unrealistic. This was perhaps best illustrated during her years abroad. It was then that she felt that the hopes, ideals and aspirations nurtured in comparative isolation in the South African interior, were to be put to the test (Schoeman, 1991). It was a test that Olive

could not afford to fail, or even really take. Failing would confirm, forcefully, her deep sense of inadequacy. It was in this respect that she employed particular symptoms to protect her precarious self-esteem. One such symptom, her illness, gave her an excuse to fail and an opportunity to rest from her incessant striving without having to relinquish her cherished ideals.

Olive's early experience of rejection, alienation and oppression, exacerbated by persecution and the frustration she felt at the restrictions placed on her as a woman in later life, meant that a sense of weakness and inadequacy were key features of her schema of apperception. Her inferiority feelings were severe enough to be regarded as an inferiority complex (Adler, 1996a, 1996b). Her schema of apperception was correspondingly rigid and in many ways disposed her to see the world as threatening, particularly in respect of her fragile sense of worth. As such it might be considered an antithetical schema of apperception, a view of the world that did not always reflect common sense and was at odds with reality (Adler, 1956). This was illustrated by her belief that people, and women in particular, were against her. It was also evident in her delaying publications, which might expose her to further criticism. These were essentially symptoms that reflected her sense of inferiority but which, along with other symptoms such as illness and flight, also helped her to avoid threats to her self-worth. As such the symptoms constituted part of a style of life characterised by the avoidance of threats through distancing.

Paradoxically however, Olive was able to draw on her feelings of weakness and inadequacy, and her experience of oppression and persecution, to understand others whom she saw as oppressed. Her capacity to do so resulted in a lifestyle of protest against injustice and discrimination, whether on the basis of gender, race, ethnicity or socio-economic status. She saw herself as a champion of the underdog (Schoeman, 1991, 1992; Schreiner, 1987) and however condescending her views might have been in this respect (First & Scott, 1989), they led to a lifestyle of service reflecting a great deal of social interest (Adler, 1956; Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956).

The use of Individual Psychology to conceptualise Olive's life led, in general, to a plausible and coherent account of that life. It allowed for an illuminating explanation of various facets of her personality; including her development, her creativity, her psychological health and her psychological maladjustment. There was a great deal of evidence for key constructs of Individual Psychology as significant features of her lifestyle. The theory appeared, in many respects, well suited to making sense of her life. The study therefore demonstrated an acceptable level of internal validity and, as a result, it is possible to conclude that the objective of the study was met.

8.4 Value of the study

The chief value of the research lay in the explanation given of the life of a famous and enigmatic figure who made a substantial contribution to society. In spite of the great number of Schreiner scholars and the large volume of literature inspired by Olive's work, no formal psychobiography of her life has previously been conducted. This study, as indicated previously in 1.3 and 6.4, offered explanations of remarkable and puzzling aspects of her life and work. For this reason it should be of interest to Schreiner scholars.

All Olive's biographers have made interpretations regarding her psychological condition and behaviour. Many, such as those offered by Schoeman (1991, 1992), have been carefully considered, supported by thorough research, and are impressively astute. Some of these interpretations have been used as data or evidence in this study, and some conclusions drawn about Olive have not differed from those of the biographers. The significance of such conclusions reached in this research for academics working within the genre of psychobiography, is that they are based on a formal theory of psychology and derived through the use of systematised and established research methods. Some of the interpretations offered in the study are novel, however. One such is the account of Olive's failure to produce any significant work of fiction after the publication of *The story of an African farm* in 1883. The thesis advanced in 7.6.2.7 is essentially that Olive had the talent and ability to produce more and better fiction, but adopted a hesitating attitude in order to postpone publication, thereby avoiding threats to her tenuous sense of

worth. Writing fiction was perceived by Olive as a great risk. Works of non-fiction might attract criticism, but this was consistent with a style of life characterised by protest and rebellion, and did not carry the risk of activating the schemas associated with her deeply held sense of inferiority. This account could be interesting to Schreiner scholars who have debated this aspect of her life for decades.

A second value of the study is related to the opportunity it presented to showcase Individual Psychology. Adler's theory is gaining increasing interest and popularity, particularly as psychologists and other theorists realise the degree to which it resonates with current thinking in a number of disciplines. The use of the theory for a conceptual framework necessitated its comprehensive presentation and discussion. This provided the opportunity to compare and contrast Adler's original theory with contemporary research and theorising by neo-Adlerians, as well as by researchers and practitioners in other fields. Some classical notions, such as the development of the prototype of personality in early childhood, are not generally accepted to be valid. Other views, such as the psychological unity of people and holism, are finding increasing support in a number of fields. Moreover, the process of conceptualising Olive's life allowed for the appropriateness of the theory to be assessed and, to some extent, confirmed or refuted. While Individual Psychology appeared suited to making sense of Olive's life in most areas, in one it did not seem to offer an adequate explanation. This entailed making sense of the seemingly contradictory evidence in respect of her obvious social interest on the one hand, and her clear psychological maladjustment on the other. This apparent weakness of the theory, while not an insurmountable obstacle to conceptualising the life, highlights the need for additional theorising and research. The study then essentially allowed for a limited degree of theory development and refinement, and indicated the need for further such development in certain areas. In this respect it could be regarded as useful by Individual Psychologists regardless of whether or not they have an interest in psychobiography.

The autobiographical nature of the Adlerian concept of *lifestyle* means that Individual Psychology is suited to case study and psychobiographical research

(McAdams, 2006). Moreover, the typically morphogenic nature of such research is consistent with the underlying principles of Adler's theory, which emphasises holism, subjectivism and the uniqueness of individuals (Carlson et al., 2006; Shelly, 2006). Although a number of Adlerian psychobiographies have been published (e.g., Chéze, 2009; Clark, 2005; Pearson & Wilborn, 1995), these studies have usually been of limited extent and scope. The present study has examined an entire life for evidence of key theoretical constructs, and it has employed established qualitative methodologies to do so. It therefore demonstrates to interested researchers in Individual Psychology a potential forum for theory refinement and development, one that does not violate the central tenets of Adlerian theory. This is a significant concern to many Individual Psychologists, as Shelley has pointed out.

It was mentioned above that established qualitative methodologies were utilised in the research. Two strategies for data extraction were employed. The one entailed a reliance on theoretical propositions and the second involved a descriptive framework for organising the case study. The strategies were combined through the use of a data analysis matrix (Yin, 2009). These methods were developed for case study research and were adopted and adapted for use in a psychobiographical study. Fouché (1999) had previously employed this system for data coding and reduction in a psychobiography. However, its use in an explanatory study, combined with a process of data triangulation, constitutes a comparatively novel development. Moreover, it is one which offers a rigorous framework for data extraction. In an explanatory study such as this, it allows for theory to be linked to data in a disciplined manner, thereby facilitating a compelling argument about the relationship between the two. The quality of the link between theory and data during conceptualisation determines whether or not the study possesses internal validity. Internal validity is crucial in an explanatory psychobiography where the emphasis is generally on analytic generalisation rather than external validity or statistical generalisation. The method employed in this research offers psychobiographers a system for collecting and analysing data, and linking data to theory in a concise way. As such it is potentially of use to local and international psychobiographers.

8.5 Limitations of the study

One possible criticism of the study derives from its use of a qualitative method and a single case design. Such methods are typically employed in psychobiographical research, and they limit the extent to which findings and conclusions can be generalised to other individuals or populations. While such generalisation was never an aim of this study, and while, as argued in 4.5.5, psychobiographies may possess external validity, these limitations could be seen as a weakness of the research.

Another possible limitation of the study is the use of a single theory for the explanatory framework. Some theorists (e.g., McAdams, 2005) have suggested, as indicated in 4.5.4, that psychobiographies draw on a number of theories in order to avoid reductionism, as well as pathologising and over-simplifying lives. While it was argued in 1.5 and 5.6 that Individual Psychology was well suited to psychobiographical studies and that its employment addressed some of the concerns outlined above, its exclusive use might be considered a weakness of the research. One danger inherent in the use of a single theory is that it necessarily leads to a selective focus on specific data. Other data, inconsistent with the framework employed, are omitted or ignored. This means that certain aspects of the life under study may not be adequately explained or considered at all.

The use of a single theory then impacts on, and necessarily limits, data collection and analysis. Associated with this is the potential problem of the hermeneutic circle, emphasised by Edwards (1998) and discussed previously in 5.2.5. The danger here is that the data are incorporated into the conceptual framework, resulting in a process of circular reasoning. In other words, researchers may find what they are looking for and ignore evidence to the contrary. While efforts were made to limit this threat to the research, the use of a single theory did result, as indicated above, in a degree of selective and limited focus.

A weakness of the theory employed, and it was one that only became apparent during the process of conceptualisation, concerns the degree to which the concept *social interest* is related to mental health. For Adler (e.g., 1956, 1958, 1970) social interest was the most significant indicator of psychological health and adjustment. However, Olive displayed evidence of both social interest and psychological maladjustment, and it was not possible to reconcile the two within the theoretical framework. This was discussed in 7.8.2, where it was concluded that social interest might not be the definitive or sole criterion for establishing whether a lifestyle is healthy or not. The questionable validity of the construct did not prove to be a major impediment to conceptualising Olive's life, and may be seen as a strength of the study, particularly since it points to the necessity for further theorising and research. Nevertheless, it proved to be a limitation of the theory and it did impact on the aim of the study.

8.6 Recommendations for future research

Two suggestions for further research are made. The first is concerned with explaining Olive's life. Psychobiographies employing other theories or combinations of theories could offer useful alternative interpretations, or better explain certain aspects of her life. This suggestion was previously made in 7.8.4, where specific recommendations were made. As indicated above, Individual Psychology is suited to psychobiographical studies and addresses many of the potential hazards inherent in such research. However, its exclusive use necessarily leads to a selective focus on specific data, while others are ignored or omitted.

The second suggestion pertains to the theory employed. Adler's concept of social interest is a significant aspect of Individual Psychology. However, as indicated in 7.8.2 and 8.4 above, its existence might not be the definitive criterion for pronouncing psychological health. Further research concerning the relationship between social interest and health and for establishing the validity of the construct is recommended.

8.7 Concluding summary: Alfred Adler and Individual Psychology

Alfred Adler was a remarkable theorist and clinician who developed his theory of *Individual Psychology* after breaking with the Viennese Psychoanalytic Society, an organisation of which he was president for a time. Generally regarded as one of the three founding figures of modern psychology and psychotherapy, Adler's theory never gained the popular acceptance that those of Freud and Jung received. This was almost certainly because his ideas were out of step with the *zeitgeist* of that era. This was unfortunate, even ironic, because his work has probably had a greater influence on actual clinical practice than either Freud's or Jung's. Moreover, his ideas are reflected in contemporary anthropology, biology and physics, and resonate with current thinking in psychology and psychotherapy. His theory seems to be gaining in popularity as psychologists discover the relevance of his views for their work (Carlson et al., 2006; Weber, 2003).

A critical evaluation or test of Individual Psychology was never an explicit or a stated aim of the study, but presenting the theory was necessary since it was employed to explain Olive's life. A critique of the theory took place in order to facilitate a comprehensive understanding of Adlerian Psychology. The research therefore offered the opportunity to showcase the theory and to assess its relevance and applicability. The comprehensive presentation of the theory in Chapter 2 and the commentary on the application of the theory in Chapter 7 suggests that the research was successful in this respect.

8.8 Concluding summary: Olive Schreiner

Olive was an extraordinary and complex woman whose life spanned a tumultuous period in South African and world history. She is probably best represented in popular consciousness by the image of a lonely governess writing *The story of an African farm* at night, by the light of the moon and a tallow candle. However, she was also involved in a number of humanitarian causes, most notably feminism, pacifism and the striving for democracy in South Africa. Many of Olive's biographers believed that she never

achieved her potential as a writer of fiction, and that she did not make full use of all the opportunities available to her. It is almost certainly true that Olive felt the same way. Nevertheless, to emphasise what she did not achieve is to risk making a tragic figure of her, and to lose sight of her accomplishments. Her life was often sad, painful and filled with disappointments, frequently of her own making, but if in reality she was not quite the unschooled, unfulfilled literary genius that she is often portrayed to be, she was not a tragic figure either.

In many ways the story of Schreiner's life was prefigured and reflected in the allegory of the hunter, narrated by Waldo's Stranger in *African farm*. She spent her life striving towards goals that would never be realised in her lifetime. At best she caught a glimpse of a vision of the future in which those humanitarian ideals might be achieved. Nevertheless, her efforts lent impetus to a number of fledgling humanitarian movements, and made the struggle much easier for those who could come after her.

8.9 Summary

This chapter has concluded the research project. It has offered a brief summary of the study objectives, discussed the extent to which they were met and reflected on the value and limitation of the research. It contains suggestions for further research, as well as concluding summaries of the work of Alfred Adler and the life of Olive Schreiner.

The research has presented the work of Alfred Adler, an astute theorist and clinician whose thinking was profound and which has the potential to enrich the work of psychotherapists working within a number of theoretical frameworks. His theory, together with adaptations made by neo-Adlerians, was used to conceptualise Olive's life. Olive was an exceptional woman whose life and work retain the power to inspire and speak to contemporary South Africans and indeed anyone who takes the trouble to try to understand her. She remains enigmatic. In the words of her biographer, Heather Parker Lewis:

*It is difficult to sum up Olive's achievements in the same manner that one can pronounce on a writer whose life has rounded off very nicely. Olive cannot be dealt with in this fashion, because so many other factors get in the way. One may argue she never reached her potential, but then, in the circumstances, what with her poor health combined with her political stance, that always went against the stream of things, one can also claim she excelled. Shunted off to one side, ignored, ridiculed, left to her own devices in a backwater, Olive continued to do what she knew she had to do. She ended her life unfulfilled in some ways, more fulfilled in others. Perhaps her greatest tragedy was being born a genius, generations ahead of her time. Her greatest dilemma was how to live a life **that desired truth above all things** – while society did its best to constrain women who did not conform to its moral codes and social values. (Lewis, 2010, p. 197, emphasis in original)*

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APPENDIX A

Chronology of Olive Schreiner's life

The numerals in parentheses indicate corresponding locations shown on the map in Appendix B. Red numerals on the map indicate movements until 1881, before Olive left South Africa for England. Black numerals indicate movements from 1889, after her return.

- 1855 Olive Schreiner is born at Wittebergen on 24 March (1).

- 1857 William Philip Schreiner (Will) is born at Wittebergen on 30 August.

- 1858 Theo Schreiner leaves for England.
Alice Schreiner leaves for Cape Town.

- 1860 Katie Schreiner marries John Findlay in August.
Cameron Schreiner dies at Wittebergen.

- 1861 The Schreiners leave Wittebergen in February; in March Gottlob takes up his post at the Industrial Institution at Healdtown (2).

- 1863 Alice Schreiner marries Robert Hemming in March.
Theo Schreiner returns from England.

- 1864 Helen Schreiner (Ellie) is born at Healdtown in March.

- 1865 Ellie dies at Healdtown in August.
Gottlob resigns from the WMS.
The Schreiners relocate to Balfour (3).

- 1866 Gottlob is insolvent by September.
- 1868 Theo Schreiner takes up a position as school principle in Cradock, where Ettie joins him. Olive and Will join them later in the year (4).
- 1870 Theo leaves for the diamond fields.
Olive visits the Hemmings in Burgersdorp (5) and the Orpens in Avoca (6).
- 1871 Olive visits Mrs Nesbitt at Kraai River (7) in April; she visits the Rollands in Hermon (8).
Olive travels to Dordrecht to stay with the Robinsons (9).
- 1872 Agnes Robinson dies at Dordrecht in February.
Olive moves to the Gaus in Dordrecht; she later returns to her parents' home at Hertzog (10).
Olive joins Theo and Ettie on the diamond fields (11).
- 1873 Olive works on *Undine Bock*.
She leaves the diamond fields for Fraserburg (12) where she arrives in November.
Olive meets John and Mary Brown in Fraserburg.
- 1874 Olive travels to Cape Town (13) with the Hemmings; she leaves Cape Town in February and returns to her parents at Hertzog (14).
Olive takes up a position as governess with the Weakley's in Colesburg (15) where she arrives in May.
- 1875 In February Olive leaves the Weakleys and takes up a position as governess with the Fouché family on Klein Gannahoek near Cradock (16).
- 1876 *Undine* is completed.
In May Olive takes up a position as governess with the Martin family on

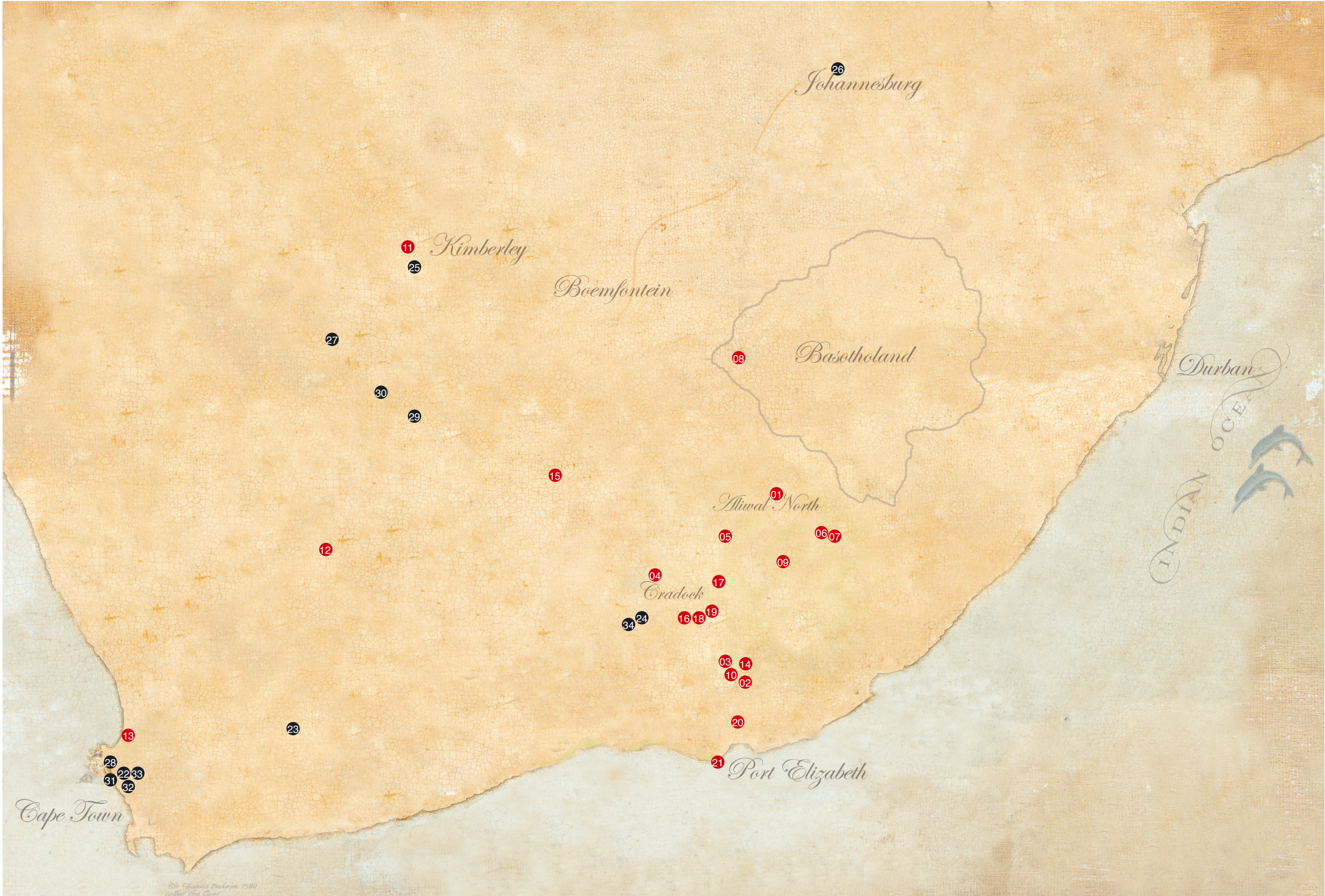
- Ratelhoek near Tarkastad (17).
Gottlob dies in August.
- 1879 In March Olive leaves Ratelhoek; she visits the Cawoods at Gannahoek (18).
African farm is nearly completed during this period.
On 25th July Erilda Cawood writes her letter of rejection to Olive.
In August Olive returns to the Fouché family, now at Leliekloof (19) near Cradock.
- 1881 Olive visits her mother in Grahamstown in February (20).
In March Olive leaves South Africa (21) for England; she arrives on 30th March.
In April Olive visits John and Mary Brown at Burnley.
Olive enters the Royal Infirmary to study nursing, but leaves after three days.
In May Olive travels to Eastbourne to stay with her brother Fred.
Later in the same year Olive again attempts to study nursing, at the Womens' Hospital in London; after five days she becomes ill and withdraws.
Olive spends the winter of 1881/1882 on the Isle of Wight.
- 1882 Olive spends much of this year attempting to have *African farm* published.
Her mood is persistently and significantly depressed for much of this year.
- 1883 *African farm* is published early in this year.
- 1884 Olive and Havelock Ellis begin to correspond early in this year; they meet in May.
During the middle of this year Olive is quite seriously ill.
- 1885 Olive attends meetings of the Fellowship of the New Life and involves herself in the Men and Womens' Club.
- 1886 Early in this year Bryan Donkin proposes marriage to Olive.

- During the first half of this year Olive develops a correspondence with Karl Pearson, and assists him in gathering information for his study of women. By December the relationship between Olive and Pearson has broken down; Olive is seriously ill, depressed and suicidal.
- 1887 Olive leaves England for the Continent.
- 1889 Olive returns to England; she leaves England and arrives back in South Africa in November (22).
- 1890 Olive settles in Matjesfontein (23) where she meets Cecil Rhodes, the Cape Prime Minister.
- 1891 Olive begins the *Buddhist priest's wife*.
- 1892 Olive meets Samuel Cron Cronwright (Cron).
- 1894 In February Olive and Cronwright are married; they initially live at Krantzplaats (24) but move to Kimberley shortly thereafter (25).
- 1895 Olive's baby girl is born and dies in April.
- 1896 The Jameson raid takes place. Its failure forces Rhodes to resign as prime minister.
Olive writes *Trooper Peter Halket*.
- 1898 The Cronwright-Schreiners relocate to Johannesburg (26).
- 1899 Olive writes *A South African's view of the situation*.
Olive spends time at Karreekloof (27) near Hopetown.
The Boer War breaks out in October.

- Olive and Cron move to Cape Town (28).
- 1900 Olive lives under martial law in Hanover (29).
- 1902 The Boer War ends.
- 1907 Olive becomes vice president of the Women's Enfranchisement League.
Olive and Cron move to De Aar (30).
She completes *Woman and labour*.
- 1913 Olive leaves for England to seek medical assistance (31).
- 1914 Outbreak of the First World War.
- 1920 Cronwright, now retired, visits Olive in England in July.
In August Olive leaves England for South Africa (32).
Olive dies on the night of 10th December in Cape Town (33); she is buried at the Maitland Cemetery.
- 1921 On 13th August Olive is reinterred on Buffelskop near Cradock (34).

APPENDIX B

Olive Schreiner's movements in South Africa



SUMMARY

Olive Schreiner (1855-1920) was a famous South African novelist and humanitarian. A remarkable and enigmatic woman, her life and work have inspired a substantial amount of research by Schreiner scholars representing a diversity of academic disciplines. They continue to speculate about the extent of her contribution to society, the degree to which she realised her potential as a writer and the nature of her psychological disturbance.

Olive was chosen as the subject of this research because she was so interesting, complex and controversial. She has been the subject of numerous biographies. All have offered interpretations of her life and some have employed formal theories of psychology to do so. None has utilised explicit or established psychological research designs and methodologies.

The aim of this study was to conceptualise Olive's life in terms of the principles of Individual Psychology, thereby providing an illuminating account of her life and offering explanations of her creativity, altruism, psychological difficulties and general personality development. Individual Psychology is the theory developed by Alfred Adler (1870-1937). It is a holistic theory, emphasising subjectivism and the creative roles of individuals in developing their lifestyles. Adler's work has had a significant influence on psychotherapeutic practice although he has received comparatively little recognition for his contributions to contemporary psychology. The autobiographical nature of the Adlerian concept of *lifestyle* and the theory's focus on the uniqueness of human beings means that it is well suited to the study of individual lives.

The study can be described as life history research. It employed a single case, holistic design and entailed a psychobiographical study of a single subject over an entire lifespan. The research was explanatory and the method was qualitative. Two strategies for data extraction and analysis were employed. One entailed the use of theoretical propositions to identify relevant data, and the other involved the development of a

descriptive framework for organising the case material. The combination of these strategies enabled the researcher to obtain evidence for key theoretical constructs throughout Olive's life. This type of psychobiographical research is useful in understanding rare or unique phenomena and its application to the lives of enigmatic individuals facilitates theory development and testing.

The researcher concluded that Individual Psychology was well suited to conceptualising Olive's life, and that it offered a plausible and coherent explanation of her moral development, creativity and her psychological distress. Olive's lifestyle, in accordance with the tenets of Individual Psychology, was understood to be motivated by a deep sense of inferiority which she spent her life striving to overcome. To this end, and in an attempt to protect her fragile sense of self-worth, she employed particular symptoms. Most obvious were her attempts at safeguarding her self-esteem by distancing herself from life's challenges. In many respects she displayed evidence of the Adlerian concept *social interest*, or a commitment to the welfare of others.

The study of Olive's personality provided a positive demonstration of the value of Adler's theory. The validity of the construct social interest as the primary indicator of mental health was questioned. Suggestions for further research were made.

Keywords: Olive Schreiner, Individual Psychology, psychobiography, life history.

OPSOMMING

Olive Schreiner (1855-1920) was 'n bekende Suid-Afrikaanse romanskrywer en filantroop. Die merkwaardige en enigmatiese vrou se lewe en werk het 'n aansienlike hoeveelheid navorsing inspireer deur geleerdes wat diverse akademiese dissiplines verteenwoordig. Hulle spekuleer steeds oor die mate waarin sy tot die samelewing bygedra het, haar potensiaal as skrywer verwesenlik het, asook die aard van haar sielkundige versteuring.

Olive is as navorsingssubjek gekies omdat sy so interessant, kompleks en omstrede was. Talle biografieë is oor haar lewe geskryf. Hulle almal het interpretasies van haar lewe aangebied en sommige het in die proses formele sielkundige teorieë gebruik. Niks daarvan was egter op eksplisiete of gevestigde sielkundige navorsingsontwerpe of metodes gebaseer nie.

Die doelwit van hierdie studie was om Olive se lewe te konseptualiseer in terme van Individuele Sielkundige beginsels en was daarop gemik om lig te werp op haar lewe en verklarings aan te bied van haar kreatiwiteit, altruïsme, sielkundige probleme en algemene persoonlikheidsontwikkeling. Alfred Adler (1870-1937) was verantwoordelik vir die formulering van Individuele Sielkundeteorie. Dit is 'n holistiese teorie wat subjektiviteit en die kreatiewe rolle benadruk wat individue speel tydens die ontwikkeling van hul lewenstyle. Adler se werk het 'n beduidende invloed uitgeoefen op psigoterapeutiese praktyk ten spyte daarvan dat hy weinig erkenning ontvang het vir sy bydraes tot kontemporêre sielkunde. Die outobiografiese aard van die Adleriaanse konsep *lewenstyl* (life style) en die teorie se fokus op menslike uniekheid beteken dat die teorie baie geskik is vir die bestudering van indiwiduele lewens.

Die studie kan beskryf word as lewensgeskiedenisnavorsing. Dit was op 'n enkele gevalstudie en holistiese navorsingsontwerp gebaseer. Dit het voorts 'n psigobiografiese bestudering van 'n enkele subjek tydens 'n volledige lewensverloop behels. Die navorsing was verduidelikend en het kwalitatiewe metodologie gebruik. Tydens die dataekstraksie

en-ontleding is twee strategieë gebruik. Die een strategie het teoretiese stellings gebruik om relevante data te identifiseer, terwyl die ander die ontwikkeling van 'n beskrywende raamwerk gebruik het om gevalstudiemateriaal te organiseer. Die kombinasie van die twee strategieë het die navorser in staat gestel om bewyse te bekom vir sleutelkonstrukte wat 'n rol gespeel het tydens Olive se lewe. Die tipe psigobiografiese navorsing is nuttig om skaars of unieke verskynsels te begryp en hul toepassing op die lewens van enigmatiese individue fasiliteer teorie-ontwikkeling en toetsing.

Die navorser het tot die gevolgtrekking gekom dat Individuele Sielkunde besonder geskik is tydens die konseptualisering van Olive se lewe en dat dit aanneemlike en samehangende verduidelings verskaf vir haar morele ontwikkeling, kreatiwiteit en sielkundige probleme. Olive se lewenstyl was, in ooreenstemming met die aannames van Individuele Sielkunde, gemotiveer deur diepgaande minderwaardigheidsgevoelens. Sy het dwarsdeur haar lewe probeer om die gevoelens te oorkom. In die proses, en in 'n poging om haar brose eiewaarde te beskerm, het sy spesifieke simptome aangewend. Die mees opvallendste was haar pogings om haar selfagting te beskerm deur afstand te skep tussen haarself en die uitdagings van die lewe. Dit het in talle opsigte bewyse opgelewer vir die Adleriaanse konsep *sosiale belangstelling* (social interest), oftewel 'n verbintenis tot die welsyn van andere.

Die studie van Olive se persoonlikheid het die waarde van Adler se teorie op 'n positiewe wyse ten toon gestel. Die geldigheid van die konstruk sosiale belangstelling as primêre aanduiders van geestesgesondheid is terselfdertyd bevraagteken. Voorstelle vir verdere navorsing is gemaak.