

Chapter 1

Introduction

"(We)...are not inherent monsters. We are your sons, we are your husbands, and we grew up in regular families" - Theodore Bundy (in Paredes & Purdum, 1990).

1.1 Introduction

I started to read about serial murder in 1995. At that stage I knew very little about serial murder and my understanding was based on the stereotypical views as portrayed by the mass and entertainment media. From the literature I realized that little research has been done within the South African context. As a psychology student I became increasingly more interested in the motivation and behaviour of people who have committed serial murder.

I also could not comprehend the discrepancies inherent to the cited cases of serial murder. On the one hand it seemed as if these people live ordinary and "normal" lives. On the other hand they are people who have committed several violent murders. In his own words Ted Bundy, America's archetype of serial murder, acknowledges the double role when he declares (in Paredes & Purdum, 1990): "(We)...are not inherent monsters. We are your sons, we are your husbands, and we grew up in regular families".

In Bundy's statement one hears a dichotomy which seems to be inherent in the lives and behaviour of those who commit serial murder: being a seemingly respectable person and being able to murder several times, often in a violent manner. One may pose the question: why do people behave in this manner, what motivates their behaviour, what are their inherent characteristics, and to what extent do the genetic, relational, social, environmental and other factors play a possible role?

1.2 The aim of this study

In this research I use dialogue (interviews) as the route via which I attempt to open up the understanding of serial murder. The aim of this dissertation is to contribute towards a possible understanding of serial murder. It is not the aim to arrive at a unitary theory or complete explanation of serial murder, but rather to abstract psychological themes which may provide a better understanding of the individuals who have committed serial murder.

Four candidates were selected in accordance with the operational definition of serial murder. They were each interviewed and themes were abstracted from these interviews. The themes were integrated into a meaningful understanding of persons who have committed serial murder. These themes were compared with current literature and theories about serial murder.

A team approach was followed to provide a wider view of the phenomenon of serial murder. Two researchers, myself and Mr. Gérard Labuschagne, undertook the investigation. The research resulted in two complementary though independent studies. The one study is presented in this dissertation and the other in Mr. Labuschagne's dissertation titled: "Serial murder: An interactional analysis" (1997).

1.3 The use of descriptive terminology

In their investigation various authors refer to people who have committed serial murder as "serial murderers", "serial killers" or even "recreational killers" (Egger, 1984; Kozel Multimedia, 1995). These concepts promote categorization and labelling which reduces the complexity of the individual's personality and behaviour. The person who commits serial murder has a relatively normal life: this person is born into a family, goes to school, becomes part of a social structure, relates with others, has a job and goes about life like most other people.

In this dissertation the reader will continuously find reference to the descriptive phrase, "people who have committed serial murder". With this rephrasing an attempt is made to

shift the focus away from simplified categorization toward a recognition of the complexity of serial murder and those who commit it.

1.4 A chapter-by-chapter-overview

The subject under investigation is briefly introduced in Chapter One. Serial murder is contextualized by means of a literature survey in Chapter Two. Serial murder is described as a complex phenomenon which represents a form of human behaviour. The reader is provided with an operational definition of the concept of serial murder and themes from the research. The historical context, prevalence, the stereotype and serial murder in South Africa are also briefly discussed.

In Chapter Three a broad overview of the theoretical perspectives is given. Amongst others the intrapsychic explanation, learning theory and psychosocial explanation, and the general systemic and post-modern approach are set out. In Chapter Four the method and procedure of this research, based on the principles of Grounded Theory, are discussed.

In Chapter Five the results are presented descriptively and are based on the clinical impressions, the context and the themes extracted from the interviews. This is followed by Chapter Six where the results are interpreted and discussed. In Chapter Seven the results are integrated and related to existing theories. In Chapter Eight conclusions are reached. Criticism and recommendations for future research are also provided.

1.5 Conclusion

In the following chapter the brief introductory literature survey covers the understanding of the concept of serial murder and arrives at an operational definition. The historical context, prevalence of serial murder, stereotypes thereof, themes from research and serial murder in South Africa are also discussed.

Chapter 2

Literature study: a brief introduction

2.1 Introduction

Serial murder is a complex phenomenon that receives a disproportionate amount of interest. This interest is evident in both the formal and informal settings. This includes scientific research, police investigations, bureaucratic exploitation to further possible political agendas, coverage by the media and fiction, sensationalism and social discourse (Caputi, 1989; Jenkins, 1994; Paredes & Purdum, 1990).

This interest in serial murder is, however, understandable. According to Jenkins (1994), serial murder is generally seen as material for high drama, as it contains the following:

- serial murder has a sexual and sensationalistic content;
- serial murder provokes fear in society;
- the "evil villain" is being pursued (and usually captured) by the forces of order;
- the "serial killer" represents the ultimate villain in society; and
- the "serial killer" provokes an equal but opposite force from the agents within society.

According to Jenkins (1994), serial murder may be presented as a "rich system of modern day mythology". Traditionally mythology serves the purpose of trying to make sense of that which seems inexplicable (Jenkins, 1994). Ted Bundy, an American who committed serial murder, states the following: "...for people to want to condemn someone like me, is a very popular and effective way of dealing with a fear and a threat that is just incomprehensible" (Jenkins, 1994, p. 108). Bundy's statement seems valid, considering society's attempts to distinguish "serial killers" from the rest of society. This is done by means of categorization, pathologizing and/or mythicization (Jenkins, 1994; Paredes &

Purdum, 1990). In short, it seems that society needs to know that "these people" are inherently different from the rest. According to Paredes et al (1990), this may be a way in which society protects itself from an "own danger that lurks within".

The question, however, needs to be answered: what is serial murder and how can this behavioural phenomenon be scientifically defined?

2.2 An operational definition of serial murder

Liebert (1985) states that the task of defining serial murder should not be within the scope of psychology. Other authors (Ansevics & Doweiko, 1991; Snyman, 1992) maintain that there is no exact definition of serial murder. Researchers and clinicians seem to be limited in both the psychological definition and clinical understanding of serial murder (Ansevics et al., 1991; Bartholomew, Milte & Galbally, 1975).

However, it is conceptually essential for this research to describe and explain what is meant by serial murder. Some authors (Egger, 1984; Leibman, 1989; Liebert, 1985) seem to agree and maintain that an operationalized conceptualization of serial murder may enhance the inherent research and communication process. Such an operationalized definition must fit the current understanding of serial murder. This also allows one to distinguish serial murder from other related violent crimes. Some researchers (Egger, 1984; Jenkins, 1994; Keeny & Heide, 1995) seem to agree that serial murder should simply refer to multiple acts - minimum three - of seemingly motiveless murders committed over a period of time.

In brief, serial murder is operationalized as follows:

- any person who commits three or more consecutive murders, over a period of time and within a definable space (urban and/or rural) (Egger, 1984);
- cooling-off periods (a dormant period) may occur between the consecutive murders (Egger, 1984);
- serial murder is not motivated by financial or material gain, and it does not serve

the purpose of eliminating witnesses to other crimes such as rape (Egger, 1984); and

- these murders may not be related to terrorism, cultism, racism or gang activities (Liebert, 1985).

At this point it is necessary to distinguish between the criteria for serial murder, mass murder and spree serial murder. Take note of the pivotal role of the temporal and spatial dimensions in distinguishing these types of murder. The distinctions are as follows:

- serial murder occurs when a person commits three or more consecutive murders, over a period of time and not necessarily in one place (Egger, 1984);
- mass murder occurs when a person commits multiple acts of murder in a brief period of time in one place (Jenkins, 1994); and
- spree serial murder is multiple acts of murder committed over a short period of time ranging from a few days to a week and not necessarily in one place (Jenkins, 1994).

2.3 Historical context

According to Jenkins (1994), serial murder has not risen from unique social circumstances as a "new" and "alarming" phenomenon. He further states that serial murder has historically been misstated, hence it is often believed to be a phenomenon of modern times (Jenkins, 1994, p.29).

Serial murder is, however, a contemporary name for a phenomenon previously described as lust murder. This name was due to an incorrect translation from the German word "lustmörd", which equated the act (serial murder) with sexual sadism. However, several contemporary authors (Jenkins, 1994; Keeney & Heide, 1995) state that although sexual sadism may occur, it does not necessarily follow with serial murder.

There is a debate about who first coined the term serial murder. Despite this debate, Jenkins (1994) says that the change in name took place in the 1980 s. In actual fact the

history of serial murder dates back to 1795 (Internet Crime Archives, 1996; Hickey, 1991; Keeney et al., 1995). In the late nineteenth century, more precisely in 1888, the "founding father of serial murder" emerged as the anonymous "Jack the Ripper" (Caputi, 1989). He seems to be the most infamous "serial murderer" of his time, though he had a few lesser known, German counterparts from the same era (Crime Archives, 1996).

Serial murder seemed to surface once again to recognition in the post World War I era and again in the 1930 s. Throughout the rest of the twentieth century serial murder continued to gain formal recognition (Crime Archives, 1996; Jenkins, 1994). Since the 1970 s serial murder gained renewed interest and received increasing coverage by both the academia and mass media. For this reason too, Jenkins (1994, p. 50) refers to this as the period of "discovering serial murder".

Jenkins (1994, p. 63) refers to the 1983 to 1985 period as the "panic era". According to him, this era was marked by several government organizations who manipulated serial murder to further their political agendas (Jenkins, 1994). By 1985 certain activists had achieved their legislative agendas. Subsequently the flood of serial murder stories abated and people increasingly challenged the so-called "panic". Despite this, the image and concept of the "serial killer" has decisively entered into the culture (Jenkins, 1994).

A "new panic", however, was created in the period from 1990 to 1992, aided by the mass media's attention. The more recent period up to 1994 is considered the "big boom" era of serial murder (Jenkins, 1994).

2.4 Prevalence

Serial murder has been reported on every continent: North America (specifically the United States of America), South America, Asia, Africa, Europe, Australia, New-Zealand, and even in the Ukraine (Internet Crime Archives, 1996; Kozel Multimedia, 1995; Snyman, 1992). Regardless of this, serial murder accounts for an insignificantly small percentage of any given country's morbidity (Keeny & Heide, 1995). Serial murder, spree serial murder and mass murder combined contribute to only two percent of the United States'

deaths incurred by homicide. A keen interest in serial murder prevails despite this small percentage (Jenkins, 1994).

A rather lengthy debate prevails in the literature regarding the prevalence of serial murder. There seem to be too many variables that may influence the prevalence of serial murder. Jenkins (1994) lists a few of these variables:

- murders may be better linked with each other, resulting in seemingly more cases of serial murder;
- murders may be more readily reported/detected; and
- the role of the mass media has an inflating influence which brings serial murder to the attention of the masses.

2.4.1 Statistical versus experienced prevalence

In the American literature the discussion surrounding the statistical prevalence of serial murder remains open ended. Strong arguments, both for and against an increase/decrease in the statistics have been presented. Some authors (Ansevics & Doweiko, 1991; Egger, 1984; Leyton, 1986) that there has been an increase in serial murders. Others (Egger, 1984; Jenkins, 1994; Stote & Standing, 1995) argue that there is no evidence to suggest such an increase. Any "increase" may be attributed to a greater awareness and more media reporting (Egger, 1984; Jenkins, 1994; Stote & Standing, 1995).

In South Africa the statistical debate follows a similar vein. According to various sources (Kozel Multimedia, 1995; Krost, 04-05-1996; Pistorius, 1998) it seems as if South Africa has had 31 reported cases of serial murder in the past 68 years. More than half of these cases have been reported in the last decade (refer to Appendix A). However, it remains uncertain whether this "increase" may be attributed to better police detection, less linkage blindness or better media coverage.

It is, however, irrelevant for the purpose of this study to determine whether serial murder has increased or not. This study is more concerned with the phenomenon of serial murder as a form of behaviour. As with many other crimes, people have become more aware of

serial murder. This increased awareness of serial murder is probably evident in the considerable media coverage, both in South Africa and abroad (Caputi, 1993; Jenkins, 1994; Krost, 04-05-1996; Stote & Standing, 1995).

Despite the actual statistics, serial murder remains a socially significant problem, because it affects everybody: "The random selection by which serial murderers operate means everyone is at risk. Thus a total at risk population transcends the numerical impact of this phenomenon and requires that it be viewed as a socially significant problem" (Egger, 1984, p. 352).

To leave home and die of a heart attack or a motor vehicle accident is an acceptable risk, but to never return home because you have crossed the path of a person who commits serial murder is not a situation which the public can tolerate (Egger, 1984). Although this statement is characteristic of Jenkins's (1994) "panic era", it contains some element of truth: serial murder is a socially significant problem. Therefore it should be researched and understood.

2.5 The stereotype

According to Paredes et al. (1990), the person who commits serial murder has become a romantic icon, an anti-hero or folk-lore. Through fiction and the mass media the theme of serial murder has been proliferated and literally glorified, especially in America (Caputi, 1993; Jenkins, 1994).

The use of stereotypes may have two functions: on the one hand, it informs people of the existence of that particular phenomenon and on the other hand, it helps to shape a misguided public perception of that phenomenon. The same applies to serial murder. The entertainment media has created a stereotyped image regarding serial murder.

What is the popular and influential stereotype of people who commit serial murder? According to Jenkins (1994), it seems to be a person who is: male, from a minority group, white, an isolated individual who always acts alone, a roamer (this is a popular belief from

the 1980 s American era of serial murder), and one who has no prior relationship with the victim (this is true in most cases involving male perpetrators). Other aspects of this stereotype are that serial murder is unique to America and that the murders are sexual in nature.

Contrary to these beliefs, the following seems to apply to people who commit serial murder:

- approximately one out of every six serial murders was committed by women over the last two centuries (Keeney & Heide, 1995);
- the person is often from a majority group, minority groups may, however, be accounted for (Jenkins, 1994);
- the person is probably white (especially in USA), but may be Black, Coloured or Asian (in South Africa and in other countries) (Krost, 04-05-1996; Kozel Multimedia, 1995; Pistorius, 1998);
- the person may have an accomplice and these acts may even be committed in close concert (Jenkins, 1994);
- the act may not be sexual in nature (women seem to have no sexual release through the act of serial murder, nor do they sexually assault any of their victims, and the same applies to some men) (Keeney & Heide, 1994);
- generally they do not roam around or travel great distances;
- close relationship with victim (most woman had either custodial, caretaking or family ties with their victims and in another case a man killed his mother and her friend) (Keeny & Heide, 1995; Leyton, 1986); and
- serial murder is a world wide phenomenon (Internet Crime Archives, 1996; Kozel Multimedia, 1995).

Thus it seems that the media misrepresents serial murder in a stereotypical way. According to Jenkins (1994), this is aimed at enhancing the popular and thrilling qualities, because sensation sells.

2.6 Themes from research

The following qualitative themes became apparent in Ansevics and Doweiko's (1991) study of people who have committed serial murder:

- all were their mothers' favourite sons;
- they had tenuous societal adjustment;
- they had violent/sadistic fantasies during adolescence;
- they had histories of exhibitionism, cross-dressing and/or sexual fetishes;
- they had no history of dating in high school and the first sexual experiences only occurred after school;
- they had puritanical attitudes towards sex and viewed females within the "Madonna"-whore dichotomy;
- all wrote melodramatic love poetry in adolescence which continued into adulthood;
- there has been utilization of violent pornography and reported rape prior to the start of their murders; and
- rejection by their only significant adulthood lover preceded their decompensation.

Snyman (1992) compiled, from various authors, the following qualitative themes derived from the profile of a person who has committed serial murder:

- an abused, deprived childhood, characterized by unfair, harsh and inconsistent punishment, and an overbearing mother with an absent or weak father figure (Holmes & DeBurger, 1988, p. 99);
- lack of self-worth and a low self esteem stemming from disadvantaged backgrounds, being shy, introverted and unable to establish healthy peer group contact (Levin & Fox, 1985, p. 56);
- excessive fantasizing about violence and the control of other people, starting at an early age when they act out these fantasies on animals and toys and continuing later in childhood; eventually carrying these fantasies into adulthood, integrating them into the pattern of murder (Leyton, 1986, p. 36);
- an inability to maintain meaningful and lasting relationships, on both social and

- sexual levels; marked by poor early child-parent relationships; a fear of failing in heterosexual relationships, and an inability to form close personal relationships due to excessive fantasizing (Leyton, 1986, p. 36);
- a fascination with hard-core pornography and sadistic sexual behaviour; his thoughts and fantasies dwell on sex and violence and fantasies may be fuelled by the pornographic material, acting out some of the scenes (Sears, 1991, pp. 97-99);
 - psychopathy, or characteristics thereof, are displayed, including persistent lying, lack of guilt feelings, no conscience, inability to show remorse, disregard for societal norms and values, highly manipulative, no pity for the victim and a craving for control over others (Egger, 1990, pp. 73-77);
 - self-centredness is vividly displayed in the enjoyment and indulgence of the media sensation which follows his apprehension (Leyton, 1986, p. 73);
 - a charming, "normal" personality with an above average intelligence and a marked absence of delusions, hallucinations and gross pathology (Leyton, 1986, p. 150);
 - drug and alcohol use before committing the murder serves commonly as a disinhibitor for brutalization (Leyton, 1986, p. 150);
 - excessive travelling in search of suitable victims or in order to confuse the police (Holmes and DeBurger, 1988, p. 97); and
 - an obsessive fascination with the police; their uniforms, badges and handcuffs, their investigation of the murders and often posing as a police official (Leyton, 1986, p. 150).

2.7 Serial murder in South Africa

Africa has the fewest reported cases of serial murder (Kozel Multimedia, 1995) and very few scholarly publications on this phenomenon have emerged from Africa. Most of the available literature is based on the American and/or European experience and research. According to Ressler (1995), despite certain socio-demographic differences, serial murder in South Africa does not differ vastly from serial murder elsewhere.

In South Africa the official crime statistics only reflect information regarding the murder

weapon and race of the offender/victim, and no mention is made of the possible motive (Snyman, 1992). There is no specific classification system whereby different types of murders may be differentiated. Ergo, there has been no such classification as "serial murder". This state of affairs enhances the difficulty of any such study within the South African context. Therefore, in order to do research on serial murder, one has to rely on newspaper and other media reports to identify those who have committed serial murder.

The historical recollection of serial murder in South Africa, as presented in Appendix A, started in 1930. During this period of 68 years it seems as if South Africa had approximately 31 reported cases of serial murder involving 33 or more perpetrators (Internet Crime Archives, 1996; Krost, 04-05-1996; Kozel Multimedia, 1995; Pistorius, 1998). There may, however, be more unreported cases. Of these 31 reported cases, 20 have been reported since 1987 (Internet Crime Archives, 1996; Krost, 04-05-1996; Kozel Multimedia, 1995) (refer to Appendix A for a brief overview of the South African history of serial murder).

The following information regarding serial murder, was gathered from the South African historical recollection (Appendix A) (Internet Crime Archives, 1996; Krost, 04-05-1996; Kozel Multimedia, 1995; Pistorius, 1998):

- thirty one (31) confirmed cases of serial murder have been reported, involving thirty three (33) perpetrators;
- all the perpetrators are male;
- the racial distribution of these 33 perpetrators are approximately 45 percent Black, 24 percent White, 24 percent unconfirmed, three percent Coloured and three percent Asian;
- serial murder has claimed the lives of approximately 370 people;
- the population of serial murder victims consist of 82 percent adults (50 percent female, 30 percent of unspecified gender and two percent male) and 18 percent children (12 percent boys, four percent girls and two percent remain unspecified);
- the racial distribution for the same population of murder victims is 63 percent black, 18 percent White, eight percent Coloured and 11 percent unspecified;
- the greatest at risk group, in descending order, is Black women, Coloured boys, and

- Black boys;
- the following populations, in descending order, are not significantly at risk, White females, Asian males and females, White males, Coloured males, Black girls, and White girls and boys; and
 - Asian boys and girls, and Coloured girls have not been reported as victims.

In comparison with American literature on serial murder, the South African information displays similarities and differences with the work of Leibman (1989). She states that serial murder usually occurs intra- racially, victims are almost always female and offenders are usually male (Leibman, 1989). The South African picture is similar to Leibman's (1989) research in the sense that most murders occur intra- racially and three quarters of the victims are female. It is different to Leibman's (1989) research in the sense that about two thirds of the victims and half of the offenders are Black.

2.8 Conclusion

This chapter has introduced the reader to an understanding of the concept of serial murder, the occurrence thereof as well as the historical and contextual aspects related to serial murder. A brief overview with regard to the phenomenon of serial murder in South Africa was also presented.

The South African picture of serial murder seems to have different features, compared to the American picture. Therefore, South African research may contribute in an unique way to the understanding of a phenomenon where one person (sometimes with the assistance of others) murders several people over a period of time.

The period after 1994 has not yet been coined. Given the historical and co- evolutionary nature of the phenomenon of serial murder, research may contribute to a "new era" of thinking about, and understanding serial murder. In the following chapter, the literature is expanded by presenting a theoretical overview regarding serial murder. Various theories are discussed as possible explanations of violent behaviour, such as serial murder.

Chapter 3

Literature survey

3.1 Introduction

According to Liebert (1985), there does not seem to be a unitary model for the understanding of serial murder. Snyman (1992) adds that the proposed explanations do not explain all the cases involving serial murder. Neither do they explain why certain people fit into these frameworks, but do not commit serial murder (Snyman, 1992). Therefore this literature survey accommodates a variety of different psychological perspectives. By presenting these theoretical frameworks, the survey aids in the process of theoretical sensitization and prepares the mind for the research process.

According to Jenkins (1994), the academic literature is divided into two seemingly opposing camps: an old and a new emerging scholarship. The old scholarship based its original understanding of serial murder on the premise that it is a sexually motivated offense. Only in the second half of the 1980s did they move beyond that, understanding serial murder in terms of a seemingly unmotivated murder. However, their focus throughout remained purely individualistic, adhering to a grossly stereotypical and highly pathologized description of serial murder (Jenkins, 1994).

The new scholarship moved beyond this view, considering the social dimensions of serial murder and breaking down some of the stereotyped views which constrained the understanding of serial murder (Jenkins, 1994).

To arrive at an understanding of serial murder it seems that one should accommodate all the possible different perspectives on serial murder. Furthermore one has to distinguish between the sensation oriented and scientific orientated literature. The distinction between these two is often vague. The mass media contributes a great deal toward the sensation oriented depiction of serial murder in both the information and entertainment

media (Jenkins, 1994).

The following theoretical views are presented and explored: the psychoanalytic approach, the psychodynamic formulation, the learning theory perspective, the psychosocial explanation, general systems theory, cybernetic epistemology, eco-systemic thinking, social constructionism and the feminist position.

3.2 The current literature understanding

Different psychological perspectives are accommodated in this literature study. Singularly or in selective combination, these perspectives propose a causative framework (Blake, Pincus & Buckner, 1995; Leyton, 1986; Snyman, 1992). These causative explanations include: psychopathy, sexual sadism, necrophilism, impaired emotional development, over or under controlled behaviour, effects of societal roles and pressures, the influence of the media, the need for power, exposure to pornography, physical and/or sexual abuse as a child, and a troubled and/or deprived childhood (Blake et al., 1995; Leyton, 1986; Snyman, 1992).

However, certain authors (Egger, 1984; Jenkins, 1994) maintain that the sum of the literature regarding homicide is repetitive, rather than cumulative and therefore a more systematic framework is necessary for the analyses of serial murder. A more comprehensive etiological model may be seen as a long-term objective (Egger, 1984).

According to Banay (1952), there is no logic to murder. He further postulates that the perpetrator's reasons for homicide are misleading, because "logically" understandable reasons obscure the true causes of murder. Victims are usually picked at random (can be considered self selecting only on the grounds of their existence in place and time), they usually have no relation with the perpetrator, the murder seems motiveless, but it seems to have symbolic meaning with much of the perpetrator's pattern of behaviour revealed through their victim selection (Egger, 1984, p. 351).

Traditionally both the academic and popular literature have viewed serial murder from an individualistic perspective. Thus, the more traditional etiological understanding of serial murder was often sought in the mind of the perpetrator, emphasizing the perpetrator's motivations (Hickey, 1991). Within this framework they explored an "intrinsic locus of motives" rooted in an abnormal personality structure and within the context of severe psychopathology (Holmes & DeBurger, 1988), trying to understand the inner narrative which drove the person to murder repeatedly (Pollock, 1995).

Only since the late 1980 s have authors started to look at the broader context of serial murder (Jenkins, 1994). Despite the shifts in focus toward the social dimensions of, and social reactions, to serial murder, the emphasis most often was to understand the behaviour of serial murder itself (Jenkins, 1994). Remarkably little has been written about the social dimensions of serial murder (Jenkins, 1994) and hardly anything has been published from a post-modern perspective.

The following is a brief overview from the literature regarding theoretical explanations of serial murder.

3.2.1 Toward an intrapsychic explanation

From literature it seems as if the authors use the terms psychoanalytical and psychodynamic interchangeably. More often than not, the authors actually refer to the psychoanalytic approach, but they call it psychodynamic. Ergo, the fundamental similarities and differences of the two approaches are ignored (St.Clair, 1996).

The following is an overview of the psychoanalytic and psychodynamic approach.

3.2.1.1 The psychoanalytic approach

The psychoanalytic approach is based on Sigmund Freud's tripartite structure of id, ego and super ego and the conflicts between the three structures. The psychoanalytic theory is fundamentally a drive theory postulating that primitive, unconscious sexual and aggressive drives, as represented by the id, are opposed by the super-ego and mediated

as the ego. The personality development is described in terms of developmental conflicts and the resolution thereof and the personality structure is formed from and after the oedipal stage (St.Clair, 1996).

According to Egger (1984), older literature on serial murder usually reflects a Freudian perspective, categorizing it as "lust murders" committed by people who suffer from a deviation or perversion of their sexual impulses. According to the psychoanalytic theory the severe, predisposed aggressive outbursts, which in this case takes the form of murder, may be explained in terms of both the lack of, and the excessive constraint of, the id (DeHart & Mahoney, 1994).

The crux of the explanation of the lack of the id impulse control seems to lie in the compromise between the eros and the tanathos. These two opposing instincts find a compromise by externalizing the aggressiveness and destructiveness toward other people (Egger, 1984). The eros blocks the direct expression of the death instinct, thus some of the natural thanatotic energy is left undischarged and maintains self-preservation through unconscious defense mechanisms such as projection and sublimation (DeHart & Mahoney, 1994). Freud referred to such individuals as "moral invalid" (antisocial) when the super-ego did not develop sufficiently to adequately balance the irrational.id impulses (DeHart & Mahoney, 1994).

Hence, people who commit serial murder have often been classified as psychopathic (Ansevics & Doweiko, 1991; Snyman, 1992). This term is used to describe the behaviour of seemingly "motiveless serial murders", as in the case of Edmund Kemper of Santa Cruz, California. The testifying psychiatrist for this case, Dr. Joel Fort, states it as follows (Godwin, 1978, p. 300): "A morality that is not operating by any recognized or accepted moral code, but operating entirely according to expediency to what one feels like or that which gives the most pleasure. It includes an absence of conscience".

These explanations, however, fail to answer why some people externalize their destructiveness in a socially acceptable way, while other people may externalize their aggression with total disregard for societal values and norms.

Alternatively, severe inhibitions against acting out the aggression, as found in over controlled aggressors, may fail to provide the person with an opportunity to frequently and sufficiently vent thanatotic energy (Dehart & Mahoney, 1994). This may result in an explosive, cathartic discharge of aggression, hence forming part of the cyclic nature of energy accumulation and discharge, so often associated with murders of a serial kind (Dehart & Mahoney, 1994). This may also explain the phenomenon of the so-called "cooling off periods" between murders (Egger, 1984).

Many of the sexual offenders have themselves been physically or sexually violated as children. Haunted and tormented by their own violation scenes that replay themselves in the conscious mind, the person objectifies and controls his own tormenting through reversing the roles and acting out sadistic fantasies (Kaufman, 1989). Sadism is then explained as fusing or ambivalence, where the erotic and thanatotic energies coexist, causing the person to derive sexual pleasure and gratification from acts such as murder and mutilation (DeHart & Mahoney, 1994).

In this sense, sexual gratification may occur in the absence of sexual intercourse or any other form of physical, sexual stimulation and thus the violence, mutilation or torture may serve as a substitute for sex (Liebert, 1985). Podolsky (1965) gives examples of how sexual pleasure may be induced: by cutting, stabbing and slashing the victim's body, ripping open the abdomen and plunging into the intestines, cutting out the intestines and taking away the genitals, by means of throttling, sucking the blood, plunging sticks and umbrellas into the anus or vagina, tearing out the hair and severing breasts. Podolsky (1965) states: "These horrors that surpass in frightfulness everything that has been committed by human beings..., constitutes, so to speak, pathological equivalents of coitus".

Freud believed that a blend of the sexual and aggressive energies begins as an unbound force, but is later cathectic into the instinctual object that consists of material or procedural elements needed for satisfaction. People who commit serial murder may through identification, substitute the instinctual object with a symbolic object, thus displacing the parental hostility onto their victims which are irrational, symbolic representations of the hated parental figure (Dehart & Mahoney, 1994).

Another question raised in the literature is whether the act of serial murder is ego-syntonic or ego-dystonic. Ego-dystonic acts of murder may be accompanied by dissociative episodes and Leibman (1989) found that acts of serial murder were frequently accompanied by dissociation. Pollock (1995), however, reports that dissociation only accompanied the first two murders and that dissociation was absent in the last two murders in his case study. We may therefore only say with certainty, that dissociation may occur during the act of serial murder and does not necessarily follow. Seeing that Leibman (1989) uses dissociation as an indicator for ego-dystonic, we may logically deduce that the act of serial murder may be either syntonic or dystonic.

Bernstein and Putnam (1986) used the Dissociative Experience Scale as measuring instrument and concluded that one should distinguish between dissociative experiences and dissociative disorders, as dissociative experiences are more frequent and commonplace than dissociative disorders. Thus caution should be taken concerning claims of dissociative disorders, because it may be used to constitute a plea of insanity so as to escape the death penalty, as in the case of Kenneth Bianchi (Yablonski & Haskell, 1988). The dilemma is apparent, we rely on a retrograde reconstruction of fantasy and behaviour to arrive at presumed etiological antecedents (Liebert, 1985) and may very well fall into the trap of the self sealing proposition.

The prognosis for people who have committed serial murders is very limited and the only way of dealing with them is to isolate them. This conclusion follows from the psychoanalytic belief that personality is established at a very early age and that compulsive behaviour such as that of serial murderers, stem from psychosexual fixations in childhood (DeHart & Mahoney, 1994).

3.2.1.2 The psychodynamic approach

The psychodynamic approach focuses on the pre-oedipal object relation, in other words the nature of the relationship between the child and it's mother, from birth to the age of about three years. The fundamental belief is that the primary object relation has an influence on the later, significant interpersonal relationships (St.Clair, 1996).

Liebert (1985) explains serial murder in terms of psychodynamic formulations, along the lines of the general object relation model of development. He considers it essential to understand the intertwined relation of destructive aggression and bonding abnormalities between the mother and child, in terms of the pre-oedipal, dyadic mother-child relationship and issues of separation and individuation. Support for this presupposition is found in a study of 11 people who committed serial murder; they had overly close attachments with their mothers, they were their mothers' "favourite children" and all the fathers were emotionally and/or physically absent during the childhood and teenage years (Ansevics & Doweiko, 1991).

The psychogenesis of borderline and narcissistic personality disorders (attachment disorders) may be sought in the pre-oedipal years, where the dyadic mother-child interaction may be described as deviant sadomasochistic and includes obviously painful pinching (McDevit, 1983). Lansky (1983) draws a functional relation between impulsive behaviour and disorders of attachment: adults who suffer from attachment disorders may restore their emotional equilibrium through impulsive behaviour to feeling normal after the impulse. Podolsky (1965) combines these ideas in his statement:

"...the typical lust murderer (serial murderer) (is) characterized by 1) periodic outbursts due to compulsions by paroxysmal sexual desires, 2) nearly always cutting or stabbing, particularly the breasts or genitals, frequently with sucking or licking of the wounds, biting of the skin and sometimes a desire to drink blood and eat the flesh of the victim, 3) sometimes erection and ejaculation followed by violation of the victim - often there is no attempt at intercourse, 4) behaviour returns to normal until the next outburst".

Retvich (1965) elaborates on the restorative function of violent sexual impulses. The ritualistic and repetitive nature of assaults on, or murders of females, provides satisfaction when hostile emotions are suddenly displaced from the mother (surrogate-mother) to the victim (Retvich, 1965). The introjected aggressive and destructive elements of the early mother-child relationship remain "unmetabolized" as dissociated elements that may be "split off" and projected outward onto the external world (Liebert, 1985). The person may thus either project his introjected, dissociated badness onto the victim, thereby justifying his own violence, or displace his violence toward his mother on

the victim, thereby destroying his mother's badness.

During this pre-psychotic process, both reality sense and reality testing seem vague, confusion exists about the location of the "badness" and adequate personality integration is lacking (Liebert, 1985). In this sense the restorative value of impulsive behaviour for the reintegration of the personality may explain the finding of Podolsky (1965) that the person's behaviour usually returns to normal after the serial (lust) murder, until the next outburst.

Hale (1994) provides a synthesis of internalised humiliation as a motive for committing serial murder as he explores the role of humiliation and embarrassment in serial murder. With this Hale (1994) adds to Holmes and DeBurger's (1988) work and criticizes them for their inconsequential handling of the roots of the intrinsic motivation in serial murder (Hale, 1994). According to various authors (Hale, 1994; Holmes & DeBurger, 1988; Katz, 1988), serial murder may be seen as a crime of passion (not in the conventional sense), where the act of murder becomes a passionate, justifiable attempt to perform a sacrifice to restore what is "good" or "right". This process involves the release of repressed emotions as the victim serves to bring back memories of someone who embarrassed, abused or taunted him/her earlier in life (Hale, 1994). The person who commits serial murder then transfers these feelings of humiliation into rage and onto the victim. In failing to eradicate the actual or original target of his rage, he experiences no release from the memories of humiliation and the murders subsequently continue (Hale, 1994).

According to Kernberg (1992), the motivation to commit serial murder may emanate from the personality structure and it is essential to understand the presence and integration of aggression within the personality. Kernberg (1982), explains sexual aggression and introjection as follows:

"Aggression may be integrated into the pathological, grandiose self, or it may be restricted to the underlying, dissociated, and/or repressed primitive object relations against which the pathological grandiose self represents the main defense structure...When primitive aggression is directly infiltrated into the pathological, grandiose self, a particularly ominous development occurs perhaps best described as characterological sadism. In this last group we find narcissistic patients whose

grandiosity and pathological self idealization are reinforced by the sense of triumph over fear and pain achieved by inflicting fear and pain on others. We also find cases where the self esteem is enhanced by the direct sadistic pleasure of aggression linked with sexual derivatives. Some...may pursue joyful types of cruelty. A final factor that has crucial prognostic significance is the extent to which the antisocial trends are build into the patient's narcissistic character pathology...Naturally when antisocial trends are present in the patient who also present a sadistic infiltration of the pathological grandiose self or direct expressions of severely sadistic sexual behaviour, the prognosis is significantly worsened..."

Thus, deceptively, behind the "good family man" and "good citizen" image is a person incapable of true social and psychological integration, who acts in an impulsive and sexually aggressive manner with polymorphous perverse sexual behaviour and paraphilia such as fetishism and necrophilia. The individual who has a borderline character structure and who is capable of serial murder displays a proclivity toward fetishism early in his career (Liebert, 1985). Sexual behaviour extends to bondage fantasies and practices, whereby the helplessness theme is reiterated in numerous variations where the victim is anaesthetized, drugged, tied-up, hypnotized, paralysed or asleep (Liebert, 1985). Sexual gratification is often only possible if the object is rendered helpless, in practical terms - dead. The disembowelment or other mutilative practices may be seen dynamically as an attempt to re-enter and explore the interior of the mother's body (Liebert, 1985).

Various authors point out that the "characterological pathology" of people who commit serial murder may be found in the general etiology and development of the personality disorders, somewhere between narcissistic and borderline development. Uncertainty remains as to the dimensional placing within the continuum of personality disorders (Ansevics & Doweiko, 1991; Liebert, 1985; Pollock, 1995). Other detailed clinical and theoretical opinions associated with narcissism, aggression, anti-social tendencies and the act of murder, and as indicators of human destructiveness, are indicated by Pollock (1995, p. 259)

Developmentally the person's self development is damaged as the object relations reflect a "malignant transformation" in which the parents were originally perceived as omnipotent, cruel, attacking and destructive. Thus the individual's defensive response is characterized by the formation of a pathological grandiose self structure in which hostility and aggression emanating from these experiences, infiltrate the self (Pollock, 1995). The combined effect of multiple traumatization has a destabilizing effect on the person, necessitating the use of schizoid and narcissistic defense in order to survive psychologically and at times of chronic ego injury, the person may use violence as a defense in service of narcissism (Abrahamsen, 1973).

As critique on the above mentioned intrapsychic explanations, Liebert (1985), cautions that we face a dilemma with the reconstruction of clinical material as we rely on a retrograde reconstruction of fantasy and behaviour to arrive at presumed etiological antecedents.

3.2.2 The learning theory perspective

DeHart and Mahoney (1994) propose the following three development and learning theory approaches:

3.2.2.1 Conditioned fusion of sex and aggression

In accordance with the principles of conditioning, a cognitive fusion of sexuality and aggression may be the result of traumatic sexual experiences where a person learns to anticipate sexuality as accompanying aggression, so that the two experiences are eventually viewed as inseparable. This fusion is reinforced and cultivated in violent fantasies which then result in intense sexual excitement. The "Sex Beast", a former police officer from Florida who may have been responsible for more than twenty murders, claimed that his sister use to beat him so as to ensure the secrecy of the sexual abuse that was about to follow (Dehart & Mahoney, 1994).

True to the theory of conditioning, this approach presumes that the person who commits serial murder, may, in theory, be "cured" through counter conditioning or by constructing

a "conscience" through the application of avoidant conditioning to violent stimuli (Dehart & Mahoney, 1994).

3.2.2.2 Conditioned conscience

The person who commits serial murder has never internalized social norms and therefore lacks inhibition against aggression. This is the result of direct or vicarious reinforcement of aggression, and the deficient conditioning of "normal" behaviour through punishment which provokes an anxiety response, viewed as "conscience" (Dehart & Mahoney, 1994).

Learning social norms supposedly should supersede the learning of cultural norms, hence, the failure to demonstrate ordinary social conditioning may point to the profound isolation and alienation of people who commit serial murders. Thus, the symptomatic manifestation of childhood alienation is normlessness, meaninglessness, powerlessness, isolation and self-estrangement (DeHart & Mahoney, 1994).

3.2.2.3 A social learning model

Based on the research of Bandura, this represents the most controversial of all the theoretical models of serial murder. Media depictions of violent sexuality and aggression may increase the viewer's proclivity to commit such acts, especially if the person already has such thoughts or fantasies. This disinhibition caused by media attention may prompt the person to act out the violent sexual fantasies. It may also propagate the violence-myth and provide perceived reinforcement (Dehart & Mahoney, 1994).

Other learning theories explore the effect of exposing males to violent rape scenarios depicting the victim as aroused. Documentation by various researchers shows that this type of exposure creates a less negative attitude toward rape, a greater proclivity to personally commit rape and more aggression towards women. (Donnerstein & Berkowitz, 1981; Malamuth & Check, 1980).

However, these last two models do not explain why such media exposure may cause one person to commit rape while others may commit murder.

The social learning theory places specific emphasis on child rearing practices. In their extensive reading of case histories of people who committed murder, Ellis and Gullo (1971) consistently found that they were not treated kindly by their parents, that there was a lack of emotional closeness to their parents and other family members, and that their interpersonal relationships were characterized as peculiar and that they landed in difficulties either at school, socially or vocationally.

The lack of affection, neglect and experiences of abuse are consistently found in the childhood histories of people who have committed murder (Ansevics et al., 1991; De River, 1958; Kramer, 1983; Lester & Lester, 1975). Leibman (1989) found the following commonalities in the social and emotional development in the four case histories she studied: cruel and extremely violent parenting and a violent family environment (Ansevics & Doweiko, 1991), rejection in childhood by parents, an adulthood rejection by a member of the opposite sex, contact with the criminal justice system either as an adult and/or as a juvenile, commitment to a mental health facility, aberrant sexual patterns and being a loner.

This still does not explain the differences between the development of a mass murderer, a serial murder and a single episode murderer. It further fails to explain why people who may have come from such backgrounds did not eventually commit serial murder.

3.2.3 The psychosocial explanation

Social and psychological deprivation seems consistent in the childhood years of people who commit mass and serial murders. People who commit serial murder seldom come from a loving and understanding environment, instead their environments are characterised by neglect, abuse, a great deal of conflict, no normal communication with a dependable part of the social world and no workable systems for social or personal frames of reference (Egger, 1984).

According to the **subcultural theory**, children grow up in subcultures where they learn through either being the victim of, or witnesses to, violence, that personal assaults are not defined as wrong, deviant or antisocial (Egger, 1984). The problem is, however, that

not all identified people who commit serial murders come from such subcultural background (Egger, 1984) and not everyone who comes from such a background necessarily commits serial murder.

According to the **frustration-aggression theory**, aggression is not inherent, but it is triggered under the influence of particular environmental pressures. In this theory the environment then causes the frustration that leads to aggressiveness (Egger, 1984). Again, many people are exposed to environmental stressors and not everybody who experiences these frustrations necessarily commits serial murder.

3.2.4 Systems theory and cybernetics

According to Jenkins (1994), the general systemic and post-modern theories have actually contributed little to the understanding of serial murder. Although these perspectives at present seem not to be concerned with the etiology of serial murder, they can, however, contribute to the better understanding thereof: by providing a systemic punctuation of serial murder; explaining the function of serial murder in the system; and shedding more light on how the phenomenon of serial murder has been co-constructed in dialogue and belief systems.

3.2.4.1 Cybernetic epistemology

Cybernetics is concerned with the field of control and communication theory and with the scientific investigation of a highly varied nature of systemic processes. This includes the regulation, processing and storage of information, adaptation, self-organization, self-reproduction and strategic behaviour. The cybernetic epistemology has forced the re-thinking of the fundamental diagnostic and therapeutic epistemological presuppositions and premises (Simon, Stierlin & Wynne, 1985). We can distinguish two basic phases in the development of cybernetics, namely homeostasis: researchers were concerned mainly with the stability of a system, and morphogenesis: the main focus is creativity and the requirements of, and conditions for change (Simon et al., 1985).

over what may happen to them and that serial murder, within the context of the systems norms, is not an "acceptable" or even "tolerable" cause of death.

In terms of morphogenesis, we may say that the presence of serial murder in a community mobilizes the community's creative potential in order to meet the requirements of, and conditions for, change. Seen in the light of the physical and systemic threat posed by serial murder, and the intolerable nature thereof, the mass information media and law enforcement agencies act to apprehend the perpetrator.

According to Bateson (in Dell, 1989): "...no part of...an internally interactive system can have unilateral control over the remainder or over any other part". Thus, there is no linear causality or control, only circular loops of interaction (Dell, 1989). This is certainly true of serial murder, especially if seen in the light of the regulation, processing and storage of information. Jenkins (1994) points out the underlying processes in the handling of information regarding serial murder. Certain interest groups may manipulate such information to further their own causes (refer also to the examples given under the heading 4.2.5.4 Social constructionism, discourse analysis and feminism).

Herkov, Wade, Myers and Burket (1994) refer to vicarious victimization. This means that a whole community can be affected by the violence of serial murder, even though it only befalls a few people. This collective exposure takes place through such avenues as the family, peers, school and the media (Herkov et al., 1994). These examples are only linear punctuations of how information regarding serial murder is regulated and processed and points toward the inherent circular feedback loops in every system. Thus, serial murder is part of an internally interactive and recursive system, and does not have unilateral control over the remainder of the system or over any other part thereof. In this sense, serial murder can only exist in the context of the larger system which recursively mirrors it.

3.2.4.2 Eco-systemic thinking:

This thinking is along the line of the philosophy of holism and presupposes a dynamic balance between members of the system (Simon et al., 1985). Therefore, every alteration

3.2.4.2 Eco-systemic thinking:

This thinking is along the line of the philosophy of holism and presupposes a dynamic balance between members of the system (Simon et al., 1985). Therefore, every alteration in the ecological system will influence the members of the system: "The unit of survival ...is not the organism or the species, but rather the system or 'power' within which the creature lives. If the creature destroys its environment, it destroys itself" (Bateson, in Simon et al., 1985).

One needs to determine what the relevant survival unit of the member is and the influences thereof (Simon et al., 1985). Serial murder threatens the preservation of social order, in other words, it threatens the basic unit of survival, which is the system. Serial murder may thus be seen as a very pertinent alteration of the ecology of the system.

What is the function of serial murder in the larger system of society? Serial murder constitutes rare, heinous and extreme conduct in human behaviour (Egger, 1984; Pollock, 1995) often sanctioned with capital punishment. The psychosocial function of capital punishment is to reassure the law abiding citizen that the system works, that good has triumphed over evil and that the law can protect society against the malevolent forces within (Wilkins, 1995; Paredes & Purdum, 1990). The extremity of serial murder constitutes the deepest structural threat to social order and puts the collective force of society to test: "Nonetheless, even among the more sober there was an implication that by his slaughter of innocents Ted Bundy (people who commit serial murders) placed upon society a collective moral obligation to exact vengeance and retribution" (Paredes & Purdum, 1990).

This acts as a cohesive force within the system, even those opposing capital punishment are forced to review their position, as the system is now faced with a mutual enemy: the categorical anomaly (Paredes & Purdum, 1990).

By punishing or executing the person who commits serial murders, the larger system "sighs" with relief, because the system works and even in the flawed judicial system that is too slow to right wrongs, justice finally prevails. For others, the execution serves as

a classical cathartic experience through which they can ventilate their vengeance, and purge themselves and the system (Paredes & Purdum, 1990). In a sense the person who commits serial murders becomes the epitome of the system's ultimate "Index Patient", bearing the system's brunt of its fears, guilt, insufficiencies and wrongs (Jenkins, 1994).

One of the most central and problematic issues concerning violence is that of power. Haley agrees that power is an overriding human concern and that the pursuit of power may have pathological outcomes (Dell, 1989). The existential threat of power exists at the level of the relationship (Flemons, 1989).

Serial murder is a unique type of community violence which is particularly distressing for the residents. The fact that the perpetrator remains at large for a long time, the random nature of the murders, the realistic sense of threat and the extensive media coverage add to the community's distress (Herkov et al., 1994).

Various research studies (Biernat et al., 1994; Herkov et al., 1994; Sears, 1991; Snyman, 1992) contain examples of how serial murder threatens the community as the basic unit of survival. The emotional, attitudinal and behavioural consequences of serial murder were measured in a community exposed to the serial murdering of five members of that community:

- Biernat and Herkov (1994) researched campus reaction and found that women were more negatively affected than men, especially with regard to phobic anxiety;
- both time and distance from the murder sites were associated with reduced symptomology (Biernat and Herkov, 1994);
- children experienced anxiety based symptoms, such as fear of being alone, difficulty with falling asleep and wanting to sleep with parents (Herkov et al., 1994);
- children's fears for personal safety and interruption of daily life extended far beyond that of the local adult population (Herkov et al., 1994); and
- in both studies the symptoms diminished over time (Biernat & Herkov, 1994; Herkov et al., 1994);

Through serial murder the perpetrator seeks the consuming, overwhelming sense of power and control over his victims, which then extends to the whole community (Sears, 1991; Snyman, 1992):

- media coverage and his accompanying, evolving reputation further satisfies his need for stimulation (Sears, 1991; Snyman, 1992);
- in a student community a 300 percent increase in the university's dropout rate was reported;
- handgun, mace and security sales increased dramatically;
- students (especially women) sought safer environments; and
- discourse both in and out of class was dominated by discussions regarding the serial murders (Biernat et al., 1994).

3.2.4.3 Social constructionism, discourse analysis and feminism

Social constructionism deals with the relationship between knowledge and reality within a evolutionary perspective, postulating that a person is unable to depict, recognize or mirror reality and that any attempt to grasp reality is to construct a model that fits. This model that fit, evolves from the person's interaction with the environment (Simon et al., 1985). This section deals with the way in which the phenomenon of serial murder has been constructed and deconstructed.

Information regarding serial murder is treated as a commodity and different interest groups construct information about serial murder to further their own causes and may even create a moral panic (Wilkins, 1995). A closer look will be taken to see how different interest groups construct the information about serial murder to co-create their own evolving models that fit.

Official law enforcement agencies may exaggerate the prevalence of serial murder to create a panic, so as to get more government funding; feminist groups may use such information to strengthen the debate surrounding male dominance in society; while moral and religious groups may use such information to point out the detrimental effect of pornography or to create a moral panic (Jenkins, 1994; Wilkins, 1995). The entertainment

media helps to keep memories, legends and myths of serial murder alive in sensationalistic and graphic detail. At the same time they capitalize on the monetary gain (Jenkins, 1994).

The feminist literature contributes much toward discourse analysis by commenting on amongst others, the male dominance discourse. Serial murder activates the issue of how gender inequality is brought about and maintained through patriarchal communication and belief systems. The belief system of male supremacy and male sexual dominance contributes to the use of sexual force against women and the apathy over the murders of prestigeless women (Caputi, 1989). There is a strong belief that male violence against women, more particularly, serial murder, has a strong underlying sexual-political component (Caputi, 1989; Caputi, 1993).

Caputi (1993) maintains that serial (sex) murder is the paradigmatic expression of a belief system, rooted in a system of male supremacy, that has divided humanity into two unequal gender classes, constructing sex itself as a form of masculine domination and a defeat of the feminine. Serial murder, especially when accompanied by sexual acts, has been constructed as a belief system of male supremacy (Caputi, 1993).

Further discourse analysis shows that a dialectic process has evolved in the popular fiction/media. Films such as "Silence of the Lambs" (1988) and "American Psycho" (1991), and more recently "Seven", highlight the prominence of the belief system of male sexual supremacy (Caputi, 1993). In reaction to the glorification of the serial murder, themes of women fighting back and their revenge for the inhumanities they have suffered, becomes more prevalent in films such as "Thelma and Louise" (1991), "The Weekend" (1991) and "Mercy" (1991) (Caputi, 1993; Jenkins, 1994). This seems like a process of deconstructing the belief system of male supremacy and male domination, and a gradual attempt at restoring the gender inequality.

Thus, informal discussion about serial murder, as well as exposure through the school, peers, family, and the information media coverage and entertainment media, enhances the discourses of male dominance, threat, fear and even the mythical anti-hero surrounding the person who commits serial murder (Biernat et al., 1994; Caputi, 1989;

Caputi, 1993; Herkov et al., 1994.; Jenkins, 1994; Paredes & Purdum, 1990; Wilkins, 1995).

Keeny and Heide (1994) criticize the feminists' argument of male dominance. A historical recollection of serial murders revealed that one out of every six serial murders was committed by women and that most authors neglect to mention this (Keeny & Heide, 1994). Once again, the explanation of male dominance as the root of serial murder may, like all other explanations, only be partial.

3.2.5 The biological perspective

Further explanations include the biological perspective, focusing on neurological causes such as impaired brain development, head injuries, electroencephalogram (EEG) abnormalities with evidence of "frontal" dysfunction, temporal lobe abnormalities, magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) and computerized axial tomography (CT) scan abnormalities consisting mainly of atrophy and white matter changes. Other causes such as those from neuro-transmitters, heredity, genetics and from an increased male sex drive, are also included. It is also possible that prolonged, severe physical abuse, paranoia and neurological brain dysfunction interact to create the matrix of violent behaviour (Blake et al., 1995; Sears, 1991; Snyman, 1992).

3.3 Conclusion

Serial murder seems to be a complex phenomenon and this is reflected in the divergent and expansive nature of the literature. This literature survey has sensitized the research process by presenting an overview of what is theoretically known about serial murder and shows how different approaches view it.

In the following chapter the method and procedure of this research are discussed.