

**SERIAL MURDER:
PSYCHOLOGICAL THEMES**

BY

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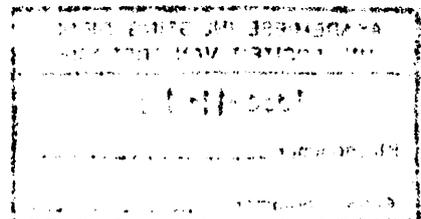
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Summary

The goal of this research is to abstract psychological themes from interviews which were held with people who have committed serial murder. This research thus contributes to a better understanding of the phenomenon of serial murder, which occurs from time to time in communities. Serial murder is operationally defined as three or more seemingly unmotivated murders. Four people who met the operational definition and criteria of serial murder were identified to participate in this research.

The research is based on the principles of Grounded Theory and the themes are presented in a descriptive manner. Different theoretical perspectives, which serve as explanation for serial murder, are presented as a point of departure. These explanations are eventually tentatively integrated with the results.

Some of the most important themes that have emerged are: these persons display a dependent personality structure with underlying anxiety; these person come across as reasonably normal without indications of severe pathology; these persons have an incapacity to form meaningful relationships; and there is a possibility that these persons grew up in a psychologically deprived environment.

Simultaneously, despite the fact that these findings may lead to generalization, the unique composition of each individual who has committed serial murder is advocated and categorization is avoided.

Opsomming

Die doel van hierdie navorsing is om sielkundige temas uit onderhoude, met persone wat reeksmoord gepleeg het, te abstraher. Die navorsing kan sodoende bydra tot 'n beter begrip van die fenomeen reeksmoord, wat van tyd tot tyd in gemeenskappe voorkom. Vier persone, wat aan die navorsing se operasionele definisie en kriteria vir reeksmoord voldoen, is geïdentifiseer en het aan die navorsingsprojek deelgeneem.

Die navorsing geskied volgens die beginsels van Grounded Theory en die temas word beskrywend aangebied. As vertrekpunt word verskeie teoretiese perspektiewe as verklarings rakende reeksmoord aangebied. Hierdie verklarings word uiteindelik op 'n tentatiewe wyse met die bevindinge geïntegreer.

Van die belangrikste temas wat na vore gekom het is dat die persone 'n afhanklike persoonlikheidsstruktuur openbaar met onderliggende angs, dat die persone redelik normaal voorkom sonder aanduidings van ernstige patologie, dat die persone 'n onvermoë het om betekenisvolle verhoudings te kweek, en 'n moontlikheid dat die persone in 'n arm sielkundige omgewing groot geword het.

Ten spyte van die feit dat sekere van die bevindinge tot veralgemening mag lei, word die unieke samestelling van elke individu wat reeksmoord gepleeg het bepleit en word kategorisering vermy.

Chapter 4

Method and procedure

"Chance favours only the prepared mind"

Louis Pasteur.

4.1 Introduction

Chance is never the predominant factor in discovery. The novice scientist who hopes that he can, by luck, emulate the great names in science is directed to Pasteur's famous saying: "chance favours only the prepared mind" (Rappaport & Wright, 1964, in Strauss & Corbin, 1990). In the quest for what is to be known we need to be scientific, yet creative. Sensitivity towards that which is already known and that which may probably be, or not be, is necessary. Therefore the method and procedure, together with theoretical sensitivity may adequately prepare the mind of the researcher to be able to search beyond the obvious so as to uncover and understand, by "chance", the reality which cannot actually be known, but is always interpreted.

4.2 Qualitative research

I have specifically chosen the qualitative research method for this study, as it may better unveil and understand the finer nuances and intricacies of serial murder. The qualitative method of interviewing may contribute more to the understanding of this phenomenon. This mode of understanding may help us to gain a new perspective on a serial murder. Qualitative research methods further enhance one's attempt to understand the nature of people's experience of a phenomenon. A specific type of qualitative research based on the principles of Grounded Theory will be used (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

This means that the data will be interpreted, analyzed and conceptualized and the concepts may be linked to form a theoretical rendition of reality (a reality that cannot actually be known, but is always interpreted) (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Theory building then represents the most systematic way of synthesizing and integrating scientific knowledge (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 19-22).

4.3 The "team approach" explained

In Chapter One it was mentioned that a team approach to the understanding of serial murder was followed. The two researchers, myself and Mr Gérard Labuschagne, undertook the research investigation, which led to two separate research reports. These two research projects have not been integrated into a comprehensive report.

Team approach in this sense meant that the two researchers worked in close concert, yet divided the final products into two independent studies. For the reader and future researchers alike, Mr. Labuschagne's Master's dissertation on the phenomenon of serial murder is titled is once again mentioned (see Chapter One and/or the reference list).

4.4 Method

The method will be aligned with the methodology of Grounded Theory. Grounded Theory is concerned with the following: a field understanding of "what is going on", the importance of a theory based in "reality", the nature of experience as continually evolving, the active role of the person in shaping the world he lives in (emphasizing change, process, and the variability and complexity of life), and the interrelationship between action, meaning and condition (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 25)

The researcher attempts to arrive at a qualitative understanding of serial murder by using the principles of grounded theory in abstracting concepts and categories from qualitative interviews with people who have committed serial murders (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). These concepts may then be abstracted and reconstructed by means of a conditional

matrix and theoretical sampling so as to capture the complexity of phenomenon of serial murder in the conditions and consequences that have a bearing upon it (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). These qualitative interviews are defined as conversations which are different to social conversation, in the sense of having a method and purpose. The method includes careful questioning and listening skills with the purpose of obtaining thoroughly tested knowledge (Kvale, 1996, p. 6).

The data for qualitative research though, may come from various sources, of which interviews and observations remain the most common sources (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 20). Interviews can literally be seen as an inter-change of views, between two people conversing about a theme of mutual interest. Qualitative research interviews thus attempt to understand the world from the subjects' pre-scientific point of view so as to uncover their lived experience (Kvale, 1996, pp. 1 - 2).

4.4.1 Nature of literature

With regard to observation and interviewing, theoretical sensitivity is of importance. Theoretical sensitivity can be described as a personal quality or attribute of the researcher: the ability to understand, to have insight, being able to give meaning to the data, an awareness of the subtle meaning of the data and being able to separate the important data from the rest. Theoretical sensitivity may be derived from various sources, such as relevant literature, professional experience, personal experience and the analytic process (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Theoretical sensitivity facilitates creative potential in the way the researcher deals with both the literature and the data. Caution must, however, be taken to keep a healthy balance between the creative and scientific. Occasionally stepping back from the research provides a balance so as to rethink it, maintaining an attitude of scepticism by which one regards both the theoretical explanations and the data findings as provisional, and following the research procedure which gives the research the necessary scientific rigour, but also helps to break through some biases (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, pp. 41 - 46).

The researcher can make use of two types of literature within the paradigm of the grounded theory approach, namely technical literature and non-technical literature.

Technical literature consists of reports, research, theoretical and philosophical papers and other disciplinary writing, and may be used in comparison with the findings of the actual grounded theory research. Non-technical literature may be comprised of biographies, diaries, documents, manuscripts, reports, catalogues, newspapers and videotapes, and may be used as primary data sources to supplement the grounded theory research (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, pp. 48 - 49). Technical literature may also have a constraining and/or inhibiting effect. In the light of the evolving theoretical framework of the grounded theory approach, the technical literature may superimpose existing categories and theoretical frameworks onto the researcher and thereby inhibit and restrain the researcher in his discovery or uncovering.

In this research the author relied heavily on non-technical literature, such as newspaper clippings (to help identify possible candidates for interviews), and videotapes of the actual interviews with the identified people (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 57). The technical literature, such as the current literature understanding of serial murder, plays an important role in sensitizing the researcher for the literature and is of pivotal importance.

This is an example of the reciprocal relationship between the literature and the evolving grounded theory: the researcher needs a point of reference from which he can start the research, this starting point may be provided by the literature which may also guide theoretical sampling. Through theoretical sampling and data analysis the new grounded theory evolves. This newly evolved grounded theory may be supplemented and compared with the literature so as to extend the existing literature understanding. Although this research is not hermeneutical per se, one can see how one rotation of the spiral of knowledge is completed.

4.4.2 Techniques in Grounded Theory

To enhance the theoretical sensitivity and to open up the data beyond the obvious, the following techniques may be used (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, pp. 77 - 93):

- asking questions (Normal questions pertaining to the specifics of certain themes. One may, for instance, ask, when, where, why, how many times and how did you commit murder, and who did you murder? One may then also question the temporal dimension of a specific theme, for instance, with what frequency did you experience this boredom, how long did it last, at which point in time did you experience this boredom and how long did you take to break this boredom?);
- analysis of a word, phrase or sentence (Scan the data and then return to any word, phrase or sentence that has struck one as significant, interesting or important, and that one would like to reflect upon more deeply);
- the "flip-flop technique" (This basically means that one turns the concept of domination upside down and imagines the very opposite, in order to think more analytically than descriptively about the data. This in turn helps to generate provisional categories and their properties);
- systematic comparison (This means that one compares a specific phenomenon with another known phenomenon with the underlying similarities and differences. One's eventual theoretical explanation, although it may draw the same conclusion as the original literature, has a higher density due to the different avenues of exploration);
- far-out comparisons (It is a technique that may be employed by the researcher to get unstuck by generating properties and dimensions to pursue. This technique is self explanatory. It entails the comparison of two seemingly unrelated areas. If One wants to generate more properties and dimensions surrounding the relationship between the person who commits serial murder and the actual murders, one may compare it to a person who collects butterflies and the actual catching of butterflies. Although these two activities are far apart, they may shed some light on hidden dimensions and properties of serial murder); and
- waving the red flag (The analytic issue at hand is never to take anything for granted. Therefore absolutistic statements, phrases or words such as: "never", "always" and "it will last forever", should be examined more closely and they may be clarified or even challenged).

4.5 Procedure

The analytic procedure of grounded theory is designed not only to test, but also to build theory. This procedure provides the research process with the rigour a) to produce a theory which is scientific, b) to help the researcher to break through preconceived ideas that are both brought into, and generated during the research process, c) and to ground the theory. Procedure assists in building a dense, tightly woven explanatory theory which is developed through sensitivity in integrating the data, so that it approximates the reality which it represents (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 57). Theory building is, however, not the aim of this research, but rather the abstraction of qualitative themes.

The researcher used personal interviews based on the principles of Grounded Theory as a qualitative data gathering basis (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Several interviews (about six) were conducted with each person. The aim is not necessarily to find commonalities and norms, but to understand the psychological structure and dynamics of each individual (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). The narratives and conversations inherent in interviews are considered essential for obtaining knowledge about the social world, and this includes scientific knowledge (Kvale, 1996, pp. 8-9)

4.5.1 Selection of candidates

Specific candidates had been selected according to the operational definition of serial murder. This research population may thus be seen as an availability sample. The following criteria had to be met:

- convicted of several (at least three or more) murders;
- the murders must seem motiveless, i.e. seemingly without any motive such as gain or revenge;
- the murders may not be gang, cult, race or ideology related, or for the reason of eliminating witnesses to other crimes;
- there may be cooling off periods between the murders; and
- the person had to be legally competent to stand trial and all appeals must be concluded.

Following this criteria only four people were identified as people who have committed serial murder. Information regarding convictions was verified through the identified persons criminal record and data from the Department of Correctional Services' computer records. These candidates were expected to be available and willing to part take in the research without reward.

4.5.2 First meetings

The purpose of the first meeting was to take care of the formal-legal aspects of the research. First of all it was necessary to establish the following:

- willing consent to take part in the research without any advantages or disadvantages attached thereto;
- consent for audiovisual recording of interviews; and
- the signing of a legal undertaking which protects their identity.

The legal undertaking was translated into several languages: Afrikaans, English, SeTswana, Northern SeSotho and IsiZulu. (See Appendix C, which is the English version of the legal undertaking).

The first meetings took place on two different days, early in December 1996. On the first day the researchers met Messrs N., M. and D. for the first time, and two days later the researchers met Mr. C. All the candidates met both the above mentioned criteria and definition of this study. A standard introductory explanation has been used which contains the following basic principles:

- this research is conducted under the auspices of the University of Pretoria;
- the focus of this research is murder;
- all information will be treated as confidential and identities will be protected;
- interviews are conducted in a discussion-type fashion;
- various interviews will be conducted and videotaped for research purposes;
- the videotapes will be used for research purposes and will only be seen by the researcher and his supervisor; and

- there are no positive or negative consequences related to your choice of participation or non-participation.

4.5.3 First interviews

The first interview with every candidate was done in an unstructured way. A certain amount of rapport had already been established with the interviewees from the first meetings and interviewer and interviewee were thus already acquainted. The researcher treated the first interview in the same fashion as one would treat the first interview with a client in a client centred therapeutic context, fostering support, warmth and empathy. The researcher was non-directive and was guided, to a large extent, by what the person brought into the interview situation and he phrased the questions in an open ended fashion so that even the clarification of statements by the interviewee remained non-directive.

It was further explained that the research process would involve a few sessions where the interviewers would have an informal discussion with each interviewee separately.

The first interview was unstructured and non-directive and was led by what the interviewee presented. All the interviews were recorded audiovisually and the first five minutes of each first interview is transcribed (see Appendix C). The first interviews and subsequent follow-up interviews were videotaped and analyzed to extract themes. These themes are described in Chapter Five in no specific order and have not been placed in any construct of inter-relatedness or interpretation. Such interpretations and conceptual frameworks will be provided later in Chapter Six. Where necessary, follow-up interviews were used to clarify certain aspects from the first interview.

4.5.4 Defining the concept "themes"

As already explained, the recognition and abstraction of theme forms an important aspect of the analysis of interviews. "Theme" refers to a concept, an idea or phrase which is repeated during the communications. Primary themes are those repeated most often and the lesser ones are considered secondary themes.

A verbatim transcription has been made of the first five minutes of each person's first interview (see Appendix C). The lines of each such transcription are numbered in the left-hand margin. Thus, when reporting and analysing the themes (see Chapter 5: Results), the line number(s) serve the purpose of indicating the location(s) of each theme and are placed in brackets next to the quoted theme.

However, due to the length of the interviews it is not feasible to transcribe each interview completely. These short transcriptions and the quoted themes serve as an example of how the researcher abstracted the themes. The reader may find that many themes have been mentioned (Chapter Five) without a mention of a corresponding line number. In such instance the theme was abstracted from the audiovisual recording of the interview. These audiovisual recordings are available, on request, from Ms. M. Bergh, Director of Psychology, Department of Correctional Services (see Appendices E and F).

4.5.5 Context

It is not plausible to report the description of interviews and themes in isolation. Contextualization is important, given the subjective nature of these descriptions. Therefore, mention will be made of the situation, the people involved, the setting and all other relevant factors that may have a bearing upon the interview and subsequent description. Minor aspects which could shed light on the identity of the four persons and so jeopardize the confidentiality were omitted or changed.

4.5.6 Analysis of the data

As introduction to each person's presenting qualitative themes, the interviews are further contextualized and other possible relevant factors are discussed. Specific attention is also given to the type of information with which the interviewee starts off the interview.

Analysis of the first interview is done by means of open coding. This means that the search for themes started off with a line-by-line analysis of the transcribed data which generated categories that formed the basis of the theoretical sampling. Sentence or paragraph analysis helped to code the then already existing categories, while analysis of

the entire document or observation helped to facilitate comparison in terms of similarities and differences (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 73).

Follow-up interviews clarify certain questions prompted by the concepts and/or categories revealed during the first interview. This guided the following interviews. Categories and concepts may be refined and abstracted through the use of axial and selective coding. Clarifying and collecting data through non-directive and directive questioning helped to saturate and understand the categories.

The newly derived grounded theory understanding of serial murder is eventually compared with the existing theories and literature. The research findings, comparisons, and documented data are written up.

4.6 Conclusion

A brief summary has been given of the theoretical roots of grounded theory and the underlying rationale thereof. An overview of the theoretical premises of both the method and the procedure has been provided. The researcher discusses how he conceptualizes and applies the principles and procedure of the grounded theory approach in his research. The researcher will thus attempt to understand the nature of the phenomenon of serial murder from a grounded theory approach, using the methods and procedures thereof.

In the following chapter the results from the interviews are presented. This chapter can be seen as the raw data of this research.

Chapter 5

Results

5.1 Introduction

The data is reported on a descriptive level and consists of the researcher's description of the content and process of the interviews. The data consists of a short contextualization of the interview situation, the researcher's clinical impressions of the interviewee and qualitative themes from the interview.

5.2 Person I: Mr. N.

Mr. N. is a 25-year-old, Afrikaans speaking, white male. He is short and of medium build. He has brown hair and blue eyes. He is the oldest of three children. His parents are both still alive. He was married for seven years and has one child from that marriage, aged seven years. He still has contact with his family.

He had no criminal record prior to the current convictions. He was convicted on three charges of murder and received three sentences of 30 years each. He has been incarcerated since 1996.

5.2.1 Contextualization

The first interview was held in the legal consulting room in the maximum security section at Pretoria Maximum Correctional facility. It was a bare room, with two wooden benches and three other single chairs tied together with a chain and lock. I was struck by the amount of noise in this room. I could clearly hear sounds from both inside and outside the correctional facility. This room was adjacent to a very busy corridor and only a door with a glass pane separated the two. This added to the noise problem.

A series of small vertical windows ran along the length of the room's outside wall with bars in front of each window. Although the interview was conducted out of sight and hearing of the correctional officer at the door, I was aware of his presence.

5.2.2 Clinical impressions

Mr. N. was dressed in a light green shirt and trousers, with shining black shoes. His appearance struck me as very neat: he was well groomed with short and neat hair. He is short and of slender build.

I would describe him as a small person. When we shook hands his hand was dry and his grip was normal. I experienced something almost sensitive about him, as if he was very susceptible to being hurt by other people. He was, however, slightly nervous, but this may have been attributed to the fact that he thought that both Mr. Labuschagne and myself were lawyers. This misconception was corrected soon after. Despite the fact that he understood both the content and implication of the undertaking, he chose to consult with his lawyer before actually signing it. This may have indicated that he was wary of trusting people on face value, and/or it may simply have meant that he knew that this undertaking had certain legal implications which needed further consideration.

He seemed to be of average intelligence and was not very talkative. He twiddled his thumbs at the beginning, he seemed rather solemn and did not initially smile at all. He also appeared slightly hesitant or unsure of himself. Later he started to liven up a bit as he smiled more frequently and appeared very thankful that someone had eventually come to his assistance. He stated that he was afraid of himself and that he did not always feel in control of himself and of what he might do.

He further stated that he would like to get to know and understand himself better. I experienced this statement as very sincere. He almost seemed touched by his own incapacity to understand himself. According to him he still could not remember exactly what he had done. When the police showed him photographs of the crime scenes he was shocked and could not believe that he could have done something like that.

He was very polite, well spoken and well mannered. He also expressed his gratitude for our help several times. He reiterated his willingness to part take in the research, especially if such research could, in future, help other people with problems similar to his. He said that his problem (he did not specify what precisely it was) did not end just because he was incarcerated. According to him, that which happened to him outside, continues to happen to him during incarceration. Thus his problem still exists.

5.2.3 Themes from the interviews

Instead of an elaborate explanation of how themes were abstracted, a short illustration follows. For this purpose the first section of Mr. N.'s first interview transcription (refer to Appendix C) is used:

- 1 **R 1:** "Ons begin vandag met ons eerste onderhoud, en ons
2 wil hê jy moet praat waaroor jy ookal wil."
3 **Mr. N:** "Ek is nou nie 'n persoon wat sommer self so kan
4 begin nie...Wel, waar wil julle hê moet ek begin?"
5 **R 1:** "Enige plek."
6 **Mr. N:** "Toe ek 'n kind was, toe ek groot is?"
7 **R 1:** "Ja, net soos jy wil, enige plek."
8 **Mr. N:** "Wel, as kind het ek seker 'n nie te slegte
9 lewe gehad nie, dis net...'n paar goeters wat gebeur het,
10 het nie die lewe so lekker gemaak nie. Ek's nou 'n man en
11 ek hou nie daarvan as mans, met gay stories deurmekaar
12 is. Ek kan dit nie hanteer nie. Dieselfde met hoere ôk.
13 Ek's nie 'n ou wat hoere kan hanteer nie, 'n vroumens wat
14 begin uitspatterig raak is vir my absoluut soos 'n doring
15 in die vlees. Ek haat dit. Ek kan dit nie hanteer nie."

As already explained in Chapter Four, this serves as an example of how the researcher abstracts themes from the data. The themes from Mr. N.'s interviews are the following:

- Self disclosure: he starts off with self disclosure by qualifying that he is a person who possibly needs guidance and finds unstructuredness difficult to deal with (3).
- Dislike of homosexual activities: The self disclosure continues. He can't handle men who are involved in gay activities (11). He later links this dislike to the fact that a cousin had sexually molested and indecently assaulted him when he was in senior primary school.
- Strong dislike for prostitutes: He can't handle whores (13). Both these references to gays and prostitutes may disclose the puritanical nature of his psycho-sexual development.
- Impaired logic: the link between his dislike of homosexual activity and prostitutes is very vague and seems like a jump in logic (lines 11 & 13). He uses a circular argument to identify his first murder victim as a whore (31-32).
- His judgement is influenced by a stereotypical view of what a whore is (31-32).
- Stereotypical images: he stereotypes people very easily, for instance women, whores and gays.
- Seeks guidance: he seeks guidance in how he should start (3, 4 & 6).
- He thinks in terms of extremes: child versus grown-up (4), he absolutely detests whores (15).
- A very strong dislike of whores: He can't handle them (line 13), they are like a thorn in his flesh (line 15), he hates it (line 16) and again he can not handle them (line 16).
- Idiomatic language use (14-15).
- Something inside himself: He struggles to explain this concept (19, 60, 61). Sometimes he describes this in an impersonal manner as "it" (19, 21, 27 & 38) with lifeless attributes like that of a wall which you walk into (19-20). More often he personalizes this entity, ascribing living qualities to it. For instance, this entity reacts to a specific name and it can wake him up on the inside (59), it is like another person (61) or another part of him (66-67), and this entity does not always react to its name (64-67). In a later interview he said that it is as if he is communicating with himself (or someone else inside himself) and his self (or this other person) can communicate back. He also displays ambivalence about the nature of this entity when he states that "...Emile is iets..." (Emile is something) (59).

- Involuntary behaviour: The entity causes him to do things which are out of his control and he cannot stop it (26- 27, 57, 35, 37-42, 63-64). This involuntary behaviour has serious results such as fighting and even death (24-27).
- Hot headedness: this may be seen as a synonym for both "something inside himself" and "involuntary behaviour" He refers to these states as being "warmkop" or hot headed, which means "that you do your own thing". He further described it as, "It is as if your body dies, you feel empty and you do not feel like yourself. Although you may be aware of what is happening, your brain cannot control your body any more, you feel as if you are radio controlled. You think thoughts that may not be thought". He states it very well by saying it is "...like someone else climbs into you, cuts you off and controls you."
- Visible changes: according to him, his wife said that one can see the changes (hot headedness) in his eyes, the look in his eyes changes completely (from timid to hostile). This has been confirmed by the social worker when she stated that he is not the person she knows. Both his wife and the social worker have reported that his behaviour changes to being more unruly and aggressive.
- Visceral experience: he reports various visceral experiences during the process of becoming "hot headed". He feels cold on the outside and then becomes hot from the inside and "then he (other part or person, or the entity) is there".
- Uncertainty about "split personality": he is uncertain about having a split personality. He says he is okay with himself, but he is scared of the other half of himself.
- Uncertain about his own identity: he asks the question "Who am I then?". He is desperate to understand himself and he seeks help, for example: he went to a neurologist, in court he requested to receive psychotherapy, and again asked the researchers to help him with his problem. When the other part/person takes over, the clean side of him disappears and this other part/person has an identity of its own.
- A moral sense: He knows when he is doing something wrong (23-25) and he knows he should stop (41-42). He is moralistic, because he judges other people and himself by a strict code of conduct.
- He is aware of his problem (20-22).
- Unsure of the cause of the problem: he speculates that the problem may be in

himself. However, he is not sure of the exact location of the problem, for example it may be in his body, his mind, his thoughts or his soul.

- Subjective discomfort: he dislikes being out of control (20-21), involuntary behaviour is incompatible with his own body (21), it makes things (and life) difficult for him (22), he does not like to murder (36-37), it shocked him to see what he is capable of (28) and it is not part of his self definition, it caused disbelief (28-30). He later said that "this thing must come out of him". When he is controlled like this, he wants to trade in his head or body for another. He has been so desperate with himself that he tried to commit suicide in 1994. When he was shown the crime scene photographs of the second and third murder, the court proceedings were adjourned so that he could go to the bathroom where he was sick. He describes these murders as inhumane and he looked disgusted when he described the detail on the photos.
- Shifting responsibility: He does not take responsibility for his actions, it is "something inside him" that does not want to deal with "whores" and "gays" (16).
- Time lapses: he experiences time gaps, for instance from the moment he opened the door for his first victim to actually beating her (35-36). He has no recollection of the second and third murders. On the evening of the second and third murders he experienced a two-hour lapse from approximately 20h00 to 22h00. He remembers going to town, visiting a friend. He had a heated argument with his friends wife, during which she swore at Mr. N.'s mother. This upset him very much because, as he puts it, she swore under his mothers dress: "...sy het my ma onder haar rok in gevloek. Dit het my omgekrap. My ma is my ma". He remembers leaving through the garden gate with his friend, but cannot recall how he got there. He remembers getting into a car with his friend and another woman. The next thing he remembers is being back at home and getting in to bed. The first time he saw the victims and what he had done was during the trial with when the crime scene photographs were shown to him.
- Triggering process: these spells of involuntary behaviour and/or time lapses may be triggered by people or events that upset him, for instance "whores", "gays", interpersonal conflict or severe insults to his mother.
- Historical onset: his problem with "hot headedness" started in childhood (56-58).

5.3 Person II: Mr. M.

He is a 44-year-old, Tswana speaking, black male. He is of slender, small build and has brown eyes. He comes from a complex, reconstituted family. He is the only child of his biological mother and father. His father divorced his mother and married another woman and they had three children. He does not know any of his mother or step mother's names. His father had a girlfriend before his biological mother and they have seven children. Since the age of two he stayed with this girlfriend of his father, whom he used to call his mother. This step-family was characterized by a lot of conflict, fighting and drinking. His father died approximately twelve years ago.

His occupation may be described as an entrepreneur. He fixes radios and televisions, and sells spices for a living.

He has a prior criminal record. His previous convictions start in 1975 and range from housebreaking, theft and assault to escape from custody. He was found guilty on six counts of murder, one of attempted murder and one of rape. He was sentenced to six times life long imprisonment and has been incarcerated since 1993.

5.3.1 Contextualization

Mr. M's interviews were conducted in the same room and under similar circumstances as with Mr. N. The interview was conducted out of sight and hearing of the correctional officer guarding the door.

5.3.2 Clinical impressions

What struck me when I first saw him was the small size of his head in proportion to his body. He was dressed in the standard dark green uniform. When we shook hands, his hand was slightly damp and this may indicate anxiety. He had a timid handshake which may have indicated interpersonal submissiveness or may otherwise have been indicative of his cultural background. He greeted me with the commonly seen alternating-three-grip-handshake.

In a way he seemed fragile and almost brittle, as if he could be easily be broken or hurt, both physically and emotionally. I experienced an almost sad quality about him. He was a bit soft spoken. I caught myself speaking slower and articulating more clearly to him, sitting forward on my chair and paying close attention to him. I think this was partly due to my first perception of him as being not too intelligent. On the contrary, he later proved to be intellectually quite capable.

He initially thought that the researchers were human rights lawyers and he wanted us to help him re-open his criminal case. The researchers stated that they were doing research about murder and he immediately contested his suitability for this study. He maintained that he did not commit any murders. He went to great lengths to explain the researchers and to convince them that he is was mistakenly identified and trailed for murders which he did not commit. According to him there had been a confusion with the names and he was eventually arrested. Due to an earlier rape conviction and sentence, he was seen by the police as the ideal suspect to fit the murder charges.

In the light of my sensitivity to keep an open mind, his explanation was so convincing that it caused enough doubt in my mind to actually check the file with his conviction records. Though possible, it seemed highly unlikely that he could have been "framed" for several murders.

After he realized that we were not lawyers he scaled down on his persuasive attempts. He seemed to be slightly cautious and suspicious of us, but later relaxed and even started to smile. He asked whether he might read his undertaking aloud and did so in his mother tongue. Despite the fact that he read slowly and often with difficulty, he persisted and finished reading the whole document. This might have been a display of his abilities and/or education. Hereafter he said that despite that fact that he knew what he read, he did not understand it and for this purpose we brought a translator in. The translator explained the content and implication of the undertaking to him in his mother tongue. This seemed to put him more at ease and he signed the undertaking.

5.3.3 Themes from the interviews

The following themes were identified from his interview(s):

- Seeks guidance: Unsure where to start (2 & 5).
- Self disclosure: He qualifies what type of man he was outside, by saying "...I was a man who..." (9 & 18). He subsequently discloses his occupations (8-9 & 15), where and with whom he lived (10-13) and what type of person he is (18-21).
- Self perception: he is a person who enjoys life with other people (19), he is not a criminal (20), other people know him as being well (21).
- Life outside (before incarceration): He mostly speaks about his occupation where he sold spices or repaired radios and televisions (8-9).
- Seeking confirmation: at the end of sentence he often repeats the phrase or a part of the phrase "...you see? Yah" or "...you see? No" (9-10, 10, 13, 19, 20-21, 21, 26-27, 29, 30, 31, 32-33, 33, 35, 38, 40, 40-41, 42, 43, 45, 48, 50 & 52). It seems as if he is uncertain whether the listener understands and therefore he seeks confirmation of the listener's understanding.
- Innocence: he firmly believes that he did not commit any murders and that he was framed for all six murders (22-23). He gives a detailed explanation of how he was framed by the defense and the complainant (22-45).
- The court failed to fulfil its responsibility: he pointed out to the court that there are discrepancies in the testimony and process of the hearing (23-30) and despite this the court still sentenced him (38-43).
- He wants to appeal: This may be seen as an attempt to assert himself, he is trying to appeal against the court sentence (43-47).
- Being left to his own devices: nobody helps him (47) and nobody is willing to help him (47-48), he has applied for legal aid (46-47), his lawyer has promised him an appeal, but this has not been realized (44-45), and the court did not help him either (23-30 & 38-43).
- Loosing hope: he is constantly trying to obtain help (46-47), but if nobody helps him he may lose hope (48).
- Instilling hope: he is not ready to give up hope (48-49) when he says "I say no, see maybe...". He furthermore places his hope in the Truth and

Reconciliation Commission (TRC) or God. He believes it is possible that the TRC or God may release him (48-50).

- Christian faith: he believes that God is in control of our lives, He knows what He is doing and He knows why things happen to us (50-51). God is his only hope (52).

In terms of understanding a person who has committed serial murder, I feel that Mr. M's data lacks in richness. This may be due to the fact that he communicated in English and not in his mother tongue. Despite this, the data holds several themes.

5.4 Person III: Mr. D.

He is a 53-year-old, Tswana speaking, black man. He is rather skinny and of average height. He is the second oldest child of five children. He has one older and three younger sisters. Both his parents are alive, they have been traditionally married and have divorced. His mother remarried and has one child from that marriage. Mr. D. is married to his first wife and they have two daughters. He feels the closest to his wife, children and his younger sister.

He is religious and belongs to a specific church. He has been a farm worker by trade and has a standard five (grade seven) education.

He has a criminal record starting in 1968. Convictions range from theft, escape, attempted escape, malicious damage to property (damaging the police cell) to manslaughter. He has been convicted on 14 counts of murder and one of attempted murder. He has received a sentence of life imprisonment and he has been incarcerated since 1990.

5.4.1 Contextualization

He was seen in the administrative part of Pretoria Local Correctional facility. The researchers met him in the office of the secretary to the commanding officer. We went

into the next door office, furnished with a standard government issue furniture including a bare table and some old dilapidated chairs.

The room had a series of small vertical windows along the length of the room's outside wall with bars in front of each window which overlooked a main road to and from the city. The floor was largely covered with a brown, loose carpet and the floor tiles had come undone in a few places. The interviews were held in privacy and there was no correctional officer guarding at the door.

5.4.2 Clinical impressions

He was dressed in an old shirt of which the collar was frayed with an outdated, old vest underneath. He struck me as very friendly. The way in which he greeted me with his right arm extended and his left hand supporting the right forearm from beneath, indicated a traditional and/or rural way of greeting.

On grounds of his handshake, I perceived him as being steeped in traditional ways and that he might be as traditional in his beliefs. His hands were dry and rough and his grip was very timid (which may be interpreted as a cultural sign of being respectful and friendly). His shoes were old and it seemed as if he either made them himself or had re-patented an old pair of shoes. This might have indicated a certain degree of ingenuity on his side with an odd and/or eccentric way of creating things.

He had rugged hands which seem to have done a lot of hard labour in their day. He spoke a rather fluent Afrikaans, with the exception of a few odd or weird word uses. He preferred Afrikaans as the conversation language. He did, however, prefer the undertaking to be in his mother tongue and also used an interpreter to help explain the implications of the undertaking, after which he signed the undertaking. He initially thought that the researchers were members of the South African Police Service who were re-investigating one of his cases and therefore inquired if he could have an interpreter to help him with the "investigation". Only after the interpreter helped to explain our affiliation, plans and purpose did he understand that we were not "investigating" in the criminal sense of the word, but rather researching.

Although he did not seem to do it deliberately, he was sometimes very amusing in the way he made sense of things and in the way he expressed himself. In this sense, I experienced him as a very likable character and this also made the atmosphere very informal and relaxed. He came across as very genuine and interested in us, he asked whether we were going away for the festive season and without giving me a sense of prying, enquired about the researchers' family lives. Despite these inquiries he kept his distance and when we showed our reluctance to answer his questions directly he did not press for an answer.

He spoke a lot about his family. He was very eager to participate and no persuasion was needed. He seemed to be delighted by the attention that was given to him by our research. Even after we had formally said our goodbyes he waited for us on the stairs to say that we must not forget about him. This also led me to experience him as dependent and almost lonely. The question remains whether any of this may be attributed to his character or the correctional setting.

5.4.3 Themes from the interviews

The following themes were identified from his interview(s):

- Starting immediately: he starts off without asking for guidance as to what to say. This may indicate a certain degree of independence or anxiety
- Postponing: he postpones what he is about to say by starting off with a long elaborate sentence. It is as if he is preparing the way (1-3).
- People must listen to him: he regards himself as one who has something to share with the world, for example "...listen up all you people...I can tell you something..." (1, 17) and "...ek sê so:" (70).
- Moralistic: people must listen to what he has to say (1 & 17). He starts off by prescribing to the people what they should or should not do, for instance, we can not live on our own (4-5) and we should live together as South Africans (10). People should not kill each other, it is not good (7-8). He often uses the words "must" and "must not" (3, 9, 30, 70, 72 & 73). Another moralistic story is that one should not rape and murder another person, because one will go to jail and ones family will suffer (21-26).

- Religious messages: this may also form part of the moralistic streak he has. There are several religious-moral themes, such as, "you must go to church and associate with church people" (14-15), and " you must walk with God and pray to Him, you shouldn't walk with the devil, otherwise the devil will get you" (34-38). He brought sketches which he traced of God standing on the serpent's head and of God and the dove (Holy Ghost).
- Seeking confirmation: he often asks the rhetorical question "You see?" after his statements. This may be a mannerism or he may be seeking confirmation of the listener's understanding (2-3, 4, 10, 26, 32, 40, 43, 51-52, 59-60).
- Perseveration: this may be a single word(s) repeated a few times or it could be an idea (9, 31, 34-38, 57, 62-64, 73-77, 78-79).
- Minimizes the effect of his behaviour: He refers to wrong doings as "funny things" (21).
- Peculiar verbalizations: for example "beur" instead of "gebeur" (2), "Sôt-Afrika" instead of "Suid-Afrika" (10, 56, 58 & 79), "kintietjie" instead of "kindjie" (21 & 22). He also refers to human anatomy in terms of animal anatomy, for instance "poot" (paw) instead of "hand" and "speen" (udder) instead of "breast". This may be due to his understanding of the Afrikaans language.
- Thought pressure: He repeats "En so aan" (And so forth) very often, especially at the end of a specific idea (16, 26, 43, 47-48). It is almost as if he is saying that he has more to say about the topic, but for the moment he will decline from doing so.
- Loose associations: for example he starts off by talking about how he likes it to be outside and how he dislikes being inside. He then starts to wander off with loose associations and ends up talking about president De Klerk (49-60).
- Tangential thinking: this occurs elsewhere in his interview where he starts off with a story about a man who is going to town. He then strays off completely and starts to tell in detail about the buildings that he sees and how he can build such buildings.
- Numerical omissions: when he would like to say "I have build seven houses while I was outside", he would for instance say "I have build 1, 2, 3, 4,..., 6, 7 houses". Despite counting out aloud and using his fingers to guide him, he would always leave out a number.

- Intellectual striving: his intelligence seems to be average to low average. Despite this he comes across as trying to sound more intelligent than he is, almost as if he tries to compensate.
- He is childlike: for instance counting out aloud and using his fingers or the way in which he describes something that is not good (7-8). He has been thrown away by his family for being "very naughty".
- Little emotional flow: there is a discrepancy between his verbal content and his non-verbal expression. For instance when he speaks about murder and rape that is not good, his face does not change and his voice remains the same. All through his interview his affect may be described as blunt.
- Speech pressure: he speaks incredibly fast and non-stop. Compare the transcription length of his first five minutes with those of the others'.
- He portrays himself as a good Samaritan character: he found a sick man alongside the road, he took him to hospital and visited him regularly. He is a person prescribing advice to other people to keep them on the straight and narrow. He wants to prevent other people from being killed, because we are all South Africans and children of God (70-79).

5.5 Person IV: Mr. C.

He is a 30-year-old, Afrikaans speaking, white male. He is of slender build with short, black hair and he is taller than average. He is an only child from his parents' marriage. His parents are still alive and married. He does not know his father's side of the family, but he knows his mother's side of the family very well. He feels the closest to his mother's side of the family. No close relationship is indicated with either of his parents.

He was a member of the former South African Railway Police. He had no prior convictions. He was convicted on five counts of murder, three of rape, one of attempted rape, one of robbery and four of theft. He was sentenced to life imprisonment and has been incarcerated since 1993.

5.5.1 Contextualization

With Mr. C one of the correctional officials sat in with the first interview. Although this was not intentional it may have had an effect on the interview. Although the correctional official's presence did not necessarily invalidate these themes, it did however create a different context. Therefore specific notice is taken of possible differences between the first and second interview (when the correctional official was absent). For the duration of the other interviews, the correctional officer guarded the door out of sight and hearing and I was not constantly aware of his presence.

The first interview was held in the administrative block of an East Rand correctional facility. A wooden door separated the corridor from the second in command's office where the interview took place. This was a large office, neatly furnished with new furniture, full floor carpeting, and an open reception area. The office is finished off with a few personal touches like family photos on the desk and a bookshelf.

5.5.2 Clinical impressions

Mr. C. seemed very suspicious of the researchers and did not speak much. The way in which he looked around, he seemed almost hyper-vigilant with a lot of sideward glancing. He was, however, very willing to co-operate and take part in the research and he also signed the undertaking during the first meeting. During the discussion on how the researchers might later contact him, the one researcher suggested that he would phone a certain contact person. The interviewee replied by telling the researcher that there were certain procedures and channels through which the researcher should work.

Before the first contact session, Mr. C notified the researchers that he would only speak to a researcher who was affiliated to the South African Police Service. Despite this, he did speak with both interviewers during the first session, without mentioning his prerequisite.

During the first meeting Mr. C. hardly showed any emotional fluctuation and had an almost aloof way in which he dealt with the researchers. He seemed almost matter-of-

fact and it also seemed as if he did not want to waste unnecessary time on this conversation. He shared his own opinion whenever he disagreed with anything the researcher's said and I therefore may conclude that he may be able to assert himself, especially if it was in a new interpersonal situation.

5.5.3 Themes from the interviews

The following themes were identified from his interview(s):

- Seeking guidance: he is unsure of how and where to start and seeks guidance from the researchers (6, 26-27).
- He is formal in the way he speaks: he refers to the crimes as "dade" (deeds) (6), "voorvalle" (incidents) (10).
- Anxiousness: this is evident from his non-verbal behaviour, for example fidgeting with his hands, swallowing a lot, a lot of sideward glancing and perspiration on his forehead.
- He speaks very haltingly: he does not speak in a flowing manner. He often stops or pauses. He uses a lot of unnecessary insertions such as "okay...'n...wel" (okay...hm...well) (9-19).
- He speaks in a slow and roundabout way: his transcription is the shortest one of all (see Appendix C).
- Uncertain way of speaking: he often repeats parts of a sentence (9) and changes direction midway in his sentences (9-14).
- He has a ponderous way of speaking: it often seems as if he thinks a lot about what he is about to say. His eyes tend to look upwards while he is talking and one often get the impression that he may be thinking more than he is actually saying.
- Detailed account: he starts off by giving detailed accounts of the rapes, murders and other wrongdoings. He does this in chronological order.
- Apathetic: he displays very little emotion during the accounts of his rapes and murders. His affect may be described as flat. His non-verbal behaviour may be described as absent, in the sense that he seems to be elsewhere.
- He comes across as nonchalant: for instance "Okay, the first one is in '89..." (11 & 14-19). Here he is speaking about his first murder and it seems as if he is

speaking about a normal day at the office. His descriptions are devoid of emotional content.

- He did not have a fixed plan of how to murder: he just went somewhere and did it. This is well illustrated by the way he approached his first victim. He did not know what to say to her and lacking a fixed plan, he drove her back into her room (17-19). He later confirms this (33-36).
- The first murder had a negative impact on him: it drained him emotionally (30), after the murder he was tired (37-38) and he took approximately two years before he committed the next murder (40-41).
- The subsequent murders were easy: as opposed to the first murder where he strangled the victim, the other murder victims were all shot dead with a pistol. According to him this had no impact on him, it was like going to work and going on with your daily routine.
- Coping style: during the murders he did not think, he just did it (36-37). This is a strong theme that is reiterated throughout the interview.
- He is interpersonally submissive: he would go along with other people's statements about him, even though he disagrees. For instance, during his psychiatric observation he was told that he has a "split personality". He has a well formed opinion, stating that he may have a soft and a hard side, but they are both still the same person. Even though he finds their feedback amusing, he does not assert himself. He simply says that they are the experts, and therefore they must be right.
- Self perception: he describes himself as an introvert, somebody who does not mind being alone. He bottles up things that bother him and he says that this may be part of his problem. He knows what his problem is and he is working on it. He sees himself as somebody who is sick and who needs to be "healed".
- Attitude toward women: He says that he does not hate women and they would be safe if they go out with him. He will not force her to do anything against her will. Sexuality is private, he does not easily speak about it and will not brag about his sexual conquests.
- Self disclosure: He is not completely comfortable with talking about himself and what he did, but he must do it to understand himself better. He grew up as an only child and describes his childhood years as being alone and boring. This boredom has

carried over into his adult life and he needed to break the boredom. Later when he read about himself, he found the discrepancy between who he is and who people think he is, amusing.

- Good-bad or hard-soft split: he states that each person has a good and bad part (or a hard and soft side). With him the bad part was more in control, the good part was still present, but the bad part is the guilty one.
- Recurring and intrusive thoughts: the thoughts and memories of what he has done are still with him. He states that they haunt and destroy him as they "eat away at his thoughts, they destroy you on the inside and you don't have any feeling left". These memories mill around inside his head and frustrate him. He also reports getting flashbacks to the murder and rape scenes. He does, however, try not to think too deeply about these things. He often thinks about what he has done, but does not want to do it again.
- Feeling out of control: he did not feel in control of himself or his life. He could not stop on his own, and he had to be caught. Being engaged was one attempt to help himself, because he believed that his fiancé would be able to bring him back on to the straight and narrow.
- A strong hubris to rehabilitate himself: he is adamant that he is capable of rehabilitating himself, despite the feedback he got from his psychiatric evaluation. He says that a part of his problem is that he does not discuss his concerns with other people. He has now started to write to pen friends with whom he discusses certain concerns, and the psychologist and reverend are also part of his healing process. He also says that being arrested is part of his rehabilitation, he could not stop out of own free will. So now he is working hard to continue his rehabilitation. He wants to be "better" when he is released.
- Willing admission of guilt: when the police brought him in for questioning, they took his finger prints and then he confessed to the crimes.
- Relief after arrest: he was prepared for what would happen after his arrest and he felt relieved, because he could not stop on his own.
- Existential concern: after his arrest he was very confused and questioned why this had to happen to him. He also took this matter up with his reverend.
- Risk taking behaviour: as a child he started off by stealing money from his mother's purse. This evolved into stealing small amounts of money from friends

- and family members' purses. He would use this money to play arcade games. He would always steal a small amount so that the person would not notice.
- Excitement seeking behaviour: he describes his life as uneventful and boring. Apart from the childhood risk taking behaviour, he also extended this behaviour into adulthood. As a young adult he joined the Police and worked at Johannesburg international airport. He says that he did not do this for power, but because he likes to work with people and to help them. Also, he often had to escort valuable cargo to foreign destinations. Other examples of excitement seeking behaviour include him entering someone's flat through an open window without being noticed. He would see the person in the flat, take the car keys, leave the flat and take the person's car. He would take the car for a joy ride and after a few days he would return the car and throw the keys through an open window. A week later he returned, entering the flat and raping the woman. He did not kill her and left again.
 - Cocaine addiction metaphor: Mr. C explain it as follow, "the person who is addicted to cocaine may have started off with a less potent drug, like cannabis for instance. Later this is not enough and he moves on to something stronger. He would go to great lengths to satisfy his cravings and in the process he may destroy his life and those of his family members. He would steal money from anybody to obtain cocaine. He can not stop the addiction on his own and needs some intense event to make him or her turn around, like a unexpected pregnancy, for example". Mr. C. too started off with a less potent activity, but increasingly needed more excitement and stimulation. He explained that he learned how to obtain excitement, "it becomes like any other task and you do it step by step. It becomes like a habit and then you become addicted to the excitement. The excitement begins when you start feeling the urge to get out the house and to go somewhere. You want to get out to break the boredom". Hence he refers to himself as an "adrenaline junky". The excitement is obtained through the risks involved in the crimes. When he enters a house he feels anxious and cold, and he can feel the adrenaline pumping, "it becomes like a drug and you become addicted to the feeling and the element of surprise, you never know who or what to expect and somebody may even shoot and kill you. Later you do not think about what you are doing, you just do it for your own enjoyment". He did not have the courage to

commit suicide or to hand himself over. Therefore, to end the addiction he needed a radical event to stop him, like being arrested. However, it did not end at being arrested, he needed to work on himself, "you need to understand yourself better, keep yourself busy and to talk about that which bothers you".

- Family: communication within his family was not good. He was closer to his mother and his relationship with his father was non-communicative. His mother was the one who did the punishing. He respects them and denies that they may have contributed in any way to what he has done. He takes full responsibility for his actions.

5.6 Conclusion

This chapter reiterates the main thrust of the research, and that is to arrive at psychological themes about individuals who have committed serial murder. Despite certain similarities, these people each remain individuals in their own right.

In the following chapter these themes (results) are discussed and integrated into a thematic understanding of each person.

Chapter 6

Discussion

6.1 Introduction

The discussions in this chapter and the interpretations are based on the context, clinical impressions and themes from the interviews. The discussion is centred around the primary themes from the data and the secondary themes where relevant. Each discussion starts off with a summary of the important themes from the data. Each such summary represents a reconstruction of the important themes and may be seen as a way of making sense thereof.

The purpose is to provide integrated themes through which one can better understand the individual who has committed serial murder. All the themes referred to in the discussion have been explicated in the results chapter.

6.2 Discussing themes from Mr. N.'s interviews

The strongest single theme is his dissociative experiences. He describes these dissociative episodes as something inside himself which causes him to act involuntary. During such an episode he may be aware of what he is doing. However, he never seems to have control over his actions and he experiences his own actions in the second person.

These dissociative episodes are usually provoked by a situation involving some sexual content which he cannot tolerate. Such dissociative experiences are preceded by a visceral experience. This acts as a warning signal that he is about to be taken over by an entity inside himself. During such experiences other people report a visible change in his demeanour. Usually he has no recollection of what happened and he experiences such an episode as a time lapse.

These dissociative experiences have a historical onset starting in primary school and still continue while in the correctional facility. He has a strong moral sense and he knows that killing people is inhumane and wrong. This, among others reasons, is why these dissociative experiences cause a whole array of subjective discomforts.

He is very much aware of his "problem" and he invests a lot of time and effort in understanding himself. This seems to cause him a lot of doubt about his identity.

From the above one can see that the most prominent theme concerns his dissociative experiences or as he coins it, his "hot headedness". Such dissociative experiences do not occur in a vacuum. Therefore, all primary and secondary themes relevant to the main theme are discussed. Other primary themes that may be linked to his dissociative experiences include: involuntary behaviour, something inside himself and subjective discomfort. Secondary themes includes the historical onset, triggering process, time lapses and visible and visceral changes.

6.2.1 Hot headedness

The terms "hot headedness" and "dissociative episodes" may be used interchangeably. Hot headedness is a colloquial term used in the correctional facilities. It refers to a state during which a person's behaviour blatantly disregards the rules and/or consequences. He attributes the following characteristic to himself when he becomes hot headed: feeling unreal, being aware of what is happening (sometimes), not being in control of his body and being radio controlled.

There are strong indications that he experiences a mind-body split during the spells of hot headedness. He explains that the brain should be in control of the body. However, when he experiences this hot headedness, the brain is "cut off" and becomes unable to control the body. This feeling is equated with a feeling of being radio controlled. For him the problem lies either within his head or his body and therefore he would like to trade in either of the two. From the way he speaks about his mind and body, it seems as if he views them as two different, autonomous entities, but that the body's behaviour is dependent on the mind's control.

6.2.2 An entity inside himself

He finds it difficult to explain this concept. He struggles to understand himself and to make sense of his experiences. This struggle enables him to present different explanations for this experience. Despite the fact that he has given these experiences a lot of thought, he remains uncertain about the exact nature of these experiences. He seems to be unsure whether this entity is animate or inanimate. However, he tends to attribute more living qualities to this entity and thereby personalizes it.

This entity has the power to stop him and to control him against his will. More often than not, this entity is experienced as inside himself like another person or another half or part of himself. This entity emerges on provocation of some sort, for instance severe sexual insults to his mother or the presence of prostitutes. A visceral experience precedes the emergence of this entity and once it starts to emerge, he cannot stop it. Although he is always unable to counteract the effect of the entity, he may sometimes be aware of what is happening.

6.2.3 Involuntary behaviour

This entity causes him to behave involuntarily. This means that although he does not want to perform certain behaviour, he has no control over his actions. Most of the time he is not even aware of the fact that he is performing such behaviour. This involuntary behaviour includes shooting at people, fighting and killing people.

6.2.4 Subjective discomfort

His deeds during these dissociative episodes cause a wide variety of subjective discomforts. To murder somebody is directly contra his self definition and this topples him into questioning his own identity. He strongly dislikes the feeling of not being in control of his actions.

6.2.5 Secondary themes

He can be described as passive in his interaction and it seems as if he cannot easily be excited. He has a strong childlike quality that gives him a boyish innocence. He is dependent on others for reassurance and guidance. He is interpersonally cautious. He does not easily trust other people and he would first consider his options before making a decision.

He displays a very strong moralistic sexual attitude toward prostitutes and male homosexual activities. This attitude forms part of the triggering process of his dissociative experiences. He seems to attribute his dislike of male homosexual activities to his own sexual abuse as a child. It is not certain how he obtained his psychosexual attitude towards prostitutes.

6.2.6 Concluding with Mr. N.

Mr. N.'s data presents a rich source of information regarding his experience of the self, dissociation and of killing someone. In conclusion I will discuss each of the above mentioned.

6.2.6.1 Self experience

He experiences intense subjective discomfort and he feels a great need to get rid of his problem. In his experience of himself there seem to be two major splits. The first is a horizontal split and the second a lateral split. The horizontal split seems to divide him into a head and a body. Head and body are perceived as two separately functioning parts and he experiences the problem as being in either of the two. In terms of his experience this is very valid. According to his frame of reference the brain should be in control of the body. However, he experiences episodes where the body acts outside the control of his brain and against his will. This experience of himself doing something bad or wrong, brings us to his experience of the second split.

The lateral split divides him into two distinct parts, halves or people. The one side is the clean side, the obedient and submissive side. He strongly identifies with the clean side and he feels that is who he should and wants to be. On the other hand there is a side or part of himself that has an own identity. This side/part scares him because it controls him, it makes the clean side disappear and it can seriously harm other people.

It is thus understandable that he asks the essential question "Who am I then?". In this question lie his struggles to make sense of this radical split in his nature. He is aware of the discrepancy between his self definition and his self experience. Therefore, his awareness of this dichotomy forces him to review his self definition. It seems as if this dichotomy extends into an existential crisis.

6.2.6.2 Experience of dissociation

There are two basic types of dissociative episodes: those during which he is aware and those during which he is unaware. Episodes of awareness are preceded by a visceral experience that serves as a warning signal. This aware episode is accompanied by a high intensity of subjective discomfort, a feeling of being out of control, a moral sense and observing his behaviour in the second person. However, the unaware episodes are not preceded by an onset warning signal and are merely experienced as a time lapse. It seems as if these are two types of dissociative experiences that differ in severity or intensity.

This reconstruction of themes does not explain why Mr. N. has such dissociative episodes or why he only killed women during these episodes. It does, however, provide a better understanding of Mr. N.'s experiences. This allows us to get a experiential glimpse of what it is like for him to have such dissociative episodes and how he experienced murdering someone.

6.3 Discussing themes from Mr. M.'s interview

Despite having been convicted on six charges of murder, he believes firmly in his innocence. He further believes that he has been framed for these crimes. He is a very

persuasive entrepreneur who presents very convincing arguments to prove his innocence. He has a very strong feeling of being abandoned or forsaken by certain individuals and the legal system. He is desperately trying to prove his innocence, but he does not succeed. This causes him to despair. However, he instills hope into his situation by believing that the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) may still help him. Even if the TRC should fail, he believes that God is his only hope.

The primary themes from Mr. M.'s data are innocence, being framed, being forsaken, persuasiveness and seeking confirmation. Secondary themes include being an entrepreneur, losing hope, instilling hope, interpersonal caution and suspicion, and seeking confirmation and guidance.

6.3.1 Innocence

From day one he has displayed a firm belief in his own innocence. He believes so strongly in his innocence that he even contested his suitability for this study. He tries his best to convince me of his innocence by giving a detailed explanation of the technical aspects of his court case. This belief is so strong that it provides the hubris to apply for an appeal and legal aid, but in vain.

6.3.2 Being framed

This theme, too, involves long detailed explanations of how he was viewed by the police as the most likely suspect, how he was pointed out to witnesses before the trial and how the witnesses confused his name and appearance. According to him, apart from not committing these crimes, he is not the man suspected by the police.

6.3.3 Being forsaken

This includes previously mentioned themes such as being left to his own devices, the court failing to fulfil its responsibility, his wanting to appeal and losing hope (refer to Chapter Five). He has a distinct feeling of being forsaken by people close to him and by the system. For instance, he was basically abandoned by his biological parents and grew up

in a hostile, reconstituted step-family. His lawyer has forsaken him by not applying for an appeal, the court has failed him by being unjust, nobody wants to help him now and even legal aid has failed him so far. This brings about a feeling of being abandoned and he is gradually losing hope. However, he still hopes to be set free and have the injustice against him rectified.

6.3.4 Persuasiveness

He is very persuasive. He presented very strong and seemingly legitimate arguments against his guilt and for his innocence. He was convincing enough to cause doubt in my mind and to send me back to check the file. A big part of his life outside was being an entrepreneur where he would fix electrical appliances and sell other merchandise. So his persuasiveness is a skill that he used to his advantage while he was still outside.

6.3.5 Seeking confirmation

This is a very strong theme. He constantly seeks confirmation of the listener's understanding. This theme is so strong that it seems to be entrenched into his verbal communication style as a type of verbal mannerism (refer to Chapter Five).

6.3.6 Secondary themes

He describes himself as a happy person who gets along with other people. He does not see himself as a criminal and other people too know him as a good person. On an interpersonal level he seeks a lot of reassurance and guidance. He comes across as cautious and suspicious of strangers.

At the moment he is scared of losing hope in proving his innocence. He has, however, not given up and he is not ready to despair yet. He overcomes the despair by instilling hope in himself: he believes that he will be set free by either the TRC or God. He states that his only hope is in God who is all knowing and in control of his life.

6.3.7 Concluding with Mr. M.

The most central theme from Mr. M.'s data involves his experience of being innocent. It seems as if all the other themes are woven around this central theme.

6.3.7.1 Being innocent

One may interpret his firm belief in his own innocence as a form of delusional thinking. One may even call it a delusion of innocence. In classic terms a delusion may be defined as a fixed, false belief of which you cannot convince the person otherwise. This belief may start out as being "realistic", but later loses track of "reality". This delusion may also be seen as systematic delusion. This means that the delusion is elaborate, well established and thoroughly developed to form a convincing story. However, there are arguments for and against this interpretation.

If he does indeed have a system of delusional beliefs, one needs to consider the function of such a symptom. The first function may be interpreted in terms of his self perception. In terms of his self perception one may say that he needs to maintain the status quo. He may need to see himself as a happy, good person who gets along with others. This is also valid for others' perception of him. So he may have developed this system of deluded beliefs in order to maintain and protect his self perception.

The second function may be interpreted in terms of his personality characteristics. He has a strong tendency to be dependent in relation to other people. This means that he relies strongly on interpersonal feedback, guidance and acceptance. As long as he is perceived as a good person who has been unjustly persecuted, he may be able to elicit the necessary interpersonal feedback.

To say that he is delusional seems like an easy way out: simply pathologize him. Although the base line assumption of this study is to believe that the people are guilty as charged, one has to give him the contextual benefit of the doubt. Given the South African jurisprudential and political history, it may be possible that he is indeed innocent. However, it may be possible, but it seems highly unlikely that an innocent man may be

framed and convicted on six counts of murder.

However, the intention is not to declare a retrial, but rather to focus on his experience, which is that he experiences himself as being innocent of these crimes and that he has been treated unjustly by the legal system. For him this experience is real and causes despair.

This reconstruction of themes does not explain why Mr. M. killed people or why he believes so strongly in his own innocence. However, an attempt is made to explain the function of the symptom (system of delusional thoughts). It also provides a better understanding of Mr. M.'s experiences. This gives us an experiential glimpse of what it is like for him to be convicted of murder and to be abandoned.

6.4 Discussing themes from Mr. D's interviews

With Mr. D. there are two strong emerging themes. The first is that of being religiously moralistic while the second theme is that of cognitive impairment. Another strong theme is that of being interpersonally dependent. Secondary themes include being childlike, little emotional flow and the importance of family life.

Mr. D. is a dependent, childlike person who attributes value to family life and his religious-moral principles. He depends on good interpersonal feedback.

6.4.1 Religiously moralistic

This category is constructed from previously mentioned themes such as: moralistic, religious messages, being the good Samaritan and that people must listen to him (refer to Chapter Five).

I have combined these themes into one, because they are closely linked. He is moralistic in a religious (see Chapter Five) and social sense. In a social sense he prescribes how people should live their lives. His communication style is very prescriptive and he regards

his opinion as authoritative. Therefore, people should listen to him, because he has important messages. He tells the people what is right and wrong, and what they should and should not do. This social moralism later flows into the religious moralities. Here he prescribes to people to walk along the straight and narrow and he warns them of the consequences for not doing so.

6.4.2 Cognitive impairment

This category is deductively constructed from the following, previously mentioned themes: perseveration, peculiar verbalizations, loose associations, tangential thinking, numerical omissions, speech/thought pressure and intellectual striving (refer to Chapter Five).

Cognitive impairment is a very wide category. There are various types of cognitive functions that may be impaired, such as cognitive focus, reasoning and concept formation. Therefore it is necessary to specify which cognitive functions may be impaired. The themes give an indication of the type of cognitive impairment.

The most prominent impaired cognitive function is thought processes. Thought processes are divided into two categories, namely establishing cognitive focus and maintaining cognitive focus. Perseveration is a sign that the person struggles to establish cognitive focus. In other words he has a problem in focusing his attention. His inability to maintain cognitive focus is indicated by peculiar verbalizations, loose associations, tangential thinking, numerical omissions and speech/thought pressure. This means that he has problems with concentration. So in short one may say that Mr. M. has impaired attention and concentration.

His added intellectual striving may be an indication that he is aware of his cognitive impairments and that he tries to compensate.

6.4.3 Being interpersonally dependent

The combination of the following themes culminated in this category: being overly

friendly, submissiveness, dependence and seeking confirmation. These themes are explicated in Chapter Five and do not require further explication.

6.4.4 Secondary themes

Family life is very important for him. He speaks about his own family, asks the researchers about their family lives and places emphasis on the maintenance of a good family life in general. He has a rather childlike quality that gives him a boyish type of charm. However, he displays very little emotional flow.

6.4.5 Concluding with Mr. D.

Despite the presence of cognitive impairment, one cannot make any definite further causal link. Cognitive impairment, such as impaired attention and concentration, may be found in various mental and psychological disorders. There are no indications of a psychotic process. This suggests that the cognitive impairment may have an organic, rather than a psychological base. Therefore it is suggested that Mr. M. should be neuropsychologically evaluated to determine the extent and exact nature of his cognitive impairments.

Despite this, there is no obvious causal link as to why he committed serial murder. It would be a jump in logic to say that he committed serial murder because of his cognitive impairment. Many people suffer from impaired attention and concentration, but do not commit serial murder. However, the data helps us to uncover more about him as a person and helps us to understand his experiences better.

6.5 Discussing themes from Mr. C.'s interviews

The most central and encompassing theme is that of being addicted. His metaphor of addiction draws a direct parallel between a cocaine addiction and his own experience. This metaphor serves as framework for reconstructing the themes into a meaningful whole and has given us a metaphor for an individualized understanding of serial murder.

These tangent points include most of the primary themes: cocaine addiction metaphor, learning process, risk taking behaviour, excitement seeking behaviour and feeling out of control. Secondary themes include self perception, being submissive, suspiciousness, hyper-vigilance and apathy (refer to Chapter Five).

6.5.1 Cocaine addiction metaphor

In the reconstruction of these themes the secondary themes are given first to give a brief description of who Mr. C. is. The cocaine addiction metaphor will then be built on further in terms of primary themes.

6.5.1.1 Secondary themes

He is an introverted person who does not easily speak about himself. He regards sexuality as private and he does not hate woman. He is interpersonally submissive. He displays very little emotional flow, even during his detailed accounts of the rapes and murders. When he speaks about the murders he comes across as very apathetic, formal and detailed. He speaks very uncertainly, haltingly, in a roundabout way, slowly and ponderously.

6.5.1.2 Learning process

Excitement seeking and risk taking behaviour forms an integral part of this category. He grew up bored and alone. This boredom started as a child and extended into adulthood. He has learned that he can escape his boredom by engaging in risk taking behaviour through which he obtains excitement. The risk taking behaviour contains an element of surprise which provides the excitement. To obtain excitement became as commonplace as any other task and eventually it became habitual. He became addicted to the excitement and eventually he could not break this addiction.

If the metaphor of addiction is extended to his actual murders and rapes, it seems to make sense. People who use drugs refer to the state of being under the influence as being on a "trip". Such a "trip" may be classified as a "good" or "bad", depending on the

experienced effect of the "trip". One may say that Mr. C.'s first "trip on cocaine" (murder), was a "bad trip". This first experience of killing another person was so intense that the behaviour was accompanied by a mild form of dissociation. He indicates this by saying he did not think, he only acted. He experienced it as emotionally draining and this first experience was so negative, that he took two years before he committed his second murder.

He did learn important lessons from the first murder. He learned that: he is capable of murdering; he can get away with murder; he desensitized himself to murder; and that he should use a more impersonal way of murdering people (for example instead of strangulation he should shoot them).

In this metaphorical sense, he too is a "drug addict" who is addicted to excitement - an "adrenaline junky". Excitement provides him with an adrenaline rush. As a child he learned how to break out of the boredom by stealing money from handbags. These lesser activities (mild drug) gradually became insufficient to provide adequate excitement. Eventually he had to find activities that would provide more excitement and satisfy his addiction (stronger drug). He may have found this more intense excitement in his initial line of work as a police official. However, later this too became insufficient to provide the necessary excitement and therefore he turned to more exciting activities, such as prowling, breaking and entering, joy riding and eventually rape and murder (cocaine).

6.5.1.3 Feeling out of control

He wanted to stop this process of addiction, but he could not control it. He had the following options: stopping out of own free will, turning himself in to the police or committing suicide. However, he did not have the strength or courage to use any of these options. That is why he was relieved to be arrested, because this external intervention was certain to break the addiction. This could be compared with the type of intense event a cocaine addict needs to stop.

6.5.2 Concluding with Mr. C.

Mr. C.'s data provides a first person description of the experience of committing serial murder and insight is gained into the lived world of somebody who commits these crimes.

He desperately needed to escape from his mundane existence. This was successfully achieved by creating excitement for himself. This basic process which leads to addiction is learned over a long period of time. His behaviour was reinforced with positive secondary gain and therefore it was very difficult to break the habit.

Insight is thus gained as to how he learned the behaviour of eventually committing serial murder. However, this does not explain why he chose serial murder as the ultimate excitement seeking behaviour. Questions remain as to why he could not escape his boredom through legitimate excitement seeking behaviour. To obtain the adrenaline rush he could have turned to bungee jumping, cave diving or some other form of exciting recreation.

However sensationalistic it may sound, it may be said that Mr. C. killed people for recreational purposes. It was not about the sex or the power, but about escaping from his boring life.

6.6 Conclusion

In this chapter the results have been discussed and further conceptualized to arrive at a thematic understanding of each person. In the following chapter the theoretical implications inherent to the discussion will be discussed.

Chapter 7

Results: theoretical implications

7.1 Introduction

The above mentioned discussions have important implications in terms of the current literature understanding of serial murder. Therefore I will briefly discuss the tangent points between the literature study and the current discussion.

7.2 The psychoanalytic theory

The psychoanalytic literature differentiates between ego-syntonic and ego-dystonic behaviour. The literature indicates that serial murder may also be divided into these two categories. From the discussion of the results it seems as if both ego-syntonic and ego-dystonic behaviour were reported.

Mr. N.'s murders were ego-dystonic. This is illustrated by his reactions in court when he saw the crime scene evidence. His despair regarding the ego-dystonic behaviour even led to a failed suicide attempt. In the case of Mr. C., the first murder seems to be ego-dystonic, while the following murders were more ego-syntonic. Both Mr. N. and Mr. C. had dissociative experiences during the murders, which is indicative of the ego-dystonic nature of such behaviour (Leibman, 1989).

However, Mr. M. displayed ego-syntonic behaviour. His delusions may be described as ego-syntonic, because they fit in with his self perception. This strong belief may in turn be a defense mechanism against the unacceptability of the murders. If this is true the murders may have indeed been ego-dystonic, because they directly oppose his self perception. Mr. D. seems to display a similar dynamic as Mr. M. His behaviour during the interviews is ego-syntonic, because it fit his self perception of being a good person.

However, the fact that he never speaks about the murders and his strong moral condemnation of crime may be a defense against the unacceptability of his murders. It may be said that both Mr. M. and Mr. D use reaction formation as a defense mechanism.

Mr. N. experiences two types of dissociative episodes that differ in intensity or severity. Within this frame dissociation is viewed as a defense mechanism which serves the purpose of protecting Mr. N. against ego injury. This means that the perceived threat of the situation may unconsciously determine the intensity of the defense mechanism. In other words, if the threat is not too intense he may be aware of, but not in control of his reaction. In terms of his ego functioning he would split up into two different parts. This emerging "other part" serves the purpose of providing him with resources which protect him. This may be called splitting, which is a very pathological, though effective, defense mechanism. However, if the threat is too intense his unconscious would not even allow him to be aware. His unconscious seems to remove him from the situation while the "other part" of him takes care of the situation. In this way he is saved from the traumatic experiences.

The defense mechanism of dissociation and splitting may be indicative of Mr. N.'s inadequate ego functioning and ego integration. This may reflect on the nature of his primary object relation with his mother. This could indicate that this first relationship was not safe and nurturing enough to accommodate an integration of his ego functions.

From the above it seems that both ego-syntonic and ego-dystonic behaviour have been found in this study. It seems that varying degrees of dissociation may occur during the act of murder. Thus, dissociation may vary from person to person, or even for a single individual. However, dissociative experiences were only found in two of the four people. Therefore this cannot be generalized to all people in the sample or to all people who commit serial murder. This is in contrast with the literature which reports sublimation and projection as the main defense mechanisms in people who commit serial murder (DeHart & Mahoney, 1994). The defense mechanisms used by the people in this sample ranged from reaction formation (Mr. M. and Mr. D.) and dissociation (Mr. N. and Mr. C.) to splitting (Mr. N.) and denial (Mr. M.).

7.3 The psychodynamic model

One of the few similarities between the four people is that they all display, in varying degrees, dependent characteristics. This dimensional placing within the frame of personality disorders has specific psychodynamic and theoretical meaning.

The literature suggests that the personality development of people who commit serial murder is dimensionally placed within the cluster B personality disorder range. However, the sample in this study suggests that the personality development of these four people rather lies within the range of the cluster C personality disorders, more specifically within those of the dependant personality characteristics.

Mr. N.'s intense dissociative experiences need closer inspection. Dissociative experiences are much more commonplace than dissociative disorders. However, his dissociation seems to transcend the mere dissociative experiences and may even be classified as a "disorder". It is not within the jurisdiction of this study to make a differential five axis diagnosis. However, Mr. N.'s experiences closely resemble the criteria for certain forms of dissociative disorders, for example dissociative identity disorder, depersonalization disorder or dissociative disorder not otherwise specified.

From Mr. M.'s discussion we see that he struggled with serious abandonment issues. This may be seen as a reflection of the abandonment he may have experienced in very early childhood. The primary object relation with his mother was severed at the age of two. In terms of personality formation, such abandonment may contribute to his dependent character traits.

7.4 Learning theory

Individual behaviour may also be explained in terms of the social learning theories, namely the conditioned conscience theory and the social learning model.

7.4.1 Conditioned conscience

Mr. C.'s dissociative experiences were far less intense and less central in his experience than in Mr. N.'s case. According to this explanation, the failure to demonstrate ordinary social conditioning may point to profound isolation and alienation in childhood (DeHart & Mahoney, 1994). This may manifest symptomatically in what Mr. C. refers to as a "boring life". Mr. C. grew up as an only child. The only way he could escape his boring life was to physically create stimulation through risk taking and excitement seeking behaviour.

He knows the difference between socially acceptable (right) and unacceptable (wrong) behaviour and by transgressing the social norms he created excitement. On the one hand his gradual conditioning process taught him that he can get away with risk taking behaviour and transgressions. On the other hand he grew accustomed to transgressing the social norms. One may conclude that he became desensitized to the transgression of the social norms.

Thus, although he experienced the first murder negatively, he seemed to be much more used to transgressions than Mr. N.. This may explain why he did not experience such intense dissociation during his first murder. However, with Mr. N., it was different. Mr. N. has a strong moralistic atunement and he does not have the same desensitization with regard to the transgression of social norms. Thus, his level of subjective discomfort seems to be much higher than that of Mr. C. and therefore he may have had more intense dissociative experiences.

7.4.2 Social learning model and psychosocial explanation

This model places great emphasis on the modelling of behaviour during childhood. Mr. M. grew up in a family characterized by violent and criminal behaviour. In terms of the social learning model one may say that he may have modelled such behaviour as acceptable. It may also be that his family's violent behaviour may have disinhibited him, causing him to act out violent behaviour at a later stage of his life.

7.5 Themes from the research

The following tangent points were found with themes from the research of Ansevics et al. (1991):

- tenuous societal adjustment (Mr. M. and Mr. D. both have prior criminal records, and Mr. C. and Mr. N. are loners);
- puritanical attitude towards sex (Mr. N. displays this in his strong dislike of people whom he regards as sexual deviants); and
- reported rape prior to murder (in Mr. C.'s case he reported several cases where he raped the woman before he murdered her)

Tangent points with other researchers include:

- absent father figure during childhood (this is true for both Mr. C. and Mr. M.) (Holmes & DeBurger, 1989, p. 99);
- an abused childhood, characterized by deprivation, and unfair, harsh and inconsistent punishment (Mr. M. grew up in such a household and Mr. N. reported sexual abuse from a family member) (Holmes & DeBurger, 1989, p. 99);
- being introverted, shy and unable to establish healthy peer group contact (all four subjects fit this description to a certain degree) (Levin & Fox, 1985, p. 56);
- an inability to maintain meaningful and lasting relationships, socially and/or sexually (Mr. N. is divorced, Mr. M. has literally no friends or relative with whom he has a good relationship, and Mr. C. broke off his engagement) (Leyton, 1986, p. 36);
- self-centredness is displayed in their enjoyment and indulgence of the media sensation which followed their apprehension (Mr. C. followed the investigation of his murders in the media and was amused by media reports about him, after his arrest, and Mr. D. indulged in the attention provided by the research) (Leyton, 1986, p. 73); and
- a charming, "normal personality" and a marked absence of hallucinations and gross pathology (this applies to all four subjects) (Leyton, 1986, p. 150).

7.6 General systemic approach

In the literature survey a person who commits serial murder, is referred to as the system's index patient (IP), as is the case in family therapy. System, in this sense, also refers to the larger system (society) or smaller sub-systems (community and/or family).

There are various ways of looking at the behaviour of any given IP in relationship to his system(s): a) what is the function of such behaviour in that person's system, b) what happens within that person's system(s) that necessitates such behaviour, and/or c) what is the person trying to convey regarding his system(s).

Mr. C. reported misconduct since early childhood and this misconduct extended into adulthood. He grew up as an only child in a family that may be described as detached. He described his life as boring and alone. The system (family) seemed to lack stimulation, hence excitement. With detached parents and no siblings he then acted out this lack of stimulation by engaging in risk taking and excitement seeking behaviour.

Another explanation may be that: a) through his behaviour he shifted the focus away from possible family problems, b) as a "problem child" his behaviour acted as a cohesive force which kept the family together, or c) his behaviour was an attempt to seek his parents' attention.

When this behaviour extended into adulthood, it seems as if he still takes responsibility for protecting his family: he takes full responsibility for his behaviour and denies that his parents may have contributed in any way to his behaviour.

His violent and murderous behaviour may also be a comment on the lack of stimulation/excitement in the larger system (society): he still needed to provide his own stimulation. In a similar fashion he took responsibility for the larger system (society): due to his violent behaviour the system labelled him as a "serial killer" and thus he provided the system with macabre stimulation.

Mr. M. experienced that the larger- and sub-systems had both abandoned and persecuted him in various ways: he was abandoned by his biological parents and his step-family; he was victimized in his own family system through violence; his lawyer has abandoned him by not appealing against his sentence; the court has abandoned him by not listening to his appeals of injustice during the trial; both the court and the police have persecuted him; and legal aid has failed him.

Mr. M.'s behaviour may also be interpreted from an eco-systemic perspective. His violent behaviour, as an essential part of the larger and sub-systems, may be seen as symptomatic of the dysfunctional nature of the eco-system. Following the eco-systemic premises, the eco-system (family and/or society) may be seen as the basic unit of his survival. Given the hostile and insecure nature of his eco-system he may not have been able to survive in such a system. Serial murder as a radical form of human behaviour may serve the purpose of removing him from the hostile ecology of his system and thereby sustaining his own survival.

According to the cybernetic perspective, for the system to survive it needs to be in a state of equilibrium. There must be a balance between human constructive and human destructive behaviour. Although such violent behaviour may also be seen as a comment on the social order within the systems, it also creates a disequilibrium. In order to survive the system needs to rectify the disequilibrium by removing the extreme behaviour.

Mr. D. is characterized by religious-moralistic messages, which need to be heard. The question may arise: "What message is he trying to bring across by committing serial murder?". Maybe his behaviour is indicative of a normlessness that exists within his systems. Through his behaviour he may have exaggerated the moral-religious crisis to such an extent that the system would have to pay attention to it.

7.7 The biological perspective

During the search for psychological themes from the interviews, it seemed as if neuropsychological themes were prominent, specifically in the case of Mr. D. Thus, there

may probably be some sort of neurological damage involved. This hypothesis is supported by the neuropsychological effects present in the interviews. The dilemma still exists, that is, it does not logically bring us closer to understanding serial murder. However, a possibility exists that neuropsychological factors may play a role in violent behaviour such as serial murder. This possibility warrants further investigation.

7.8 Conclusion

This chapter illustrates that the four people who participated in the research are unique and those reported similarities are only similar in the definition of the theme. Within those themes of similarities however, they also differ. These differences are with regard to the relationship between the dynamic interaction of their life stories, the way of description and the nuances in communication.

It seems as if the intrapsychic models at present provide the most fitting understanding of people who have committed serial murder. However, in order to understand serial murder within a complex framework, such an understanding should not be limited to intrapsychic explanations. The intrapsychic explanation is only one dimension of human behaviour and therefore the other dimensions should also be explored.

Chapter 7

Results: theoretical implications

7.1 Introduction

The above mentioned discussions have important implications in terms of the current literature understanding of serial murder. Therefore I will briefly discuss the tangent points between the literature study and the current discussion.

7.2 The psychoanalytic theory

The psychoanalytic literature differentiates between ego-syntonic and ego-dystonic behaviour. The literature indicates that serial murder may also be divided into these two categories. From the discussion of the results it seems as if both ego-syntonic and ego-dystonic behaviour were reported.

Mr. N.'s murders were ego-dystonic. This is illustrated by his reactions in court when he saw the crime scene evidence. His despair regarding the ego-dystonic behaviour even led to a failed suicide attempt. In the case of Mr. C., the first murder seems to be ego-dystonic, while the following murders were more ego-syntonic. Both Mr. N. and Mr. C. had dissociative experiences during the murders, which is indicative of the ego-dystonic nature of such behaviour (Leibman, 1989).

However, Mr. M. displayed ego-syntonic behaviour. His delusions may be described as ego-syntonic, because they fit in with his self perception. This strong belief may in turn be a defense mechanism against the unacceptability of the murders. If this is true the murders may have indeed been ego-dystonic, because they directly oppose his self perception. Mr. D. seems to display a similar dynamic as Mr. M. His behaviour during the interviews is ego-syntonic, because it fit his self perception of being a good person.

However, the fact that he never speaks about the murders and his strong moral condemnation of crime may be a defense against the unacceptability of his murders. It may be said that both Mr. M. and Mr. D use reaction formation as a defense mechanism.

Mr. N. experiences two types of dissociative episodes that differ in intensity or severity. Within this frame dissociation is viewed as a defense mechanism which serves the purpose of protecting Mr. N. against ego injury. This means that the perceived threat of the situation may unconsciously determine the intensity of the defense mechanism. In other words, if the threat is not too intense he may be aware of, but not in control of his reaction. In terms of his ego functioning he would split up into two different parts. This emerging "other part" serves the purpose of providing him with resources which protect him. This may be called splitting, which is a very pathological, though effective, defense mechanism. However, if the threat is too intense his unconscious would not even allow him to be aware. His unconscious seems to remove him from the situation while the "other part" of him takes care of the situation. In this way he is saved from the traumatic experiences.

The defense mechanism of dissociation and splitting may be indicative of Mr. N.'s inadequate ego functioning and ego integration. This may reflect on the nature of his primary object relation with his mother. This could indicate that this first relationship was not safe and nurturing enough to accommodate an integration of his ego functions.

From the above it seems that both ego-syntonic and ego-dystonic behaviour have been found in this study. It seems that varying degrees of dissociation may occur during the act of murder. Thus, dissociation may vary from person to person, or even for a single individual. However, dissociative experiences were only found in two of the four people. Therefore this cannot be generalized to all people in the sample or to all people who commit serial murder. This is in contrast with the literature which reports sublimation and projection as the main defense mechanisms in people who commit serial murder (DeHart & Mahoney, 1994). The defense mechanisms used by the people in this sample ranged from reaction formation (Mr. M. and Mr. D.) and dissociation (Mr. N. and Mr. C.) to splitting (Mr. N.) and denial (Mr. M.).

7.3 The psychodynamic model

One of the few similarities between the four people is that they all display, in varying degrees, dependent characteristics. This dimensional placing within the frame of personality disorders has specific psychodynamic and theoretical meaning.

The literature suggests that the personality development of people who commit serial murder is dimensionally placed within the cluster B personality disorder range. However, the sample in this study suggests that the personality development of these four people rather lies within the range of the cluster C personality disorders, more specifically within those of the dependant personality characteristics.

Mr. N.'s intense dissociative experiences need closer inspection. Dissociative experiences are much more commonplace than dissociative disorders. However, his dissociation seems to transcend the mere dissociative experiences and may even be classified as a "disorder". It is not within the jurisdiction of this study to make a differential five axis diagnosis. However, Mr. N.'s experiences closely resemble the criteria for certain forms of dissociative disorders, for example dissociative identity disorder, depersonalization disorder or dissociative disorder not otherwise specified.

From Mr. M.'s discussion we see that he struggled with serious abandonment issues. This may be seen as a reflection of the abandonment he may have experienced in very early childhood. The primary object relation with his mother was severed at the age of two. In terms of personality formation, such abandonment may contribute to his dependent character traits.

7.4 Learning theory

Individual behaviour may also be explained in terms of the social learning theories, namely the conditioned conscience theory and the social learning model.

7.4.1 Conditioned conscience

Mr. C.'s dissociative experiences were far less intense and less central in his experience than in Mr. N.'s case. According to this explanation, the failure to demonstrate ordinary social conditioning may point to profound isolation and alienation in childhood (DeHart & Mahoney, 1994). This may manifest symptomatically in what Mr. C. refers to as a "boring life". Mr. C. grew up as an only child. The only way he could escape his boring life was to physically create stimulation through risk taking and excitement seeking behaviour.

He knows the difference between socially acceptable (right) and unacceptable (wrong) behaviour and by transgressing the social norms he created excitement. On the one hand his gradual conditioning process taught him that he can get away with risk taking behaviour and transgressions. On the other hand he grew accustomed to transgressing the social norms. One may conclude that he became desensitized to the transgression of the social norms.

Thus, although he experienced the first murder negatively, he seemed to be much more used to transgressions than Mr. N.. This may explain why he did not experience such intense dissociation during his first murder. However, with Mr. N., it was different. Mr. N. has a strong moralistic atunement and he does not have the same desensitization with regard to the transgression of social norms. Thus, his level of subjective discomfort seems to be much higher than that of Mr. C. and therefore he may have had more intense dissociative experiences.

7.4.2 Social learning model and psychosocial explanation

This model places great emphasis on the modelling of behaviour during childhood. Mr. M. grew up in a family characterized by violent and criminal behaviour. In terms of the social learning model one may say that he may have modelled such behaviour as acceptable. It may also be that his family's violent behaviour may have disinhibited him, causing him to act out violent behaviour at a later stage of his life.

7.5 Themes from the research

The following tangent points were found with themes from the research of Ansevics et al. (1991):

- tenuous societal adjustment (Mr. M. and Mr. D. both have prior criminal records, and Mr. C. and Mr. N. are loners);
- puritanical attitude towards sex (Mr. N. displays this in his strong dislike of people whom he regards as sexual deviants); and
- reported rape prior to murder (in Mr. C.'s case he reported several cases where he raped the woman before he murdered her)

Tangent points with other researchers include:

- absent father figure during childhood (this is true for both Mr. C. and Mr. M.) (Holmes & DeBurger, 1989, p. 99);
- an abused childhood, characterized by deprivation, and unfair, harsh and inconsistent punishment (Mr. M. grew up in such a household and Mr. N. reported sexual abuse from a family member) (Holmes & DeBurger, 1989, p. 99);
- being introverted, shy and unable to establish healthy peer group contact (all four subjects fit this description to a certain degree) (Levin & Fox, 1985, p. 56);
- an inability to maintain meaningful and lasting relationships, socially and/or sexually (Mr. N. is divorced, Mr. M. has literally no friends or relative with whom he has a good relationship, and Mr. C. broke off his engagement) (Leyton, 1986, p. 36);
- self-centredness is displayed in their enjoyment and indulgence of the media sensation which followed their apprehension (Mr. C. followed the investigation of his murders in the media and was amused by media reports about him, after his arrest, and Mr. D. indulged in the attention provided by the research) (Leyton, 1986, p. 73); and
- a charming, "normal personality" and a marked absence of hallucinations and gross pathology (this applies to all four subjects) (Leyton, 1986, p. 150).

7.6 General systemic approach

In the literature survey a person who commits serial murder, is referred to as the system's index patient (IP), as is the case in family therapy. System, in this sense, also refers to the larger system (society) or smaller sub-systems (community and/or family).

There are various ways of looking at the behaviour of any given IP in relationship to his system(s): a) what is the function of such behaviour in that person's system, b) what happens within that person's system(s) that necessitates such behaviour, and/or c) what is the person trying to convey regarding his system(s).

Mr. C. reported misconduct since early childhood and this misconduct extended into adulthood. He grew up as an only child in a family that may be described as detached. He described his life as boring and alone. The system (family) seemed to lack stimulation, hence excitement. With detached parents and no siblings he then acted out this lack of stimulation by engaging in risk taking and excitement seeking behaviour.

Another explanation may be that: a) through his behaviour he shifted the focus away from possible family problems, b) as a "problem child" his behaviour acted as a cohesive force which kept the family together, or c) his behaviour was an attempt to seek his parents' attention.

When this behaviour extended into adulthood, it seems as if he still takes responsibility for protecting his family: he takes full responsibility for his behaviour and denies that his parents may have contributed in any way to his behaviour.

His violent and murderous behaviour may also be a comment on the lack of stimulation/excitement in the larger system (society): he still needed to provide his own stimulation. In a similar fashion he took responsibility for the larger system (society): due to his violent behaviour the system labelled him as a "serial killer" and thus he provided the system with macabre stimulation.

Mr. M. experienced that the larger- and sub-systems had both abandoned and persecuted him in various ways: he was abandoned by his biological parents and his step-family; he was victimized in his own family system through violence; his lawyer has abandoned him by not appealing against his sentence; the court has abandoned him by not listening to his appeals of injustice during the trial; both the court and the police have persecuted him; and legal aid has failed him.

Mr. M.'s behaviour may also be interpreted from an eco-systemic perspective. His violent behaviour, as an essential part of the larger and sub-systems, may be seen as symptomatic of the dysfunctional nature of the eco-system. Following the eco-systemic premises, the eco-system (family and/or society) may be seen as the basic unit of his survival. Given the hostile and insecure nature of his eco-system he may not have been able to survive in such a system. Serial murder as a radical form of human behaviour may serve the purpose of removing him from the hostile ecology of his system and thereby sustaining his own survival.

According to the cybernetic perspective, for the system to survive it needs to be in a state of equilibrium. There must be a balance between human constructive and human destructive behaviour. Although such violent behaviour may also be seen as a comment on the social order within the systems, it also creates a disequilibrium. In order to survive the system needs to rectify the disequilibrium by removing the extreme behaviour.

Mr. D. is characterized by religious-moralistic messages, which need to be heard. The question may arise: "What message is he trying to bring across by committing serial murder?". Maybe his behaviour is indicative of a normlessness that exists within his systems. Through his behaviour he may have exaggerated the moral-religious crisis to such an extent that the system would have to pay attention to it.

7.7 The biological perspective

During the search for psychological themes from the interviews, it seemed as if neuropsychological themes were prominent, specifically in the case of Mr. D. Thus, there

may probably be some sort of neurological damage involved. This hypothesis is supported by the neuropsychological effects present in the interviews. The dilemma still exists, that is, it does not logically bring us closer to understanding serial murder. However, a possibility exists that neuropsychological factors may play a role in violent behaviour such as serial murder. This possibility warrants further investigation.

7.8 Conclusion

This chapter illustrates that the four people who participated in the research are unique and those reported similarities are only similar in the definition of the theme. Within those themes of similarities however, they also differ. These differences are with regard to the relationship between the dynamic interaction of their life stories, the way of description and the nuances in communication.

It seems as if the intrapsychic models at present provide the most fitting understanding of people who have committed serial murder. However, in order to understand serial murder within a complex framework, such an understanding should not be limited to intrapsychic explanations. The intrapsychic explanation is only one dimension of human behaviour and therefore the other dimensions should also be explored.

Chapter 8

Conclusion

8.1 Introduction

In this study a historical, contextualized account of serial murder in South Africa and internationally has been provided. This has been followed by a comprehensive literature overview of serial murder, which incorporates various perspectives on the phenomenon of serial murder.

For research purposes the main procedure deals with abstracting themes from interviews with four people who have committed serial murder. Primary and secondary themes have then been provided and eventually integrated with the literature findings and theoretical investigation.

8.2 Conclusions from the research

The following verifies the already existing information regarding serial murder:

- people may have different ways of theoretically understanding and explaining serial murder;
- serial murder is a historical-contextual phenomenon;
- there are tangent points between the research undertaken and existing theories (specifically with the intrapsychic explanations, the learning theory perspective, themes from the research, the neuropsychological model and the general systemic approach);
- both ego-syntonic and ego-dystonic behaviour seems to be confirmed;
- varying degrees of dissociation were reported during the murders;
- at present it seems difficult to integrate the information into a unitary model of

- serial murder;
- tenuous societal adjustment seems to be confirmed;
 - puritanical attitude towards sex was reported;
 - rape prior to the murder occurred;
 - an absent father figure during childhood was reported;
 - an abused childhood, characterized by deprivation, and unfair, harsh and inconsistent punishment were specific themes;
 - being introverted, shy and unable to establish healthy peer group contact were strong themes in the interviews;
 - an inability to maintain meaningful and lasting relationships, socially and/or sexually for most of the participants; and
 - a charming, "normal personality" and a marked absence of hallucinations and gross pathology (all four subjects).

New information generated by this research includes the following:

- in terms of personality formation all four people displayed signs of a dependant personality structure;
- there were signs of varying degrees of anxiety present;
- serial murder in South Africa seems to be quantitatively and qualitatively different to serial murder else where in the world;
- the historical recollection of serial murder in South Africa yields a different racial composition than does the European-American history (The ratio of White:Black perpetrators is 1:2 in South Africa, and 2:1 in the United States of America); and
- it seems as if this category of "serial murderer" is of purely academical and jurisprudential value and does not seem to be grounded in these people's experience of themselves.

8.3 Critique

The research had a very small sample size, which makes the results prone to scrutiny. Although the small sample size may be criticized, the candidates represent an availability

sample and therefore a larger sample was not possible. However, the internal validity of this study is above suspicion. Thus, the results may not be generalized to all people who have committed serial murder. In the bigger picture of research on serial murder, this research may serve as a reminder: there may be people who have committed serial murder who are different from the stereotypical view of serial murder or from the findings of previous research.

A second point of criticism is that the main aim of this research have been concentrated on the abstraction of psychological themes from interviews. Other types of information such as clinical history, family genograms, comments by extended family members and friends have not been taken into account. The aim however was to allow the person who had committed serial murder to speak for himself and then to apply psychological themes to his communication and interaction, with the minimum external influences. These are, in themselves, aspects which have been neglected in previous research undertakings.

A further point of criticism is that the research does not yield much practical value for those who are actively involved in the detection and profiling of serial murder. Although this was not the purpose of this study, there may be some valuable practical implications from this research. Profilers and researchers may see that European-American standards do not necessarily apply to the South African context. Therefore it seems that profiling and detection should rely more on the individual qualities than on the collective qualities of people who commit serial murder.

Lastly, no research is ever uncontaminated by the various contexts within which it takes place. In this research it is difficult to determine the effect of the different variables such as the interaction of the researchers, the environment of the correctional facility, the attention received during the research and cultural differences between the researcher and the subjects.

8.4 Recommendations

Future researchers may find the case study method more useful in serial murder research.

Although it is also a qualitative method it may be more encompassing than the grounded theory approach.

In order to understand serial murder with the complexity that has a bearing upon it, research should not be limited to the intrapsychic explanations. Intrapsychic theory is only one theoretical explanation of human behaviour and, therefore, other dimensions should also be explored. Future researchers should focus more on the other neglected psychological dimensions of serial murder, such as the interactional, systemic and post-modern approaches.

Similarly, discourse analysis is another way in which research could be undertaken, specifically in South Africa. It may provide a source of information regarding the public perception of serial murder. To aid such future research on the phenomenon of serial murder, an additional reading list is provided (see Appendix D).

However, in the greater picture of the phenomenon of serial murder, it seems that the psychological understanding thereof only advances one step at a time. This is possibly due to the fact that serial murder only occurs in small numbers. Generalized conclusions are thus not feasible.

This does not mean that research on the phenomenon of serial murder should not be undertaken. Research methodology should rather be updated, and larger programs which include large research teams investigating the phenomenon from several angles, could provide better insight into extreme behaviour such as serial murder.

8.5 Conclusion

Serial murder, as a form of human behaviour, continues to pose a challenge for the human sciences, especially psychology. It still remains difficult to understand how one person can murder several people, seemingly without motive. Many questions remain unanswered.

Society seems to protect itself through unwritten, social and legal rules/laws of order. When people transgress the social system's rules, the non-compliant behaviour is significant and meaningful. However, it is not clear what serial murder means with regard to its conversational language within the system. Possible answers may include: we are different; and we abhor the society we live in, especially the rigidity of the rules.

The answers to these questions, however, lie in future research and possible other avenues of investigation.

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- Modus Operandi: He stalked courting couples in cars on the outskirts of the city and hacked his victims to death.
5. Date: 1970
Name: Unidentified (known only as the "Ironman")
Victims: This person murdered seven people in the 1970 s.
Area: Atteridgeville area (outside Pretoria).
Modus Operandi: Victims were clubbed to death while on their way home from the shebeens late at night (Krost, 04-05-1996).
6. Date: 1970
Name: John "Axeman" Kgabi
Victims: He was accused of murdering 16 young girls during the 1970's.
Area: Unknown
Modus Operandi: He hacked the victims to death. He was a former policeman who worked in the mortuary and was sentenced to death after being convicted of 13 murders (Krost, 04-05-1996).
7. Date: 1983
Name: Cornelius Burger
Victims: He allegedly murdered four white and brown prostitutes. He was arrested and committed to a psychiatric institution where he eventually died.
Area: Johannesburg.
Modus Operandi: He strangled the victims (Pistorius, 1998).
8. Date: 1980
Name: Unidentified (known only as the "Bergie Killer")
Victims: This person killed 13 vagrants during the 1980 s.
Area: Cape Town's city centre.
Modus Operandi: This person killed all his victims on a Thursday evening by shooting the sleeping victim in the head at point-blank range with a .22

calibre gun. He is believed to have fled the country (Krost, 04-05-1996).

9. Date: 1982
 Name: Joseph Mahlangu (known as the "Lovers' lane killer")
 Victims: The victims were courting couples in parked cars in secluded places in Soweto. He was sentenced to death on 10 of the 27 counts of murder and was executed in 1982.
 Area: Soweto (outside Johannesburg).
 Modus Operandi: The victims were blinded with a torch and were then shot (Krost, 04-05-1996).
10. Date: 1983
 Name: Phillip Khehla Magoso
 Victims: He allegedly murdered five black women.
 Area: Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu-Natal.
 Modus Operandi: The victims were murdered and then raped.
11. Date: 1986 - 1994
 Name: The "Station Strangler"
 Victims: The "Station Strangler" sodomized and murdered a young man and 21 other boys between the ages of eight and fourteen and left their bodies in the bushes. Norman Afzal Simon was convicted for the last murder associated with the "Station Strangler" and was subsequently sentenced to 25 years in prison. Therefore, according to the operational definition Mr. Simon may not be referred to as a person who has committed serial murder.
 Area: Cape Flats (Krost, 04-05-1996).
 Modus Operandi: These murders started in 1987, then stopped and started again in 1994. He would meet schoolboys at the train station and lure them away to desolate areas under the pretence of helping him to carry something.

12. Date: 1988
Name: David Motshekgwa
Victims: He was convicted of murdering 14 women.
Area: Klerksdorp area.
Modus Operandi: He allegedly asked the women for sex after which he refused to pay them. He then killed them by strangling or clubbing them to death (Krost, 04-05-1996).
13. Date: 1989
Name: Johannes Mashiane (known as the "Beast of Atteridgeville")
Victims: He allegedly sodomized and murdered 12 boys.
Area: Atteridgeville (Outside Pretoria).
Modus Operandi: The victims were either strangled or stoned to death. He died when he jumped under a bus during a police chase in October 1989 (Krost, 04-05-1996).
14. Date: 1989-1992
Name: Jacobus Petrus Geldenhuys (known as the "Norwood serial murderer/rapist")
Victims: He was convicted on five counts of murder, three of rapes and one of attempted rape. He was sentenced to death five times, but was not executed due to the Constitutional Court's abolition of the death sentence.
Area: Norwood, Johannesburg.
Modus Operandi: He was a policeman living in the Norwood police single quarters. He would enter a house or flat where he would rape the women at gunpoint, after which he shot them with his duty firearm (Krost, 04-05-1996).
15. Date: 1990
Name: Raymond Govensammy (also known as the "Chatsworth serial

- murderer")
- Victims: He was connected to the murders of three Indian women, whose bodies were found in the sugarcane fields. He is currently a State President's patient at Fort Napier Psychiatric hospital in KwaZulu-Natal.
- Area: Chatsworth, Durban.
- Modus Operandi: The victims were beaten to death and raped (Pistorius, 1998).
16. Date: 1990 - 1996
- Name: Stewart Wilkin
- Victims: He allegedly murdered nine people (four prostitutes, four boys and his own daughter).
- Area: Unknown.
- Modus Operandi: Victims were sodomized and strangled with their own clothing, and cannibalism also took place (Pistorius, 1998).
17. Date: 1991-1993
- Name: Moses Mokgety
- Victims: He allegedly killed six children between August 1991 and May 1993. He was sentenced to life imprisonment six times, twelve years for rape and six years for attempted murder.
- Area: Mohlakeng township, near Randfontein.
- Modus Operandi: He tortured the children and allegedly sold their body parts for "muti" (traditional medicine) (Krost, 04-05-1996).
18. Date: 1992
- Name: Unidentified (known as the "Cape Town killer" or "Prostitute serial killer")
- Victims: This person murdered more than 19 prostitutes. He has been active since 1992 and claimed his nineteenth victim in the week of 18 May 1996 (Krost, 18-05-1996, Star, 1997-07-29).
- Area: Western Cape.

- Modus Operandi: The victims were strangled and their bodies were dumped in undeveloped areas of the Western Cape (Krost, 04-05-1996).
19. Date: 1992
Name: Antonie Wessels
Victims: He allegedly murdered four people.
Area: En route from the Western Cape to Gauteng.
Modus Operandi: He and his lover allegedly robbed and murdered four people while travelling to Gauteng (Pistorius, 1998).
20. Date: 1994
Name: Mhlengwa Zikode (also known as "Donnybrook Serial Killer")
Victims: He murdered 18 people, attempted to murder another 11 people, raped 10 women and attempted to rape another eight women. He was convicted and sentenced to 140 years' imprisonment (Pistorius, 1998).
Area: Donnybrook, KwaZulu-Natal.
Modus Operandi: These crimes were committed within a seven kilometre radius between 1994 and 1995. Mhlengwa Zikode was arrested for these crimes on 29 September 1995 (Krost, 04-05-1996).
21. Date: 1994
Name: Moses Sithole and David Selepe (also known as the "ABC - Atteridgeville, Boksburg and Cleveland - or "Gauteng serial killers")
Area: Atteridgeville, Boksburg and Cleveland
Victims: 41 Women were raped and strangled between July 1994 and August 1995. It is believed that two people were responsible for these murders. A suspect, David Selepe was arrested and shot when he tried to escape from one of the crime scenes. Moses Sithole was convicted in 1997 on 38 counts of murder, 40 of rape and six of robbery (Krost, 04-05-1996; The Citizen, 21-05-1996). He was sentenced to 2410 years' imprisonment (Pistorius, 1998).
Modus Operandi: Unknown.

22. Date: 1994
Name: Unidentified (known as the "River Strangler")
Victims: He has attacked five women, killing only two of them. The others escaped.
Area: Pinetown area
Modus Operandi: He murders petite young white women. (Krost, 04-05-1996).
23. Date: 1995
Name: Unidentified (known as the Nasrec Serial Killer)
Victims: This person allegedly murdered 13 black women (Pistorius, 1998). The bodies were found near the Western bypass (Star, 14-05-1996; Star, 13-05-1996).
Area: Ormonde and Nasrec-showgrounds
Modus Operandi: He raped and then strangled his victims.
24. Date: 1996
Name: John Frank Brown and Samuel Jacques Coetzee (also known as the "Cross-Dressing serial killers")
Victims: They allegedly killed four men and one teenager. They were arrested on 13 April 1996 (Krost, 04-05-1996). During the course of the trial Samuel Jacques Coetzee committed suicide by taking an overdose of pills. Subsequently John Frank Brown was only convicted on one count of murder. Thus, as in the case of Mr. Simon, Mr. Brown does not fit the operational definition of this study.
Area: Bedfordview, Johannesburg
Modus Operandi: Mr. Coetzee masqueraded as a female prostitute and so enticed his victims. The victims were severely beaten and then stabbed, strangled or shot dead. Both were sent for 30 days' psychological observation and appeared in court on 14 June 1996 (Krost, 18-05-1996).

25. Date: 1996
Name: Nolan Edwards
Victims: He murdered three black female prostitutes. He was convicted on all three charges and received three concurrent sentences of thirty years each.
Area: Witbank.
Modus Operandi: Non-specific.
26. Date: 1996
Name: Bonani Mfeka (also known as "Kranskop serial murderer")
Victims: He allegedly murdered five black women and is currently awaiting trial.
Area: Kranskop, Johannesburg.
Modus Operandi: The victims were strangled and raped (Pistorius, 1998).
27. Date: 1997
Name: Agmatir Twala (also known as the "Phoenix serial murderer")
Victims: He allegedly murdered 22 people. He is currently awaiting trial.
Area: Phoenix, Durban.
Modus Operandi: The victims were raped and strangled (Pistorius, 1998).
28. Date: 1997
Name: Jan Adriaan van der Westhuizen
Victims: He allegedly murdered three people.
Area: Unknown.
Modus Operandi: The victims were attacked with a sharp object and then set alight (Pistorius, 1998).
29. Date: 1997
Name: Sederick Maake (also known as "Wemmerpan-" and "hammer serial murderer")
Victims: He allegedly murdered 40 people. He is currently awaiting trial.

Area: Wemmerpan, Gauteng.

Modus Operandi: He allegedly attacked courting couples in their car, assaulted the men and raped and strangled the women. He allegedly also attacked Indian male shop owners and killed them with a hammer (Pistorius, 1998).

30. Date: 1997

Name: Nicolas Ncama

Victims: He allegedly murdered three people. He is currently awaiting trial.

Area: East London, Bisho and Port Elizabeth, Eastern Cape.

Modus Operandi: Unknown (Pistorius, 1998).

31. Date: 1997

Name: Unknown

Victims: He allegedly murdered five black women.

Area: Maake, Lenyenye - Northern Province.

Modus Operandi: The victim were raped and their necks were broken (Pistorius, 1998).

APPENDIX B

LEGAL UNDERTAKING

I, THE UNDERSIGNED (state full initials and surname)

a major person, DECLARE myself willing to participate voluntarily and without remuneration in the proposed research programme on the phenomenon of murder, which is to be undertaken by Messrs J J du Plessis and G N Labuschagne.

This undertaking is subject to the conditions that **** all / certain / no information will be treated as confidential and that my identity will be protected at all times / not be protected at all times.**

In addition I undertake that **** all / certain interviews, conversations or tests may be recorded / may not be recorded audiovisually. These recordings may not be used for purposes other than research.**

CONSEQUENTLY I undertake not to institute any actions, lawsuits or claims, against the above persons or recover any damages, costs and expenses of any nature from them if they meet the conditions set out above.

Signed at _____ on this the _____ day of _____ 199

As witnesses:

1. _____

2. _____

(Signature of participant)

**** (Delete that which is not applicable)**

APPENDIX C

VERBATIM TRANSCRIPTIONS OF THE FIRST FIVE MINUTES
OF EACH PERSON'S FIRST INTERVIEW

1. Mr. N:

1 R 1: "Ons begin vandag met ons eerste onderhoud, en ons
2 wil hê jy moet praat waaroor jy ookal wil."

3 Mr. N: "Ek is nou nie 'n persoon wat sommer self so kan
4 begin nie...Wel, waar wil julle hê moet ek begin?"

5 R 1: "Enige plek."

6 Mr. N: "Toe ek 'n kind was, toe ek groot is?"

7 R 1: "Ja, net soos jy wil, enige plek."

8 Mr. N: "Wel, as kind het ek seker 'n nie te slegte
9 lewe gehad nie, dis net...'n paar goeters wat gebeur het,
10 het nie die lewe so lekker gemaak nie. Ek's nou 'n man en
11 ek hou nie daarvan as mans, met gay stories deurmekaar
12 is. Ek kan dit nie hanteer nie. Dieselfde met hoere ôk.
13 Ek's nie 'n ou wat hoere kan hanteer nie, 'n vroumens wat
14 begin uitspatterig raak is vir my absoluut soos 'n doring
15 in die vlees. Ek haat dit. Ek kan dit nie hanteer nie."

16 "Dit lyk vir my dis iets in my wat dit nie wil hanteer
17 nie, want vir my is 'n vrou mooi. As hulle party keer
18 wild aantrek ôk, dis, dit lyk mooi ôk, party maal. In
19 myself - ek weet nie hoe om vir julle te sê nie - dit
20 voel soos 'n muur wat 'n mens teen loop: jy hou nie
21 daarvan nie, dit wil nie by jou liggaam werk nie. En dit
22 maak dinge nogal moeilik. Ander kere, dan as jy jouself
23 kry is jy besig om iets te doen wat jy nie moet doen nie.
24 Miskien baklei jy, of jy maak iemand dood vir geen rede
25 nie."

26 "Met die eerste keer wat ek iemand dood gemaak het, het
27 ek dit glad nie beplan nie. Dit het net gekom, gebeur.
28 Dis vir my nogal 'n skok gewees om te sien hoekom, wat
29 gebeur. Ek het nie geglo dat so iets ooit met my sal
30 gebeur nie. En die vrou het aan my deur geklop en ek het
31 oop gemaak - okay, sy was goed geklee en elke ding - maar
32 net haar maniere, want sy was 'n hoer. En iemand het haar
33 seker na my toe gestuur, ek weet nie wat het sy eintlik
34 daar in die eerste plek gesoek nie."

35 "En toe ek my weer kon kry toe's ek bo-op haar. Ek slat
36 vir haar. Wel, toe't ek haar doodgemaak daarsô, maar dis
37 nie iets wat ek wou gehad het nie. Ek, ek het begin, maar
38 dis iets wat ek nie kon keer vir myself nie. Dit gaan net
39 aan, jou liggaam gaan net aan, al sê jou brein vir jou
40 wat! Ek meen jy, jy sien alles, maar jy't nie beheer oor
41 jouself nie. Ek meen, ek't vir myself gesê: Stop dit,
42 stop dit! Daar's niks wat wil stop nie."

43 "En toe sy nou eers dood stil lê en alles is verby, toe
44 ek nou weer tot ruste kom, toe sien ek, nee, iets is fout.
45 Toe't ek al gegaan na 'n spesialis toe, hy't vir my gesê
46 dis van tros hoofpyne of wat ookal. Maar ek't nie vir hom
47 gesê wat ek gemaak het nie. Ek het geweet daar's 'n fout,
48 dit was nie vir my reg nie."

49 "Toe dit 'n tweede keer gebeur het, toe word ek gevang.
50 Dit is maar die klein deeltjie wat ek gedoen het. As daar
51 iewers iets is wat julle wil vrae...?"

52 R 2: "Ek dink wat vir ons belangrik is, is om jou te leer
53 ken. Dis hoekom ons sê ons het nie vaste vrae wat ons jou
54 wil vrae nie, want dan kry ons die informasie wat ons

- 55 soek... Ons wil hê jy moet oor enige iets praat"
- 56 **Mr. N:** "Wel, ek het een slag op my stiefboetie geskiet. Dit
- 57 was nog voor ek vir myself sê nee, toe is dit al klaar.
- 58 Want hy't vir my gesê: 'Emile'." (Fictitious name)
-
- 59 "Nou Emile is iets wat my, wat my binnekant wakker maak.
- 60 Ek weet nie hoe om dit vir julle te beskryf nie, dit is,
- 61 Emile is soos iemand anderster. Dis moeilik om te beskryf
- 62 hoe 'n mens voel en dis asof daai naam genoem word en jou
- 63 liggaam reageer daarop. Dis nie dat jy self wil reageer
- 64 nie, jou liggaam reageer sommer dadelik self. Ander kere
- 65 as mense vir my sê 'Emile', dan's dit heeltemaal reg,
- 66 ander kere as hulle dit sê, dan's daai deel van my
- 67 wakker."
-
- 68 "Ek het hom gelukkig mis geskiet."

2. **Mr. M:**

- 1 R 1: "You can start where ever you like..."
- 2 **Mr. M:** "Eh...?"
- 3 R 1: "...we don't want to ask specific questions today,
- 4 we want you to start anywhere."
- 5 **Mr. M:** "Yes,...eh, about my life outside?"
- 6 R 2: "Yah."
- 7 R 1: "Anything."
- 8 **Mr. M:** "Yah, when I was outside, eh, I was a man who sells
- 9 spices sometimes, or repairing radios and TV's, you see?
- 10 Yah. I use to live with my step mother, yah. Then in
- 11 1990, my step mother, my step mother chased me away. Then
- 12 I go to Carletonville to stay with my father's sister,
- 13 and I stay there with them, yah. There in Carletonville I
- 14 didn't repair anymore radio and TV's, because there's no

15 electricity. Then I started to sell spices and
16 grocery...until I was arrested in 1993. Then I came...to
17 prison." (Silence for 6 seconds)

18 "Yah, ...outside I was a, I was a man who...who's
19 enjoying a, a, a live with other people, you see? I'm not
20 a criminal or doing something funny to other people, you
21 see? No. Even at home they know me, I'm very well, yah."
22 "On '93, I was arrested, you see I was framed for, for,
23 for murder, in Krugerdorp. You see, they told, they told
24 a, a, a complainant to say, no, it's me. But the
25 complainant, in his statement, he just stated: 'no, that
26 man is short and his, he has a big face with pimples'. You
27 see? Yah. But, so in court the complainant said, he say: 'no
28 the man who, who sits there in the bench', because she saw
29 me before, before the court start, you see, because there
30 were two people inside the court, you see? Everybody was
31 inside, yah. Somebody raise hand for for me, you see, but
32 I didn't know, I didn't know she is the complainant, you
33 see? I started to see that girl on the TV, you see, but I
34 told the court, this girl, no, somebody raise their hand
35 for me, then the girl look at me, you see? Yah!"

36 "Okay, the, the court understood that, and the girl
37 also, the complainant, eh, agree, agree that he saw me
38 before, you see? And she, and she described me with, a,
39 a, because I use to cut, when I'm in prison I use to cut
40 my hair, you see? So that now I had no hair, you see?
41 Yah. The court didn't ask me outside, how was the, how
42 was the, maybe accused, see? Yah. She never
43 explained, you see? Yah. But the court sentenced me, they
44 sentenced, de, de, de,... eh, eh, eh,... the lawyer said
45 I'll make appeal, he know how I was sentenced, you see?"

46 "Everyday I'm trying to, I'm trying to write for the
47 legal aid to help me. Nobody help me. Nobody wants to
48 come to me and help me, you see, until I lose hope. I
49 say no, see maybe the amnesty will release us, or maybe
50 God will. He knows something about us, you see. God know.
51 He knows what he is doing with us, and why we are here.
52 You see? That's only my hope."

3. Mr. D:

1 Mr. D: "Okay...'n, hoor hiersô jille mense, ek kan jille iets sê,
2 sô...'n, dis iets wat hille maak hille beur bytoekant, jy
3 sien?, elleke ding wat ons kan maak...ons moet maak met die
4 mense wat 'n mekaar liewerste verstaan, jy sien? Ons kan nie
5 so lewe nie, elleke-een-elleke-een. Mense daar waar ons gan,
6 of waar jy gan loop, of loop nie, jy loop saam met die mense,
7 mar ek sien jy maak een doodgan, jy maak een dood of anner een
8 maak anne...anner een dood. Daai ding is nie goed nie. Ons
9 moet aan mekaar liewerste almal lewe by 'n-'n-'n al die, al
10 die plek van Sôt-Afrika, jy sien?."

11 "En ons kan nie elleke een 'n, as jy sien 'n ander man hy maak
12 daai ding doen. Nee ons kan nie. Loop alleen of loop met die
13 man wat hy kan nie daai ding doen nie of liewerste, los als
14 goed, gan by die kerk, gan saam ander mense van die kerk, gan
15 kerk toe, gan "straight" by die kerk, jy sal nie al's doen.
16 En 'n so an."

17 "Ek kan sô sê, dis een ding wat ek kan jille sê, jy sien? Die
18 ding wat ek hom gesien die tyd wat ek bytoekant, "eighty six"
19 ek was, ek was bytoekant gewees, "yes". En nou, dis die ding
20 wat ek het sien al die mense van bytoekant. Ek sien die man,
21 hille maak snaakse goeters. Klein kintietjies, groot man, hy

22 loop saam met die mense, hy loop saam, die klein kintietjie hy
23 gan hom "rape", hy maak hom dood en hy vat daai lyk van hom en
24 gooi hom weg, die polisieman hulle vang hom en hy gaan tronk
25 toe. En sy "family" hulle lewe nie mooi nie, hulle gan swar
26 lewe, jy sien? En so an."

27 "Ek kan sô sê, al die mense van hier, van by die tronk ons
28 gaan uitkom by die tronk ons, ek sê nie ons gaan almal uitgaan
29 by die tronk. Ek kan jille sô sê, tot jille twee mense wat
30 jille het by my gekom, ons kan sô sê, julle moenie dink van
31 bytoekant "or" miskien die lewe is 'n bietjie 'n-'n-'n-'n, reg
32 nie. Die lewe is bietjie swar bytoekant, jy sien? Daar waar jy
33 loop jy moet net dink "or" miskien, maar die lewe, as jy loop
34 bytoekant 'n, jy loop saam met die Here. As jy kan werk, as jy
35 bid nie, as jy bid nie jy loop saam met die - die duiwel, as
36 jy kan nie bid nie, as jy bid jy loop saam met die Here, as jy
37 bid nie jy loop saam met die duiwel die duiwel gan jou kry en
38 jy gan ander ding maak. Los en maak, maak die ding wat 'n die
39 Here gan jou gelp en moet saam met jou loop daar waar jy gan,
40 jy sien?"

41 "Dit ôk, hiersô waar ek help, ek het was by die skool gegaan,
42 ek was nie baie geleer nie, ek het nie so baie geleer nie, ek
43 het "standard five", jy sien en so an. My "family" hille is
44 bytoekant en my ma ôk hille is bytoekant en my "family" hille
45 ken nie die tronk nie, dis net ek ek is by die tronk gewees,
46 mar ek sal uitkom by die tronk, ek "worry" nie. Ek "worry" net
47 by die plek, want ek het kinders en als van bytoekant, maar sô
48 an."

49 "Ek kan sô sê, ek laaik daai ding van bytoekant, mar die tronk
50 ek laaik hom nie. En dis baie mense wat hille, ek het hille
51 gesien, en dis baie mense wat ek hille het gesê: nee man, jy

52 sien "president" Mandela was by die tronk gewees van Robin
53 "island" en hy's uit, hy's nog hiersô by Sôt-Afrika, en
54 hy...hy is nog, nog, hy's nog "president", hy's nog
55 "president" nou. Dis nie meer 'n gevangene nie, dis
56 "president" van Sôt-Afrika, al die mense van Sôt-Afrika. En
57 elke ding wat ons soek tot 'n, 'n-'n-'n-'n "president" De
58 Klerk hy was die "president" van Sôt-Afrika. Nou 'n
59 "president" De Klerk hy het gelos en nou dis nou Mandela en jy
60 sien nou Mandela. Hy's nie, hy kan nie sê hy't ons sommer
61 gelos by die tronk nie. Nee, dai man het baie probleme en hy's
62 groot. Hy kom van die tronk af en hy sal vir ons uit kom, as,
63 uit by die tronk, ons sal almal uitkom by die tronk, ons sal
64 almal uitkom hiersô by die tronk. Ons gan bytoekant."

65 "Nou iets wat ek gaan nou sê, ek praat van nou van die mense
66 wat hille, hille was hiersô my van "last year" - nee, voor ek
67 gaan Krismis. Hille was hiersô en hille het gekom. Ek vra
68 hille, ek vra vir hille by "bail" as hille moet, as hille gan
69 hiersô uit, as hille uit, as hille gaan loop by die hys, hulle
70 moet mense sê van bytoekant, ek sê sô: elke een wat, elke
71 een wat 'n elke een wat 'n elke een wat 'n, hy maak, dink
72 is nie goed nie, hy maak nie "straight" nie, hy moet een man
73 roep, hy moet kan wys hom wat hy moet dai ding doen. Hy moet
74 nie sommer maak nie, hy kan, miskien kan hy verkeerd maak,
75 miskien, hy gan, miskien dai ding gan hom seer maak, miskien
76 hy gan seer kry, miskien hy, miskien dai ding gan hom dood
77 maak. Ons wil nie ons wil nie een man hy moet dood wees, ons
78 is, ons is kinders van die Here, almal van ons hiersô, bydie-
79 bydie-bydie-bydie, Sôt-Afrika."

4. Mr. C:

1 R 1: "Hoe gaan dit vandag?"

- 2 Mr. C: "Nee, goed dankie."
- 3 R 1: "Ek dink die doel van vandag is dat jy met ons
4 gesels, ons wil nie spesifieke vrae vra nie nie."
- 5 R 2: "Dis 'n bietjie moeilik."
- 6 Mr. C: "Nou wat wil julle eintlik hoor, wat ek...oor die,
7 oor die, oor die dade wat ek gepleeg het?"
- 8 R 1: "Enige iets, waar wil jy begin?"
- 9 Mr. C: "Ja, ek sal maar,...ek sal maar, dis...dis, al wat
10 ek sover kan weet is, is die, is die voorvalle wat plaas
11 gevind het... Okay, die eerste een is in '89,...het dit plaas
12 gevind... Okay, 'n, nou... okay...wel ek het 'n...'n...
13 'n...dis nou die voorval, het plaas gevind,...langs, 'n, my
14 ouerhuis. ...'n..., Ek het oor die, 'n, muur geklim wat nou,
15 'n, op die, op die motorhuis, 'n, se dak, 'n, gaan en toe't
16 ek, 'n, daar afgespring en toe kom, 'n, die bediende uit die
17 kamer uit en, 'n, toe weet ek nie wat om te sê nie, jy weet?,
18 'n, en toe't ek, 'n, haar maar weer terug gedryf in, in...in
19 die bediende kamer in en haar, 'n, verwurg."
- 20 "Okay, 'n, en sy't, sy't toe uitgepaas, want in die hof het
21 dit uit gekom dat, 'n, die verwurging het nie die dood
22 veroorsaak nie. Ek het die plek aan die brand gestee, die
23 tafel, en toe't die brand versprei en so, en toe haar nagrok
24 haar "gown" - en sy't van die, 'n, bed afgeval, want dit was
25 nou aan die brand, en op haar gesig geval en so gesmoor en dis
26 toe sy nou dood is. 'n...Wil julle hê ek moet nou uitbrei
27 daaroor, of wat?"
- 28 R 2: "Dis nes jy wil."
- 29 R 1: "Vertel ons wat jy wil."
- 30 Mr. C: " Okay, die 'n, die moord het my, 'n, baie uitgetap,
31 ...'n, omdat dit jou eertse moord is...is jy maar...jy voel
32 baie ongemaklik... en 'n, jy weet as, as jy nou van 'n, ê, ê,

33 ê, hmmm, jy verwag nie mense daarsô nie en dan ewe skielik,
34 hier's 'n persoon voor jou... en...en, en jy weet nie eintlik
35 wat om nou te sê nie. Wat maak jy nou hiersô, jy weet? Dis hoe
36 ek gevoel het... En toe...okay ...ek het net gedoen, ek het
37 nie gedink nie... Wel ek is maar toe daar weg, ek is toe moeg
38 gewees... Ek het toe nie weer, die volgende moord, die
39 volgende moord het ek eers begin in 1991."

40 R 1: "Amper twee jaar tussen in?"

41 Mr. C: "Ja, ..."

APPENDIX D
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APPENDIX E
AUDIO-VISUAL RECORDINGS OF RESEARCH INTERVIEWS

Confidentiality with regards to the video-recorded interviews and that of the identities of the individuals was maintained throughout the research process. To further ensure the integrity of the confidential nature of the interviews the recorded interviews shall remain in the custody of the researchers and remain under lock-and-key, unless being used for further research. It is the intention of the researchers to ensure the continued integrity of the agreement of confidentiality as indicated by the written agreement which the researchers and the respondents undertook.

APPENDIX F
VIDEO RECORDING AGREEMENT

I, _____ (full name and surname), hereby declare that all video recordings made during the interviews with interviewee will only be used for research purposes. I furthermore declare that no copies will be made of such recordings, other than for research purpose, and that the original recordings will be handed to the Department of Correctional Services upon completion of the research.

Above mentioned recording can be obtained, upon request, from the Department of Correctional Services, should it be needed for later/further research.

Signed on this (day) _____ of (month) _____ 1997 at (place) _____

_____ (Researcher) _____ (Witness)

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.