

**LATENT MURDEROUSNESS: AN EXPLORATION OF THE
NATURE AND QUALITY OF OBJECT RELATIONS IN
RAGE-TYPE MURDERERS**

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by

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ABSTRACT

In this dissertation I investigate the intrapsychic make-up of rage-type offenders and explore the psychodynamics of the act of murder itself. The dissertation begins with a discussion on the defining features of the act of rage-type murder. I then consider the role of personality characteristics and psychopathology in individuals who have committed such offences.

With the basic features of the offender and act itself outlined, the following section reviews key areas of debate regarding the psychodynamics of violence and the intrapsychic make-up of the rage-type murderer. I first explore the nature of aggression as debated in psychoanalysis and conclude that the views expressed are often unnecessarily polarized regarding the origins of aggression and suggest that the specifics of particular types of aggression require consideration in order to assess their intrapsychic nature. The specifics of rage and violence are discussed with this in mind. In the second chapter of this section I develop a number of intrapsychic dimensions to be used in understanding how different types of violence are constituted. Psychodynamic contributions towards understanding rage-type murder, as a specific form of violence, are then discussed. Following this review, a number of directive questions are formulated regarding (1) the intrapsychic dimension of rage-type murder; (2) the presence of the borderline personality in such offenders and its intrapsychic nature; and (3) the specific psychodynamics that lie behind what is argued to be a defensive act of murder.

A multiple case study approach, using nine imprisoned rage-type offenders, is used to further explore the above issues. Court summary reports, the Thematic Apperception Test and the Psychoanalytic Research Interview comprised the research material, with particular emphasis placed on the interview material. The interview is approached from a psychoanalytic perspective and I develop some theoretical, technical and analytical guidelines to try to broaden the use of psychoanalysis in the research domain.

Findings of the research reveal a specific kind of defensive organization that is characterized by a constellation of object relations that I term the 'narcissistic exoskeleton'. I suggest that these findings best fit the description of a particular kind of borderline personality organization typified by apparent 'normality'. Other prominent aspects of the dimensions of violence observed in these cases include: (1) a poor representational capacity; (2) an interactional style characterized by uncontainable projective exchanges between victim and offender; (3) a collusive primary object relationship combined with the absence of an internalized 'third object'; (4) a 'two-faced' superego structure; (5) the internalization of traumatic experience that has become associated with a bad object system; (6) fantasies of restoring ideal good in external objects alongside conscious fantasies of annihilation.

Within the context of these factors the intrapsychic events that lead to the act itself are discussed. It is found that a collapse of the 'narcissistic exoskeleton', the intrusion of the bad object system and the unbearable shame that this evokes in the offender are prominent features of what culminates in an act of explosive rage and projective identification. Some of the implications of my research are briefly discussed in the concluding chapter.

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SECTION I

DEFINING THE PARAMETERS OF INVESTIGATION

CHAPTER ONE

AN INTRODUCTION

Murder, despite our reluctance to admit it, is part of our humanity because it is rooted in human emotions (Abrahamsen, 1973, p.9).

A number of difficulties confront us when attempting to investigate extreme cases of violence. The acts themselves often resist any rational explanation and evoke in us a sense of fear and helplessness. As Abrahamsen suggests, however, many of these difficulties are related to how we deal with unbearable thoughts of violence or murder. The way we understand and explain violence often reflects an avoidance of what is potentially a part of all of us. Wertham (1962), a pioneer in the field, isolates two trends that have obscured a fuller understanding of the problem. Firstly, violence is often mystified or showered with an intrigue that detracts from the reality of the situation. The manner in which violence is glamorized in the media or in popular culture might be understood in this way. Alternatively, human destructiveness is often construed as 'evil' in nature, giving rise to beliefs that place it beyond the reach of scientific scrutiny (Hering, 1997). Either way, violence becomes de-humanized, leaving us secure in the belief that it has nothing to do with the human condition.

Wertham's second observation refers to the common assumption that all murderers must suffer from extreme pathological conditions. The idea that acts of violence and murder are often committed by individuals who cannot easily be separated from the average man in the street, is far more difficult to contemplate. This is not just a lay perception. The illusion of explanation and cause that a 'scientific' diagnosis creates in the field of psychiatry is often viewed as sufficient in explaining motivations for violence. The fact that most of our dealings with murderers and serious violent

offenders occur within the context of a forensic investigation does not make this any easier. The judicial system demands that the clinician produces scientific observable 'facts' about the offender that are often reduced to a psychiatric diagnosis. There is little time for understanding the underlying, and perhaps less tangible, complexities of each case here. As Glasser (1996) argues, this approach has often led to violent offenders being treated as a homologous group, creating the impression that all murderers are the same.

Perhaps it is the need for observable 'facts', along with the aspiration to predict violence through 'objective' means, that has led to there being very little emphasis on understanding the role of intrapsychic factors in the development of violence. The intrapsychic world of the individual essentially refers to a psychic reality made up of representations, drives, images, defenses and mental objects, a world that makes up the subject matter of psychoanalytic¹ inquiry. There are, I believe, many important observations to be made here to which we do not have access through 'objective' assessments of dangerousness or through the application of simple diagnostic categories. As clinicians or psychotherapists we have privileged access to the internal world of others. Our insights in this regard have important implications for understanding the precipitants of extreme forms of violence, alerting us to factors that may help prevent or anticipate such acts. Without an adequate grasp of the offender's psychic reality we are unable to understand fully treatment and prognostic considerations, or to assess accurately the propensity to commit violence (Cox, 1982; Glasser, 1996).

With this understanding in mind, the present dissertation aims to explore the internal world of those who have committed acts of rage-type murder. The study essentially concerns itself with questions about what it means, at an intrapsychic level, to

¹ I will use the term 'psychoanalytic' very broadly throughout the dissertation to refer to all psychodynamic theories that concern themselves with understanding the intrapsychic life of the individual. Emphasis, however, has been placed on Object Relations Theory as the central theoretical approach.

commit an act of murder. More precisely, it is concerned with understanding what it means to commit murder *in this way*. In attempting to understand murder as an act of violence, general considerations regarding the psychodynamics of violence are also considered in some depth here.

There are relatively few psychoanalytic studies on murder. Although there has been much written on aggression and destructiveness, the specifics of different forms of violence, some that may lead to murder, have been far less worked out or understood. There may be a number of reasons for this. Firstly, violent offenders, or acts of violence, are seldom seen in the psychotherapeutic setting, leaving little scope for exploration. In psychotherapeutic practice, 'violence' and 'aggression' are also terms usually used to describe the intrapsychic life of the individual and often have little to do with *actual* physical acts of violence (Perelberg, 1999a).

Secondly, the psychoanalytic model is predominately used as a method of treatment and has been slow to use its insights in applied or research disciplines. In this sense, just as there has been a general resistance to understanding the internal world of the violent offender, psychoanalysis has done little to facilitate this process (Emde & Fonagy, 1997; Kirshner, 1998; Schachter & Luborsky, 1998).

Finally, murder and violence are most readily associated with crime and the discipline of criminology. Here, situational, behavioural and cognitive theoretical models are more readily adopted to suit the demands of the judicial and legal process. Further, the methodology of inquiry is usually actuarial rather than clinical in nature. Although this study addresses the problem of violence from a psychoanalytic perspective, this does not mean that these other approaches should be ignored in considering the subject. The actuarial details of violence and murder used in criminological approaches can be useful in verifying analytic insights and can also help define areas of interest that require exploration from a psychodynamic point of view.

In exploring the internal world of the rage-type murderer, the parameters of the act itself require clarification. To this end, drawing on both criminological and

psychological work in this area, the first part of this dissertation explores the definition of rage-type murder and then goes on to consider some of the dilemmas regarding personality and the presence of psychopathology in such individuals. One of the key points of discussion here is the apparent normality of rage-type offenders. These kinds of offenders are not usually violent, show few signs of psychopathology and do not have psychopathic motives for committing murder. Their aberrant rage is thus far more difficult to understand. For this reason the term 'latent murderousness', first used by Hyatt-Williams (1996), aptly describes the subject of investigation here.

In the second section psychoanalytic perspectives on aggression, rage and violence are reviewed. The first chapter takes a closer look at the way the concept of aggression has been used in psychoanalysis. Although the models considered here make some contribution to our understanding, I argue that most lack clarity in distinguishing between different forms of aggression and violence. Due to this, the inevitable differences in the psychodynamic origins of specific behavioural manifestations of aggression still remain unclear. I suggest that the dichotomy in the debate around the instinctual and reactive origins of aggression has prevented further clarity in this regard by perpetuating the idea that aggression has only one origin.

The question of how intrapsychic factors translate into physical violence is then considered. Here, I review more recent psychoanalytic developments that explore some of the intrapsychic correlates of violence such as the role of the representational system, the quality of object relatedness, and the nature of defensive systems that occur in violent individuals. From this I develop a number of intrapsychic dimensions to be used to understand and assess different forms of violence. Finally, turning specifically to rage-type murder, I explore a number of seminal psychodynamic studies on murder raising a variety of questions to be pursued in the case research.

The research itself concerns the analysis of nine cases of rage-type murder drawn from a prison population. The case material used to explore the intrapsychic processes of each offender comprised the Psychoanalytic Research Interview, written court reports, and the Thematic Apperception Test (TAT). Each case is analyzed and

formulated separately and is presented in Chapter 9. Thereafter, the emerging themes across all cases are considered.

During the research process emphasis was placed on the interview as the key source of research material. However, the interview methodology used required considerable development to suit the needs of psychoanalytic inquiry and an entire chapter is reserved for this purpose. The lack of psychoanalytic research outside the therapeutic setting has led to a dearth in the development of specific methodologies suited for other forms of psychoanalytic research. In an attempt to address this problem, guidelines to approaching the research interview from a psychoanalytic perspective have been developed in this study. I hope that the development of the *Psychoanalytic Research Interview* makes some contribution to broadening the scope of how psychoanalytic principles can be used in research.

In discussing the research findings across all cases, I return to *The Intrapsychic Dimensions of Violence* to provide a guiding structure through which case themes can be explored further. Most notably, the kind of defensive organization evident in rage-type offenders is found to be a key dimension across most cases. It is characterized by a particular kind of splitting process that strives to keep an internalized bad object system separate from idealized good objects. The idealized object system itself appears to serve a defensive function here and requires constant attention to ensure that bad objects, associated with aggression, remain unarticulated and split-off in the psyche.

Other factors such as poor representational capacity, the absence of violent fantasy, the absence of a clearly defined paternal object, and how particular situational factors impinge on the act of rage-type murder, are all discussed as significant features of the offender's psychological make-up. Finally, the dynamics of the act itself, how and why the rage reaction ends in murder, are discussed from an object relations perspective.

- In considering rage-type murder from an intrapsychic perspective, I in no way wish to diminish the importance of the social, biological or neuropsychological contributions in this area. There is no doubt that these factors, depending on the type

of violence being considered, have varying roles to play in precipitating violence. Although situational elements are considered here in terms of their impact on the internal world of the individual, the scope of this dissertation does not permit extended consideration of such factors.

CHAPTER TWO

RAGE-TYPE MURDER: DEFINING THE PARAMETERS OF THE ACT

As the name suggests, rage-type murder refers to a murderous act triggered by a sudden explosive affective state. There are, of course, many different forms of violent crime and many different reasons why some of these result in a homicidal act. Murder committed as an act of rage falls broadly into the category of expressive or hostile violent crime (Weiner & Wolfgang, 1989). Offenders belonging to this category need to be distinguished from individuals who have psychopathic, perverse or psychotic motives (Biven, 1997; Bollas, 1995; Gilligan, 1997; Hodgins, 1993; Kernberg, 1992). They further need to be distinguished from those individuals who have committed murder in order to fulfill a criminal motive (Blackburn, 1993; Hollin, 1989; Hyatt-Williams, 1996).

An act of murder driven primarily by an uncontrollable explosive rage reaction has been found by many to be a common form of homicidal behaviour (Abrahamsen, 1973; Bromberg, 1961; Gilligan, 1997; Hollin, 1989; Hyatt-Williams, 1996; Meloy, 1992; Wertham, 1937). However, there appears to be no reliable statistical enumeration available indicating how common this form of murder is. This is because most of the statistical studies exploring the incidence of homicide simply make a distinction between 'normal' homicide, 'abnormal' homicide and psychopathic homicide (e.g. Blackburn, 1993; Bluglass & Bowden, 1990). It is difficult to use these kinds of studies in considering rage-type murder as it has not been consistently reported as belonging to one particular category. Although there has been a considerable amount of research on personality and mental illness related to violence or murder, the parameters and characteristics of the act itself still require

further exploration. With the exception of Revitch & Schlesinger (1978, 1981), Meloy (1988, 1992) and Hyatt-Williams (1996, 1998), there has been very little recent work in this area. There are, however, a number of early seminal studies that remain relevant in defining the act and will be returned to in this investigation (Menninger *et al*, 1963; Ruoloto, 1968; Weiss *et al*, 1960; Wertham, 1937).

The forthcoming review of the literature draws on both criminological and psychological perspectives. It attempts to refine our understanding of the defining parameters of explosive forms of violence which, in turn, raise important questions and problems. Investigation in this area will not only further our understanding of the particular psychological correlates that accompany this form of violence, but also has implications for forensic investigation and assessment. It should be noted that, aside from some general comments regarding the structural psychodynamics of the act, detailed discussion on psychodynamic features will be reserved for later chapters.

2.1 THE ACT

The following brief description based on a recent newspaper report typifies the kind of events and situations that surround what is being referred to here as rage-type murder:

After hearing, two days previously that his wife was leaving him, Arnold had become notably withdrawn and depressed. He said little and could not eat or sleep. His wife had moved out after feeling that the relationship was not able to fulfill her needs anymore. Two months later he invited her to come round to the house to collect the rest of her belongings. Arnold reported that he had managed to recover somewhat from the separation and realized that there was little future in the relationship. He started moving in a different circle of friends and had also began a new relationship with another woman.

His wife arrived that Saturday night, accompanied by their four year-old child. They were able to discuss the details of their separation cordially and even sat down together to eat dinner like 'old times'. She began to talk about where she was staying and her new job. At that point he began to feel upset again by the situation and

found himself becoming overwhelmed with anger as she spoke. From this point on, he had very little recall of the events that followed.

He remembered a knife, he remembered both his wife and child on the kitchen floor with multiple stab wounds all over their bodies, he remembered the blood, he remembered calling the police, but nothing else.

Arnold had no previous history of violent or aggressive behaviour towards anyone and still cannot understand what happened to him as he had never consciously thought about killing the two people closest to him. He could only understand it as 'something inside me snapping something happened *to me*', a subtle means of separating himself from being the perpetrator of such a crime.

Along with the overwhelming rage that precipitated the above double murder, there are a number of other characteristics immediately evident here that set this kind of murder apart from other homicides. Most notably, it appears to be out of character, there is no clear apparent motive for the murder, and the act is not premeditated in any way.

A number of other terms have been used to describe this kind of murder, each one tending to focus on one of the above characteristics. Blackman *et al* (1963), Lamberti (1958) and Weiss *et al* (1960), all part of the same research group at Washington University, use the term 'sudden murder' to emphasize the peculiar nature of the murderous act. 'Sudden' refers not only to the impulsiveness of the act itself, but also to its being an isolated event uncharacteristic of the individual's usual behaviour.

They describe the act as being committed by:

... a person who, without having been involved in any previous serious aggressive antisocial acts, suddenly, unlawfully, and intentionally kills (or makes a serious attempt to kill) another human being. The murder is 'sudden' in the sense that it appears to be a single, isolated, unexpected episode of violent, impulsive acting-out behaviour - behaviour which is never well thought out, behaviour which has no obvious purpose or hope for personal advantage or profit foreseeable as a result (Weiss *et al*, 1960, p.669).

Other terms that have been used to describe a similar form of homicide include: motiveless murder (Satten *et al*, 1960; Sohn, 1995; Stone, 1993), dissociative murder (Tanay, 1969), affective murder (Meloy, 1988), explosive murder (Bromberg, 1961; Menninger *et al*, 1963), and catathymic murder (Meloy, 1992; Wertham, 1937).

There are two possible diagnoses worth considering, related to the act itself, when one uses *The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual IV* (American Psychological Association, 1994): Intermittent Explosive disorder and Brief Reactive Psychosis (Meloy, 1992). The former is defined by the following criteria:

- A. Several discrete episodes of failure to resist aggressive impulses that result in serious assaultive acts or destruction of property.
- B. The degree of aggressiveness expressed during the episodes is grossly out of proportion to any precipitating psychological stressors.
- C. The aggressive episodes are not better accounted for by another mental disorder (e.g., Antisocial personality disorder, Borderline personality disorder, a Psychotic disorder, a Manic Episode, Conduct Disorder, or Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder) and are not due to the direct physiological effects of a substance (e.g., A drug of abuse, a medication) or a general medical condition (e.g., a head trauma, Alzheimer's disease) (APA, 1994, p. 322).

There has been very little research exploring the nature of this disorder and its relationship to different types of violence. There do, however, appear to be some similarities between explosive acts of violence and what is described above.

Although *The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual IV* (APA, 1994) reports that it is a relatively rare diagnosis, Felthous *et al* (1991) report a 18.9% incidence amongst violent men. They also found that most of the rage reactions occurred without a noticeable prodromal period. Although most offenders remained orientated during the outburst, a majority only had partial recollection of the event.

The other diagnosis, Brief Reactive Psychosis, also may describe some of the clinical elements that appear in a rage-type murder. It is defined by the presence of vivid

psychotic symptoms, such as hallucinations and incoherence. Although not always the case, this disorder may occur in response to a particular stressor in the individual's life (Kaplan & Saddock, 1989). It is defined by the following criteria:

- A. The presence of at least one of the following symptoms indicating impaired reality testing:
 - (a) incoherence or marked loosening of associations
 - (b) delusions
 - (c) hallucinations
 - (d) catatonic or disorganized behaviour
- B. Emotional turmoil, i.e., rapid shifts from one intense affect to another, or overwhelming perplexity or confusion.
- C. Appearance of the symptoms in A and B shortly after, and apparently in response to, one or many events that, singly or together, would be markedly stressful to almost anyone in similar circumstances in the person's culture.
- D. Absence of prodromal symptoms of Schizophrenia, and failure to meet the criteria of Schizotypal Personality Disorder before onset of the disturbance.
- E. Duration of the disturbance of from a few hours to one month, with eventual full return to premorbid functioning.
- F. Not due to a psychotic Mood Disorder, and cannot be established that an organic factor initiated and maintained the disturbance (APA, 1994, p. 206-207).

In contrast to Intermittent Explosive Disorder, this diagnosis requires that there is a gross break with reality where considerable disturbance of the individual's perceptual functioning occurs (Meloy, 1992). Although in some cases of rage-type murder this has been reported (Menninger *et al*, 1963; Weiss *et al*, 1960), it appears that in most cases only minor dissociative states, by comparison, occur (Bromberg, 1961; Gilligan, 1997; Hyatt-Williams, 1998; Meloy, 1992). Further, although these dissociative states may be present for a long period prior to the act of violence, as is specified for the diagnosis of Brief Reactive Psychosis, this is not the case in rage murder. Here, dissociation usually occurs along with a sudden surge of rage at the time of the murder and remits again immediately afterwards (Meloy, 1992; Revitch & Schlesinger, 1981). In terms of diagnosis then, it appears that Intermittent

Explosive Disorder comes closer to defining the act. The homicidal act however, is far more complex than any single diagnosis can fully explain. The inadequacy of psychiatric diagnosis in defining disorders or syndromes related to homicidal behaviour has been noted by a number of authors (Meloy, 1993; Stone, 1993; Wertham, 1950).

In what could be considered the first attempt to outline the complexity of the act, Wertham (1937) formulated a particular sequence of clinical events that occur in the build-up to violent behaviour of this kind. He called this *the catathymic crisis*. Wertham uses the term 'catathymia', taken from Maier's (in Meloy, 1992) work in 1912 on affect-idea complexes that overwhelm conscious thought and control, to emphasize the affective nature of this process. Ultimately this leads to a conceived plan of violence and a compulsion to carry it out. It may not necessarily always result in murder, but murder is included as one of the possible consequences of the affective state. He describes the sequence of events as follows:

A traumatic psychogenic experience precipitates an unbearable and seemingly unsolvable inner situation leading to extreme emotional tension; the subject holds the outer situation entirely responsible for this inner tension; his thinking becomes more and more ego-centric; with apparent suddenness a crystallization point is reached in the idea that a violent act against another or against himself is the only way out. After a prolonged inner struggle this violent act is attempted or carried out. It is followed immediately by an almost complete removal of the preceding emotional tension, but the patient does not gain insight at this time. There follows a superficially normal period of varying length, usually several months, after which an inner equilibrium is established, which leads to insight (p.976).

Later, in *Dark Legend*, a more detailed study of a single case of murder, Wertham (1950) reformulates this clinical process into a five-stage process summarized as follows: (1) After an injurious precipitating experience, an inner uneasiness develops. Thinking becomes self-centred and the precipitating event is held responsible for this. (2) Thoughts about a violent act being the only solution begin to occur and a consequent inner struggle develops. (3) The inner tension escalates. (4) The violent

act is carried out followed by a superficial return to normality, but with no insight into the event. (5) This is eventually followed by the realization that the outer situation does not account for the extreme violent act that was perpetrated.

To develop this further, I shall elaborate on different aspects of Wertham's description outlining key characteristics and classifications that have subsequently been used to define the act and its surrounding situation. Five key determinants can be isolated as being central to understanding the act itself: (1) The affective nature of the act; (2) its dissociative nature; (3) its apparent motivelessness; (4) the distinction between chronic and acute affective reactions; and (5) the situational characteristics of the act.

2.1.1 Explosive Affect

What stands out as the most central defining feature of Wertham's catathymic crisis is the eruption of an overwhelming and unbearable affective state preceding the violent act or murder. Karl Menninger's research group, in the 1960's, conducted a number of studies focused on this affective form of violence. He called it 'episodic dyscontrol' in an attempt to convey, from an economic point of view, sudden lapses in ego control that would allow a surge of aggression to be acted out (Menninger *et al*, 1963; Menninger 1966, 1973).

Consistent with this, reports of such incidents usually describe the act as¹ "unnecessarily violent" (Menninger *et al*, 1963, p.239) where the victims have been shot or stabbed many times, depicting the scene of an 'overkill' (Hyatt-Williams, 1996, 1998; Meloy, 1992). Hyatt-Williams (1996) also makes the point that the growing tension within the individual is not always consciously apparent to the offender, or to others, preceding the violent act.

The affective tension, however, does not simply emerge out of nowhere. For Meloy (1992), the affective nature of acute catathymic violence always emerges in response to a perceived threat. In his words:

The mode of violence is clearly affective, delineated by intense autonomic arousal, overwhelming anger during

the violence, the perception of the victim as an imminent threat to the ego structure of the perpetrator, a time-limited behavioural sequence and a goal of threat reduction and a return to intrapsychic homeostasis (p.47).

The violent response, as Meloy (1992) points out, ultimately serves a defensive function. This has been a consistent finding throughout the research on the general psychodynamic process underlying the act. In most cases it is described as a desperate defensive attempt to prevent a disintegration of the personality (Glasser, 1998; Hyatt-Williams, 1998; Meloy, 1992; Menninger *et al*, 1950; Wertham, 1937, 1950; Zulueta, 1997). The nature of defensive forms of violence has become the subject of recent ongoing investigations into the psychodynamics of such acts. How this relates to rage-type murder *per se* remains to be explored. Furthermore, whether explosive murder is qualitatively or quantitatively distinguishable from other forms of explosive violence also requires further investigation. For instance, it is not yet clear if rage-type murderers experience particular kinds of fantasies or emotions that set them apart from individuals who are vulnerable to explosive reactions or engage in less severe forms of violence.

A further observation to be made, referring to Meloy's above description, is the use of economic or 'energetic' terminology to describe the act, thereby referring to it as essentially cathartic in nature. This presumption can be consistently observed across the literature. An unburdening of the tension, as a consequence of the murder, is said to bring great relief to the individual (Meloy, 1988; Revitch & Schlesinger, 1981; Ruoloto, 1968; Wertham, 1937, 1950). Further, symptoms such as dissociation or depression associated with unbearable inner tension tend to remit after the act has been committed (Carney, 1974; Revitch & Schlesinger, 1981; Wertham, 1937; 1950). Confessing to the murder, a typical pattern with this kind of murderer (Meloy, 1992), has also been observed to have a cathartic effect (Revitch & Schlesinger, 1981) and perhaps serves as a continuation of the affective discharge after the murder.

It is difficult not to describe explosive violence in cathartic terms as both its objective appearance and the phenomenology of the event point in this direction. Seeing it

simply in these terms, however, risks obscuring or foreclosing broader investigation. The importance of the individual's relationship with his surrounding situation, for instance, and the interactional nature of violence are largely ignored if the act becomes simplistically based on the cathartic release of aggressive energy. This is reminiscent of Freud's (1895) homeostatic drive model where object relationships are not fully accounted for. The implications of how one contextualizes the affective nature of explosive violence are many. If it were simply a cathartic act, one would expect aggressive eruptions to occur on a regular basis every time the level of aggressive psychic energy peaked. This has implications for treatment and forensic management as one would expect regular repeat offenses. However this does not appear to be the case, suggesting that other factors need to be considered in exploring the matter further (Blackburn, 1993; Meloy, 1992). The implications of this line of investigation will be explored further when intrapsychic features of rage-type murder are considered.

2.1.2 Acute & Chronic Catathymia

Revitch & Schlesinger (1978, 1981), followed by Meloy (1992), distinguish between acute and chronic catathymia and in doing so, divide the explosive act into three phases. Chronic catathymia is most similar to Wertham's original definition where murderous conflict exists within the individual for some time prior to the act itself. This constitutes the first stage of the process, what they have called the *incubation phase*. Here, the individual becomes obsessively preoccupied with his or her victim. The offender-to-be struggles with overwhelming affective states but does not take action. The incubation phase usually lasts several days but can occur for as long as a year. It is usually experienced retrospectively by the individual as a "dream-like or ego-alien" (p.137) state characterized by inner conflict of both a suicidal and homicidal nature. The second phase, the murderous act itself, is "triggered by a build up of tension, a feeling of frustration, depression and helplessness" (p.129) which is then followed by the third phase of the process characterized by a sense of relief.

In acute catathymic homicide, very little time lapses between the eruption of the affective conflict and the act itself. The incubation period is far shorter and may often be a matter of seconds. The trigger here is less the build-up of affect, and more simply an experience of sudden overwhelming affect tied to a particular symbolic

idea. Revitch & Schlesinger (1981) also claim that the third stage differs from chronic catathymia in that the individual usually experiences a flattening of emotions and not a sense of relief. They further argue that in the case of the acute catathymia, the victim is more likely to be a stranger and the perpetrator is less likely to retain any memory of the incident.

2.1.3 Dissociation

In his attempt to classify different acts of murder, Tanay (1969) uses the term 'dissociative murder' to refer to what is being called rage-type murder here. For him, the murder is committed in an altered state of consciousness where there is no conscious awareness of the motive for murder. He distinguishes this from two other categories of murder: the psychotic murder and the ego-syntonic murder. The former refers to murders where a florid psychotic episode can be easily observed and where the motive is based on a delusional idea. The ego-syntonic murder, on the other hand, refers to murders with a psychopathic motive where the act does not disrupt the ego functioning of the individual in any way.

Wertham (1962), reviewing his earlier work, also emphasized the delusional nature of the individual's thinking during the violent act, describing a marked impairment in the individual's contact with reality as part of this process. As Meloy (1992) suggests, this constitutes a redefinition of the catathymic reaction as a transient psychotic episode where some absence of reality testing can be observed. Meloy argues that this became more apparent to Wertham once an awareness of transient psychotic disorders, evident in such diagnoses as the Borderline Personality Disorder, became more prominent in general psychiatric practice. This may well be the case as dissociative experiences of violence associated with borderline phenomena are more readily reported in more recent literature (Hyatt-Williams, 1996; Meloy, 1992; Revitch & Schlesinger, 1981).

Further signs that a dissociative process underlies this explosive state are apparent in the offender's description of events following the murder. The individual often lacks insight and is unable to explain, or understand, any motive for the crime (Stone, 1993). Perpetrators often describe their experience of the murder as feeling 'unreal' or 'dream-like'. Furthermore, some form of psychogenic amnesia is often reported

(Hyatt-Williams & Cordess, 1966; Meloy, 1992; Menninger *et al*, 1963; Revitch & Schlesinger, 1981; Wertham, 1950) and the individual does not appear to have been aware of any strong fantasies towards the individual concerned (Hyatt-Williams, 1966; Satten *et al*, 1960). All this suggests that these murders take place within an intrapsychic context of dissociation, ego disintegration and depersonalization.

It is often difficult, however, to determine whether the dissociation is part of the cause of the rage-type reaction, or whether it is simply a consequent reaction or way of coping with the ego-dystonic experience that the murder itself represents. This has implications for forensic investigation and legal recourse. Clearly, forensic investigation into the extent to which dissociation occurs is very difficult given that information is always *ex post facto* and eye-witnesses are rare. The extent to which a disturbance in reality testing occurs is also more difficult to assess in these cases given that these kinds of offenders are usually compliant, display no odd behaviour, and seldom have a history of aggressive behaviour (Blackburn, 1993; Hollin, 1989; Meloy, 1992). If one takes the view that the chronicity and the extent to which dissociation occur are proportionate to the level of control and responsibility displayed during the offence, then this becomes an important factor in the legal and psychological management of such cases. In legal terms, it becomes a crucial part of establishing *mens rea* (intention to commit the act) and to what extent *diminished responsibility* is a factor in the murderous act (Blackburn, 1993).

Further understanding the nature of this dissociative process may clarify this somewhat. Dissociation, for instance, has been connected with a number of mental disorders. To what extent, if at all, can these disorders shed some light on the type of dissociation observed here? Meloy (1988) finds that most rage-type murderers are not found 'insane' and end up serving normal prison sentences. Meloy (1992) and Revitch & Schlesinger (1981) further observe that few rage-type murderers suffer from any form of neurological impairment. This means that the majority of such offenders do not present with attributes which are synonymous with 'insanity' in legal terms. This says little, however, about other forms of mental disorder that will be explored shortly. In terms of intrapsychic factors, whether these dissociative qualities are chronically entrenched in the personality, part of an acute reaction, or a consequence of the violence itself, will be further explored as part of this study.

2.1.4 Motiveless Motivation

Rage-type murder does not appear to have any other motive apart from the explosive expression of aggression that has been triggered by some relatively insignificant event. It is referred to as 'motiveless' not only because there seems to be nothing to be gained by the action, but also because the act appears to be incomprehensible. Stone (1993) takes this to its extreme and suggests that these kinds of murders simply do not have an explanation, and it is this uncertainty in itself, that we as health professionals need to tolerate and accept.

In Wertham's initial (1937) description of the catathymic crisis, he mentions that prolonged internal tension may lead to a conceived plan to perform a violent act. Wertham is referring here to a more chronic, prolonged rage reaction where a plan has time to be conceived. Less emphasis however, is placed on this in his later writings (Wertham, 1950, 1966) which appear more consistent with subsequent studies in this area (Hyatt-Williams, 1998; Meloy, 1992; Revitch & Schlesinger, 1981). It is important to note, however, that a plan, or a murderous fantasy, is not the same as a motive for murder. One may become preoccupied with murderous fantasies and even plan a murder in one's mind but still not have a motive for carrying it out.

Along with there being no motive, no premeditation is evident and the method of the murder is usually described as "haphazard and impromptu" (Menninger *et al* 1963, p. 239). Some have also noted that often conventional weapons are not used in these cases (Hyatt-Williams, 1998; Satten *et al*, 1960), an indication of the suddenness of the act.

Revitch & Schlesinger (1978, 1981) have put forward perhaps the most detailed account of the specific defining features of different kinds of homicidal acts. First, they distinguish the act from neurological and psychiatric conditions, particularly alcohol induced violence and schizophrenia, which they find only very rarely to be a factor in homicidal behaviour. Then they set out to consider both motivational and dynamic factors in their classification of homicidal behaviour.

Their motivational model places different types of murder on a continuum between endogenous and exogenous motivational factors. They isolate five different types of homicide beginning with the most exogenous type and ending with the most endogenous:

- a) *Environmentally stimulated homicide*. Exogenous social pressures and controls motivate these homicides. Politically motivated murders or murder motivated primarily by social injustices would fall into this category. They are incidental and are less likely to be repeated if the environment changes in some way.
- b) *Situational homicide*. Revitch & Schlesinger, (1978, 1981) argue that these murders are committed due to a fearful or angry reaction, which may be adaptive or maladaptive, to a stressful situation. A murder that occurs in an attempt to protect oneself in a threatening situation would be an example of this. These individuals show few signs of personality disturbance or psychopathology.
- c) *Impulsive homicide*. Impulsive offenders characteristically display very poor impulse control and often have a history of many antisocial acts as a result of this. They differ from situational homicides in that the motivation is primarily derived from personality predisposition as opposed to being a straightforward reaction to an event.
- d) *Catathymic homicide*. Revitch & Schlesinger, (1978, 1981) believe that catathymic homicides are motivated primarily by emotional outbursts triggered by delusional thinking rather than by any rational conscious motive. This would exclude murder that was initiated by some form of obvious or overt threat.
- e) *Compulsive homicide*. Compulsive homicides differ from the above forms in that they are driven by clear fantasy constellations and ideas, predominantly of an infantile sexual nature, that are compulsively acted out. They have a more coherent personality organization in that violent eruption is less a function of some form of environmental provocation than in other categories of murder.

Revitch and Schlesinger (1978, 1981) point out that these are far from discrete categories. In many cases it would be difficult to clearly categorize the act and motivation. The situational murder and the catathymic murder for instance, are difficult to tell apart. They differ, however, in the location of the motivation. Provocation in the situational murder is realistically life-threatening as opposed to the

more internal motivation of the catathymic murder. In catathymic murder provocation is minor, or hidden, but serves as a catalyst for other psychological processes that eventually lead to murder.

The endogenous motivations pointed out here have not gone undisputed. Many have found the influence of situational factors on the act to be important as well (Bentingham & Bentingham, 1981; Blackburn, 1993; Goldstein, 1986; Hollin, 1989). Situational factors and their impact on the individual's psychological make-up bring us closer to understanding the kind of interaction that occurs between external and internal factors. The extent to which, and in what way, we consider this kind of murder to be apparently motiveless is worth exploring further with this interaction in mind. In terms of psychological motivation, rage-type murder is mostly considered to be motivated by explosive affect. Related to a question asked earlier, this as a sole motivation does not provide a full explanation for the act. Other ways of understanding motivation, or its source, thus require further investigation.

2.1.5 Situational Factors

Some have argued that the situation under which most explosive murders take place - an argument or a damaging insult - is in itself enough to explain why this kind of murder occurs (Bentingham & Bentingham, 1981; Goldstein, 1986). In other words, they claim that any person in that situation would react in a similar way. Situational factors thus take precedence over the individual's psychological state. In such a claim, however, the interaction between these two factors is largely ignored.

Although this study is essentially concerned with understanding the internal world of the rage-type murderer, external situational factors have an important bearing on what occurs at an intrapsychic level. These factors are important not only to determine what factors precipitate the psychological state that ends in murder. They also serve as a starting point for understanding what intrapsychic dynamics may have partly created or precipitated the tragic external situation. In other words, the situation not only acts as a determinant, but *why* and *how* such a situation develops may reflect something about the individual's psychological make-up. For example, the availability of a gun, the number of other people present, or the location, may be understood as key determinants as to whether a murder will take place. These same

factors, however, may also say something about the perpetrator's intrapsychic life. Why, for instance, was a gun available at all? Why did the individual 'choose' a location that he felt he could not walk away from? To return to the case of Arnold at the beginning of this chapter, one would wonder, for instance, about the unconscious psychological implications of inviting his wife to his house and his re-creation of the 'old times' dinner.

However, the features emerging through a situational analysis of rage-type murder and its psychological implications would be less conspicuous than those of psychopathic or perverse kinds of murder. This kind of murderer acts out fantasies and thoughts in a coherent way, etching a clear pattern onto the surroundings and creating a situation from which one can infer much about the individual's psychological make-up (Biven, 1997; Meloy, 1988). In explosive murder, on the other hand, where there is no motive and it is impulsive, the clues to the individual's internal world become more difficult to discern from the crime situation. The intrapsychic implications of this will be further explored in considering the intrapsychic dimension of violence in the next section.

The main situational features often reported in cases of rage-type murder are as follows. Some have already been mentioned in passing:

- a) *The offender is typically provoked by a relatively innocuous external event or person that then triggers an acute internal crisis in the offender.*

From an interactional perspective, some have argued that in this way the victim contributes to, or has a part to play in, his or her own murder. Abrahamsen (1973), for instance, during the time when a comprehensive body of literature about victims was beginning to emerge, argues that "the murdered person often plays an unconscious part in his own death" (p.3). As with most of the debate around theories of victimology, this approach is often criticized as an exercise in blaming the victim. This need not be the case: it rather serves as a way of considering the influence of the interaction between victim and offender on the violent outcome.

b) The offender usually has a close emotional relationship with the victim.

In a pioneering study of 588 homicide offenders, Wolfgang (1958) found that over half his sample knew their victims well. This has often been found to be the case (Blackburn, 1993; Bowden, 1990; Hollin, 1989; Meloy, 1992). Some researchers however, notably Menninger *et al* (1963) and Stone (1993), report a number of cases where the victims did not know the perpetrator in any way. This appears to be the exception rather than the rule. It is also possible that these cases would be better described as psychotic murders where all contact with reality is lost. It also highlights the problem, mentioned earlier, regarding the numerous different definitions used to describe murder.

c) Predation, or stalking of the victim seldom occurs.

This situational factor becomes important in considering whether there was any form of premeditation specific to carrying out an act of murder. It is also an important factor in establishing, more generally, the state of mind of the individual. The individual may, for instance, be plagued by obsessive thoughts about a person, not specific to carrying out an act of murder, which leads to predation or stalking. This generally does not occur in rage-type murder (Meloy, 1988). Perhaps part of the reason for this is simply that most explosive murders occur between individuals who have an established, close relationship and therefore predation becomes less of a factor. Given the nature of the relationship, it may also be less reported or a less obvious factor prior to the murder.

d) The external situation, and consequently the intrapsychic situation, becomes overwhelming and there appears to be no means of distancing oneself from the interaction.

The circumstances around the murder are typified by a situation where 'too much happens too soon' (Hyatt-Williams, 1998). Meloy (1992) describes it as an overwhelming escalation where 'something has to snap'. This again raises important questions pertaining to how such a situation comes about. Does the situation simply occur by chance, or is it co-created in a way that makes it so entrapping? We are all, in some way, overwhelmed by certain difficult situations. It does not follow however, that we would all commit murder in the same

situation. A fraught, provocative or entrapping situation may make us angry, we may even feel 'murderous', but how does this differ from actually carrying out an act of violence or murder?

- e) *The victim is usually stabbed or shot numerous times, even after the individual has clearly been killed.*

The 'overkill' nature of the offence has been discussed earlier in terms of the individual suddenly being overwhelmed by explosive affect. It may however, further signify a desperate need to obliterate either a particular object, object relationship, or the reality of the situation as it stands in that moment in time. The psychodynamic processes evident here have been considered by a number of recent authors from an object relations point of view (e.g. Glasser, 1998; Hyatt-Williams, 1996, 1998; Meloy, 1992; Perelberg, 1998). The details of these studies will be considered in the next section.

- f) *The offender is often reported to have been under the influence of alcohol.*

This is not always a consistent finding. Bowden (1990), for instance, in his review of homicidal behaviour, reports that motiveless murders are rare among alcohol abusers. It is also problematic to view this as a cause for violence as there is no clear relationship to be found between alcohol and violence (Brain, 1986; Collins, 1989; Pernanen, 1991). Rather, alcohol functions as a disinhibitor making manifest what otherwise may have been controlled. Therefore its role needs to be considered within the context of other variables such as personality (Blackburn, 1993; Pihl & Peterson, 1993). Alcohol may ironically also be used as an attempt to deal with unbearable feelings of rage.

- g) *Offenders often hand themselves over to the authorities after the murder (Hinton, 1983).*

The situation following the murder is such that the individual is usually shocked and traumatized by what he or she has done but is cognizant of the extreme nature of the situation and thus hands himself over to the authorities. This may be a useful indicator that there is little evidence of psychopathy present in the individual. It should not however, necessarily be taken as a sign of remorse. The ability to be remorseful or to mourn usually does not occur immediately and only

emerges gradually with insight (Hyatt-Williams, 1996; Wertham, 1937,1950). It appears that although there is an awareness of the wrongfulness of the act, the relief that occurs after the act still serves an important function in preventing the mourning process from beginning immediately.

2.2 CONCLUDING REMARKS

I have outlined the key features that define rage-type murder and raised some of the dilemmas and problems that we face in further understanding the murder scene itself. The complexity of the act, however, cannot simply be ascribed to overwhelming destructive affect, dissociative episodes or particular situational factors. These factors are meaningless unless they are viewed within the context of the individual's personality and general life experience. Wertham (1962) cogently states this in *A Sign for Cain* in separating the idea of murderous impulses from murderous people:

Given the negative emotions, the death wish and the catalyst, there must still be one important factor: the whole personality and the whole life situation of the individual. The difference between one who murders and one who does not is never a simple impulse or a single mental attitude, however destructive" (p. 40).

In line with this, the following chapter sets out to consider the role of mental illness, personality disorders and personal attributes in the rage-type murderer.

CHAPTER THREE

THE RAGE-TYPE MURDERER: MENTAL ILLNESS AND PERSONALITY

It is widely accepted that no single personality type or psychiatric disorder can be isolated as being solely responsible for the act of murder. There are however, certain psychological factors that appear related to different types of murder. Using both actuarial and clinical findings, this chapter explores the relationship between mental illness and explosive forms of violence and then goes on to review some of the prevalent personal attributes and personality characteristics that are commonly associated with rage-type murder.

3.1 MENTALLY ILL OR DISORDERED?

How can a person, as sane as this man seems to be, commit an act as crazy as the one he was convicted of? (Satten et al, 1960, p.48).

The horror that an act of murder engenders in us often leaves us desperately searching for answers. This is especially the case when there are no obvious motives. Our own insecurity about there being no apparent explanation leads to a greater need to think of the offender as insane. Such an assumption serves as a means perhaps of having some control over the unknown, a way of denying that the offender may have lived an essentially 'normal' life. Stone (1993) believes, in a similar way, that this kind of reasoning often occurs when murderers are brought to trial and a psychiatric diagnosis is used to mask what is inexplicable.

Difficulties with the term 'mental illness' have often been pointed out. I shall not discuss these in any depth here (see Kleinman, 1987; McKeller, 1989; Parker *et al*, 1995). Suffice to say that the inconsistent use of diagnostic categories and the use of non-generalizable samples in diagnostic studies (Blackburn, 1993; Hollin, 1989; Howells & Hollin, 1992) make findings regarding the presence of mental illness difficult to evaluate. For this reason findings in this area should be treated tentatively. These difficulties notwithstanding, to what extent might psychiatric notions of mental illness play a role in understanding rage-type murder? Is there a particular relationship to be found between violent crime, more particularly rage-type murder, and mental illness?

Hollin's (1989) review of research findings suggests that approximately 30% of prisoners have psychiatric disorders. This differs from the general population where an incidence rate of 14% was noted. To contextualize this further, a majority of all prisoners are diagnosed with either Antisocial Personality Disorder or a Substance Abuse Disorder (Blackburn, 1993). Specifically relating to homicide, Coid (1983) found the incidence rates of 'mentally abnormal' offenders to be consistent across 15 research studies. The incidence rates of 'normal' violent offenders, however, varied greatly depending on the socio-political situation in the particular country concerned. This suggests that mental illness can be consistently linked to a particular group of violent offenders. It is important to note, however, that in all the studies reviewed here, 'mentally abnormal' offenders only made up a small minority of the cases involved in homicidal acts. This has been supported in a number of other studies (Bowden, 1990; Campbell, 1995; Coid, 1993; Howells, 1982; Monahan, 1992, 1993; Watson, 1973; Satten *et al*, 1960).

Bromberg (1961), in an important study, claims that most homicide offenders do not show signs of mental illness. He uses the term 'normal murderer', describing such individuals as occasional offenders who have committed a crime "in response to a solitary aberrant impulse" (p.24). In his words:

These offenders, not neurotic in the clinical sense, are usually well adjusted, successful persons, without

nervous complaints, usually law-abiding, even 'pillars of society,' who inexplicably are propelled into a major crime (p.24).

Stone (1993) argues that most of these offenders are merely referred to a psychiatrist because it is assumed that some 'illness' must be responsible for such a heinous act. He too finds that most murderers do not easily fit into medical classifications of mental illness. This does not mean however, as Bromberg (1961) later shows, that these individuals do not show signs of intrapsychic conflict. A number of other authors have expressed similar observations regarding the apparent normality of these offenders (Goldstein, 1986; Hyatt-Williams, 1998; Meloy, 1992, 1988; Satten *et al*, 1960). We shall return to their views on the psychodynamics of the 'normal' offender in Chapters 5 & 6.

Two possibilities emerge regarding the absence of psychiatric illness in these offenders. Firstly, one might conclude that a majority of these individuals are in fact 'normal'. Secondly, one could argue that this says more about the inadequacies of the present psychiatric diagnostic system in understanding murder. Revitch and Schlesinger (1978) have this to say about the limitations of psychiatric diagnosis related to murder:

Except for the offenses stimulated by paranoid delusions and hallucinations and for the very rare acts of violence committed in states of confusion due to organic or toxic factors and ictal and postictal epileptic states, the psychiatric diagnosis does not explain the offense (1978, p.138-139).

They go on to emphasize the need to obtain full details related to the individual's background and the act itself if one is to fully understand the offense. Their work in this area, although slightly dated, still remains a seminal contribution in understanding homicide and will be referred to regularly in this study.

Although psychiatric diagnosis does not offer a full explanation and cannot account for most of these cases, some studies have shown slightly greater incidences of psychiatric illness existing in rage-type offenders. To evaluate these findings further,

the different disorders that have been associated with expressive forms of violence or murder will be explored individually.

3.1.1 Depression

Some of the emerging research in this area suggests that there is a link between homicidal behaviour and depression that has been largely overlooked (Blackburn, 1993; Bluglass, 1990; Revitch and Schlesinger, 1978, 1981; Rosenbaum, 1990; Rosenbaum & Bennet, 1986). In a review of a number of studies linking serious violent offenses to depression, Howells (1982) concludes that this hypothesis is accepted by most practicing clinicians.

Revitch & Schlesinger (1981) note that depressive symptomatology is particularly common during the incubation period of the catathymic crisis. Rosenbaum (1990) observes that the depression linked to explosive murder is usually due to a narcissistic injury, in other words, a situation that humiliated or shamed the individual. He contrasts this with an anaclitic type of depression that emerges as a consequence of object loss and the threat of separation. Although this seems consistent with the precipitant factors that produce a rage-type reaction (Kohut, 1978), the distinction between narcissistic depression and anaclitic depression is problematic and difficult to make. This is so because narcissistic injury produced by infidelity in Rosenbaum's (1990) study, also represents a form of loss related to the self and *vice versa*. Perhaps it is more useful to conceptualize this relationship on a continuum where the loss of the self is more likely to produce a rage response as opposed to the loss of the object; the former being the more developmentally primitive reaction.

In support of this being a developmentally primitive reaction, Rosenbaum (1990) also found that depression was more likely to translate into explosive murder if the individual showed signs of having a personality disorder. Unfortunately he does not specify the type he is referring to. He argues that depressive features are caused by aggressive impulses defensively turned inward which erupt when a trigger event ruptures this defensive strategy. This goes some way in offering an understanding of why explosive offenders are often close to suicide as a result of aggression turned in on the self (Hyatt-Williams, 1998; Meloy, 1992). It also illustrates how important

controlling this defensive strategy becomes to avoid aggressive outbursts. We will return to this in more detail in discussing the intrapsychic make-up of the rage-type murderer.

Observations regarding depression, however, are not consistent across the research. For instance, in a later study, Rosenbaum & Bennet (1990) compared incidents of murder-suicide and homicide and found that although in murder-suicide incidents signs of depression were evident, homicide offenders did not appear to be depressed.

In response to this inconsistency, Collins and Bailey (1990) argue that a more detailed analysis of the relationship between mood disorders and different forms of violence is required. Working with a large prison sample of 1140 adult males, they only found a significant link between long-standing depression and robbery related incidents, which they conceptualize as a form of violence. They did not find expressive forms of violence, such as rage-type murder, to be significantly linked to depression. If anything, expressive violence appeared more related to mania than depression.

In order to contextualize these findings further it is important to remember that it is generally accepted that most depressed individuals are passive and non-violent. Further, depression is much more readily associated with suicide than homicide. This suggests that there are a number of other social, interpersonal, and psychological factors that need to be considered in these incidents (Hollin, 1989; Howells, 1982). Perhaps this indicates one of the shortcomings of relying on diagnosis as opposed to exploring the more detailed and specific underlying dynamics that are associated with violence.

3.1.2 Psychotic Disorders

Hollin (1989), reviewing a number of studies, finds that there is a slightly higher incidence of schizophrenia in offenders who have committed serious offenses, particularly those of an extremely violent nature. This has been reported by a number of other authors (Blackburn, 1993; Hafner & Boker, 1982; Howells, 1982; Monahan, 1993; Taylor, 1993). Hafner and Boker (1982) argue that sudden violence may be an important indication of an incipient psychotic process. Further, Blackburn (1993) and

Taylor (1993) find that these forms of violence appear to be over-represented in the paranoid group of schizophrenia, but under-represented in the psychoses related to mood disorders. This appears to suggest that violence is more closely associated with the paranoid delusional aspect of psychotic experience, what Taylor (1993) refers to as the “delusional drive” (p.80) to commit violence.

Some have reported a relatively high incidence of psychosis in rage murderers. Champion *et al* (1985), for instance, found that, in cases they examined of men who had committed matricide, most of the offenders were schizophrenic. Weiss *et al* (1960) found that 4 of the 13 cases of rage murder they explored showed classical signs of schizophrenia. The other individuals revealed signs ranging from emotional coldness to ‘primary process’ thinking leading to the conclusion they too showed signs of psychotic experience. However, the statistical findings are far from consistent and reports related specifically to rage-type murder are lacking. For instance, Taylor (1993) who interviewed 203 violent criminals found that psychotic individuals were far less likely to engage in extreme forms of violence and were more likely to direct their violent behaviour towards property or non-human objects. She found that most individuals who had been involved in serious crimes, such as murder, did not suffer from a psychotic illness.

As discussed earlier, the act of rage murder often involves transient dissociative or psychotic symptomatology. It is tempting thus to conclude that this indicates a psychotic disorder and therefore should be defined as a psychotic murder. This is especially the case given that psychosis is most readily associated with violence in the media and by the general public (Angermeyer & Matschinger, 1996). There is, however, an important difference between a psychotic murder and a rage-type murder. A psychotic murder is motivated primarily by paranoid delusional beliefs which are often accompanied by explosive rage (Taylor, 1993). Rage-type murder, on the other hand, has no apparent motive, delusional or otherwise, and appears to be more directly linked to explosive affect (Revitch & Schlesinger, 1981). There also appear to be other differences. For instance, psychotic assaults are often completely unprovoked (Hollin, 1989; Sohn, 1995; Taylor, 1993) and may involve bizarre ritualized behaviours (Bowden, 1990; Hollin, 1989). This kind of offender is also

more likely to kill a close family member towards whom he feels indifferent (Bowden, 1990; Taylor, 1993).

These differences are not often acknowledged in the literature, leaving a confusing picture and making it difficult to understand the relationship between psychotic illness, such as schizophrenia, and rage-type murder. Transient dissociative experiences in the rage offender are perhaps better explained as being linked to traumatic experience or as part of the dynamics of the borderline personality which I shall consider shortly.

3.1.3 Intellectual Ability

Hafner & Boker (1982), in their survey of 533 cases of murder, attempted murder and manslaughter, compared a 'normal' group of offenders with those who showed different forms of psychiatric illness. They found that mentally retarded individuals were more like the 'normal' group of offenders in terms of their demographic characteristics. They were also more likely to have experienced a history of family disturbance suggesting that mental retardation itself was not the cause of the violence.

There seem to be two basic relationships between types of offense and intellectual functioning. Firstly, there appears to be a relationship between slightly subnormal IQ's and delinquent or antisocial behaviour (Hollin, 1989). Secondly, individuals who have extremely low I.Q.'s display a higher incidence of minor sexual crimes (Blackburn, 1993; Hinton, 1983; Hollin, 1989). However, individuals with subnormal IQ's do not appear to have a significantly greater propensity to commit extreme forms of violence such as murder.

Factors related to poor intelligence, such as poor communicative ability have been found to be important for understanding violent behaviour. Dura (1997) for instance, found that mentally retarded individuals with poor expressive communicative abilities were more likely to communicate through minor shows of violent behaviour. This probability was found to be greater if associated with some form of mental

frustration and inarticulateness in such cases, intellectual ability does not appear to be a major factor in extreme forms of violence (Blackburn, 1993; Hollin, 1989; Howells, 1982).

3.1.4 Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

The irritability, fear and hypervigilance which, by definition, accompany the diagnosis of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder may lead to explosive and disruptive behaviour (American Psychological Association, 1994; Blackburn, 1993). Solursh (1989), in a study of 100 war veterans suffering from PTSD, reports explosive aggression to be present in 97% of his sample. Collins and Bailey (1990), in a sample of 1140 prisoners, found that those suffering from PTSD, or symptoms associated with the disorder, were more likely to commit explosive forms of violence.

There appears to be a growing body of research emphasizing the link between impulsive violence and trauma. The idea that violent or murderous behaviour emanates from an original trauma may also be associated with the effects of post trauma experience, although the individual may not necessarily show signs of PTSD *per se* (Blackburn, 1993; Duncan *et al*, 1958; Hyatt-Williams, 1996; Satten *et al*, 1960; Zulueta, 1993). Certainly, analysts and psychotherapists, working with individual cases where trauma is evident, have often pointed to the different psychodynamic connections between trauma and aggression or violence (Hyatt-Williams, 1996; Zulueta, 1993). This will be discussed in greater detail in a later section.

In sum then, some psychological disorders, most notably Depression and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, appear to endow an individual with a greater propensity for explosive violence. However, this still does not account for the majority of violent offenders who show few signs of overt symptomatology that would suggest the presence of psychiatric disturbance. Furthermore, although a link between 'mental disorder' and the offense has been supported by some, this does not necessarily mean that a causal link between the two factors exists. As Hollin (1989) points out in his review of earlier research, there are a number of other possibilities: mentally ill offenders are more detectable and thus more readily caught; mentally ill individuals are more likely to be charged; guilty pleas are more readily made by these individuals to ensure treatment. Finally, it is often not clear whether the mental

illness is a cause, or whether it occurs subsequent to the offense (Collins & Bailey, 1990). For instance, offenders may show signs of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder or Major Depression. However, given the stresses associated with the murder itself, arrest, trial and imprisonment, it is difficult to establish whether these symptoms are a cause or consequence of the offense.

The fact that many of these individuals do not show signs of having a clinical disorder, particularly psychosis, brings us back to the concept of the 'normal' murderer. On the one hand, this brings us face to face again with the idea that anyone, you or I, could be driven to such a sudden extreme. On the other, it leaves us with a number of still unanswered questions specifically related to what 'normal' actually means here. All we have established thus far is that it means that an overt clinical disorder is usually absent. Exploring the personalities and personal attributes of these individuals goes some way in explaining this further.

3.2 PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES AND PERSONALITY

There is no one particular profile that clearly defines the behaviour and personality of the rage-type murderer. Nevertheless, there are a number of characteristics that are common to most studies in this area. The first defining characteristic occurs by way of exclusion: Individuals who have committed rage-type murders do not fit the personality profile of the psychopathic or antisocial personality, a personality type most often associated with violence (Blackburn, 1993; Hollin, 1989; Millon, 1996). Individuals in this category lack the ability to empathize with others, and display a particular form of object relatedness characterized by a perverse form of empathy where emotional connectedness with the external object is maintained through sadistic means. Unlike the psychopath, rage-type murderers seldom have a criminal history, show few signs of sadistic or perverse motives in the violence perpetrated, and are not belligerent or impulsive in their general approach (Blackburn, 1993; Hollin, 1989; Hyatt-Williams, 1998; Meloy, 1988). The general psychodynamic differences between these two personalities will be outlined in Chapters 5 & 6.

Satten *et al* (1960) describe sudden murderers as seemingly “rational, coherent and controlled, and yet whose homicidal acts have a bizarre, apparently senseless quality” (p. 48). The fact that these murders are often described as being out of character also suggests that dissociated split-off aspects of the personality play a part in overwhelming the individual’s usual ego functioning. More generally, rage-type murderers have been described as being overcontrolling, rigid and inflexible whilst at the same time, prone to sudden disintegration (Hyatt-Williams, 1998; Meloy, 1992; Satten *et al*, 1960). Their tolerance of any form of affect, particularly anger, is extremely limited, lest they be overwhelmed by it. This may explain why, perhaps as a means of controlling affect, individuals who have committed rage-type murder have sometimes been noted to have difficulty in communicating (Abrahamsen, 1973; Gilligan, 1997; Satten *et al*, 1960). Further, relationships are often shallow and cold as a result (Satten *et al*, 1960).

Anger or violent feelings are therefore not usually experienced on a regular basis at a conscious level (Abrahamsen, 1973; Hollin, 1989; Satten *et al*, 1960). As a result, they are not overtly violent individuals and are usually very conforming in their behavior (Hyatt-Williams, 1998; Weiss *et al*, 1960). The potentially destructive nature of this personality, however, is evident in reports of them being self-destructive, more accident-prone than most, and often close to suicide (Abrahamsen, 1973; Gilligan, 1997; Hyatt-Williams, 1996; Meloy, 1992; Ruotolo, 1968; Wertham, 1937). Deep feelings of inadequacy, strong dependency needs (Blackburn, 1993, Gilligan, 1997; Weiss *et al*, 1960), as well as an apparent passivity in their general predisposition, have also been described (Blackburn, 1993; Hollin, 1989; Megargee, 1966). Consistent with this, Ruotolo (1968) also found them to be constantly preoccupied with a sense of isolation and alienation.

In earlier studies, Duncan *et al* (1958) and Satten *et al* (1960) found a history of unrelenting physical violence and emotional deprivation in the cases they examined. Long parental absences and a chaotic family background usually characterized emotional deprivation. Many authors, working from different theoretical perspectives, have also found this to be a key factor evident in the violent individual’s history (e.g. Blackburn, 1993; Hyatt-Williams, 1998; Rosenbaum, 1986; Zulueta, 1993, 1997). But a history of abuse or exposure to trauma is not always

reported to be present. Blackman *et al* (1963) for instance, found that the family life of the rage-type murderer was notably cohesive, overprotective, and conformist with no history of abuse. More generally, Shengold (1989, 1991, 1993) has written extensively on murderous impulses being more closely related to overstimulation and overindulgence which is not typically viewed as a form of deprivation. This will be returned to later in discussing the intrapsychic dynamics of violence.

There have been some attempts to classify criminal or violent behaviour in an attempt to determine the kind of personality associated with expressive forms of violence such as rage-type murder. The distinction between 'normal' and psychopathic murderers that Bromberg (1961) makes in this respect has already been discussed.

Yavis (1972), working from a psychoanalytic perspective, classified criminal offenders into three basic categories, each expressing different forms of aggression. The first group, the *Neurotic Character Group*, is characterized by Oedipal conflicts. Here, impulsive behaviour results from a breakdown or rupture of ego functioning as opposed to a more chronic failure to master impulses. Although violence may occur, threatening and damaging behaviour is rare as most of the unconscious rage is deflected away from parental figures onto criminal activity. The second type, the *Narcissistic Character Group*, shows more oral and anal sadistic tendencies, displaying an excessive need to control objects and an intolerance of frustration. Due to this, such individuals are most susceptible to aggressive outbursts when their controlling nature is challenged. In Yavis' words: "The rapidity with which the change takes place may be likened to a thundershower - sudden and violent but dissipating quickly." (p. 557). He distinguishes this group from his final group, the *Ego-Disturbance Group*, by claiming that forms of violence amongst the former group are often deliberate and somewhat controlled. In this way, individuals in the second group show more signs characteristic of psychopathic behaviour where violence remains unmitigated by a mature superego. A primitive, narcissistic and dependent form of relating characterizes the ego-disturbance group. They are generally withdrawn with an extremely low self-esteem. They are incapable of sublimating drive activity and thus explosive outbursts tend to be uncontrolled and frequent due to constant feelings of chaos and instability. This group, he argues,

typically represents serial offenders and recidivists who lack the control to refrain from repeat offenses.

Central to Yavis's distinction between the last two categories is the amount of control evident in the personality. The controlling nature of the narcissistic group appears more characteristic of the attributes present in the rage-type offender. Control, or overcontrol, has been isolated as a key factor in understanding the personality of rage-type murderers.

Megargee's (1966) classification of violent offenders has been used extensively in criminological literature and has a great influence on the way we understand the relationship between control and violence. He distinguishes between *undercontrolled* and *overcontrolled* violent offenders. The former are characterized by weak inhibitions, impulsiveness. As a result, they are prone to regular violent outbursts. He identifies the psychopathic personality as being prototypical in this category.

The overcontrolled group, on the other hand, displays strong inhibitions and only aggresses when some form of instigation occurs. Although violence is evident far less frequently with these individuals, when they are violent they are extremely violent and homicidal (Blackburn, 1993; Howells & Hollin, 1992). Consistent with this, Blackburn (1971) and Lang *et al* (1987) found this to be a common feature in homicide offenders. Lang *et al* (1987) further found that homicidal individuals scored lower on general levels of hostility than did general assaultive offenders. This kind of offender is also far less likely to have a criminal record prior to the murderous outburst (Blackburn, 1993; Hinton, 1983).

Overcontrolled individuals are therefore usually non-aggressive. A review of the typical features of the rage-type murderer discussed thus far suggests that such offenders fall within the overcontrolled group. They show a high degree of impulse control, low levels of hostility, are defensive, and may show signs of depression and inward-directed hostility (Blackburn, 1971; 1993; Hollin, 1989).

Megargee's model does not, however, "clarify whether it is anger arousal, its expression, or the lack of aggressive habits which are problematic in overcontrolled

individuals" (Blackburn, 1993, p.239). In trying to understand this further, Blackburn (1971; 1986) suggests that there is evidence of two types of overcontrolled individuals: (1) The Conforming Type: Individuals who deny anger as an experience and describe themselves as free of anxiety, sociable and conforming. This, he argues is closer to Megargee's original category. (2) The Inhibited Type: Individuals who describe strong experiences of anger but have great difficulty expressing it in any way. They avoid social interaction, report depressive feelings, and have a poor self-image.

Blackburn also suggests two similar categories for the undercontrolled group, the secondary and primary psychopathic groups, which I shall not explore here. What concerns us is whether this kind of categorization of the overcontrolled group further helps in understanding explosive forms of violence or murder. Hollin (1989) concludes that this typology appears to hold for the entire offender population rather than just for violent offenders. The depressed-inhibited profile, however, appeared to be most evident in violent offender populations.

On the other hand, Hinton (1983), using a behaviour rating scale - the *Objective Behaviour Rating Scale* - for assessing 'dangerousness' in violent offenders, found that the overcontrolling, conforming offenders were more highly correlated with murderousness. These individuals were also found to be far less likely to be associated with other types of criminal offenses such as minor assaults. Hinton found this group to be most different from impulsive, belligerent, expressive individuals, more closely associated with anti-social characteristics. As opposed to conforming offenders, these individuals were more likely to have been involved in many different types of offenses and were more likely to be 'non-murderous'. In referring to the overcontrolling individuals who show signs of "extreme obedience" (p.98) he concludes:

These would seem to be the types who are more likely to have been the domestic killers in real life - the 'bloody handed' as opposed to the 'bloody minded'! They are also more likely to be classified as 'mad' or 'psychotic' as opposed to 'bad' or 'psychopathic'. A high proportion of these killers may never be discharged from security hospital, yet of those who are

let out, a particularly low proportion re-offend. In fact, unlike common criminals in general, those convicted of capital offenses show little re-offending (p.98).

The point he takes up here about re-offense appears to be reasonably well supported in the literature (Blackburn, 1993; Carney 1974; Meloy, 1992; Menninger *et al*, 1963), although many have noted the complexities and problems related to predicting violence or dangerousness (Campbell, 1995; Hinton, 1983; Howells & Hollin, 1992; Limandri & Sheridan, 1995; Milner & Campbell, 1995; Prins, 1990). As to whether rage-type murderers belong more to the conforming group as opposed to the inhibited group, there appears to be no other decisive criminological research that clearly places explosive murder in one or the other.

So far we have explored how explosive violence has been explained mainly in terms of criminological typology and personality attributes. In further considering the psychological make-up of these offenders, how do these features compare, if at all, with the designated personality disorders used in psychological literature? Secondly, what relationships can be discerned between personality disorders and explosive forms of violence?

3.3 PERSONALITY DISORDERS

Personality disorders, as opposed to symptomatic psychiatric illness, are generally viewed as being a better predictor of violent behaviour (Blackburn, 1993; Hollin, 1989; Howells & Hollin, 1992; Meloy, 1992). Broadly, the term personality disorder refers to structural character deficits in the personality that lead to enduring patterns of maladaptive behaviour. In reviewing the literature in this area one of the main difficulties one comes across is the confusion that has occurred in the use of terminology. As a result, and depending on one's theoretical understanding and emphasis on behavioural or psychodynamic characteristics, many different types of personality disorders have been alluded to in discussing explosive forms of violence. Most, however, essentially refer to similar factors suggesting that it is the confusing use of terminology, rather than there being many different types of personality disorder, that is the problem here.

Some authors have simply used the term 'personality disorder' to refer to an unspecified category in acknowledging the influence of structural deficits in the personality when referring to rage-type murderers (Carney, 1976; Revitch & Schlesinger 1978; Rosenbaum, 1990). Others have implicated particular types of personality disorder. Meloy (1988, 1992) argues that psychotic or borderline personality organizations explain most homicidal acts. Likewise, Blackburn (1993) finds that the Borderline Personality Disorder is an important consideration in understanding general acts of violence. Apart from the Antisocial Personality Disorder, most readily associated with violent behaviour, Kernberg (1984, 1992) associates Narcissistic and Borderline Personality Disorders with sudden aggressive behaviour. A number of authors also describe what would more typically be referred to as a Schizoid Personality Disorder (Hinton, 1983; Menninger *et al*, 1963; Ruoloto, 1968).

An added confusion in referring to personality disorders results from the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual IV's* (APA, 1994) categorization based on behavioural and observable criteria. This differs greatly from how many of these terms were originally used to describe common psychodynamic processes in the personality. Categorizing personality disorders as distinct behavioural entities misses the point in the sense that many of these disorders share similar features and underlying dynamics (Howells & Hollin, 1992; Kernberg, 1984). This is highlighted when one attempts to use the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Diseases (Fourth Edition)* to understand some of the characteristics of the explosive personality discussed so far. Many different personality disorders appear to be partially implicated, but none stand out as a precise description of the kind of problem evident in the rage-type murder. This leaves us with no clearer a picture than we started with. For instance, the Schizoid, Avoidant and Dependent Personality Disorders all tend to allude to the constricted, withdrawn, and isolated aspects of the explosive personality, whilst both the Borderline and Narcissistic personalities best explain the sudden emotional outbursts characteristic of the act of rage-type murder.

Blackburn (1993) tries to address this problem to some extent by proposing a dimensional classification system for personality disorders, bringing together some

of the criminological and psychological literature in this area. Here, the overcontrolled group is characterized by dependent, compulsive, avoidant, schizoid and passive aggressive personality types. Significantly, Blackburn is unsure where to place the Borderline Personality Disorder in his classification attempt. Perhaps this is understandable given the very confused and broad way the term is used. It may equally reflect the difficulties in using this term to describe a constellation of behaviours and symptoms without referring to the underlying psychodynamic features of the personality. It is important to consider the Borderline Personality Disorder in more detail as it appears to be most often implicated in explosive forms of violence, especially when the underlying structural dynamics of the personality are taken to be the main categorizing factor (Gallwey, 1985; Jackson & Tarnopolsky, 1990; Kernberg, 1984; Meloy, 1988, 1992; Millon, 1996).

The confusing use of terminology, however, does not disappear when one focuses on psychodynamic processes. This is especially the case with the borderline personality. Borderline personality is sometimes used interchangeably with the Schizoid Personality (Fairbairn, 1952; Rey, 1988) and the Narcissistic Personality (Bateman, 1998; Rosenfeld, 1971, 1987). In some cases, it is also used to refer to a spectrum of conditions and not regarded as a single disorder (Kernberg, 1984, 1992; Stone, 1980).

I shall not discuss this in any depth here but turn to exploring the use of the term with reference to explosive violence and rage-type murder. A comprehensive overview of the borderline personality can be found elsewhere (Jackson & Tarnopolsky, 1990; Kernberg, 1984, 1992; Stone, 1980). For the sake of clarity, Kernberg's (1984) use of the term will be employed here. His flexible, but precise, description of the different dynamic configurations of the borderline personality appears most suited to the characteristics of the rage-type offender discussed thus far.

In Kernberg's view, the borderline personality organization covers a number of different character manifestations that share the same underlying structural dynamics and developmental characteristics. Symptoms are not considered in isolation but point to important structural deficits in the personality apparent in narcissistic, schizoid and anti-social personalities. The common structural features relate to a

chronic, diffuse identity that is dealt with by using primitive defence mechanisms. Self representations and object representations remain contradictory and have not been integrated into a coherent identity that is found in the neurotic personality.

As a result, borderline individuals fail to obtain real empathy and maintain superficial, chaotic or blocked relationships with others. The defensive system used here involves splitting, projective identification, idealization, denial, omnipotence and devaluation. The many different ways in which the primitive defensive system is used makes the overt appearance of the borderline organization so diverse. However, the identity diffusion which occurs here is not as great as that found in the psychotic personality where boundaries between the object and the self are completely lost.

To return to the personality structure of the rage-type murderer, there appear to be two common trends in the literature that can be understood in terms of Kernberg's borderline category. The first is found in Satten *et al*'s (1960) description of the offender as having poor impulse control, transient blurring of fantasy and reality, altered states of consciousness, shallow or blunted affect and finally, a violent and primitive fantasy life. Meloy (1992) also describes similar erratic and impulsive features in the detailed description of a woman who committed a catathymic murder. He uses the term 'borderline catathymia' to describe the case. This is most similar to the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual IV*'s diagnosis of Borderline Personality Disorder (APA, 1994).

In contrast, the other, perhaps more common description, characterizes the individual as having severe deficits in the personality but with a much more controlled outward appearance. The ostensibly 'normal' personality discussed earlier appears to correspond more closely with this description. Certainly, Megargee (1966), Blackburn (1993) and Hollin's (1989) descriptions of the overcontrolled personality seem to suggest this kind of presentation.

The disparity between accounts of the more impulsive, incoherent personality and the overcontrolled version, may simply be a consequence of whether the individual is under any kind stress or not at that point in time. This appears to be the case with Meloy's (1992) description where the offender's history appears to be a lot more

stable and controlled prior to the onset of the more incoherent catathymic turmoil. Satten *et al* (1960) also write about the apparent normality of such individuals despite their being impulsive at times.

Under the broad heading of the borderline personality, Gallwey (1985) discusses two different types of dual personality organizations that may exhibit violent or homicidal behaviour. These organizations are similar to Deutsch's (1942) discussion of the 'as-if' personality, what Winnicott (1965) later called the False Self personality. Although they did not discuss violence in association with these organizations in any detail, the structural features of this personality type appear to explain some of the features of the potentially explosive individual.

Gallwey (1985) wishes to emphasize the paradoxical characteristics often associated with the 'borderline' concept where apparently relatively well-adapted individuals exhibit bouts of disturbance not congruent with the rest of their personality. His emphasis on the apparently normal and adaptive nature of the borderline personality resonates with the confirming, overcontrolling and non-revealing attributes of the explosive personality described earlier. In Gallwey's (1985) conceptualization, both personality types are shielded by a pseudo-personality that appears relatively adaptive and may at times exhibit neurotic symptomatology. It is this general dynamic that often leaves one surprised when these individuals display disturbed behaviours as it seems incompatible with their apparent normal functioning.

In the first type of borderline personality, the pseudo-self serves to conceal deficiencies in the ego caused by prolonged infantile trauma. These deficiencies leave the person with a fragmented sense of self, often struggling with feelings of depersonalization. Their defensive system is also markedly impoverished causing a lack of impulse control which may lead to explosive outbursts. However, such individuals are able to maintain some stability through concealing this part of the self behind a compliant and dependent self. Some of the features described here appear to concur with the more 'impulsive' personality associated with rage murder. But the extreme fragility, overt manipulateness and associated repeat offenses that Gallwey (1985) associates with these offenders do not appear typical of what would be

expected from the rage offender. Gallwey's (1985) second dual-personality seems better to describe the overcontrolled individual described above.

In the second type of pseudo-personality, the individual has a more coherent ego that has managed to negotiate development in a relatively unproblematic way. In this sense, the ego has developed real resources and capacities for itself. This however, has only taken place at the cost of splitting off a more destructive and disturbed area of the personality. The ego thus has to remain controlled and vigilant in maintaining the split in order to keep these destructive impulses away. These individuals are seldom violent and appear relatively well adjusted until this encapsulated part of the self is provoked in some way. Here, when a murder is committed it appears most incompatible with the person's life history and personality. Although these individuals may appear passive and shy, they are seldom excessively withdrawn. According to Gallwey, overt psychotic symptoms and other gross forms of symptomatology are rarely detected, further supporting the idea that this kind of schizoid organization is similar to what can be found in the 'overcontrolled' group of offenders. The intrapsychic features of this personality will be further discussed when considering the specific psychodynamics of the rage-type murderer.

Jackson & Tarnopolsky (1990), in their review of the borderline concept in Forensic Psychiatry, support the above claim. They have this to say about such offenders:

... the most severe, and at times most unexpected, psychopathology relevant to the forensic field is found in a group of 'pseudonormals', who have very severe and encapsulated psychopathology. Although able to function well under normal circumstances, they are prone to outbursts of bizarre and dangerous behaviour when their powerful splitting defenses give way (p.432).

They differentiate this 'pseudo' personality, characterized by extreme destructiveness, from the majority of borderline individuals who more readily display inadequate and deprived personalities.

3.4 CONCLUDING REMARKS

In reviewing psychiatric illnesses that may be associated with rage-type murder, it has been argued that psychotic illness is seldom evident in the rage-type murderer. Psychotic dissociative symptoms are transient and appear better explained as a feature of the borderline personality structure. Although poor intellectual functioning may play a role in some forms of crime, it does not appear to be associated with explosive murder. Depressive and Post-traumatic conditions, on the other hand, appear to be more readily associated with rage-type murder, although it is, at present, difficult to understand the temporality of such conditions. Broadly speaking however, psychiatric illness, as a feature of the offender's psychological make-up, does not appear in the majority of offenders and thus is limited in its explanation of the offense.

In reviewing the personality characteristics on the rage-type offender, I have suggested that certain characteristics appear common to most of these offenders. Most notably, they appear ostensibly 'normal'. The research in this area, from criminological and psychological perspectives, suggests that an overcontrolled pattern of behaviour may explain this. Whilst pointing out the difficulties in the definitions of personality disorders, I have attempted to draw some links between this overcontrolled pattern and a specific kind of borderline personality. The idea of a dual personality structure appears to go some way in forming a basic theoretical understanding of the rage offender. The nature and quality of the object relations and defenses used here however require further exploration. How we should understand explosive affect related to violence and murder in the context of particular personality dynamics and object relations is essentially the main exploratory focus of this study. We now turn to considering the Psychoanalytic and Object Relations perspectives on aggression, violence and murder, before focusing specifically on the internal world of the rage-type murderer.

SECTION II

THE INTERNAL WORLD OF THE MURDERER: PSYCHOANALYTIC CONTRIBUTIONS

In order to explore the internal world of the murderer and what constitutes aggressive action and its precipitants, a clearer understanding of aggression, rage and violence from a psychoanalytic perspective is needed. The following chapter reviews key aspects of the debate regarding the nature of aggression and then goes on to discuss rage and violence as related concepts, but with their own specific defining features.

Following this we shall consider some of the intrapsychic factors that have been considered in attempting to understand violence from a broad psychoanalytic perspective. It will be suggested here that many of the intrapsychic factors outlined here can be viewed as different dimensions of what culminates in an act of violence and will vary in significance depending on the type of violence being considered. These dimensions will be further considered in discussing the findings of the present study.

The final chapter in this section reviews specific studies that have attempted to understand the intrapsychic nature of rage-type murder. Drawing from this, and the previous chapter, a number of directive questions are considered concerning the focus of this study.

CHAPTER FOUR

AGGRESSION, RAGE & VIOLENCE

No one questions the experiential evocation of aggression – aggression as a response to frustration, deprivation, pain, overstimulation. What we do not know is whether it starts from within as an innate drive or as a reaction to something without (Shengold, 1999, p. xiii).

The term *aggression* is often used in very broad and confusing ways in psychoanalytic literature. Much of the confusion comes from the use of the term to refer to both a psychological drive and/or a behavioural action (Person, 1993a). Perelberg (1999) defines aggression as “a variety of behaviours, feelings, and representations, from attempts to master the environment to something that is perceived as destructive” (p. 40). Aggression is thus seen as having constructive and destructive aims. Whilst some have emphasized both its neutralized constructive potential (Hartmann *et al*, 1949; Winnicott, 1965) as well as its harmful nature, others argue that aggression is distinctly destructive and should be separated from positive terms such as assertiveness and psychic activity (Hollin, 1989; Glasser, 1998; Meyers, 1993). The above distinctions are all ultimately derived from what one understands the nature of aggression to be. This, of course, remains a perennial debate in psychoanalysis stretched between those who view it as reactive in nature and those who view it as instinctual.

This chapter firstly reviews Freud’s understandings of aggression and then goes on to consider both sides of the debate highlighting some of the main theories and contributions on the nature of aggression. The emphasis here is on considering how aggression as an intrapsychic occurrence has been formulated. In particular, the status of the internal object within these formulations will be considered. Although

regarded by some as simply an intellectual debate, this has important implications for how we understand, treat and make prognostic assumptions about pathological states.

It will be argued that even in Freud's work, the many different ways in which aggression is understood hints at a problem that the nature-nurture debate on aggression has obscured from full view. Whilst the debate is of great importance, with both sides shedding light on different aspects of aggression, it draws us into the spurious position of believing that there is one kind of aggression that must have one origin.

With this argument in place, I then go on to explore rage as a particular form of aggression with specific psychological determinants. Finally, the broad features of what constitutes violent action are explored. It is argued that the definitions of violence outlined here bear testimony to the complex origins of different forms aggression.

4.1 THE NATURE AND OBJECT OF AGGRESSION

4.1.1 Freud on Aggression

It is often argued that Freud only considered aggression to be an important component of the personality when he began to formulate the nature of aggression as being linked to the death instinct (Freud, 1920). His ideas on aggression, however, were far more complex than being simply about the externalization of the death instinct.

Freud first briefly mentions the role of aggression in *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* (1905a) and *Fragment of an Analysis of a Case of Hysteria* (1905b). In the former, he finds aggression to be a means of sexual mastery over an object. In the latter, he considers it as a form of resistance to treatment. His first comprehensive attempt to understand aggression however, can be found in *Instincts and Their Vicissitudes* (Freud, 1915). In this paper he explores elements of love and hate and their relation to the self-preservative instincts and the sexual instincts.

Freud (1915) argues that, during the pre-genital stages of development love and hate are indistinguishable and the infant remains indifferent to his own sadistic actions and injury to his objects. The primary motive at this stage, through incorporating and devouring the object, is the urge for mastery over the object. However, he argues that hate itself has a different instinctual source based in the self-preservative instincts:

The ego hates, abhors and pursues with intent to destroy all objects which are the source of unpleasurable feeling for it, without taking into account whether they mean a frustration of sexual satisfaction or the satisfaction of self preservative needs. Indeed it may be asserted that the true prototypes of the relation of hate are derived not from sexual life, but from the ego's struggle to preserve and maintain itself (Freud, 1915, p.136).

It is only later in development that sadism proper emerges when sadistic tendencies are internalized and fused with the sexual instincts to form masochistic object relations. In turn, when this is externalized again, aggressive tendencies have become associated with pleasure, and the pain inflicted on the object begins to accrue a sexual motive. The external object, when first presented, is hated and seen as a source of unpleasure, separate from the narcissistic pleasure that has thus far dominated. Freud describes the genesis of hate as follows:

Hate, as a relation to objects, is older than love. It derives from the narcissistic ego's primordial repudiation of the external world with its outpouring of stimuli. As an expression of the reaction of unpleasure evoked by objects, it always remains in an intimate relation with the self-preservative instincts (Freud, 1915, p. 135).

With the introduction of the death instinct in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920) Freud's understanding of aggression took a new turn. Aggression was now seen as an innate manifestation of the death drive, although not simply equated with the death instinct. Here, he reserves the term aggression for the externalization of the death instinct (Laplanche & Pontalis, 1988).

Freud's need to postulate the existence of the death instinct did not come directly from a need to explain the expression of aggressiveness. He sought primarily to understand how the repetition of unpleasant phenomena in the form of the repetition compulsion did not abide by the pleasure principle. Using evidence from the biological sciences he concludes his speculation with the observation that all living organisms hold within them the seeds of their own destruction: an element of instinctual life that seeks to return living matter to an inanimate state. Apart from aggression having a different function here, sadism is now seen as being secondary to masochistic dynamics. The death instinct seeks its own form of satisfaction characterized by internal pain (Segal, 1997).

Still later, in terms of his structural model, Freud (1933) begins to view unconscious guilt as the result of "a piece of aggressiveness that has been internalized and taken over by the superego" (Freud, 1933, p.142). He describes the superego as being, in part, a construction made up of aggression that has been taken in from the outside world. There is no sign of the death instinct here at first. But Freud goes on to suggest that the superego may also absorb aspects of the "destructive instinct" (p.143) that could not be discharged onto external objects:

... aggressiveness may not be able to find satisfaction in the external world because it comes up against real obstacles. If this happens it will perhaps retreat and increase the amount of self-destructiveness holding sway in the interior (Freud, 1933, p.138).

He claims that the relative harshness of the superego, observed in neurotics, compared to lower levels of strictness and aggression found in their external world confirms the occurrence of the above process. The destructiveness of the superego thus becomes a key dynamic in understanding melancholia, neuroses and masochism (Freud, 1923).

Freud is never conclusive about the role of aggression in the personality, especially in terms of how his earlier work on aggressiveness and hate should be considered alongside the death instinct. We may assume perhaps that the self-preservative instincts, which become part of the life instincts in his revised model, would still

retain the elements of aggressiveness aimed outwards in the service of the preservation of the ego. In support of this, Perelberg (1995b) points out that Freud, in *Analysis Terminable and Interminable*, also introduced the concept of 'free aggressiveness'. This type of aggression could attach itself to any instinct with the effect of creating the coexistence of contradictory affective states. It offers a possible explanation as to why the instinct of self-preservation always has some measure of aggressiveness in its action.

Often the opposition between sexuality and aggression is confused and seen as the same as the opposition between the life and death instincts which has tended to misrepresent Freud's understanding of aggression. Aggression cannot be accounted for as simply emanating from the destructive motives of the death drive. As Anna Freud (1972) and later Perelberg (1995b) have argued, Freud shows aggression to have different sources of development which cannot be confined to this opposition. It could be argued that Freud's ideas reflect the difficulties inherent in much of the literature on aggression: although one type or source of aggression is sought, a consideration of how the term is used in many different ways, hints at a more complex problem.

In summary, Freud considered four different manifestations of aggression that may exist internally or otherwise discharged. They are: (1) Aggression that has its roots in self-preservation and protection of the self; (2) free-floating aggression; (3) aggression that emerges from the externalization of the death instinct which, by definition, has a destructive aim; and (4) aggression that has an intrapsychic location and is absorbed by the superego and turned against the ego.

Some of the arguments and theories related to considering aggression as instinct or reaction will now be reviewed before considering the essence of the debate further.

4.1.2 Aggression as Instinct

Hering (1997) lauds Freud's efforts in placing human destructiveness firmly within the individual through the formulation of the death instinct:

Whatever you might think of Freud's concept of a death drive which opposes all forms of life, one has to pay tribute to his courage. Not only did he envisage a force of silent and absolute destructive intention, he also did not hesitate to place it within each man's and each woman's own psyche. By doing so he set a frame within which the struggle with this 'evil' could take place in a less externalized and alienated form (p.211).

Although it has its supporters (Abraham, 1927; Hitchcock, 1996; Klein, 1957; Segal, 1997; Shengold, 1991; Sohn, 1995; Steiner, 1993; Wertham, 1950, 1966), the death instinct or the idea of an aggressive drive still remains one of the most contentious theoretical ideas put forward by Freud. Many believe that there is little need to postulate an entirely separate destructive instinct in order to understand aggression (Fromm, 1973; Glasser, 1998; Kernberg, 1980; Stern, 1985).

Zulueta (1993), a vehement opponent of the death instinct theory, views it as nothing more than a cultural construct emanating from western Christian belief systems, particularly the belief in the original sin. To view destructiveness and wickedness as an innate component of humanity, she argues, clears the individual of personal responsibility and also helps emphasize man's inability to control himself. More importantly, she argues that the idea of the death instinct has never disappeared - despite research to the contrary - because it has become the easiest way to give meaning to suffering. It also gives us reason to feel guilty rather than simply out of control and helpless. Further, Zulueta (1993) claims that viewing love and hate as derivatives of opposite drives prevents the exploration of the links between them. As a consequence, it fails to give appropriate emphasis to the link between violence and our need for stable loving attachments.

Ornstein & Ornstein (1993) explore the clinical consequences of dual drive theory explaining that if aggression is considered to be a drive, aggression itself can no longer be analyzed, only the way it is managed becomes responsive to analytic

interventions. A further consequence of dual instinct theory relates to the idea that the release of aggression through the analytic process will put an end to neurotic symptoms. These theorists find it more useful, however, to focus on the need to keep aggression out of the transference in order to maintain self-cohesiveness. From a different perspective, Kernberg (1980) dismisses the Kleinian death instinct on the basis that it has no clinical significance and cannot be observed in any meaningful way. Many others have also argued that the death instinct has received little clinical substantiation (Fairbairn, 1952; Glasser, 1998; Guntrip, 1968; Kohut, 1978; Zulueta, 1993) and some have pointed to a lack of empirical verification regarding the concept (Hollin, 1989; Parens, 1993).

Those who have supported the concept claim that the power of the death instinct is clinically observable (Klein, 1957; Segal, 1997; Rosenfeld, 1971, 1987; Shengold, 1991) and the nature of human destructiveness cannot be simply explained as a response to frustration. Segal (1997), for instance, illustrates how feelings of deadness and despair in the countertransference are often projected manifestations of the death instinct, whereas Rosenfeld (1987) explores the link between the death instinct and destructive narcissism. Shengold (1999) argues that transference-countertransference resistances make it difficult to deal with the idea of an aggressive drive. He thinks that this often keeps us from acknowledging and theorizing its importance:

It is my conviction that murder, the aggressive drive to violence – central to both the pre-Oedipal and Oedipal in Freudian and Kleinian theory – has been consistently underplayed as a motivational force because it gives rise to so much anxiety and so much resistance in clinical work, on the part of analysts as well as patients (1999, p. xv).

Although the idea of the death instinct itself is difficult to prove, one would be hard pressed to prove that aggression does not have its roots in instinct, no matter how remote. Ethological research reminds us of how difficult it is to divorce psychology entirely from biology. The protective aggressive displays that can readily be observed in the animal kingdom, for instance, cannot be fully divorced from our own behaviours (Konner, 1993; Lorenz, 1963; Schuster, 1981). One might argue that this

is especially the case when we consider the disproportionate ways in which aggression is expressed across the sexes where genetic and basic instinctual links to aggression cannot be ignored (Konner, 1993).

It is often held that the struggle between representatives of life and death can just as easily be formulated in purely psychological terms (Brenner, 1971). What this percept lacks however, is a link to the body. One of Freud's key motivations for considering the instinctual nature of man in understanding the psychology of the individual was to provide an essential link to the body and biological processes. Schafer (1976) argues that the physiological characteristics of aggression and its 'bodily' nature are often underestimated by non-drive theorists. He views aggression as a 'psychophysiological reaction' which occurs in a relational context rather than simply being seen as an isolated spontaneous bodily impulse. Similarly, Kernberg (1984) sees the rejection of the instinctual nature of aggression as disregarding the biological forerunners of human development. The nature of the link between aggression and the body is the essence of what constitutes a violent act. Possible ways in which this might occur will be explored in the following chapter.

Ideas pertaining to the instinctual nature of aggression have been developed in two main directions since Freud. These directions are most evident in the *Kleinian* and *Ego Psychology* schools, the former being the principal advocate of the death instinct. They both provide possible explanations for how the origins of aggression can be formulated intrapsychically.

Klein (1932) bases much of her psychological understanding of the individual on Freud's ideas of the death instinct. Based on clinical observations with children, she argued that envy and destructiveness dominate in early life as derivatives of the death instinct and are responsible for primary forms of anxiety in the psyche. Through projective and introjective mechanisms the infant's main task at this very early stage is to split off all part-objects that have become 'bad' through their association with destructiveness which, in turn, results in further paranoid anxiety (Klein, 1946).

Klein found the death instinct to be a useful concept for explaining what she observed to be a much earlier formation of an archaic harsh superego (Klein, 1927, 1928). For her, the formation of this primitive internalized object resulted from the

internalization of the death instinct that had initially been projected outwards onto other objects.

Central to the Kleinian approach is the observation that phantasies, the psychic derivatives of the life and death instincts, are always object related (Isaacs, 1948; Klein, 1958). There is no such thing as primary narcissism or a destructive objectless state. The central implication of this for understanding aggression is that Kleinian formulations are not driven by energetic or homeostatic principles where discharge is the essential driving force, placing the significance of the object as secondary. Klein began from the premise that the object is always present in phantasy constellations, setting up an object-related dynamic from which aggression emanates. Her concept of projective identification also shifted the meaning of aggressiveness from simply being a deflection of the death instinct away from the self (Freud, 1920) to a more complex understanding of destructiveness. Because projective identification always involves a part of the self, aggression is “directed both at the perceiving self and the object perceived” (Segal, 1997, p. 18). Thus, the deflection or projection of aggression also has important consequences for the self. Firstly, parts of the self are also attacked in this process in their projected state. Secondly, projection identification leads to further depletion of the self (Klein, 1946).

Later, Bion (1970) developed this central idea by postulating a *container-contained relationship* as a key theoretical configuration that, amongst other things, existed between mother and infant. His work allowed for a more developed understanding of how the maternal function works to metabolize innate destructive aspects of the infant’s psyche through projective and introjective processes. His work also developed Klein’s ideas on evacuative forms of projective identification that play a key role in understanding aggressive responses intrapsychically and interpersonally.

The work of innate destructiveness still remains central to understanding pathological states in Kleinian circles (Bateman, 1999; Grotstein, 1981; Rosenfeld, 1971, 1987; Segal, 1978, 1991, 1997; Spillius, 1988; Steiner, 1993). For this reason this body of work is perhaps the most systematic study of the role of destructiveness in character development. It would be wrong to assume, however, that the Kleinian perspective largely excludes positive life-giving forces evident in the psyche, as some have

argued (Greenberg & Mitchell, 1983; Chessick, 1993). Indeed, much of Klein's own later work, most evident in *Envy and Gratitude* (Klein, 1957) is an attempt to understand creative forces in the psyche.

The other main development in conceptualizing the instinctual nature of aggression comes from those who have laid primary emphasis on the development of the ego. Although retaining the dual instinct theory, Hartmann *et al* (1949) emphasize the neutralizing function of the ego that serves to 'deinstinctualize' both sexual and aggressive instincts, in turn, lessening their need for discharge. Neutralization differs from Freud's idea of sublimation in that it is not a defense against drive demand, nor is it a deflection onto another object. It represents a transformation process that is an important part of psychic development.

In this way Hartmann conceptualizes the structural components of the psyche as made up of different energy systems ultimately derived from both the sexual and aggressive drives. He also argues however, that the ego has in addition its own innate adaptive features that come from other forms of psychic energy, although he is never clear on this issue (Greenberg & Mitchell, 1983). For Hartmann, the internalization of object relations has an important influence on determining the aggressive nature of the individual. The infant interacts with an 'average expectable environment' that ensures the appropriate neutralization of the drives. However, Hartmann clearly rejects theorists who see the role of the internalized object as having a direct influence on the individual. He is loyal to Freud in this regard, seeing all interaction as being mediated through the drives first. Nevertheless, later authors, particularly Jacobson (1954) followed by Kernberg (1984, 1992), have modified this view claiming that the bifurcation of the drives is directly dependent on the nature of objects that are internalized. In other words, inchoate object relations have a primary influence on the how the drives become polarized.

To return to Hartmann, aggression here is primarily determined by an innate aggressive charge and the neutralizing function of the ego. Hartmann takes issue with Freud's (1920) claims that the aggressive drive does not follow the pleasure principle. According to him, the suppression of all psychic drives leads to increased unpleasure, whilst drive expression leads to pleasure. He further believes that the ego

has a degree of autonomy in determining what will be pleasurable and what will be unpleasurable.

The repetition compulsion thus becomes reformulated as no longer a manifestation of the death instinct *per se*, but is accounted for by the need to act on pleasure-filled activity. Brenner (1971) points out that this appears to have been accepted by most psychoanalysts but it has not been followed by the relevant theory to back it up. It is not clear, for instance, whether this kind of 'pleasure' is not better termed 'relief' in the sense that it is linked directly to the release of an unbearable psychic state that differs from libidinal satisfaction.

If emphasis is placed on the ego, the aim of aggression depends largely on ego strength and how defense mechanisms manage the developmental process (Brenner, 1971; Hitchcock, 1996). If appropriate neutralization takes place, aggression can be used 'in the service of the ego' (Kutesh, 1978), emerging in acts or states of assertiveness to further personal growth. The positive use of aggression for self-assertion and the establishment of boundaries between self and other is a common feature of many of the reactive models of aggression (Fromm, 1973; Kohut, 1978; Winnicott, 1965).

Destructive aggression occurs when the ego is weak. From this point of view, a person may have murderous or aggressive tendencies, but whether these are acted out or not depends on the strength of the ego. Importantly, however, the ego can also be over-cathected leading to rigid ego-id boundaries where repression becomes restrictive and where none of the aggressive or libidinal drives can be sublimated and the person's affective range remains shallow and ineffective (Kutesh, 1978).

In sum then, viewing aggression as a drive to be neutralized and used positively in the psyche holds up a far more optimistic view of the individual's struggle with aggression. Viewing aggression as more directly entrenched in the death instinct, on the other hand, immediately places the individual in a hateful world. Here, hate and dread are central to primitive experience and it is only if these can be contained in some way, that love and the 'good object' can be found. Furthermore according to the Kleinian approach, this level of primitive experience will always exist embedded

deep in phantasy, constantly influencing our everyday experience. This view of the individual as being aggressive by nature is very different from considering the origins of aggression as rooted in a reaction or interaction, which we shall now consider.

4.1.3 Aggression as Reaction

Those who have rejected the notion of innate destructiveness, or the presence of an aggressive drive, tend to agree broadly on conceptualizing aggression as a reaction to frustration, unpleasure or threat from an internal/external object (Fairbairn, 1952; Guntrip, 1968; Kohut, 1978a, 1978b; Parens, 1993; Zulueta, 1993). There is a focus on the deprivation of need being related to destructive aggression, something that Freud was unable to separate from the frustration of instinct (Gallwey, 1985). Specific emphasis has also been placed on reaction to loss, trauma and difficulties with attachments (Bolby, 1936; Hyatt-Williams, 1998; Perelberg, 1995a; Zulueta, 1993). Here, the defensive nature of aggression has become an important feature of understanding aggression in this way (Fonagy *et al*, 1993; Mitchell, 1993). The key factor that underlies this approach is the emphasis on the role of object, primarily the maternal object, in the development of aggressiveness itself. This approach to understanding aggression is perhaps best exemplified in the work of Winnicott and Fairbairn, and will be considered further here. Winnicott's emphasis is placed on the role of the maternal environment, whilst Fairbairn focuses on understanding manifestations of aggression in complex internal object constellations.

Whilst not rejecting the idea of instinct *per se*, Winnicott (1971) preferred to conceptualize instinct as a spontaneous, creative force. The origins of aggression could be found in the earliest forms of infantile bodily movement equivalent to all bodily activity at this stage. Aggression here is viewed as a positive force that allows the infant, through spontaneous motoric movements, to discover his or her own limitations. In his terms, it allows the infant to discover the difference between what is 'me' and 'not me' and serves as the primary means for establishing 'object permanence'.

The steps for maternal environmental provision and the course of normal aggressiveness are as follows: Firstly, initial ego-support allows for an element of

'destruction by chance' emanating from the infant's exploration of the environment with little impingement from reality. The 'good enough' mother then gradually goes through a process of disillusionment, allowing the introduction of reality and a reduction of magical qualities attached to what is omnipotently controlled and aggressed by the infant. Finally, the actual survival of the mother, unchanged, when she has been 'destroyed' or placed outside the infant's subjective self, creates a stable permanent object relationship. The mother 'survives' the attacks and importantly, has not retaliated (Winnicott, 1971).

Winnicott (1986) believed that 'the antisocial tendency', which included a broad range of negative behaviours including destructive aggression, was directly linked to deprivation, as opposed to privation. He believed that these individuals had once 'known' a good-enough mother and thus had felt some sense of ego-support and integration, but this had been lost. At that point the child suffers 'unthinkable anxiety' and then is "gradually reorganized into someone who is in a fairly neutral state, complying because there is nothing else that the child is strong enough to do" (p.92). Although Winnicott does not link this to the origins of the False Self in his work, the state of compliance described here appears very similar to what he describes as the False Self (Winnicott, 1965).

Anti-social behaviour, as he understood it, was about attempting to "get back behind the deprivation moment to undo the unthinkable anxiety or confusion that resulted before the neutral state became organized" (p.92). It marks the rediscovery of aggressiveness and at the same time, a moment of hope. Aggressiveness here expresses the attitude: "the environment owes me something" (Winnicott, 1965, p. 134), an expression of wanting what he or she once had. Thus, for Winnicott, destructiveness is never an end in itself and in this way is similar to the Self Psychology perspective on aggression (Kohut, 1978; Chessick, 1993). It is the point at which the individual has the 'courage' to put the False Self aside and allow the True Self to express itself. This idea has been used in a number of different ways to understand violent behaviour and will be revisited in the next chapter.

Fairbairn (1952) also believed that destructive aggression had its roots in deprivation. Concentrating less on the role of the mother *per se*, he set out to understand the kind

of intrapsychic structural dynamics that deprivation set up. In doing so, he formulated a model of the personality that represents the most radical shift away from Freudian drive psychology. Central to his model is the assumption that libidinal and aggressive elements of the psyche are primarily object-seeking as opposed to being pleasure- or unpleasure-seeking.

Fairbairn's (1952) conceptualization of aggression begins with the internalization of a rejecting maternal object. The rejecting experience sets up a central ambivalent dilemma where if "he expresses aggression, he is threatened with the loss of his good object, and, if, on the other hand, he expresses libidinal need, he is threatened with the loss of his libido (which for him constitutes his own goodness) and ultimately the loss of the ego structure which constitutes himself" (p.113). Fairbairn found that the key solution to this dilemma took place through the internalization of the bad mother object in order to control it internally.

This moment leads to the complex formation of an internalized system of object relationships in which aggression plays a key role: The internalized bad object undergoes a further split into the needed or *exciting object*, and the *rejecting object*. Aggression, at this point, is used internally in two ways. It firstly serves the purpose of repressing these bad internalized objects. Secondly, a further 'volume', as Fairbairn puts it, of aggression is used to effect corresponding splits in the central ego to form subsidiary egos (the libidinal ego and the internal saboteur). These, in turn, attach themselves to their corresponding split-off parts of the internalized object.'

With this internal structure in place, aggressive affect is absorbed by the internal saboteur and used to attack any needs that the libidinal ego may have towards its external object. In Fairbairn's (1952) terms:

The child seeks to circumvent the dangers of expressing both libidinal and aggressive affect towards his object by using a maximum of his aggression to subdue a maximum of libidinal need. In this way he reduces the volume of affect, both libidinal and aggressive, demanding outward expression (p.114-115).

The child's aggressive feelings towards mother thus live on in an internalized situation where aggression is turned on a repressed part of the self with the effect of destroying libidinal need.

Apart from being the 'purest' attempt to understand human motivations from a psychological, as opposed to a biological perspective, Fairbairn's approach is an attempt to trace the internal object relationships that lie behind aggression. In essence his approach is based on the individual's attempt to control bad objects through internalization. Aggression has two main functions: (1) To repress the bad object that has been split in two, and (2) to launch an internal attack on the libidinal, needy parts of the subsidiary ego.

The idea that aggression may be reactive is beyond debate to most. Whether it is originally so is more difficult to ascertain. With their differences in emphasis, the importance of Winnicott's and Fairbairn's approaches lies in their ability to demonstrate the possible origins of aggression through interaction and object relationships. In other words, aggression originates between objects and is not simply an innate destructive force that uses the object as a vehicle for discharge.

Thus far, some of the main approaches and issues associated with understanding aggression have been reviewed. All these approaches have their value. How does one ascertain which view to follow? Is it simply a matter of how one chooses to understand the human condition as Perelberg (1999) attests, or does it depend on the type of behaviour, emotion and so forth being observed?

Taking the latter view, it could be argued that the polarization that has occurred between different theories is the result of asking the wrong question/s. Although many of the theories discussed above side with one end of the debate, do we need to conclude that there is only one answer? Implicit in many of the writings on aggression are references to different types, functions and aims allocated to what is broadly termed aggression. It could be argued that the need to see aggression as either instinct or reaction, nature or nurture, and as one entity, has under-emphasized specific questions regarding the nature and function of aggression/s.

4.2 BEYOND THE DEBATE: ONE AGGRESSION OR MANY?

On reviewing the nature of aggression in the individual a number of authors have concluded that the instinctual and reaction models of aggression need not be viewed as incompatible (Fonagy *et al*, 1993; Glasser, 1998; Mitchell, 1993; Shengold, 1999). Some have argued that the compatibility of these ideas is often implicit in the literature (Glasser, 1998; Mitchell, 1993). But as Gaddini (1992) points out, these ideas are often not clearly stated because traditional metapsychological theory cannot cope with these oppositions, which indicates that some reformulation is required.

Mitchell (1993) has attempted to show how these two apparently polarized views may be preserved within a single theory of aggression. He argues that if aggression is considered within a relational context which explores the conditions that elicit aggression, particularly what the individual brings to the interpersonal field, the instinctual and relational nature of aggression can be considered together. In his words, "to characterize aggression as a response does not minimize its biological basis; rather, the biology of aggression is understood to operate not as a drive but as an individually constituted, pre-wired potential that is evoked by circumstances perceived as threatening or endangering" (p. 364). In other words, he considers the capacity for aggression to be innate, but the aggressive happening itself is initiated by a reaction that the endangered self might experience in relation to external or internal objects.

There are many other ways of formulating the instinctual and reactive nature of aggression in one theory. It is only Symington (1996) who boldly rejects both models in favour of a model based on unconscious murderous guilt. Glasser (1998) fully acknowledges the role of the external environment in aggressive responses but argues that this does not mean that innate predispositions do not have a role to play in structuring these responses. In his words, "aggression/violence and the stimuli that prompt it are artificially separated components of a unity: the triggers can only be regarded as such in the context of the innate structure" (Glasser, 1998, p.890). Gaddini (1992) argues that frustration itself can be understood as a manifestation of instinct. Shengold (1991), on the other hand, takes the middle ground claiming that

frustration, and consequent aggression, should be seen as both a reaction to the difficult demands of the environment and a response to the threat that innate destructiveness can cause.

Person (1993) takes up this point from another angle arguing for the need for new models to account for the diversity of phenomena evident in aggression, rage and anger. "Even if an aggressive drive in humans were demonstrated," she claims, "it would be erroneous to attribute to it all of the various manifestations of aggression, rage and anger - just as when we talk about sex, it would be extremely naive to attribute all manifestations of sexuality to the sex drive" (p.6).

On reviewing Freud's understanding of aggression I have suggested that he points to different manifestations of aggression that cannot all just be reduced to the work of the death instinct. I have suggested that Freud himself struggled with this problem and, although aggression is fundamentally perceived to be instinctual in nature, he does consider the role of the object in triggering aggression both intrapsychically and interpersonally. In struggling with the problem, Freud reflects some of the difficulties that have continually been evident in this area of study.

It is my contention that our preoccupation with the debate related to a single explanation on what constitutes aggression is misdirected and has led to an impasse. Since Freud, aggression has become reified as a single construct leading to the illusion that there is a single solution, a single way in which instinct and/or reaction make up the aggressive response. Perhaps there are many reasons for this. One of the main reasons, however, appears to stem from a quest in psychoanalysis to remain scientifically credible by succumbing to the confused belief that there can be only one scientifically correct answer, one cause and one effect. Ironically this has led to an unfocused diffusiveness in the debate where terms are often used very differently and the kind of aggression being referred to often lacks a specific reference point in 'objective' behaviours, affects, thoughts and so forth.

Although, broadly speaking, aggression may be both reactive and instinctual, the debate has obscured real questions about specific factors that may play a particular role in different forms of aggression. Put another way, 'aggression' does not have to

come from the same place, intrapsychically or otherwise. Researchers who have applied their minds to specific forms of violence and aggression appear to have moved beyond this debate with this realization in mind (Duncan & Duncan, 1978; Fonagy & Target, 1995; Glasser, 1998; Hyatt-Williams, 1996; Kutash, 1978; Lewis, 1993; Meloy & Gacono, 1992; Mitchell, 1993; Mullen & Maack, 1985; Parens 1993; Person, 1993a; Shengold, 1991; Symington, 1996).

To use Mitchell's (1993) argument, in order to maintain a specific focus it becomes important to acknowledge that all formulations are dependent on the relational field from which aggression emanates. This could be about both intrapsychic and external relations. The specifics of the situation are where a more refined understanding of aggressive phenomena lies, enabling us to understand whether we are indeed talking about the same thing. Those who have explored the specific internal and external situations linked to aggression have, I believe, been able to make a more decisive contribution to understanding aggression. Rage, violence, violence towards inanimate objects, anger, passive-aggressiveness, self destructiveness, assertiveness and so forth - all have different psychological, psychodynamic, social and even biological correlates and influences that require separate study.

Assertiveness, for instance, may be seen as having distinctly separate influences as compared to destructive aggression (Meyers, 1993; Ornstein & Ornstein, 1993; Person, 1993a). The role of affective states has also been found to differ greatly across various forms of aggressive experience (Person, 1993a). Further, Parens (1993), in his child and infant observation studies, finds support for the existence of an aggressive drive but also finds that reactive hostile destructiveness should be viewed as a separate form of aggression caused by 'excessive unpleasure' (p.123). Another example of the different influences specific to different forms of aggression can be found in Fonagy *et al's* (1993) work. They find that environmental influences, particularly the maternal object, appear to be more crucial when the infant is temperamentally difficult.

Rage can also be separated, both phenomenologically and dynamically, from other forms of aggression (Kernberg, 1992; Lewis, 1993; Person, 1993a; Symington, 1996; Treurniet, 1996). Similarly, Glasser (1998), Meloy (1992) and others have been able

to begin to show how different forms of violence, as specific manifestations of aggression, have different origins or correlates. All the above examples suggest that general references to aggression are problematic and specific factors related to different types of aggressive experience require greater emphasis if we are to accurately understand the many different manifestations of aggressive experience. To this end, and for the purpose of further exploring the nature of aggression apparent in rage-type murder, the specific features of rage and violence will now be explored.

4.3 RAGE

Rage is often referred to as a primitive explosive affective state (Kernberg, 1992; Shengold, 1991). Although it may well be linked to violence and *vice versa*, the one does not necessarily imply the other. One may, for example, fly into a rage about someone cutting in front of one on the highway, without any sign of physical violence. On the other hand, a psychopath may commit heinous crimes of violence without feeling any emotion or rage. A number of key underlying psychodynamic factors constantly emerge in the literature pertaining to rage, the most common features being its link to self exposure, shame, narcissistic injury, hate and reactive explosive affective states.

Parens (1993), in his infant observational study, claims to have found no evidence for the death instinct as being the source of rage. He argues that rage is experience-dependent and occurs due to 'excessive unpleasure', creating an explosive affective state. The persistence of these kinds of experiences results in the emergence of hate towards the object, especially when experienced in the first year of life:

When such excessive unpleasure experiences persist, occur frequently enough, and are sufficiently intense from the first year on, they stabilize into *hate*, a more enduring feeling of self-object-attached hostile destructiveness (p.127).

Due to an accumulation of past trauma, rage reactions may more easily be triggered by a stimulus of a low intensity causing excessive reactions to seemingly benign

events (Hyatt-Williams, 1998; Parens, 1993). In a similar way it is likely that those who have experienced recent severe trauma, referred to earlier in relating violence to PTSD, will also have a greatly reduced capacity for containing feelings of rage, shame and humiliation. Intensity, duration and frequency of unpleasure experiences also appear to determine the intensity of the rage reaction and the cumulative effects it has on the self (Parens, 1993).

Although always a reaction, the response is often understood as being an automatic involuntary reflex similar to that observed in the animal kingdom and often referred to as the *fight-flight response* to a threat (Konner, 1993; Parens, 1993,). The impact that rage has on a human life however, is where we differ from animals. We are able to remember, *re-present* and think about threats and dangers. Fears and threats do not simply go away after cathartic discharge as they do with animals (Person, 1993a), *they linger on and have a psychic life*. Much of what will be discussed in the next chapter deals with the intrapsychic consequences and causes of such a response.

Kernberg (1992) sees rage as a primary affective state. Based on his theory of affects, rage is one of the affective states on which psychological drives are based. In other words, the libidinal and aggressive drives are organized around the individual's affective system. He also believes that even very primitive affects have a corresponding cognitive and object relational component. It is the impression that 'peak-affects' have on the infant that determine how an object is internalized.

For Kernberg, the hatred that is derived from rage is a key factor in the formation of pathological states. In his words:

Hatred derives from rage, the primary affect around which the drive of aggression clusters; in severe psychopathology, hatred may evolve into an overwhelming dominance directed against the self as well as against others. It is a complex affect that may become the major component of the aggressive drive, overshadowing other universally present aggressive affects such as envy and disgust (p. 21).

Hatred is thus only distinguishable from rage in that it is a more stable and fundamentally integrated part of the personality. Kernberg believes that rage, as a

normal affective state, is transformed into hatred through traumatic attachment to a frustrating mother. Most object relations theorists would broadly agree with this (Fairbairn, 1952; Guntrip, 1968; Klein, 1946, 1932; Winnicott, 1965). They all show, in different ways, how rage need not be directly expressed and can exist in a split-off encapsulated state, greatly influencing the structure of the personality.

Kernberg (1992) understands the entrapping and consuming nature of rage as not only being due to the intensity of the affective state, but also as a consequence of the object relationship that this attachment brings. This occurs when the infant identifies both with the damaged self and the persecutory object leaving him feeling abandoned by all good objects and trapped in a traumatizing bad object relationship.

When one considers the phenomenology of rage, its overwhelming nature and its apparent random diffusiveness, one may conclude that it is an 'objectless state' (Glasser, 1998; Meloy, 1988). Kernberg (1992) disagrees however, and explains himself as follows:

A full-fledged rage reaction - its overwhelming nature, its diffuseness, its 'blurring' of specific cognitive contents and corresponding object relations - may convey the erroneous idea that rage is a 'pure' affect. Clinically, however, the analysis of rage reactions - as of other intense affective states - always reveals an underlying conscious or unconscious fantasy that includes a specific relation between an aspect of the self and an aspect of a significant other (p. 22).

Here, Kernberg draws on the Kleinian understanding of there always being an object relationship evident in all psychic states. This has important implications for understanding the type of rage that occurs in explosive acts of murder. As will be explored more thoroughly later, due to the phenomenology of rage, many of the formulations regarding rage-type murder make use of drive metaphors such as 'episodic dyscontrol' (Menninger *et al*, 1963) where the explosive release of affect is emphasized.

The function of rage within particular phantasies depends on the developmental level of object. Rage at the most primitive level of object relations is used to remove immediately a source of extreme psychic pain (Hyatt-Williams, 1998; Kernberg, 1992; Shengold, 1991) and later, to eliminate any obstacles that stand in the way of gratification. Where the phantasies are more elaborate they include the will to restore all-good objects (Kernberg, 1992). Still later, in mature development, when the infant is able to identify with an all-good object, rage can be used as a way of asserting autonomy so as to move away from damaging bad object relations. At this level, rage becomes far more specific in its object selection, it is more adaptive in nature and less entrapping.

The emphasis on the discharge of affect tends to distract our attention away from the kind of object relations that may be evident in the individual. It also diverts our attention away from how the generation, or build-up of hate, occurs (Gaylin, 1984). This, in itself, appears to reflect a key function of rage. Metaphorically speaking, the overwhelming wall of affect that is expressed in a rage reaction aims to prevent any further understanding or vision of what lies behind it.

Apart from being an expression of primitive affect, rage reactions have also been associated with elements of self-consciousness, shame and narcissistic injury. This appears to point to a particular type of self-object dynamic that leaves the self suddenly exposed, attacked and defenseless, distinguishing the rage reaction from other forms of aggression.

Lewis (1993) attempts to distinguish between anger and rage reactions in his experimental observations of infants of different ages. He observes that anger is the result of the obstruction of goal-directed behaviour. Anger, according to him, emerges in relation to action aimed at overcoming barriers. It usually begins to emerge in infants of four months when they have discovered cause-effect relationships. Rage, on the other hand, is different because it requires *personal insult*. As this requires a degree of self-awareness, it is not present in this form until the child is two years of age.

One of the implications of Lewis' (1993) argument is that anger can be seen to be more focused on the object, whereas rage pertains primarily to the self. Rage, he argues, is "less related to overcoming an obstacle and more related to an attack on the self as object; it is a response to an injury to the self. As such, it is more intense, less focused, and longer lasting" (p.159).

From a developmental perspective, Lewis (1993) and Parens (1993) conclude that temper tantrums in infancy resemble a disorganized form of anger whereas rage in children over the age of two and in adulthood, is related to shame-filled emotions and the vulnerable exposure of the self. In Lewis' (1993) words, "rage is a response to humiliation, a threat to the self esteem and well-being of the individual" (p. 165).

Retzinger (1987) writes about a cycle of rage that oscillates between rage and shame. He views anger as a simple primitive bodily response. Rage, on the other hand, appears to assume a complex psychic process where there is a focus on self consciousness attached to an object whose presence induces shame and humiliation. Importantly the phenomenology of humiliation and shame, a sense of exposure with no support, appears to induce an isolating and entrapping sense that then erupts into rage.

There appears to be wide agreement that rage is a reaction to perceived self damage, shame or narcissistic injury (Chessick, 1993; Kohut, 1972; Lewis, 1993; Morrison, 1989; Parens, 1993; Schafer, 1997; Shengold, 1991). Feelings of shame induce a sudden loss of self-esteem that, in turn, produces desperate defensive action aimed at preventing further humiliation (Rosenbaum, 1986). Schafer (1997) explores the underlying fantasies related to the emotional experiences of humiliation and mortification, both extreme forms of shame. He links these painful experiences to fantasies of debasement and annihilation "associated with fantasies of deserving to die, being made to die, even causing oneself to die" (p. 109). Shame is thus felt to have a deathly presence. In this context rage erupts as a defensive response to the threat of self-annihilation with the aim of destroying the perceived annihilator.

Kohut (1992) used the term 'narcissistic rage' to refer to this form of affective expression. He saw rage as a destructive form of aggression distinguishable from

mature uses of aggression, which he preferred to call *self-assertive ambition*. He thought of self-assertiveness as belonging to a separate line of development originating from transformation of the *grandiose-exhibitionistic self* also responsible for the regulation of self-esteem (Ornstein & Ornstein, 1993).

Kohut maintained that all drives and motivations are firmly embedded in a self-structure. It is when the cohesiveness of this self structure is lost that narcissistic rage arises, rendering the self most vulnerable to feelings of shame, humiliation and ridicule. For Kohut this vulnerability has a particular source leading to narcissistic injury. He explains:

The most intense experiences of shame and the most violent forms of narcissistic rage arise in those individuals for whom a sense of absolute control over an archaic environment is indispensable because the maintenance of self esteem - and indeed the self - depends on the unconditional availability of the approving-mirroring self object or of the merger-permitting idealized one (Kohut, 1972. p. 644-645).

Thus rage emerges with sudden realizations of a lapse in the control, fantasized or real, of mirroring or idealizing objects. It is also, according to Kohut, from this kind of injury that the deepest sense of revenge, and the unrelenting aim of undoing past hurts, come. It follows then that rage reactions emerge out of a narcissistic object relationship ultimately having a self-preservative function. This is not difficult to imagine, especially if one sees narcissism, love of the self, as part of the self-preservative instincts (Glasser, 1997). It remains to be seen whether this notion of rage is useful in understanding rage murder. Furthermore, rage in itself does not adequately explain the aggressive action that occurs in rage murder, as rage does not always have a violent outcome. I now turn to consider some of the defining features of violence.

4.4 VIOLENCE

Violence, as opposed to aggression, has received relatively little attention in psychoanalysis. Usually, when it is considered, it is only considered in the therapeutic context where fantasies of violence rather than actual acts of violence are explored (Perelberg, 1999a). It is only recently, with contributions from Fonagy & Target (1993), Glasser (1996, 1998), Hyatt-Williams (1996, 1998), Meloy (1988, 1992) and Perelberg (1999a), that intrapsychic factors associated with violent behaviour have begun to be more thoroughly explored. As a particular manifestation of aggression, violent behaviour as the subject of analysis has suffered the same problems outlined above, and is often discussed as a homogeneous category (Glasser, 1998; Meloy, 1992). Murder in particular is often viewed in this way. Homicides are grouped together simply because they have the same endpoint, that of killing. Additionally, perhaps in the case of murder we are blinded by the unbearable thought of the act itself, which prevents us from seeing the many different forms of violence that could end in murder. It is therefore often difficult to isolate various factors and causes that might help further understand the problem.

Glasser (1998) restricts his definition of violence to "a bodily response with an intended infliction of bodily harm on another person" (1998, p.887). The focus here is on the breach of the bodily boundary. Violence towards inanimate figures, as well as unconscious forms of violence, he argues, have different psychodynamic pathways and symbolic meaning. Shengold (1999) views violence more generally as the loss of control of the aggressive impulses leading to action. Others, such as Mitchell (1993), Meers (1982) and Buie *et al* (1983), have chosen to emphasize the psychic motivation behind the act as key to defining behaviour as violent, rather than the physical bodily encounter itself. Limentini (1991) appears to take the middle ground between these two, claiming that an act is only violent if the individual shows a clear intention to do physical damage to an object. Perelberg (1999a), on the other hand, defines violence in terms of the communication of a core phantasy associated with the primal scene as well as aspects of the Oedipal situation.

Clearly there are many different ways in which one could define what constitutes an act of violence. This has led to some researchers distinguishing between different

kinds of violence (Fromm, 1973; Glasser, 1998; Lefer, 1984; Meloy, 1988; Menninger *et al*, 1963; Revitch & Schlesinger, 1978). Lefer (1984) describes four different types of violence: (1) Violence used as a means to an end with no need for justification; (2) Violence that is a means to an end but is justified; (3) Violence that occurs due to a dissociated state; and (4) Violence that, through a position of power, emanates from a symbiotic relationship with either the first or second type of violence-prone individual. The last type is most interesting in that Lefer (1984) implicitly acknowledges that situational factors may play an important role in some forms of violent behaviour. This will be discussed further in the following chapter.

Perhaps the most recent and significant distinction has been put forward by Glasser (1996, 1998) who distinguishes between *self-preservative* and *sado-masochistic violence* which bears some resemblance to Fromm's (1973) earlier distinction between *defensive* and *destructive aggression*. Glasser describes self-preservative violence as a physiological 'fight or flight' response that occurs in the presence of danger. He views this as being close to what can be regarded as an automatic instinctual response and thus it differs from Freud's (1920) idea of a separate death instinct. He makes use of Freud's (1915) initial conceptualization of aggression here, where aggression emerges as an ego-instinct. Although the ego perceives the threat, it is a far more primitive reactive impulse that actually attacks. This form of violence usually occurs in reaction to a perceived attack on the self or a narcissistic injury (Glasser, 1986). According to Glasser (1998), it "focuses on the dangerousness of the object, rather than the object itself" (p. 888). Thus the response of the object is of no interest and the aim of the violence is to eliminate perceived danger. Glasser goes further to argue that "observations and accounts of such violent acts characterize them as being, during the execution of the acts, so primitive that it may be considered that no object relationship is involved" (p.889). He views aggression as being the psychic equivalent of self-preservative violence. They exist on a continuum where at some point 'violence' no longer requires bodily expression. At this point the danger can be real or imagined but the "aggressive response is carried out psychically" (p. 890).

Sado-masochistic violence, on the other hand, has its origins in the libidinisation of self-preservative violence. The perpetrator obtains pleasure from the violence

inflicted and thus the fate of the object - that the object suffers - becomes important in this form of violence. He argues that libidinisation, by definition, converts self-preservative violence into psychic phenomena, making fantasy and object relations key ingredients in this form of violence. The aim here is to preserve the object and to make it suffer. Further, in contrast to self-preservative violence, anxiety is usually absent.

Meloy (1988; 1992) also identifies two different types of violence: *predatory violence* and *affective violence*. He also puts forward two other dimensions that cut across these types of violence. The first dimension is the level of reality testing that the individual is capable of before, or during, the violence. The second refers to the nature of 'object selection' that occurs in the violent individual. He bases his distinction not only on psychodynamic and behavioural factors, but also on neuropsychological evidence that suggests that different neuro-anatomical pathways are used in the two different types of violence.

Affective violence emerges in response to an internal or external threat whereby the autonomic nervous system is activated leading to a defensive response. This is similar to Glasser's self-preservative violence and also appears to describe the rage-type reaction that leads to violence. They disagree, however, when it comes to their second categorizations of violence (Glasser, 1999; Meloy, 1999).

According to Meloy, predatory aggression refers to psychopathic forms of violence where a clear motive, planning, and a degree of emotional detachment before, and during, the act are evident. In his words, a "suspension of empathic regard" (p. 390) takes place. This differs from what Glasser identifies as sado-masochistic violence in that predatory violence need not necessarily be sadistic. 'Predatory' is also perhaps an unfortunate word to use for this class of violence because the word, as Glasser (1998) points out, is more associated with animal predation where the function of violence - to survive - is essentially self-preservative. Meloy and Glasser also disagree on how their categorizations of violence are related. Whilst Glasser argues that sado-masochistic violence emerges out of what are initially self-preservative acts, Meloy sees them as quantitatively different. He accuses Glasser of ignoring empirical research in this area and argues that self-preservative and sado-masochistic

violence undergo different psychobiological paths of development and are in no way linked (Meloy, 1999).

It is difficult to argue that either of these approaches is more accurate, as they arise from very different perspectives on the topic. Secondly, there appears to be a multitude of other factors that underlie the nature of the violent situation that require further consideration. Although there is little doubt that the above categories define particular types of violence, other factors, such as the role of trauma, external factors, defensive organizations and representational capacity, make understanding the nature of violence more complex. Not all psychopathic forms of violence are sadistic for instance, and not all rage attacks lack sadistic tendencies. Further, within Glasser and Meloy's definitions, it is not clear how we should understand sanctioned or socially accepted forms of violence. A review of the literature points to a multitude of different factors that constellate in different ways with different forms of violence.

Many of the ways of classifying violence tend to be one-dimensional in their emphasis and are dependent on the particular focus of the author. This becomes problematic as no one particular intrapsychic factor appears to explain violent acts adequately. A violent act is dependent on the configuration of a number of factors that coincide in a particular way at a specific point in time. These factors require further exploration for a more complete appraisal of violent situations to be gained.

For this reason, and as a means of understanding rage-type murder in particular, a dimensional approach to understanding intrapsychic factors pertaining to violent behaviour is thought to be more useful. Aside from being a means of classifying violent behaviour, it also offers various explanations as to why violence occurs. The dimensions that will be considered are all inter-related, no one dimension on its own carries a full explanation of the intrapsychic situation that may occur in a potentially violent individual. For this purpose I shall define violence very broadly as the physical show, or actualization, of aggression, leading to the destruction or damage of an object. This view is similar to Meloy's (1988) general definition that violence includes anything that involves "the inflicting of physical damage on persons or property" (p. 388). It is the physical and destructive nature of the act that separates it from other intrapsychic or interpersonal activity. Although Meloy's definition is used,

the approach employed here is not in keeping with his theory that predatory and affective forms of violence are distinctly different entities having little in common. Nor does it appear correct to see different forms of aggression as lying on a continuum where excessive signs of aggressiveness can be assumed always to be closer to the eruption of physical violence. Although this kind of reasoning is often implicit in accounts of violence, no such linear relation between aggression and violence appears to exist.

CHAPTER FIVE

INTRAPSYCHIC DIMENSIONS OF VIOLENCE

In what also constitutes a review of the literature in this area, I shall consider eight different but inter-related dimensions underlying the violent act. In doing so, I confine myself to those analytic authors who have written particularly about actual physical violence and draw less on those who are writing solely about a psychological construct. The intrapsychic dimensions to be discussed here are: the nature and quality of object relationships; representational capacity; brutalization of the self; sexuality; the role of phantasy/fantasy; defensive organizations; and the role of the external environment.

The idea of considering the different intrapsychic correlates of violence points to the different ways in which violence could be understood. The dearth of psychodynamic research in this area, however, leaves many gaps in our knowledge as far as specific acts of violence are concerned and how they feature within these dimensions. In this sense the following dimensions may serve as a useful checklist for further research and the assessment of dangerousness or potential violence.

The question, however, is not simply one of classification of violence. Each of these factors holds within it a partial theory as to why violence may occur. The main question here is how, and why, does aggression in some cases turn into violence? Lefer (1984) calls this 'the fine edge of violence' and asks; "Why can one individual be incipiently violent [aggressive in my terms] but stop short of physically hurting another person and another feel no restraints against injuring people physically?" (p. 253). Each of the following dimensions offers a partial answer to this question. Given that there are so many different forms of violence it is anticipated that the meaning of each of these dimensions will shift depending on the nature of the violence being

considered. In this sense, this chapter lays the foundation or general structure for the analysis of rage-type murder.

5.1 THE NATURE AND QUALITY OF THE OBJECT WORLD

There are a number of factors that have been found to be significant in understanding the nature and quality of the object world. In Meloy's (1992) opinion Object Relations Theory can be used effectively to understand violent crime, particularly in making assumptions about prediction through studying the 'pattern' and target of violence. He puts it as follows: "It is my hypothesis that by carefully studying the pattern, or instance, of target selection one can make reasonable inferences about the nature of the individual's object relations when cathected by his most primitive and aggressive impulses. A pattern of target selection will also allow the clinician to predict the size of future potential victim pools, and thus contribute to the assessment of the individual's dangerousness" (p. 382).

Meloy holds that characteristically, aggressive or sadistic object relations are simply enacted through violence towards the outside world. There is a consistency between the person that is targeted and the individual's object relations. This, however, is not always the case as many violent situations occur that are not simple enactments. The role of the object relations and the target of violence in these cases is far more difficult to fathom.

Meloy (1988) raises important questions here about the nature and quality of the object/s associated with the intrapsychic make-up of the violent individual that are worth exploring further. Notably, (1) how should one formulate the role of affect in understanding 'violent' object relations and should we distinguish between objectless and object related violence? (2) Are there particular internal objects/part-objects that instigate a violent outcome? (3) How defined and complex are these internalizations, and how are they related to the individual's object world and the self? There are a number of consistent findings related to these questions.

5.1.1 Capacity for Object Relating

The capacity for object relating in potentially violent individuals is often observed as being ostensibly unproblematic (Hering, 1997; Hyatt-Williams, 1998). Meloy (1988) suggests that this may be because the more primitive object relations are often hidden behind more mature defenses such as repression. This might also be understood in terms of a battle between more realistically oriented parts of the psyche and destructive 'objectless' states. Hering (1997), for instance, argues that acts of violence occur when the destructive part of the personality hijacks the object-seeking parts of the personality that are able to distinguish between good and bad:

These faculties of the mature and sane part of the personality, along with these best capacities for realistic and responsible thinking, are sucked into the maelstrom of a relentless 'evil' propaganda and are enlisted to loyally serve a fanatical pursuit of destruction while, at the same time, maintaining the resemblance of a benign ordinary life (p. 212).

This kind of formulation has been observed in a number of studies, most using Winnicott's (1965) idea of the False Self which will be discussed later (Gallwey, 1985; Glasser, 1998). Does this mean, however, that violent behavior is essentially 'objectless'? Although some have argued that emotionally charged rage reactions are 'objectless' in nature (Glasser, 1998; Perelberg, 1999), this is a deceptive assumption.

In discussing rage earlier, it was observed that it is reasonably well established that this form of violence is aimed at the elimination of the object, where the fate of the object *per se* is unimportant (Glasser, 1998; Meloy, 1992; Menninger *et al*, 1963; Sohn, 1995; Wertham, 1934). This in itself may lead to the faulty assumption that internal objects are less important in this form of violence. Further, the act itself, being an act of poorly focused rage, does appear to be 'objectless'. The individual's inability to explain his own rage, which is often the case, may also lead one in this direction.

Given, however, that a majority of violent individuals do not suffer from chronic psychotic disorders, their capacity for object relating and the ability to differentiate

between objects is often relatively intact. In these cases, it appears more accurate to say that this state is induced by a high degree of unarticulated affect that overwhelms the object world (Meloy, 1988). Further support for this can be taken from the fact that these acts are very seldom randomly targeted acts. There still remains, prior to the act, a pattern of object selection that can be traced to internal factors. It is only in the rare cases when such affective forms of violence are random and completely unprovoked (Sohn, 1995) that a more chronic lack of object-relatedness can be assumed.

What of the capacity for object-relating in sadistic forms of violence? A particular form of perverted relationship with the object is needed to perpetuate sadistic violence. There appears to be relative agreement that dehumanization of the object is a key factor here. Some have argued that a process of dehumanization of the object world needs to take place if any type of violence is to occur (Kutash *et al*, 1978; Lefer, 1984; Perelberg, 1995a). Perelberg (1995a) has further argued that dehumanization can also be used as a defense to protect the individual from the frustrations and violence of the human world. It essentially refers to an expected lack of empathy for objects most characteristically observed in anti-social personalities.

Dehumanization, however, is used differently to refer to the internal world of the sadistic psychopath. In these cases there is a preoccupation with the survival, death and resurrection of the object (Biven, 1997; Bollas, 1995). It does not mean that the object's response to feeling is not an important factor, as might automatically be assumed. Making the object feel pain and suffering is a primary dynamic behind the violence. It is felt to be exciting and stimulating to the perpetrator (Glasser, 1998; Meloy, 1988). Lefer (1984) explains this as a process that arises out of a deadened sense of self: "The violent one may have completely deadened feelings, feel depersonalized, and envy the capacity of others to feel. Only when violent may he feel pleasure and stimulation" (p. 256). He goes on to say that violence occurs here because the individual hungers for a human bond that is effected by violent interaction through which he acquires a kind of recognition of his impact on the individual.

Biven (1997) is in agreement with this line of thinking. He reserves the term 'dehumanizing principle' for "a small group of individuals that has been irrevocably traumatized" (p. 24) and display sadistic violent tendencies. Arguing from a more traditional Freudian standpoint, Biven (1997) claims that this occurs when trauma disrupts the developmental task of gaining a sense of mastery over the object world. It blocks a healthy expression of aggression which is diverted from the world of human contact taking refuge in an inanimate object world where the individual seeks stimulation rather than comfort.

The above addresses some of the processes found to be apparent in the object world of the violent individual. There have also been a number important contributions towards understanding the role of key internalized objects in violent individuals.

5.1.2 The Primary Maternal Object

Perelberg (1999a), in her introduction to a number of psychoanalytic case studies on violence and suicide, points out that a central organizing dynamic that precipitates violence occurs when the self is overwhelmed or consumed by an the object. Meloy (1992) adds to this the idea that, for the perpetrator, the object possesses some internalized sense of identity. He refers to this when he writes about the fear of being trapped "in an identity-bearing introject" (p. 8). Here, the violent response essentially functions as a means of creating space between self and the object (Bateman, 1999; Perelberg, 1999a). Although this is the aim, Fonagy *et al* (1991) make it clear that this is complicated by the fact that the primary identification that has occurred makes the maternal presence inescapably a part of the self which thus cannot simply be rejected. Many have located the origins of this dynamic between infant and mother where a pathological attachment, symbiosis or fusion cause complications in the child's sense of identity and separateness (Duncan & Duncan, 1978; Glasser, 1998, 1997; Hyatt-Williams, 1998; Kernberg, 1984; Shengold, 1989).

The role of the overprotective mother often emerges in the literature (Bateman, 1999; Perelberg, 1995b; Shengold, 1991, 1993). Glasser (1998) refers to a situation of over-gratification leading to an absence of a clearly defined dyadic object relationship. In an earlier paper (Glasser, 1997), he explains how narcissistic relating between mother and infant leads to a basic core complex: A dilemma between feeling consumed or

abandoned by the mother. This leads to a split in the maternal object, the avaricious and the rejecting mother, which, in turn, cause fears of annihilation. Feeling either engulfed or rejected by the mother the infant has two defensive options: to retreat into a narcissistic withdrawal or use self-preservative aggression against the obliterating mother. It should be noted that Glasser makes a distinction here between this kind of violence and sadistic violence where Oedipal dynamics are more evident.

Shengold (1991) writes about a similar type of narcissistic object relationship that contains violent propensities. He finds that maternal over-stimulation combined with the child being treated as an extension of the mother leads to what he calls 'soul murder'. Here, the infant's self is smothered and replaced by the mother's idealizations. Once these inevitably falter, the child is left exposed to the dread of having nothing after being promised an ideal world. This in turn leads to a devastating sense of having no self.

Lefer (1984) identifies a similar dynamic in the transferences of individuals who had committed murder. He observed that they would most typically display idealized parental transferences. Any slight indication of perceived abandonment, however, evoked extremely negative transferences which he associates with potential violence.

From an Attachment Theory perspective, following Bolby (1936), some have emphasized the importance of primary attachments in exploring violent behavior. Meloy (1992) points out that a vast majority of acts of violence take place within a existing attachment. This is one of his motivations for using Attachment Theory to understand different forms of violence. He argues that disorders of extreme detachment, when no stable attachment occurs, are the bedrock of the psychopathic personality where a chronic lack of emotion towards human objects is apparent and no clear internalization of a maternal object occurs. The mother is felt to have abandoned the child and is lost to him, eventually leading to a sense of detachment with little protest.

Zulueta (1993) emphasizes the role of trauma and deprivation as being the most prominent factor in abnormal attachments that lead to violence. Apart from having to deal with the loss of the object's love, however, a less emphasized problem here is

the loss of the object's assistance in countering unknown inner forces (Hitchcock, 1996). In agreement with an emphasis on object loss, some have argued that many of the most heinous acts of murder involving mutilation and intended suffering appear to be primitive reenacted attempts at dealing with the loss of a primary object (Biven, 1997; Harris & Pontinus, 1975; Hyatt-Williams, 1998; Zulueta, 1993).

At the other end of the spectrum, disorders of extreme attachment form one of the main predisposing factors for other forms of violence. Meloy (1992) claims that problems of attachment here are less obvious as they are often perceived as normal in society and thus go undetected. Most of the psychodynamic characteristics emerge from the rapprochement sub-phase of Mahler's (1967) separation-individuation phase of development. This at occurs approximately the age of 18 months where a growing uneasiness about being away from the mother is felt. It becomes difficult to relinquish infantile omnipotence giving rise to separation anxiety, feelings of shame, and abandonment rage akin to anxieties most evident in the borderline personality structure.

In keeping with the idea that the mode of attachment influences violent behavior, Shoham *et al* (1987) found, in a study using a prison sample, that attachment to family was associated with the type of violence committed. They argue that those more attached to family were more likely to commit impulsive acts of violence whilst those who did not receive any form of punishment during childhood were more likely to commit planned acts of violence.

In sum, although seen in different ways, all the above note problems (although seen in different ways) with separation from the maternal object as being a key correlate in violent individuals. Further, there appears to be wide agreement that defensive violence occurs from within an extreme attachment dynamic.

5.1.3 The Paternal or Third Object

Viewing the paternal object as the third object, bringing with it internal space and the capacity to symbolize, is not a new formulation specific to understanding violent individuals. This understanding essentially begins with Freud's (1923) notion of the superego and has been developed considerably by a number of psychoanalysts

(Britton, 1992; Gaddini, 1992; Lacan, 1973, 1977; Limentani, 1991; Stoller, 1979). A fair amount has been written about the role and internalization of the father in potentially violent individuals (Bateman, 1999; Britton, 1992; Fonagy & Target, 1995; Gaddini, 1974; Limentani, 1991; Perelberg, 1999a; Stoller, 1979). In most cases the paternal object is found to be an intermediary object breaking a pathological symbiosis or fusion between self and the primary object. The paternal object is felt to be less of a threat as it is less contaminated by projections of hate and envy (Fonagy & Target, 1995; Perelberg, 1995b; Bateman, 1999). Therefore it follows that the absence of a coherent paternal introject is often isolated as one of the key problems with violent individuals. Perelberg (1999a), in her review of a number of studies of potentially violent individuals, finds this to be a common occurrence. In her words: "Each patient felt trapped in a dyadic relationship with the mother/analyst where the perspective of the father as a third object was lacking" (p.8).

Campbell (1999), referring particularly to the pre-suicide state as violence turned against the body, views the father's role as enabling the child to dis-identify from the mother. This, in turn, allows the child to occupy a place in the father's mind separate from mother. He follows this dynamic in an interesting case study where he is able to identify, through enactment, his own failure to rescue his patient from a murderous mother imago. His failure leads to a plea for a third object, the father-therapist in this case, to stand in the way of regression to a more violent and entrapping sado-masochistic transference.

Aggression and envy towards the paternal object may also precipitate violence. Fonagy & Target (1995) argue that destroying the tie between the parental couple as part of an Oedipal dynamic is not always the key motivation behind violence. The father is important in that he represents the possibility of reflection. Attacks on the paternal object thus involve destroying his awareness of the infantile self that is ignored by the mother. Contrary to an Oedipal understanding, this kind of violence against the paternal object is more concerned with destroying a witness than destroying a rival.

Does this mean that more primitive internalizations of the father are more apparent in violent individuals? This may be the case in some forms of violence. For instance,

Abrahamsen (1973) and Perelberg (1995b, 1995a, 1999a) have noted the precarious nature of male identifications or internal representations. In a number of cases Perelberg (1995a, 1999a) observes that there are often rapid oscillations between male and female identifications in violent individuals making it difficult for them to establish a cohesive identity. She isolates identification with the female object and its association with passivity as a trigger that could evoke terror and possible violence in her male patients. It may be the case, however, that this kind of precarious identification is more akin to 'imitation', than to identification proper (Gaddini, 1992). If so, this is part of a more primitive process involving the imitation of the object prior to any internalization, which makes the individual far more dependent on the object always being present.

To return to the question however, although these 'pre-Oedipal' processes are of utmost importance in understanding violence, violence may also emerge from Oedipal themes such as jealousy, rivalry and revenge. The extent to which these themes would be translated into violent action however, appears to be more dependent on the other dimensions of violence being discussed here.

5.1.4 The Superego

The traditional superego results from identification with the same sex parent in order to avert castration anxiety in the boy and loss of love in the girl (Freud, 1923). It has been understood in many different ways since then (Chasseguet-Smirgel, 1984; Fernichel, 1945; Glasser, 1978; Klein, 1927; O'Shaughnessy, 1999; Rosenfeld, 1952; Steiner, 1993). I will not discuss these specific details here. Broadly, the superego represents the internalization of parental values, goals and restrictions. It represents the conscience of the individual that could be either punitive, absent or supportive. The status of the superego in violent individuals appears to vary. As previously discussed, the superego is often seen as absent in psychopathic or criminal forms of violence, but is overly restrictive and harsh in explosive violence (Hyatt-Williams, 1998).

Freud (1923) believed the superego to be absent in psychopaths. Fernichel (1931) however, argued that although extreme psychopaths have not developed a superego, most do have some primitive superego capacity but it is ineffective. The argument

for the underdevelopment of the superego in delinquents and psychopaths has received considerable support. For instance, many of these individuals come from loveless families where there is a frequent absence of the father and hence the capacity to develop an adequate superego is compromised (Bolby, 1936; Gilligan, 1997; Kline, 1987).

Klein (1927), on the other hand, saw the superego as being extremely harsh and punitive in cases of violence. This was consistent with her ideas about the archaic formation of the superego. From this point of view violence is understood as a form of externalization. It is a means of alleviating the inner persecution that occurs between the ego and punitive superego. Violence serves to reassure the ego that harsh inner attacks can be outdone by controlling and attacking the external world. Klein understood this to work alongside an unconscious sense of guilt caused by the superego. The latter is similar to Freud's (1916) understanding of criminal behavior as being the enactment of unconscious guilt. Symington (1996) finds this to be important, specifically in violent situations, as opposed to general criminal conduct. Violence erupts, he argues, when unconscious guilt, as a result of internal attacks on the ego, become intolerable.

Much could be said about how different analysts conceptualize the superego. Further exploration of how these conceptualizations relate to physical acts of violence is still required. For instance, Glasser's (1978) distinction between the *proscribed* and the *prescribed* superego may prove useful in its application to different forms of violence. It might be argued that some forms of violence are more closely associated with proscribed aspects of the superego, whereas as others may best be related to prescribed qualities. This will be further explored in the course of considering the forthcoming research findings in Chapter 11.

5.2 THE REPRESENTATIONAL SYSTEM AND THE BODY

Representational capacity evolves from the transformation of somatic excitation into psychically derived drives, objects and affects. Lecours and Bouchard (1997) describe this process as follows:

The process of mentalization refers to a preconscious/ego linking function, consisting of a connecting of bodily excitations with endopsychic representations. In one sense, mentalization could be seen as the necessary mediator between the ego and the id, yet in another, it serves as a necessary *creation* of a psychic id (p. 855-856).

A number of psychoanalysts argue that the capacity for violence is related to an inability to mentalize (Bion, 1962a; Fonagy *et al*, 1993; Fonagy & Target, 1995; Hyatt-Williams, 1996, 1998; Segal, 1997). In essence, they argue that the inability to form coherent internal object representations causes a confusion between body and mind, the mental and the physical. Implicit in this is the idea that physical acts are a more immediate expression of drive-affect expression, an idea well established by Freud himself. In *Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety* (Freud, 1926), for instance, he states: "Touching and physical contact are the immediate aim of the aggressive as well as the loving object cathexes" (p. 122). Earlier, in *Formulations on The Two Principles of Mental Functioning* (Freud 1911), he explains how, through a process of binding (*bundig*), free-floating excitations are transformed into psychological elements mediating the concrete immediate needs of instinctual life.

The implications of this line of thinking have perhaps been most thoroughly explored by Wilfred Bion (1958, 1962a, 1962b, 1963, 1970). His understanding of the nature of β -elements and the α -function, as well as the container-contained relationship, among other concepts, has contributed greatly to understanding the process of thinking and thought formation. An important implication of this theoretical standpoint is that the unconscious is no longer viewed as pre-formed and symbolic. Some degree of psychic elaboration needs to occur before repression, as it is traditionally understood, can operate. These ideas have laid the foundation for a number of recent contributions to understanding the impact of the representational system on violence. Fonagy and his colleagues have developed this line of thinking considerably and these developments are to be explored in some depth here.

Fonagy *et al* (1993) draw a distinction between the *pre-reflective self* and the *reflective self*. The former is synonymous with the experiencing physical body,

whereas the latter is the “internal observer of mental life” (p.472). This reflective capacity is acquired through interaction:

The child’s growing recognition of the importance of mental states (feeling, beliefs, desires and intentions) arises through the shared understanding of his own mental world and that of his caregiver. She reflects upon the infant’s mental experience and re-presents it to him Her role is to provide a creative social mirror which can capture for the infant aspects of his activity and then add an organizing perspective (p. 473).

Fonagy *et al* (1993) liken this to Winnicott’s idea of *cross-identifications* where the infant’s mental space is acquired through careful observation of his own mental life and a primary identification with the caregiver’s reflective capacity. His own acquired reflective capacity provides the individual with a sense of himself as a mental entity.

Violence, they believe, originates from an inability to reflect or understand the mental state of the self and others. Here, the difference between the mental and physical diminishes:

In the absence of adequate reflective capacity, the pre-reflective and physical self may come to substitute for mental functions - the body may reflect experiences instead of the mind and thus be imbued with thought and feeling (p. 481).

The tendency to unconsciously represent mental states in bodily terms also leads to the mind being perceived as being accessible via the body (self or other). Moreover, this also reduces the individual’s capacity for the inhibition of aggression as the capacity to experience real suffering in the self or in others cannot be sufficiently represented or mentalized.

Fonagy *et al* (1991) conducted extensive research on mother-infant interactions in the first year of life. They found that parents who had difficulty reflecting on their own intentions during the research interviews were more likely to have one-year-olds who displayed avoidance and aggression when they had to be separated from their

parents. They contend that these kinds of aggressive displays are not initially pathological (Fonagy *et al*, 1993). They serve an adaptive function aimed at defending the psychological self from thoughts that it does not have the representational or mental capacity to protect itself from.

When the parent's reflective capacity is compromised drastically, however, the child may develop pathological forms of destructiveness. Here, aggression as a defense fails at protecting the psychological self. Aggression intensifies eventually causing a pathological fusion with the self. As a result, 'aggression becomes inextricably linked to self-expression' (Fonagy *et al*, 1993, p. 475). This complication causes, among other solutions, the introjection of a distorted, or even absent, picture of the child as part of mother's internal world and becomes the "germ of a potentially persecutory object which is lodged in the self, but is alien and unassailable" (Fonagy *et al*, 1993, p. 494).

If the capacity to conceive thoughts is poorly developed it may be used as a defense against psychic pain. Aggression may also be used here as a means of turning against thoughts, representations and psychic processes that are felt to be intolerable (Fonagy & Target, 1996). Fonagy *et al* (1993) indicate that this constitutes a "more profound disturbance than simply the internalization of rejecting, unempathic parents." (p. 481). It is not simply the internalization of an aggressive, violent or rejecting object that explains violence, it is more profoundly the representational system, the inability to mentalize, that translates into a physically violent solution. In support of this, in a later study, Fonagy and Target (1995) report on their involvement with a number of patients who do not fit the 'cycle of abuse profile' but display a similar fragility in their ability to mentalize. They argue that these problems arise from more subtle forms of interaction that are not easily observable in relationships with others but still threaten the psychological self.

The ability to re-present is also associated with the capacity for symbolic thought: The ability to allow one representation to stand for another (Segal, 1978). Violent murderous images, for instance, may stand for angry feelings towards someone and, not for murder in itself. Without this capacity to re-present, however, these murderous images can only be seen and felt as concrete images, bringing them closer

to being a reality. The absence of the symbolic function in violent individuals has been discussed by a number of authors (Bucci, 1998; Fonagy & Target, 1995; Hyatt-Williams, 1998; Lecours & Bouchard, 1997; Segal, 1997; Sohn, 1995). For example, Lefer (1984) observes that dream elements often felt like concrete dangerous objects to violent patients, leaving them disturbed and paranoid in waking life. Dreams become what he calls concrete 'candid camera' type dreams. They themselves become concrete encapsulating objects that are felt to 'attack' the individual.

What remains important to understand is how this situation comes about and its relation to different forms of violence. In some cases, for instance, this may be a chronic situation. In others, there may be a sudden collapse in the symbolic function. Still further, it may occur due to the destruction of the symbolic function by a sinister part of the psyche (Fonagy & Target, 1996).

Lecours and Bouchard (1997) develop a model that attempts, amongst a number of other things, to explore different levels of mental elaboration and how they may be related to violence. The degree of elaboration is dependent on the extent to which the containment of affect has occurred. At the most primitive level, what they call *disruptive impulsion*, no mental elaboration occurs. Drive affect is expressed in an uncontrolled way and has not undergone repression because it has not been 'mentalized'. It is expressed somatically or through motor activity and gives rise to extreme forms of destructive uncontrollable violence that are crude and unfocused.

At the next level, *modulated impulsion*, there is some containment, but unarticulated affect is still evacuated from the psyche. No reflection takes place, but it serves as a cathartic release. At a more sophisticated level of mental elaboration, evacuation via the 'action defenses' (p.863) does not occur and unwanted representations or affects now undergo a process of externalization. Through externalization the individual can talk about the affective state; it is represented in some way. It is disowned through the representational system using more mature defenses as opposed to 'action defenses'. Lecours and Bouchard (1997) do not give an indication of whether this would mean that violence, as a bodily expression, would ever occur at the level of representation.

Thus far we have discussed how the inability to mentalize leads to a greater propensity for violence. This is not to say however, that the entire personality is usually uniformly plagued with the same problem. Perhaps, along lines similar to Bion's (1957) ideas on psychotic and non-psychotic aspects on the personality, it is more productive to think of specific parts of the personality as remaining unrepresented and unsymbolized for different reasons. For instance, in sudden explosive forms of violence the representational system is suddenly overwhelmed by particular indigestible circumstances that cause the representational system to implode. On the other hand, focused, more intentional acts of violence may stem from a particular object relation that has remained unarticulated and closer to physical forms of expression whilst the rest of the personality makes use of the symbolic function.

Importantly however, the collapse or incapacity of the representational system cannot explain all forms of violence. Violence that is premeditated and carefully planned or sanctioned may be construed in elaborate mentalizations that may become obsessional. Further, a central feature of sadistic violence involves an elaborate use of representational space where the capacity to imagine the victim's pain is an essential feature (Fonagy & Target, 1995). In this case the representational system is inverted. Instead of moving away from bodily forms of representations, psychic images are tinged with excitement giving rise to more elaborate images. Although the mentalizations may be elaborate and detailed they usually hold very little meaning for the individual apart from their primitive excitement value. In this sense it is a 'pseudo-representational system. The excitement that such images induce is usually what drives these individuals into violent action. Once asked to explain their actions however, they are unable to (Biven, 1997), illustrating how devoid of real meaning these representations of self and other are.

5.3 BRUTALIZATION OF THE SELF: TRAUMA AND LOSS

- Physical or sexual abuse and trauma are often reported in the case histories of violent individuals (Biven, 1997; Bolby, 1936; Gilligan, 1997; Hyatt-Williams, 1996, 1998; Lefer, 1984; Zulueta, 1993). The trauma may have occurred in childhood, or result

from a more contemporary event in adulthood as is the case with individuals who have suffered Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (Collins and Bailey, 1990; Solursh, 1989). It may also be an acute traumatic experience or what Khan (1986) called 'cumulative trauma'. Often termed 'the cycle of violence', violence from this perspective is understood to emerge through a defensive identification with the aggressor, a concept first used by Anna Freud (1937). The individual identifies with the aggressor in order to escape a vulnerable abused self that is then projected into someone else. It would appear that the nature of the violence that occurs here would depend on two factors. Firstly, as it occurs through identification, it would depend on the kind of violence of which the individual was victim. Secondly, it would depend on the extent to which the identification predominates in the personality. If for instance, as with Rosenfeld's (1971) description of an internal mafia gang, the aggressive identification becomes a structuralized part of the self, then the violence moves from being originally defensive to being a perverse means of reaffirming identity.

For Kernberg (1992), an early traumatic relationship with the mother leaves an experience of the mother as being an all-bad object that has destroyed or consumed the all-good one. In this case, destructive attempts are aimed at trying to restore good object relations. Commenting on a similar process to *identification with the aggressor*, Kernberg argues that although this leads to an imagined triumph over the sadistic traumatizing object, it also leads to a futile and entrapping intrapsychic situation. This occurs because the individual identifies with both the damaged self and the persecutory object and, as a result, is consumed by an object relationship based on hatred and aggression.

Hyatt-Williams (1998) emphasizes the role of traumatic experience in perpetuating violence from a different perspective. Using Bion's understanding of undigested mental states, he argues that traumatic experience or the loss of an object stands in the way of normal psychic digestion. Psychic states induced by trauma often cannot be contained and worked through adequately and thus cannot be mourned. As a consequence these experiences remain concrete volatile objects suspended in the psyche. With this the individual's sensitivity to stressful events heightens and the risk of violence in a desperate attempt to rid the psyche of psychic pain is increased.

Hyatt-Williams applies this theory specifically to dynamics of murder and will be returned to in the following chapter.

A number of other authors have linked violent acting out to issues of loss and problems with the mourning process (Bluglass, 1990; Sohn, 1995; Zulueta, 1993). Loss here relates not only to the object, but also to the self. Trauma damages the self, leaving it changed in some way. In these cases loss and problems with mourning are related to experiences of loss of parts of the self.

It is well known that trauma forces the personality into a state of dissociation. It leaves the self or ego vulnerable and hypersensitive to external stimuli causing extreme defensive measures, such as violence, to be taken in reaction to relatively benign events. The trauma is internalized and perpetuated internally as part of a paranoid-schizoid solution where no mourning or reparation of internal objects and self-representations can occur. Symington (1996) conceptualizes this as the archaic superego constantly attacking creative developing parts of the mind.

In expressing how little we know about violence, Shengold (1999), taking a somewhat opposing view, observes that not all violent individuals have a traumatic or spoiling parental presence in their histories, and is convinced that violence is often a result of overgratification or overstimulation. Although agreeing that rage is a reaction to narcissistic injury, Shengold (1991) emphasizes the role of overstimulation as “the basic danger situation” (p. 110). Overstimulation creates primitive and illusive narcissistic desires for ‘everything’ that give rise to intense affective states. When this intensity leads to ‘nothingness’, however, it is easily transformed into murderous rage. The more this archaic grandiosity is overstimulated the further the individual has to fall when this delusion is shattered in some way. Thus, “overstimulation threatens annihilation and enhances (‘feeds’) the aggressive drive” (p.111).

Shengold (1999) also finds that parents who are afraid of their own anger cope by being overindulgent in their parenting. The experience of anger then becomes associated with a dangerous unknown experience. Here, overindulgence leads to these individuals having “deficiencies in internalizing the necessary ‘no’ in relation

to their impulses and are therefore terrified of them and of their unchecked rage at inevitable frustrations" (Shengold, 1999, p. xvii).

Hering (1997) also questions the simplistic notion of the cycle of abuse. He claims that there is only partial support for this hypothesis as many who have been abused do not show violent tendencies. He argues that reliance on the trauma hypothesis leads to an underestimation of our own intrinsic destructiveness and also negates the potency of violent phantasies that are not the result of abuse but lead to destructive scenarios.

5.4 SEXUALITY

What role does sexuality play in fostering violent behavior? There are many theories about the sexual or libidinal development of the child available to us, ranging from Freud's instinctual model to Fairbairn's object driven model. These two models perhaps represent polar opposites within psychoanalytic thinking as regards the sexual and aggressive nature of development. This has been reviewed in the previous chapter. Much has been written about the fine line between sex and violence, from cases of rape, to sado-masochistic practices, to serial murders. Here, a fusion of excitation, omnipotence and destructiveness can be clearly observed pointing to a 'pre-Oedipal' level of fixation or regression where differentiation between object, self, and their corresponding affects, are not apparent.

At the 'pre-Oedipal' level of development, consistent with difficulties in breaking away from the primary object, a sense of separateness and separate sexual experience has not yet developed. More primitive forms of sexuality are evident where the body becomes overwhelmed by sensations that cannot be mentally represented. Sexual excitement or sensation is thus very generalized and fuses with other affects or inchoate object and self- representations. Joseph (1997) reminds us of an important distinction to be made between mature sexuality and sexualization. Mature forms of sexuality are characterized by a rich exchange with the object leading to creativity and growth. Sexualization, on the other hand, essentially refers to the eroticization of parts of the body or mind preventing them from performing their suitable functions.

It stands in the way of thinking and serves as a defense against mature object relating and painful experience.

In sadistic or perverse violence primitive forms of sexuality are used in the service of violence itself. Here, painful experience itself is sexualized, making it exciting, compelling the individual to commit sado-masochistic forms of violence. Factors like overstimulation, abuse and trauma, however, may also be important determinants here (Abrahamsen, 1973; Shengold, 1991; Zulueta, 1993).

Although underlying theoretical principles have been developed considerably since Freud, the dynamics believed to be behind sadistic violence have changed little since his second revision of the term (Freud, 1920). Here sadism is viewed as being the result of destructive tendencies towards the self that have been sexualized or libidinized before being projected outwards. Generally it is agreed that those who seek violence due to exciting sexual stimulation are dominated by pre-Oedipal experience which forms the basis of particular character or personality disorders (Biven, 1997; Kernberg, 1984, 1992; Meloy, 1992). How this is acted out, or whether it will emerge through violent means, further depends on other intrapsychic factors being considered here.

Not all pre-Oedipal violent experience is related to uncontained sexual excitation. Much of the recent work focusing on 'pre-Oedipal' dyadic themes in violent behavior emphasize the defensive origins of violence at this level, focusing more on the structural aspects of the psyche that make the individual vulnerable to violence. It is generally agreed that defensive violence has its roots in attempts to ward off perceived dangers from destroying an already fragile self (Fonagy *et al*, 1993; Glasser, 1998; Lewis, 1993; Meloy, 1988). In some of these cases, sensation and primitive sexual excitement are, in themselves, felt to be dangerous. Rather than this kind of violence emanating from a defined sexual part of the self, violence aims to keep sexually exciting objects and sensations away. Put another way, it forms a part of the defensive system which will be discussed at greater length later. But can we distinguish between 'pre-Oedipal' and Oedipal sexual development and the propensity for violence? Related to this, can we distinguish between the type of violence that occurs in relation to psychic development and sexuality?

We have already observed that the distinction between Oedipal and pre-Oedipal is problematic. A more important question to ask here concerns the degree to which object-self differentiation has occurred and the extent to which the individuals are able to contain, represent, or sublimate their own sexual experience. The question remains however: are individuals dominated by whole object experience and full genital sexuality less capable of violence? This is a difficult question to answer and is at risk of being guided by the faulty assumption that primitive pathology can be equated with greater severity in distress, psychopathology, or in this case violence (Western, 1989). It can be said, however, that the potential for violence exists at all levels of sexual development - it is the nature of the violence that changes (Kutesh, 1978; Shengold, 1999).

We have already considered two possible formulations regarding the 'pre-Oedipal' nature of violence where either sexual aggression or a schizoid split away from all sensate excitation dominates sexuality. It is also thought that violence that erupts as a cathartic release can often be located at the anal level of development (Abraham, 1927; Schafer, 1976; Shengold, 1991). The Oedipal level, on the other hand, is mediated by representations manifesting in experiences such as rivalry, power, revenge, jealousy or competitiveness. Clearly many violent acts may be initiated at this level. Patricide, matricide, a brawl between men, a fight between siblings: all may clearly show Oedipal themes. But do these themes elicit violence themselves, or do they initiate a regression to a more primitive level of the personality that acts but? The latter appears to be the most favored assumption in explaining both explosive and sexual violence (Hyatt-Williams, 1998).

Oedipal conflicts and their fundamental links to sexuality, however, can elicit violence without regression. Thus violence may not always mean the collapse of mature sexual development. Indeed, many of our cultural stereotypes about the 'macho' male support the image of a powerful dominant male, implicitly condoning violence as a means to power. In this sense the Oedipus Complex remains a central organizing principle around which the image of the violent male is formed (Jukes, 1993; 1994; Person, 1993b). As Jukes (1993) points out, there is no doubt that trauma and attachment problems can be important precipitants of violence, but they

cannot explain why all forms of violence are found to be far more prevalent amongst men. If the Oedipus Complex did not have such an influence, and male violence is not simplistically explained as being innate, then one would expect to have a greater proportion of violent women, as they are the more victimized sex.

Violence can occur in the service of the ego to defend and maintain a coherent sense of identity of which gender and sexuality are an important part. From the male point of view this might be seen as an attempt to uphold 'phallic power' and excessive control (Person, 1993b) or an Oedipal defense against helplessness and vulnerability, and a regression to an encapsulated psychosis (Jukes, 1993). It could be argued that powerful rationalizations fostered by internal and societal factors around masculinity also foster violence at this level without the need for regression. 'Fight and be brave like a man' or 'You are a coward for not fighting', express some of the sanctioned societal or cultural cues to violence at this level. This is also supported by the fact that only a small minority of men who commit violent acts against women suffer from diagnosable psychopathology (Finkelhor, 1986; Jukes, 1993; Kelly, 1988). From this, one could infer that this kind of violence must emanate from an Oedipal constellation where some degree of psychic resolution has taken place.

5. 5 THE ROLE OF PHANTASY/FANTASY

Perelberg (1995b) places great importance on the instigating function of phantasy in violent behavior when she says, " I suggest that the key to the distinction between aggression and violence is the phantasy attached to the act and not the act itself" (p. 113). The act, she claims, always comes with an underlying motive or 'unconscious narrative' (p. 113). Similarly, Hyatt-Williams (1998), referring specifically to murder, emphasizes the importance of phantasy:

Murder occurs concretely in most cases when it has been committed many times previously in daydreams, nightmares, and sometimes in unconscious fantasy that has never become conscious (p. 155).

A number of important questions require understanding here, some of which have received very little attention thus far: Do fantasies always precede violent action? Are different types of fantasy or phantasy being referred to here? Can particular phantasies/fantasies and corresponding defensive organizations be linked to violent actions? In what way does the violent scenario, if at all, exist in the individual's mind prior to the act? Are enacted 'violent phantasies' quantitatively different from those that are not? These are important considerations in the assessment of violence, not all of which not can be considered here. Although some have convincingly argued that specific phantasies can be linked to violence (Hyatt-Williams, 1996, 1998; Perelberg, 1995a, 1995b), one needs to be cautious in understanding what type of violence is being referred to in each case. As stated earlier, there are so many different forms of violence and ways of defining it that it would be far too simplistic to assume that one particular group of phantasies could explain all types of violence.

5.5.1 Phantasy and Fantasy

Implicit in Hyatt-Williams' (1998) statement above are two types fantasy if one understands it from a Kleinian point of view (Klein, 1927; Isaacs, 1948). He does not appear to make use of the distinction himself, but does indicate that fantasy may occur at different levels of consciousness. In brief, phantasies are essentially unconscious and constitute deep structures of the mind from which all thought and behavior emanate. Fantasy, on the other hand, refers to conscious surface mentation that serves what is assumed to be a sublimatory function. The distinction itself has more recently been discussed by Hinshelwood (1997). He argues that there is little need to use one of these terms to the exclusion of the other. Though traditionally viewed as representing very different theoretical standpoints, both terms refer to different levels of psychic functioning and can be used productively together.

There is merit, I believe, in using this distinction in understanding the dynamics of violence. For instance, it is usually the case that in perverse or sadistic violence, conscious violent fantasies are clearly present and, in different ways, contribute to the conscious actions of the offender. In this case the distinction between fantasy as a sublimatory activity and unconscious phantasy collapses and what is usually destructive but unconscious becomes permissible in the conscious mind. Violence that is socially sanctioned, on the other hand, is clearly worked out many times

consciously, but is different in the sense that these actions do not necessarily stem from unconscious mental structures. Gang members or soldiers may fantasize many times about how they would respond when threatened or under attack, but their actions may not necessarily be linked to unconscious phantasy. Obsessional neurotics may also be plagued by fantasies of violence or murder, but will never act them out as the source of the unconscious phantasy underlying these thoughts is very different.

Still further, in explosive forms of violence, like rage murder, where violence is primarily motivated by volatile affect, conscious fantasies of attacking an object are often not present. This may be due to the presence of a punitive superego (Lefer, 1984). If violent fantasies are present in any way, they tend to be conscious fears of being attacked, rather than being fantasies of actually attacking (Hyatt-Williams, 1998; Lefer, 1984). This does not mean, however, that these individuals do not possess particular murderous phantasy constellations that further explain their behavior. These brief examples hopefully demonstrate that the distinction between phantasy and fantasy holds some heuristic value in investigating the nature of violent acts.

It should be noted that phantasies, having deep structural influences on the mind, can be matched with particular defensive organizations. For example, the phantasy of annihilation of a part of the self may be matched with a defensive organization characterized by projective defenses aimed at destroying parts of the self represented in other objects. However, there is not always a one-to-one match between phantasy and defense. For this reason the defensive system is being treated as a separate intrapsychic dimension here. Broadly speaking, defenses may both enact or work against phantasy constellations.

Secondly, whether a phantasy is enacted or not, is not solely dependent on the defensive system. The level at which phantasies are represented in the psyche is also important here. This relates to the representational system referred to earlier. For instance, Hering (1997) suggests that the destructive part of the personality is fueled by what he calls a 'concrete dream'. Here phantasy cannot occur in a symbolized

phantasy that has eluded any elaboration or influence by both internal and external forces. I now turn to considering the content of fantasies/phantasies related to violence.

5.5.2 Content of Phantasy/Fantasy.

Although Freud did not discuss the conceptual distinctions between violence and aggression, Perelberg (1995b) argues, in a thorough analysis of his use of the term, that he consistently related violence to phantasies of the primal scene and the Oedipus complex. Freud, she argues, related violence to key aspects of myths of our own origins. Notably, the parental sexual act is experienced by children as violent on the father's part and it is here that the phantasy of murderousness towards the penetrating father is at its height. Further, phantasies related to the idea that sons would kill their fathers in order to have intercourse with their mothers also leads Perelberg to the conclusion that violence, on Freud's part, is linked to unconscious phantasies of an individual's own origins.

Following Freud's emphasis on the Oedipal origins of the neuroses, many of the earlier writings on violence and murder appear to emphasize Oedipal phantasies as being prominent in acts of violence. Menninger *et al* (1963), for instance, understood some forms of aggression and destructiveness as being connected to castrating or mutilating phantasies originally directed at parents. Others have argued that violent encounters have their roots in fearful phantasies of sexual inadequacy that expose the individual in a shameful way (Abrahamsen, 1973; Bromberg, 1961).

Perelberg's (1995a; 1995b) analysis of violent patients supports the idea that the primal scene is an important core phantasy in considering violence. She expands on Freud's original ideas, however, by emphasizing the relationship with the 'pre-Oedipal' mother as important. This follows a general trend in psychoanalytic thinking where the influence of the first two years of life and the maternal relationship are given more emphasis. Recent understandings of the violent patient are no exception.

There appears to be common agreement that self-preservative forms of violence are often accompanied by phantasies of feeling engulfed or attacked by the maternal

object (Bergaret, 1984; Kernberg, 1984; Perelberg, 1995b; Shengold, 1989; Sohn, 1995). Congruent with the symbiotic maternal object relations discussed earlier, some have found that fantasies underlying violence depict a dilemma between fusion and a desperate desire for separateness (Biven, 1977; Glasser, 1998). Glasser (1998) argues that this points to a core complex that is present in all of us but underlies all violent behavior when tampered with or left unresolved. The complex is expressed in fantasies of longing for fusion and union with the object, whilst at the same time, fearing being merged and as a consequence, annihilated by the object.

Biven (1977) reports on a similar dilemma in his analysis of an adolescent boy who had undergone severe deprivation as an infant and was from a violent home. The core fantasy manifested itself in the child's thoughts of being 'enveloped' by skin. Biven explains his interpretation of 'envelopment' as follows: "The aim of such envelopment would not simply be reunion with the primary love object, but borrowing as it were, the strength and cohesiveness from a more powerful object in other words the skin served as a concrete part object of another's strength" (p. 351). It is a fantasy of incorporation with the effect of having access to the mother's strength and containment. He considers the meaning of this further, claiming that the consequent retardation in superego development in this case prevented resolution of the parental relationship. As a result, the child lived in constant search for new love objects to fulfill this fantasy with violence erupting if this was threatened in any way. The fantasy here is thus a defense against aggressive impulses originally aimed at a mother "who was experienced as mad and murderous" (p. 347).

Others have seen violence as stemming from a fantasied attack on the body of the mother (Bateman, 1999; Campbell, 1999; Fonagy & Target, 1995). Perelberg (1995b) goes further and concludes, in her analysis of a patient, that the mother's body is the target of violence as she is experienced as being in possession of her patient's bodily, affective and intellectual functioning. The central underlying fantasy appears to be about a violent engulfing experience where a violent response attempts to create a space for a separate existence. It is characterized by a particular kind of paranoid-schizoid experience fueled by the fantasy that the individual was conceived out of a violent interchange with the mother with no conception of a paternal object present (Perelberg, 1999a). The central structuring fantasy in one of

feeling consumed by unmanageable, indigestible experience with no relief or containment apparent.

This is central to Hyatt-Williams' (1998) ideas as to why self-preservative acts of violence occur. The individual becomes consumed by evacuative and annihilatory phantasies aimed primarily at escaping a more 'deathly' experience by defensively attacking it. There appears to be general agreement about this being a defining feature of this kind of violence (Glasser, 1998; Hyatt-Williams, 1996; Meloy, 1988, 1992; Menninger *et al*, 1963; Sohn, 1995; Wertham, 1962). Hyatt-Williams, in particular, emphasizes a link between evacuation and phantasies of violence that have, at their core, indigestible experience or fantasies of death or trauma. In this case, as alluded to earlier, these phantasies cannot be worked through or mourned in the conscious mind and remain in a dangerous incubated state awaiting provocation from the external world.

Most of the above pertains to defensive acts of violence. There is general agreement that in sadistic forms of violence, fantasies of violence are not only conscious and well developed, but are also characteristically tinged with sexual excitation (Biven, 1997; Chasseguet-Smirgel, 1984; Glasser, 1998; Hyatt-Williams, 1998; Kernberg, 1992; Meloy, 1988). Although 'pre-Oedipal' themes, particularly of engulfment and fusion, do appear to characterize these forms of violence (Biven, 1997; Bollas, 1995; Harris & Pontinus, 1975), it is the role they play as part of a perverse creative act that appears particularly different about the fantasies of such offenders.

In an exploratory study of a serial killer, Biven (1997) argues that, although often obscured, the dehumanizing principle is always evident in this form of violence. The central phantasy constellation forms around a repetitive need to obliterate all humanness in the self and the object which is accompanied by intense sexual arousal. It becomes an attempt to freeze experience in a 'tableau' of his own perverse creations. He describes this repetition perpetuated by phantasy as follows:

The impotent, terrified child becomes the potent but detached adult man acting a part in a play that he can barely fathom. Yet he is always dissatisfied. Each enactment of the fragmented past becomes less and less

representative or connected to the human world. Such a man is not content with a dead mother or a headless eviscerated mother. What he wants is the total disappearance and reappearance of mother. But, as we can see, mother's disappearance is not simply a wish that she would go away. In fact, one could argue that in the repetitious and compulsive enactment, the serial killer is constantly bringing her back to life, only to kill her again and again (p. 40).

Here conscious fantasy is partly an attempt to hide childhood trauma behind a "grotesque, childish collage of fact and feeling, distortion and desire" (p. 44), and partly a reenactment of the trauma. Biven points out that, although plagued by these fantasies, these individuals seldom show any understanding of their meaning.

Discussing a similar case, Harris & Pontinus (1975) argue that acts of dismemberment are perpetuated by fantasies aimed at a purposeful disintegration of the object in order "to reconstitute it in a subjectively more meaningful way" (p. 7). The fantasy here manifests as a primitive reinstatement of a primary identification or fusion with an omnipotent and gratifying object which can then be incorporated into the self.

An important question to ask here is whether there are qualitative differences in fantasy/phantasy constellations when it comes to defining the level of dangerousness in different kinds of violence. This is a complex question. I have attempted to show the broad differences between manifestations of the fantasy/phantasy distinction as well as possible differences in content. As mentioned earlier however, the extent to which these are enacted is not solely based on the intensity or extremity of the fantasy and is dependent on other factors such as the nature of the defensive system and situational factors.

5.6 DEFENSIVE ORGANIZATIONS

One might argue that although all the above dimensions are important to our understanding of violence, the ability to inhibit violence is essentially dependent on the nature and strength of the defensive system. Although this may be correct, it still

remains to ask, as Shengold (1999) does, "How and why does an inadequacy of defence against the discharge of violent impulses arise?" (p. xvi). Here we are reliant on other dimensions of violence to assist us in our understanding. The nature of internal object relations and accompanying phantasies as well as external stressors, all influence the defensive system's action at that moment when violence may potentially occur.

Many different kinds of defensive maneuvers have been associated with violent acts. Perhaps the most common formulation regarding violence and defense is that it represents a collapse of the psychological defensive system where the individual is only left with action (Biven, 1977; Hyatt-Williams, 1998; Lefer, 1984; Menninger *et al*, 1963). According to Hitchcock (1996), for instance, violence erupts when mechanisms of displacement are weakened causing the individual's ego to be overwhelmed with an unmanageable affective state. Using Anna Freud's words, he calls this anticipatory state of violence the "dread of the strength of the instincts" (p. 102). This is similar to the violent acts discussed by Menninger *et al* (1963) caused by 'episodic dyscontrol' where a rupture in the ego leads to violence.

Violence has also been formulated as a means of identifying with the aggressor (Zulueta, 1993). From another perspective, Treurniet (1986) and Symington (1986) view some forms of violence as an ultimate defense against intolerable guilt. Others have argued that it acts as a defensive means of maintaining attachments (Bolby, 1936) or maintaining contiguous contact with the object (Biven, 1977). Still further, violence has also been understood to function as a means of defensively ridding the self of toxic mental states (Hyatt-Williams, 1998; Sohn, 1995). Related to this, from an interactive point of view, it is seen as a defense against further violence or pain.

The above are but a few of the many possible formulations. The aim here is to consider the broader issues of how defenses might be used in violent behavior. What they illustrate, however, is that it is not always the case that defenses aim to inhibit the aggression. They themselves may also lead to violence. Violence may well be incorporated into the defenses as a means of protection and/or persecution.

One way of explaining these differences is to separate repression as a primary defense from more primitive interactional defenses (Bateman, 1996). Repression essentially functions as an internal defense keeping forbidden impulses in check. If this fails the ego is flooded by impulses that may lead to violence. The phenomenological experience of erupting into a violent rage is often depicted as a collapse of an internal repressive force.

On the other hand, more primitive defenses such as splitting and projective identification, which have appropriately been termed the 'action defenses' (Lecours & Bouchard, 1997) incorporate violence as a means of defense. Violence may be used here as a paranoid means of warding off attacking objects or as a means of attempting to rid the self of intolerable mental states.

It is usually a system of defences, however, that work together as opposed to a single defensive manoeuvre that leads to violence. Here the Kleinian understanding of defensive or pathological organizations is most useful. The term 'pathological organization', originally used by Steiner (1987), emerged from the work of Kleinian analysts interested in understanding borderline and narcissistic personality organizations. It refers to a system of defenses and object relations that work, or lock, together so as to avoid psychic pain and to effect a deadening stasis in the emotional life of the individual (Hinshelwood, 1994). Because the defenses form a system, this aspect of the personality becomes extremely resistant to change. O'Shaughnessy (1981) explains the difference between what she understands as normal defenses' and what she calls 'defensive organizations':

Unlike defences - piecemeal, transient to a greater or lesser extent, recurrent - which are a normal part of development, a defensive organization is a fixation, a pathological formation (p. 363).

Whereas defenses, she goes on to say, form part of working through paranoid and depressive anxieties, defensive organizations shut down the personality to any experience of disturbance.

In reviewing this development in the Kleinian school, Spillius (1988a) identifies two central aspects of defensive organizations that have emerged in the literature: Firstly, pathological organizations have been used to describe a system that includes internal object, phantasies and impulses existing between the paranoid-schizoid and depressive positions. Secondly, pathological organizations stem from the dominance of the 'bad self' over the rest of the personality. These organizations have their roots in more aggressive aspects of the individual which may be used in a number of different ways to avoid emotional growth.

Borderline and narcissistic defensive organizations are often found to be present in violent individuals across different categories of violence (Gacono, 1990; Gallwey, 1985; Hyatt-Williams, 1996, 1998; Kernberg, 1992; Meloy, 1992). The battery of defenses being referred to here are primitive defenses such as splitting, denial, idealization, devaluation and projective identification. As well as these individual defenses contributing to a violent mental state, there appear to be a number of important factors that lead to physical destructiveness becoming a part of the defensive organization.

Firstly, the way in which internal objects lock together to form a rigid and inflexible defensive system goes some way in explaining why some parts of the personality remain aggressive in nature and unarticulated by experience. The system serves as a barrier to unwanted experience and entrenches a split in the personality. Due to the static and inflexible nature of the system, sudden unexpected shifts in the psyche immobilize the defenses and release encapsulated violent affects and object constellations.

Bateman (1999) found this to be the case in exploring violence in narcissistic states. He adopts Rosenfeld's (1987) distinction between 'thin' and 'thick-skinned' narcissistic states in an attempt to understand violent action. He argues that violence is most likely to occur when a shift between these two rigid defensive patterns take place. In a similar way, Hyatt-Williams (1998) argues that flight into action is precipitated by a rapid shift from the depressive position to the paranoid-schizoid position where persecutory anxiety predominates and threatens the ability to contain.

The rigid barrier that characterizes these kinds of defensive organizations might, in some cases, be difficult to distinguish from repression. Both keep parts of the psyche away from reality or consciousness. They have very different functions however. Repression, a more mature defense, aims to push down what is forbidden or detrimental to realistic development. The defensive system, on the other hand, aims to prevent learning from experience and any consequent emotional growth by splitting off parts and functions of the personality.

The splitting of the personality in this way has been found to be an important factor in the defensive functioning of the violent individual. From different perspectives, Winnicott (1965, 1986) understands the origins of antisocial acts to be in a split between the False and True self. Glasser (1997) explored 'simulation' as a key defense against development of the real self, and as discussed earlier, Gallwey (1985) considers the role of the 'pseudo-personality' in violent criminals.

The degree to which the defensive system is characterized by paranoid or psychotic splitting that threatens the individual's hold on reality is an important factor to consider here (Meloy, 1988; Sohn, 1995). In this state the self is vulnerable and overreacts to benign stimuli. A violent outcome is also more likely when there is an intolerance of any depressive experience (Bateman, 1999; Hyatt-Williams, 1998; Perelberg, 1999b; Sohn, 1995). In these cases the experience of loss or ambivalence cannot be held in mind and is evacuated via projective identification. Here violence is used as an immediate solution to ending the painful experience through annihilating it in the object it is projected into. More will be said about this later with particular reference to murder.

On the other hand, Sohn (1995) found, in working with patients who had committed unprovoked assaults, that violence resulted from a failure to use projective identification as a means of ridding the self of frightening psychic elements because of the concrete nature of internal objects. He found that the concretization of objects served to enable the patients to keep objects inside themselves avoiding the dread of an empty mind. This kind of patient could not use projective identification as a means of projecting unwanted contents. If they could put it into words, Sohn argues,

they would say: "I can't project the experience of loss - If I did I would empty my mind and myself completely" (p. 574).

Finally, the action of projective identification, viewed from an interactive perspective, also offers an explanation as to why aggression may escalate into violence (Hyatt-Williams, 1998). Used in this way, the concept transcends a difficult conceptual divide between intrapsychic and interpersonal processes. Once the intolerable psychic state has been projected, the recipient may himself experience it as intolerable and return it along with his own defensive anger. This in turn leads to a more uncontrollable psychic state that becomes impossible to metabolize by, or between, the individuals involved. An insult that leads to an argument and then to violence is a broad example of this kind of interaction. Here victim, perpetrator, and specific aspects of the context become part of a dangerous juggling act where undigested emotional states are irresolvably passed between perpetrator and victim. The situation becomes entrapping with neither party being able to opt out, or contain, the projected state. As a result, an escalating violent situation ensues. This understanding, most readily explored by Hyatt-Williams, moves towards understanding violence not simply in terms of the perpetrator, but in terms of the total situation.

Thus it appears that projective identification can be used differently to understand different types of violent situations. This may also be dependent on other dimensions of violence, particularly the representational system and the role of situational factors which will now be discussed.

5.7 INTERACTION WITH THE EXTERNAL SITUATION

... a violent act is always a triangle. A study of one person can never explain it. Nor a study of two. We always have to visualize the potential influence on one another of first, the perpetrator; second, the victim; third; the reaction of the other people in the smaller or wider circle (Wertham, 1962).

Although this study is concerned with the internal world of the rage-type murderer, this of course cannot be studied in complete isolation from events evident in the external situation at the time of the violent act. Of importance here is the interface between the intrapsychic and the external situation. All too often this is ignored as a key factor leading to criticisms regarding the solipsistic nature of psychoanalysis. Perhaps this is due to the fact that in the therapeutic setting most external factors are held constant and emphasis is placed on internal experience. In the analysis of behaviors that occur outside of the therapeutic setting however, external factors cannot be ignored. This is especially the case in studying violence where a majority of violent acts can be shown to have external precipitants, no matter how benign in themselves (Howells & Hollin, 1992). The interface could be seen on two different levels: Firstly, it relates to how the external circumstances impact on the individual altering his or her internal world. Secondly, studying external factors helps us understand how the individual manipulates external objects to fulfill an internal purpose.

It is common knowledge that the external situation has an important role to play in weakening defences and prompting regressions. Hitchcock (1996), for instance, finds that external situations associated with a difficult past situation weaken the individual's displacement mechanisms, leaving him feeling overwhelmed by the situation. Hyatt-Williams (1998) acknowledges the role of situational factors in precipitating certain acts of violence. He describes the violent situation as occurring when 'too much happens too soon' not allowing any control or psychic digestion to take place. Stone (1971) also places great emphasis on aggression being externally motivated. Fromm (1973) takes this to the extreme by arguing that destructive

aggression or violence is “not due to a greater aggressive potential but to the fact of aggression producing conditions” (p. 185).

Does this mean that we are all capable of violence of some kind when the pressure gets too much? This, of course, is dependent on individual vulnerabilities expressed in the different dimensions outlined above. It would also depend, however, on the nature of the external factors themselves. Clearly severe trauma or an extremely threatening situation would propel many into using violence defensively as a last resort. Milder provocations, on the other hand, would cause a wide range of reactions and would depend more on intrapsychic factors.

Condoning external factors, as opposed to provocative or instigating events, also influence violent action. These are factors, immediate or enduring, that facilitate ‘acceptable’ forms of violence. The most obvious example here is the violence committed during war. External influences are internalized in an ego syntonic way and differ greatly in their intrapsychic influence (Hyatt-Williams, 1998; Wertham, 1962).

The external situation also requires thorough investigation as its nature sheds light on the degree to which pathological states contribute to the violent act (Meloy, 1988; Revitch & Schlesinger, 1981). Pathological states can be assumed to play more of a part in violent acts when there is little provocation from the environment. Here, external factors serve more of a representational role giving us clues about the individual’s internal world. This includes, for instance, the way the offender, consciously or unconsciously, creates the crime scene, interacts with the victim or makes a weapon available. Biven’s (1997) attempt at understanding the internal world of a serial killer provides a good example of this process. These factors, however, also remain important in less glamorous or perverse forms of violence. The events that lead the offender into a potentially violent situation, for example, may say a lot about his unconscious motivations. Meloy (1988) demonstrates the importance of understanding precipitating external events in order to work out the significance that the person attacked has for the internal world of the offender. This has important implications for working out whether the offender will attack a wide range of individuals or only a small target pool that hold a particular representational meaning

for the individual. This is important when assessing the dangerousness of the individual.

The victim/s, being part of the situation, also make different impressions on the offender's internal world. Those who have attempted to explore the victims' role in acts of violence have tended to consider only their intrapsychic motivations (Abrahamsen, 1973; Goreta, 1995) - for example, how unconscious guilt may motivate an individual to seek punishment unconsciously. To continue with the example, whilst this is important, it tends to underestimate the interactional nature of the psychological system. The individual may seek an unconscious form of punishment but this is always in interaction with an external object. In this sense, the victim's role in manipulating the interpersonal situation towards a violent outcome is central. The same victim, for instance, may constantly put himself in a situation where he compulsively insults or picks pointless arguments with others, hence manipulating his objects into a defensive attack.

This brings us again to the role of projective identification in understanding the situation. From an intrapsychic perspective, the initiator of a violent act becomes the focus of our attention regarding his defenses and projective identifications and so forth. From an interactional perspective however, it can be seen that in some cases, the violent offender may well be on the receiving end of a potent projective identification that he could no longer tolerate, and thus a retaliation is provoked.

The victim's role and the situation itself thus become important factors to consider (Duncan & Duncan, 1990; Hyatt-Williams, 1998; Wertham, 1962). An example of the complexity of the interaction that might occur, as discussed by Hyatt-Williams, who uses the term 'death constellation' to refer to an indigestible psychic state (1998), is as follows:

The person into whom the death constellation has been put by projective identification is felt to contain that part of the owner of the death constellation. There is also a supposition that the death constellation can be bounced back into the owner as and when the latter feels threatened. At this point, there is acute danger of a murderous attack upon the person into whom it is

imagined that the death constellation has been put.
Sometimes the projector reintrojects his intention,
sparing his victim (p. 45).

Later Hyatt-Williams returns to this theme explaining that “after a few projective and introjective transactions the situation becomes confused and the motivation becomes more and more mixed’ (p.118). This goes to show how confusing the situation in which violence escalates becomes for both victim and offender.

CHAPTER SIX

THE PSYCHODYNAMICS OF THE RAGE-TYPE MURDER

On reviewing the general characteristics of the rage murderer and the act itself, two main questions were raised that require psychodynamic exploration: (1) What is the psychodynamic nature of the apparent normality evident in these individuals? (2) What is the nature of the intrapsychic situation out of which murderous rage eventually erupts?

Having developed the broad theoretical parameters within which aggression and violence can be understood, I now turn to consider specific contributions regarding the psychodynamics of rage-type murder. Throughout the development of this research area authors have broadly agreed that murderous impulses originate from an internally threatened part of the personality that attempts to ward off danger through the annihilation of what is perceived to threaten the individual (Glasser, 1985; Hyatt-Williams, 1996; Mitchell, 1993; Perelberg, 1995b, 1999a). The act is clearly affective (Meloy, 1992) and self-preservative (Glasser, 1998) in nature. Views differ, however, concerning the specific psychodynamic nature of the act, as well as the premorbid intrapsychic qualities evident in the personality.

Beginning with Wertham's catathymic crisis and moving on to more contemporary efforts, specifically in the area of Object Relations Theory, this chapter moves towards outlining key questions that require further exploration and debate. It should be noted that the different dimensions of violence, outlined previously, will not be discussed with reference to these particular contributions, but reserved for the final analysis and discussion of the cases used in this study.

6.1 EARLY DEVELOPMENTS

6.1.1 Wertham: The Catathymic Crisis

We have already discussed some of the clinical and dynamic qualities that Wertham attributed to the act of rage murder. Briefly, he found there to be a marked period of ego-centricity, and build-up of affect attached to a particular unresolvable idea which eventually leads to a violent cathartic response (Wertham, 1937). Much later, in *A Sign for Cain* (Wertham, 1962), he warns that it is misleading to simply emphasize the impulsive nature of the killing. His statement, "Nothing has a longer preparation than an impulsive violent act" (p. 42), paves the way for the consideration of other psychological factors that contribute to such an offense.

Wertham makes no distinction between those who commit violence and individuals who commit murder. He argues that hate and consequential fear are key factors that create an oversensitivity in violent individuals. In a transient form, this is not an uncommon experience for most of us. Prolonged hate however, causes even greater sensitivity and murder itself is seen as a fantasized end to these distressing emotions. As Wertham (1962), puts it: "Cause fear and you sow the idea of violence" (p. 37). The point is however, many of us may think of violence in the face of fear, but as Wertham concedes, it is a lot more difficult to understand why some go to the extreme of committing murder.

Two more factors can be isolated in Wertham's work with murderers that may be seen as an attempt to understand this problem further. Firstly, he finds that they possess a particular habitual kind of 'magical' thinking that is "... supremely arrogant. The persons are habitually disposed to lift themselves, not by work or thought but by some quick action against others ..." (p.35). Underneath this however, and this brings us to the second factor, he finds that these individuals often feel inferior, incompetent and are extremely passive. Violence or murder, he argues, frees them from these disabling factors in the personality.

Wertham struggles to make any further headway in understanding the intrapsychic qualities of rage-type murder. In concluding, he argues that it is often simply about an 'unsolvable' internal problem which incidentally, via the media or through

interaction with others, becomes fused with the easy solution of murder which is then carried out. He acknowledges that such an explanation would be viewed as superficial by most but also cautions about equating the extreme nature of the crime with a greater need for a 'deeper' understanding. Although this is an important point, it does not address the need for further understanding regarding the predisposing intrapsychic nature of the personality. Instead of further exploring these possibilities, he turns to external factors such as alcohol, poverty, and the accessibility of weapons to explain violence. Again, although these are undeniably significant factors, he does not consider their intrapsychic causes and consequences of these problems and forecloses further exploration in this area.

6.1.2 Menninger and Colleagues: Episodic Dyscontrol

Menninger's understanding of murderous rage grew out of a large body of work, beginning in 1928 (only published in 1973), dealing with different aspects of destructiveness and aggression (Menninger, 1966, 1942, 1973; Menninger & Mayman, 1956; Menninger *et al*, 1963). In his first case study involving an apparently normal individual who kills his wife, Menninger (1973) views murder as a symptom of extreme psychological isolation. For Menninger, the typical rage-type murderer has a history of episodic impulsive acts of violence.

Menninger *et al* (1963) characterize these individuals as having more severe ego disturbances not typical of neurotic disorders. At the same time, he found that these individuals could not be characterized as 'psychotic', borderline, or schizophrenic. He identifies two prodromal factors that represent the first two lines of defense before murderous rage erupts. Firstly, neurotic defenses are increasingly employed but fail to dissipate anxiety. Secondly, some evidence of paranoid experience and its accompanying defenses begins to occur. The naked display of aggression represents a third line of defense against further disorganization and destruction of the personality. In this way, although aggression is depicted as being uncontrollable, it still performs a crucial function.

Although Menninger's focus is on ego control, he shares similar ideas to those put forward by Wertham regarding the psychodynamics of the act itself. The act is driven by a build-up of affect or psychic energy that has a cathartic or relieving effect after a

rupture in the ego has occurred. It amounts to the general assumption that the personality is governed by homeostatic principles first considered by Freud (1895) in his discussion of the *constancy principle*. Briefly, this refers to the assumed tendency for the psyche to constantly return to a level of minimal stimulation through the discharge of affects that disrupt the homeostasis. This idea was modified considerably by Freud (Greenberg & Mitchell, 1983), but the essence of the principle remains relevant to Menninger's implicit assumption about rage murder. The metaphors that Menninger uses; flooding an area to prevent an overfilled dam from overflowing, or the need to incise an abscess to prevent it from getting further infected, convey an economic understanding of this event. The interplay between ego and energetic release is apparent in the following statement:

Ego rupture permitting some aggressive energy to be discharged has the economic value of affording sufficient temporary relief from internal pressure for the healing-over of the ego's ruptured wall to occur (p. 229).

In emphasizing the structural economic principles behind murderous rage, both Wertham (1937, 1962) and Menninger *et al* (1963, 1966) implicitly separate affect or 'psychic energy' from underlying object relations that make up the personality. In doing so, they foreclose further exploration of the specific nature and function of other psychodynamic factors and general personality characteristics. The fact that explosive violence, especially murder, does not occur on a regular basis (Hyatt-Williams, 1998) in a constant attempt to restore a homeostatic balance in the personality, suggests that many other factors, internal and external, require consideration here. They cannot be viewed as secondary to the constancy principle. Although this principle may accurately describe the phenomenology of rage-filled experience and the relief that follows, the analysis of the event or its prodromal factors cannot be based solely on our conscious experience. A fuller analysis of the underlying factors that contribute to this experience is needed.

To be sure, Menninger is clearly aware of the particular psychodynamic make-up of each case he explores. He finds, however, that "these dynamics do not explain that extremity of the act, the violence and the apparent meaninglessness of the act" (p.

239). He argues that these eruptions have a more general economic implication: they function as an attempt to prevent something worse happening within the personality.

In other publications specifically related to sudden murder in which Menninger is a co-author, some psychodynamic factors are outlined. Satten *et al* (1960) argue that sudden murder is caused by "severe lapses in ego control which make possible the open expression of primitive violence, born out of previous, and now unconscious, traumatic experiences" (p. 48). Duncan *et al* (1958) also observe this in an earlier study. Studying the history of four cases of murder, Satten *et al* (1960) conclude that the overwhelming nature of the early traumatic events prevents any form of ego-mastery from occurring causing "early defects in ego formation and severe disturbances in ego control" (p. 50). As a result, the ego is left deficient, brittle and inflexible. They also report that this may, at times, lead to a tendency to overcontrol elements of the personality. The extent to which this reflects the same kind of overcontrol observed by Megargee (1966) in the criminological findings discussed earlier, remains unclear.

As a consequence of having inflexible ways of managing emotional experience, the overcontrol they are referring to here appears to serve as a means of keeping relationships devoid of emotional experience. They describe the relating capacity of such individuals as follows:

Their relationships with others were of a shallow, cold nature, lending a quality of loneliness and isolation to these men. People were scarcely real to them, in the sense of being warmly and positively (or even angrily) felt about (Satten *et al*, 1960, p. 51).

Satten *et al* (1960) further found that all four men displayed a "bizarre, violent and primitive fantasy life" (p. 50) that was also evident in repetitive violent dreams. They make a distinction between this and conscious fantasy life, claiming that conscious fantasy and ideational material was minimal. Dissociation and depersonalization were also reported by these men, but were not given any specific dynamic meaning.

In sum then, apart from emphasizing the role of ego dysfunction, the Menninger group also found the role of trauma to be significant in rage murderers. No single

unconscious motive could be found for these kind killings apart from a general desperate attempt to avoid further disintegration of the personality. In essence, sudden murder occurs when a lapse in ego control allows for the re-activation of an old conflict where the victim becomes a key figure.

6.1.3 Bromberg: 'The Cuckolding Reaction'

Bromberg (1961) speaks of the murderous incident as a creative experience where "a criminal act succeeds in organizing, perhaps for a fleeting instant, a new set of life arrangements, new emotional configurations and so on" (p. 9). Although the use of the word 'creative' is somewhat problematic given that it is a destructive act, he explains: "... a destructive act is a creative act when viewed from the individual standpoint. It accomplishes aims consonant with the total configuration of his inner drives" (p.10). His views do not differ much from Wertham and Menninger in terms of general structural dynamics; he sees sudden murder as resulting from ego dysfunction and the failure of repression.

In addition, Bromberg (1961) found that explosive murders are usually related to an intense unconscious fear of being exposed as sexually inadequate. Offenders, he claims, are constantly preoccupied with ways of defending their own sexual virility and an extremely high emotional charge surrounds this sexual fear. He calls the psychological mechanism through which this reaction takes place the 'cuckolding reaction' (p. 29). The Cuckolding sign, made by putting the thumb between the first and second finger, is an ancient symbol of hypersexuality and when thrust at someone represents disdain for sexual impotency or inadequacy. Here, murder is a last ditch reactive attempt at eliminating the perceived cause of extreme feelings of sexual inadequacy.

Bromberg (1961) thus places the explosive murder squarely in the realm of the Oedipal complex. He relates the extreme humiliation that results from the exposure of sexual inadequacy to a repressed homosexuality originally involving the father. For this reason these murders are usually enacted within a triangular situation resulting in two different outcomes. Either the offender destroys his love object for betraying his (unconscious) shared secret about his inadequacy by seeking someone else, which has left him fearfully exposed. Or, secondly, the male 'competitor' is

attacked as an act of rivalry and triumph. The greater the Oedipal insecurity the more violent the reaction

In an earlier paper however, involving a detailed reconstruction of a case of explosive murder complicated by alcoholism, Bromberg (1951) highlights the role of early oral aggression. In this case, destructive phantasies were more about aggression towards unborn children, fear of a castrating mother, revenge against women, and less about typical Oedipal fears. Further, compliance and passivity are seen as a character defense against unconscious aggressive impulses. Bromberg concludes that the murder was a defensive reaction against overwhelming passivity which the offender unconsciously shared with woman through identification with them. Therefore, it is the passive feminine object that is annihilated. Here, the core insecurity appears to stem from internal dynamics between the offender, the maternal object and his identification with her.

Bromberg's study raises important questions regarding the role of the 'cuckolding reaction' in earlier object relations. His work reflects the general problems evident in attempting to conceptualize the influence of both Oedipal and pre-Oedipal experience in understanding particular behaviors or mental states (Grotstein, 1981; Western, 1989). I suggested earlier that the level at which these themes are represented in the psyche appears to provide a better indication of how both Oedipal and pre-Oedipal factors influence psychic activity.

6.1.4 Weiss and Colleagues: Distorted Identifications and Inadequacy

Weiss *et al* (1960) provide one of the most detailed accounts of the psychodynamic factors evident in the prodromal personality of the sudden murderer. In a comparative study, between 13 habitual offenders, 13 sexual offenders, and 13 sudden murderers, they report the following characteristics as being typical of the sudden murderer: Their family backgrounds were characterized by a poor relationship between parents but the families remained an ostensibly cohesive unit. Fathers were always found to be hostile or indifferent whilst the mothers occupied a domineering, conforming and overprotective role.

Weiss *et al* (1960) believed that the mother's overprotective behavior constituted a reaction formation to her own aggressive feeling towards her children. This left these future murderers in a situation where they could not adequately identify with a paternal object due to the father's overt hostility. They remained strongly attached to, and in partial identification with, the mother's strong dependency needs and her need for conformity. In order to maintain this attachment, and in an attempt to preserve some love, all reactive feelings of hostility towards mother were repressed. Weiss *et al* (1960) describe an internal situation characterized by considerable insecurity. On the one hand, their maternal identification leads to sexual identity problems, on the other hand, they cannot turn away from this for fear of breaking with mother's conforming ethos and risking losing her love.

As a result these individuals internalize a strong need to conform and succeed. However, due to their insecurities and confusion regarding their own identity and underlying hostility, they constantly fail. This sets up a cycle of personal failures that leads to escalating feelings of anger and rage. Because they are unable to deal with the failure, it is projected in the form of constantly blaming the 'bad world' for their own insecurities.

Weiss *et al* (1960) also found that rage-type murderers displayed a period of overt healthy adjustment for a period, ranging from a month to a year, before the murder took place. For instance, the individual may have kept a steady job or relationship for a reasonable length of time. This appears to be significant in that conformity brings with it more pressure to succeed, thus widening the gap between real feelings of inadequacy and the demands of conforming to a task. Further, the individual is no longer armed with the defensive manoeuvre of being able to blame others, as he is succeeding. He is forced closer to confronting his own unbearable self.

It is this tension that Weiss *et al* (1960) believe eventually, as a result of minor provocation, leads to the sudden murder. The provocation feeds the inadequacy that the individual can no longer tolerate, leading to "the ultimate projection, a feeling of 'I am no good, but it's your fault!'" (p. 674). This constitutes an ultimate attempt to rid himself of the 'bad object' that always reminds him of his intolerable inadequacies.

It is important to note however, that Weiss *et al* (1960) find that part of what makes these inadequacies inescapable is the unsuccessful use of projection because these murderers have become too overtly aware of their own deficits. Thus they are unable to keep them at a distance by projecting them into another object. In this sense, the 'ultimate projection' might be seen as a final violent attempt to instill and fix what they desperately want to disown into another person. As Meloy (1992) points out, projective identification seems to better describe this action where homicide becomes an ultimate form of control over the devalued victim/projected part of the self. This thinking goes hand in hand with broader developments in psychoanalytic thinking to which we will return in considering some of the more recent contributions in the field.

In a later study by the same research unit, Blackman *et al* (1963) emphasize intense conforming and dependency needs present in the forty-three cases they review. Dependency needs, however, are vigorously denied and explosive bouts of rage become the ultimate means of denying this need. They emphasize this as the key to why the murder takes place: "The offender is aware of his own dependency needs, but he tries to deny them; the explosive reaction of rage becomes the ultimate brutal denial" (p. 293). The facade of independence used to ward off these feelings eventually becomes impossible to uphold.

6.1.5 Ruotolo: The Damaged Pride System

Ruotolo (1968), in *Dynamics of Sudden Murder*, investigates five cases of sudden murder. With slightly different emphases on the dynamic features described above, he views the murderous response as a reaction to a perceived irrevocable assault on an idealized self image or "pride system" (p. 173) that desperately needs to be upheld. The assault or blow generates intolerable self-hate which is then externalized onto the victim in a desperate attempt at restoration of the self. In this sense, the preservation of the 'pride system', as opposed to the obliteration of the object, is primary here. In his words, "Some personalized value was found to take precedence over the 'ultimate' crime of murder. The *sin qua non*, this unique image of oneself, had to be maintained by the murderer at any price" (p. 162).

Ruoloto's findings appear very similar to the kind of rage that occurs in response to narcissistic injury which was discussed earlier (Lewis, 1993). The shame and humiliation that results leads to extreme hate and, in Kernberg's terms, a 'radical devaluation' (p. 23) of the object leading to murder or suicide. A number of authors have since supported this claim (Frazier, 1976; Gilligan, 1998; Rosenbaum & Binni, 1986). Rosenbaum & Binni (1986) for instance, found that homicidal impulses were essentially linked to narcissistic injuries that lead to a sudden drop in self-esteem, whereas Frazier (1974) associated explosive murder more with milder repeated humiliations accompanied by feelings of shame.

The self-hate that results from narcissistic injury sets the scene for further self-destructive behaviours, a common feature in all of Ruoloto's cases. He also notes what he describes as a "seeming indifference to their own lives" (p. 74). As well as being emotionally isolated from others, he appears to refer here to a sense of these offenders being alienated from their own affective states, especially anger.

Ruoloto (1968) outlines a second dynamic component to sudden murder: There is a move away from a neurotic solution, in which symptoms are used to play out particular conflicts, to a repressed solution characterized by self-effacement. Repression however, cannot be maintained and causes extreme anxiety that, in turn, precipitates a desperate need to return to a neurotic solution. The potential for murder occurs when the victim unknowingly stands in the way of the offender returning to his previous mental state. However, Ruoloto is somewhat skeptical about his own assumptions here as firstly, a number of these cases did show evidence of secure neurotic solutions and secondly, four of his cases presented with fragile ego boundaries and signs of psychotic breakdown. As Meloy (1992) suggests in his review of this study, the above characteristics appear to resemble closely the borderline personality organization.

The murderous act, according to Ruoloto (1968), occurs not so much because the victim happens to 'fit' into preconceived object-relations, fantasies and unconscious conflicts that are reenacted. It is more a reaction than a reenactment. Murder occurs because victims are felt to be symbolic impediments to the restoration of a more tolerable psychic state. According to this view, the victim is seen one-

dimensionally as an obstacle to recovery. The significance of the object's particular characteristics for the offender's internal world are not seen as an important dynamic feature of this kind of murder. This view differs somewhat from the main view that some form of transference enactment takes place when these murders are committed (Hyatt-Williams, 1998; Meloy, 1992; Revitch and Schlesinger, 1981).

6.2 RECENT CONTRIBUTIONS

More recent studies share a common emphasis on primitive psychological processes such as splitting and projective identification. These are typically observed in the borderline personality organization. As suggested earlier, a particular type of borderline personality appears to typify best the 'overcontrolled' murderer. Although Gallwey (1985) does not discuss rage-type murder specifically, I include him here because his findings regarding the borderline personality in the criminal population are relevant to exploring the intrapsychic qualities of the rage-type murderer.

6.2.1 Revitch and Schlesinger: The Catathymic Murder

We have already discussed Revitch and Schlesinger's (1978, 1981) distinction between acute and chronic catathymic homicide. Although *The Psychopathology of Homicide* is a seminal contribution outlining the different kinds of homicide, unfortunately Revitch and Schlesinger (1981) place little emphasis on the underlying intrapsychic factors that may contribute to these offenses. The cases they put forward are detailed and illustrative in terms of clinical signs and symptoms, but their analysis of how the individual's background and preceding interactions contribute to the crime is limited.

They essentially draw four conclusions about catathymic murder. Firstly, they agree with Ruotolo (1968) in finding that an injury to 'the pride system' is a key intrapsychic determinant of acute catathymia. Secondly, they acknowledge that chronic catathymia always occurs within a close relationship implicitly acknowledging that attachment difficulties may be significant. They claim that relationships evoke unresolved sexual conflicts and helplessness in the perpetrator, but they do not develop this much further. Thirdly, Revitch and Schlesinger (1981)

find that although past trauma may be a significant factor in rage-type murder, many of their cases show no signs of previous trauma. Finally, they argue that the key motivating force behind the murder stems from a displacement of emotion onto the victim which carries some symbolic significance.

6.2.2 Meloy: Pathological Attachment and Borderline Personality Organization

Following Revitch and Schlesinger (1978), Meloy (1988, 1992) develops a broader understanding of the psychodynamics of catathymic murder by using Attachment Theory combined with an Object Relations perspective. Drawing on more recent understandings of the borderline personality, particularly Kernberg, he argues that rage-type murderers are victim to primitive defensive processes such as splitting, denial, idealization, devaluation and projective identification, all characteristics of a borderline level of functioning. In his words, "... the unconscious denial of affect, and the use of pre-Oedipal defenses in a rigid and controlled personality disorder with dependent and narcissistic features, are pathonomic of catathymia" (p. 52).

As is characteristic of borderline pathology, these individuals may shift from being dependent to feeling entitled, from being highly sensitive to humiliation, to being grandiose about personal capabilities. Meloy makes use of Kernberg's theory, proposing that each object or self-representation carries its own affective charge when cathected. The denial of affect, referred to above, is thus also attached to a particular object relation that has been split-off from the rest of the psyche. It is from this split off affective charge that murderous rage emanates.

The catathymic offender's internal world is split into good and bad objects and all thinking past these polarities becomes unresolvable, creating an internal situation that leads to a build-up of unbearable affect. Along these lines, Meloy (1992) quotes a patient as saying: "Either he or I must die, something has to give" (p. 58). He believes that verbalizations like this essentially express a wish to annihilate the bad self or object whilst at that moment having no consciousness of the good self or object.

Meloy also finds that these kinds of murderers show clear signs of insecure attachments to significant objects originating from early primary relationships. Due

to this, the individual feels bound and controlled by attachments, whilst at the same time fears that significant others will abandon him. For Meloy, this is the prototype of the transference that predisposes the individual to a situation of murder aimed at ending the distress that this dilemma causes. In this way he agrees with Revitch and Schlesinger (1978, 1981) that murderous action is propelled by reenactment.

But why does this escalate into murder? Meloy (1992) uses the mechanism of projective identification to explain how this occurs. In a defensive attempt to protect representations of the self, unwanted bad parts of the self are attributed to an object, followed by an attempt to control the object. During a period of increasing tension the offender feels more and more vulnerable, and in an attempt to eliminate feelings of helplessness, he invades the internal object so as to control it or he fears he will be controlled by it. Although a complete break down of the boundaries between self and object does not occur, there is growing confusion, due to projection, as to the source of anger, distress and pain. When the confusion is finally located in another person, through projective identification, a sense of magical omnipotent control is exercised over the external object. Finally, "absolute control of the object as the source of persecutory distress," Meloy argues, "is acted out through violence" (p. 62).

It is not clear whether he sees this kind of murder as having any particular dynamic features, as opposed to it simply being an extreme form of escalating violence. He does say however, that in chronic catathymic individuals experience conscious fantasies of murder. Although planning of the murder may take place here, it differs from psychopathic motives in that the fantasies are ego-dystonic and are unpleasurable to the person. From a dynamic standpoint, Meloy also views the depression linked to chronic catathymic murder as being a defense against murderous impulses. If external triggers are intense enough, the defense collapses leading to murder.

The relief associated with rage murder, according to Meloy, has two psychological sources. Firstly, it occurs by virtue of the large amount of affect that has been split off through the murder, in phantasy unburdening the self. Secondly, the relief emerges from the actualization of a fantasized end, that has occurred through the destruction of the object, to a disruptive symbiotic attachment.

6.2.3 Hyatt-Williams: Latent Murderousness and the Indigestible Idea of Death

In *Cruelty, Violence and Murder*, Hyatt-Williams (1998) discusses over thirty years of experience working with violent prisoners. He makes a significant theoretical contribution to understanding the internal world of offenders who have murdered through rage. He agrees with the observation that most rage-type murderers do not show many overt signs of abnormality. But this does not mean that their personalities are free of specific dynamic constellations. "Despite histories of hitherto apparently blameless lives," he argues, "all murderers seem to have a criminal personality" (1998, p. 19). For Hyatt-Williams, a criminal personality exists between neurotic and psychotic ways of managing internal experience. Like Meloy (1992), he agrees that borderline dynamics best explain the way these individuals manage experience. The 'criminal' aspect to which he makes reference refers to an entrenched, but often hidden, narcissism. When uncovered, the arrogance of this part of the personality reduces the psychic world to part-objects, in turn dehumanizing the living world that surrounds the potential murderer.

The process of splitting evident in the personality organization he discuss appears to be somewhat different from what is typically associated with the more impulsive, erratic, rapidly cycling borderline personality. He describes a splitting process that appears more stable, and perhaps more 'successful', in its effort to keep bad internal experience split off from the rest of the personality.

Hyatt-Williams (1996, 1998), at present, provides the most comprehensive account of how defensive organizations operate in rage-type murderers. He draws predominantly from Klein's and Bion's ideas on projective identification, Ps <-> D interchanges, the container-contained relationship and indigestible mental states. He begins with the premise that we all possess murderous capabilities as manifestations of the death instinct. He argues that it is "the indigestible idea of death" (p. 23) itself that forms the core of this pathological organization which, in turn, constantly threatens psychic development and life-giving processes. He calls this 'the death constellation'.

Throughout life, he argues, we continually attempt to work through depressive anxieties related to destructiveness and death, mourning the losses that result. This would also ultimately include mourning the idea of one's own inevitable death. We are ultimately dependent on the containing capabilities of the maternal object to ensure that our own destructiveness acquires a depressive solution where it is mitigated by love and care for the object. In the murderous mind, however, Hyatt-Williams finds that a number of factors force this process into an encapsulated state where 'working through' ceases. He cites a predisposition to excessive envy, the lack of a containing object, exposure to trauma, brutalization and prolonged painful illness as factors that impair the metabolizing process. As a result, associated internal experiences are split off and exist as concrete indigestible objects lying dormant until some external or internal event threatens the status quo. They exist in the form of ideograms, unarticulated images, that are propelled into consciousness when under threat.

The splitting that occurs here accounts for why many violent individuals are often described as 'apparently ordinary individuals'. In most cases where destructiveness has not contaminated the whole intrapsychic situation, such as is seen in extreme psychopathy, these individuals possess only a particular area of vulnerability. Here, he is referring specifically to individuals who are susceptible to rage-type murder. In his words:

There are, however, other persons who have areas of specific vulnerability, but who also possess a healthy part of the personality. In practical terms, unless the area of disturbance that is the Achilles heel is touched upon, one can be reasonably certain that no murderous escalation will occur (1996, p. 35).

Hyatt-Williams regards the impact of trauma, in particular, as causing this kind of specific hypersensitivity in the psyche. One implication of this formulation is that murder is not an inevitability in these individuals. There is no clearly defined, focused phantasy of murder or unconscious conviction to carry it out despite the presence of the death constellation. Further, Hyatt-Williams' formulation, as indicated earlier in his general contribution to understanding violence, places great

emphasis on the contemporary environment as to whether explosive murder will take place. Only if circumstances occur in such a way that 'too much happens too soon' and the psyche's digestive capabilities are challenged will these individuals murder. "Actual murder", he writes, "takes place when too much pressure is experienced by the individual at risk before he or she has had the time, opportunity, or capacity to digest it and detoxicate it psychically" (Hyatt-Williams, 1998, p.157). The extent to which this situation itself is unconsciously determined by the individual's prodromal behavior is unclear in his work.

Due to the concrete nature of the death constellation a lack of symbolic capacity is also noted. Its importance in other forms of violence has been noted earlier. Important here, however, is that a sudden collapse of the symbolic function occurs where symbols turn into symbolic equations. In other words, some symbolic capacity may be evident in that part of the personality prior to the onset of an indigestible situation. This again suggests that disturbance is not always apparent in these individuals.

Hyatt-Williams (1998) argues that, as a consequence of the splitting process, murderous action is "dynamized by persecutory anxiety" (p. 78). Unable to tolerate the psychic pain associated with the encapsulated part of the self, these individuals are susceptible to using powerful forms of projective identification. Here external reality, the victim in this case, becomes the target of the aggressor's unbearable psychic pain. It is externalized then attacked or annihilated in the victim. In what he terms "the dance of death" (p. 21), the unsymbolized fantasy of destroying what is indigestible becomes real, irreversibly changing the external situation.

It appears that Hyatt-Williams refers to a particular type of projective identification most akin to Bion's (1962a) 'evacuative' type, but with more coherence. In other words, it seldom leads to the chaotic psychosis that Bion describes. Further, its function is most directly about annihilation. In phantasy, this disburdens the self and brings some relief similar to what Wertham (1937) and Menninger & Mayman (1966) have indicated. As Hyatt-Williams points out, however, this ironically results in further depletion of the self and a diminished ability to deal with stressful life

situations. Therefore the defensive solution also becomes the vehicle for an escalating vulnerability to act violently.

In keeping with his ideas about violence, the main focus of treatment for Hyatt-Williams (1998) is aimed at “restoring psychic digestion and metabolism so there can be learning from life experiences” (p. 120). The therapist’s containing function is of utmost importance here in order to facilitate a process of mourning that he observes is absent in the murderer. The capacity to mourn, an essential feature of the depressive position is, in Hyatt-Williams’ experience, the main means through which psychic digestion can eventually occur. If successful, it results in reclaiming the ground lost through brutalization. It allows for the restoration of creative life-giving aspects of the psyche and an increased capacity to tolerate psychic pain. However, Hyatt-Williams is not over-optimistic in working with such individuals claiming that the outcome is either very rewarding or extremely difficult and disappointing. This tends to mirror the deep polarized split that appears to occur in the minds of these offenders. He also argues that, in his experience, extreme acts of destructiveness, like rage murder, can never fully be mourned and at best, treatment can only facilitate an increased maturation of the personality and a move towards a more reparative lifestyle.

6.2.4 Gallwey: The Dual Personality Organization

As mentioned earlier, Gallwey (1985) discusses two different dual personality profiles that fall within the broad category of borderline personality organization. His formulations are worth exploring here as they help clarify some of the dynamic differences observed in borderline personalities that are vulnerable to pathological forms of aggression. His understanding of the borderline personality, particularly the schizoid type, also appears to resonate with what has been discussed previously regarding their apparently ‘normal’ predisposition.

Gallwey bases his formulations on the work of Fairbairn and Klein, and Bion’s ideas about a split personality organization. Here, regression need not be used to explain the expression of primitive defenses as the personality functions as two separate systems, one able to function independently of the other.

In the first type of dual personality, the pseudo-self serves to conceal deficiencies caused in the ego by prolonged infantile trauma. As a result a large part of the ego remains in a regressed state. These individuals are intolerant of separation experiences and are plagued by feelings of hopelessness and profound loss. Gallwey (1985) argues that the ego, however, remains somewhat functional through the use of various strategies. Most evident, is the use of primitive fantasies to control objects, which sets up a parasitic dependence on 'host' objects to maintain this illusion of normality. The illusion of control may also be maintained by reversing the problem of dependency, making objects dependent on the self. Aggression resulting from "emotional hunger and sense of poverty" (p. 135) is dealt with through addictive behaviors. Gallwey (1985) goes on to say, in these individuals "vengeful feelings cannot find legitimate expression, this may lead to compliant, passive, even masochistic relationships with others" (p. 135). He does not however, make it clear why these vengeful feelings cannot be directly expressed.

The expression of aggression and other antisocial behaviors in this personality organization are part of the defensive system to maintain the fickle ego. For this reason these individuals often appear intimidating and frightening to others. They "have a clear tendency to collapse in the face of almost any hazard or frustration, are usually unable to sustain an independent existence, show frequent bouts of self-destructiveness, are almost continually manipulative and self-preoccupied, and are generally poorly contained individuals" (p. 135).

Gallwey (1985) believes that most habitual offenders fit this personality profile. These personalities are particularly vulnerable to committing acts of homicide when there is a threat of the loss of an object. The violence is thus a defensive attempt to preserve his dependency on the object. He argues that "violent behavior can be as much a desperate attempt to establish some supportive link with an object of over-dependency as an expression of pure destructiveness" (p. 136). Some of the features of this personality do appear to concur with the more 'impulsive' personality sometimes associated with rage murder. However, the extreme fragility, overt manipulateness and associated repeat offenses do not appear typical of what would be expected from the rage offender being discussed here. Gallwey's (1985) second dual-personality appears closer to the mark.

In this borderline personality organization, the individual has a more coherent ego. However, this can only be maintained as long as it is split off from a more destructive and disturbed area of the personality. As long as this split is maintained, such individuals may live a reasonably fulfilling life. The encapsulated part of the personality, in his opinion, consists of “‘undigested’ memories or primitive images built of experiences connected with being terrorized or exposed to excessive pain or brutality through non-accidental injury” (p. 147). His findings are similar to Hyatt-Williams' (1998) in this regard. If this is disrupted through some form of vulnerability, a catastrophic discharge of violent emotions will ensue. Due to an extraordinary capacity to maintain the split between these two separate systems, the discharge of these primitive affects is usually brief and circumscribed.

As a result, murders committed by such individuals appear most incompatible with the person's life history and personality. Although these individuals may appear passive and shy, they are seldom excessively withdrawn, they appear relatively stable and there is little evidence of any deterioration in their personality after violent acts. Further, according to Gallwey, overt psychotic symptoms are rarely detected. Offenders may, however, experience depersonalized feelings and amnesia both before and during violence; this is especially so when the attack is “catastrophically violent or homicidal” (p. 142).

He also claims that the offense “often has bizarre, violent and quasi-sexual features” (p. 142) and, at times, there may be evidence of a sexual perversion or non-habitual delinquency, despite the individual being socially well-adjusted. These signs do not, however, seem to be commonly featured in the type of murderer outlined in much of the literature. However, Gallwey (1985) isolates a further group of individuals that use schizoid encapsulation to such an extent that they show very little sign of distress. In these offenders no psychopathology is apparent. He describes them as shy and passive with some neurotic features. Because they are so often free of any gross symptomatology, organic causes are often sought in an attempt to explain their aberrant violence despite there being no evidence of this. This appears most similar to the personality characteristics described earlier in Chapter 3.

Gallwey uses Bion's (1962a) theory of the α -function and β -elements to explain the dynamics of this personality. Briefly, the α -function is concerned with assimilating and metabolizing the drives and painful psychic experience, making them more manageable and facilitating ego adaptation. The β -elements stand for those aspects of psychic experience that are felt to be concrete and indigestible and are thus repelled by healthier parts of the personality. However, instead of being constantly projected, as they are in Bion's account of psychotic experience, the α -function manages to organize these volatile elements into a separate system. This makes 'normal' development in this part of the ego possible, where the α -function operates without disruption. The β -system remains primitive, only on occasions 'leaking' through to the α -system in the form of paranoid ideation, obsessional symptoms, or violent nightmares. As projection into the object is not often used, this part of the self becomes a quasi-mystical unknown entity.

Violence occurs when the β -system collapses and floods the rest of the personality with dangerous unknown and unarticulated experience causing an internal crisis. Gallwey believes that the specific vulnerability that may precipitate the collapse may be caused by either traumatic experience or anti-developmental congenital factors that are encapsulated in the β -system.

Although these individuals may appear 'normal', the deeply entrenched splitting process inevitably leads to an impoverished personality structure as much psychic energy is spent internally on maintaining the split. Where the β -system is characterized by homicidal feelings, the α -system maintains the split by remaining passive, shy, and non-aggressive. Gallwey's formulation explains how potential murders are often described as non-aggressive and passive in nature. It also provides a conceptualization of a relatively stable kind of borderline personality organization most vulnerable to aberrant acts of violence, but at the same time, socially well adjusted. The homicidal nature of the β -system, however, is unclear and is not the focus of Gallwey's paper. The particular qualities of this system, the psychodynamic factors and object relations that keep it encapsulated, require further exploration with particular reference to rage-type murder.

6.3 CONCLUSIONS & DIRECTIVE QUESTIONS

Throughout the previous chapters a number of key features and problems with understanding rage-type murder have been outlined. To recapitulate, we have considered the clinical features of the act, pointing out five distinguishing features: (1) Dissociation, (2) its affective nature, (3) its motiveless nature, (4) the distinction between chronic and acute catathymia, and finally, (5) the particular situational characteristics of the act. We then explored some of the characteristics apparent in the personality of the rage-type murderer evident mainly from a criminological perspective. This also included reviewing what we know about the evidence of psychopathology in rage-type murder. In essence, I have argued that both Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and Depression may be associated with rage-type murder and that the dissociation that accompanies the act is not typical of a psychotic disorder. In terms of the general features of the personality, the trends in the literature sketch an image of an insecure overcontrolled character that is usually passive and non-aggressive. A further trend indicates that these individuals are typically considered to have features of Borderline Personality Disorder. It was pointed out, however, that the borderline personality organization is best seen as encompassing a number of varying personality profiles. It was suggested that those who had conceptualized the borderline personality as a dual personality appear to describe best what has been outlined in the literature. However, the nature of the rage-type murderer's personality, the particular psychodynamic factors, and how such factors could be related to murderous violence, require further consideration.

To this end, we set out to consider the internal world of the murderer from a psychoanalytic perspective with particular interest in exploring how intrapsychic characteristics have been used to understand aggression. I emphasized the need to distinguish between different types and manifestations of aggression in order to avoid an endless debate on the nature of aggression. Rage and violence, as being key features of rage-type murder, were then discussed with this in mind.

The physical nature of violence, as well as its self-preservative motive, was found to be an important key factor in understanding rage-type murder. This leads to an essential exploratory question: What are the psychodynamic origins of physical violence? What turns aggressiveness into a physical act? More specifically, why does this in some cases lead to murder?

The many different ways in which these questions might be answered from an intrapsychic perspective were then explored, referring to what has been written about violence in psychoanalysis. I have argued that it is useful to consider these different approaches as part of a dimensional system, some being more prominent and manifesting themselves in different ways, depending on the type of violence. This is a relatively new area in psychoanalytic research and still requires considerable development.

Finally, how intrapsychic features have been used in the analysis of violence, with particular reference to rage-type murder, has been considered in the present chapter. It is difficult to draw specific conclusions from this body of work as most of the main studies have considered rage murder from different perspectives and with a different focus. However, I shall draw three broad conclusions from the literature explored thus far that, in turn, give rise to further questions to be explored in this study.

a) Intrapsychic Dimensions of Murder.

Clearly the intrapsychic dimensions of murder cannot be separated from other questions posed below, but are concerned more with the specifics of why, from an intrapsychic standpoint, murder occurs. What particular intrapsychic factors can be isolated in these individuals that help explain the act of murder?

The intrapsychic dimensions of violence, with their accompanying conclusions, have been outlined above. How do these manifest in rage-type murder specifically, and do particular dimensions appear more relevant than others? For instance, it will be important to explore further the nature of the defensive organization evident in the research cases and how these are related to murderous violence. Further, projective identification has been isolated as a key dynamic in violent action. It is used, however, to refer to a broad range of behavior and

psychological experience. What is the specific nature of projective identification used in rage-type murder? Secondly, the nature and function of phantasy/fantasy still remains unclear in these individuals and requires further exploration. All the dimensions of violence mentioned previously require specific exploration with regard to rage murder and will be considered further here, notwithstanding the limitations of the research methodology to be used.

b) Borderline Personality Organization.

There is general agreement that rage-type offenders are typically non-aggressive, passive and emotionally isolated. All this, however, is rigorously controlled in a way that makes such individuals appear relatively normal. It has been argued that a particular kind of borderline personality organization, characterized by schizoid encapsulation, best describes their personality (Gallwey, 1985). Similar formulations have previously been put forward by Winnicott (1965) and Glasser (1996). It is not yet clear how they may be related.

The general questions that require further exploration here pertain to the existence of this type of personality discussed previously. Can this personality constellation be observed in this study? Secondly, are there any particular dynamics or structural features observable from the analysis of the cases used in this study?

c) The Act

There is general agreement regarding the defensive nature of the act. Most of the literature indicates the annihilation of the object, as the perceived source of distress, to be a key dynamic behind the act. However, a number of authors, taken in by the obvious phenomenological nature of the act, have tended to overemphasize its cathartic nature. This has tended to under-emphasize the role of object relations in the psychology of the individual. Here, the general criticisms lodged against the drive model and the constancy principle hold true for the specific case of rage-type murder. Much of the later work born out of traditional psychoanalysis attempts to emphasize the importance of the internalized object (Fairbairn, 1952; Kernberg, 1984; Klein, 1957), and this is reflected in many of the more recent studies on rage-type murder.

It has been argued that rage is seldom, if ever, 'objectless' and has its own particular dynamic features. With this in mind, the explosive nature of the act requires further exploration. Significant questions to consider include: Is rage characteristic of a particular object relation that has just been waiting to erupt? Does it constitute an enactment? More broadly, one might ask, out of what part of the personality or dynamic structure does this murderous rage emerge?

One also has to explore the role the victim plays in the discharge of affect. To what extent might these individuals represent a neglected internal object relationship that is suddenly confronted in reality? Viewed in this way, it becomes as important to understand how the offender is overwhelmed by a situation, or an object, as it is to understand how the affective discharge itself overwhelms the individual. These psychological and situational factors, both prior to, and during the incident, require further consideration.

It is important to note that how we understand the dynamics of the act, whether from a situational or intrapsychic perspective, has implications for the rehabilitation and prognosis of such individuals. For instance, if the rage experienced here is formulated solely as a massive catharsis, rather than being linked to a particular situation or internal object, then the prognosis will be viewed as much worse. If, on the other hand, a particular object relation could be isolated as causing the violence, management and ideas regarding prognosis' could be far more specific (Meloy, 1988).

SECTION III

METHODOLOGY

This section comprises two chapters. The first outlines issues related to research design, details of the participants of the study, material used, and methods of analysis. Chapter 8, the second chapter in this section, focuses on the *Psychoanalytic Research Interview* as the main source of research material in this study. The use of psychoanalytic principles in the analysis of interviews and interview technique still remains a relatively unexplored area. I have developed the *Psychoanalytic Research Interview* as one way of considering how psychoanalytic ideas can be applied to the interview process. As this constitutes a novel means of conducting and analyzing interviews it requires considerable discussion. Given the specific demands of psychoanalytic inquiry, interview methodology needs to consider technical and methodological concerns specific to this endeavor. Most notably, this involves examining how intrapsychic processes and unconscious meaning can be discerned from the interview process.

CHAPTER SEVEN

PARTICIPANTS & RESEARCH APPROACH

7.1 RESEARCH APPROACH

All the research for this study was conducted at Westville prison in Kwazulu-Natal. Permission for access to prisoners was granted by the Commissioner of the Department of Correctional Services.

A multiple case study approach (Edwards, 1993b) was used where different aspects of each case were explored across nine cases. The case study approach is widely used in the social sciences and may be employed adopting a wide variety of research strategies (Bromley, 1986; Edwards, 1993a, 1993b, 1989; Kazdin, 1981; Mitchell, 1983). In the present study the research material for each case included: (1) court records comprising a summary of events surrounding the homicide; (2) the offender's response to the Thematic Apperception Test (Bellak, 1975); and (3) the *Psychoanalytic Research Interview*. The use of a number of different sources of case material follows Meloy's (1992) suggestion that a full forensic assessment of the violent individual should be compiled using a corroboration of three different sources of information: independent historical data, a clinical interview and psychological testing.

The different sources of material were not given equal weighting in the analysis of each case. The analysis of the interviews was used as the main focus of this study whilst the court proceedings and the TAT were used mainly to supplement and corroborate information gained from the interviews. The nature and mode of analysis of each of these sources of material will now be discussed. However, a detailed discussion of the interview methodology will be reserved for the next chapter as the

approach considers specific problems related to psychoanalytic research methods. The *Psychoanalytic Research Interview* was introduced as a novel means of understanding the interview process and its analysis. For this reason, specific theoretical and technical guidelines were developed and require considerable explication here.

7.1.1 Court Records

Court records obtained from the offenders' prison file were used to establish the specific details of each case and the circumstances leading to the murder. The records comprised a summary of the court proceedings, an outline of the events that took place, the magistrates' description and sentencing of the case. The level of detail varied across cases, but all sufficiently described the events surrounding the crime as adjudged by the court. These records were used to inform some of the questions, specific to each case, that were asked towards the end of the interview process. Questions were used to gain further clarity about the case as well as to confront the individual during the interview about any particular detail that he had omitted.

Court records also served as a corroborative source of information in the analysis and interpretation of each case. For instance, if particular details given by the court records were distorted, omitted, or changed by the offender, the records served as a key determinant as to how such an act could be interpreted.

In each case these records were used, along with some of the interview material, to compile a case history. This has been included in the discussion of each case. Emergent themes regarding the events of the murder and the case history were then explored across the nine cases.

7.1.2 The T.A.T.²

The TAT (Bellak, 1975) was used to explore intrapsychic processes and object relations evident in each offender. Western's (1991) system of analysis, which uses the TAT to assess four different dimensions of object relations, was used to analyze the stories. The four dimensions are as follows: (1) Complexity of representations of

² Thematic Apperception Test.

people; (2) Affect-tone of relationship paradigms; (3) Capacity for emotional investment in relationships and moral standards, and (4) Understanding social causality. Each of these dimensions are assessed on a 5-point scale clearly outlined by Western. The system has been shown to have a high validity rating against other evaluation procedures dealing with assessing social maturity and the capacity for intrapsychic representation (Western, 1991; Western *et al*, 1990). Each of the dimensions can be described as follows:

7.1.2.1 Complexity of representations of people

This scale uses developmental theory broadly accepted by object relations theorists to assess the maturity of representations. In theory, the distinguishing features between self and other should become increasingly refined with emotional growth and object representations become more complex, multi-dimensional, and integrated. This scale also evaluates the individual's capacity to integrate object representations that have opposing affective valences. In other words, it assesses the individual's capacity to tolerate ambivalence apparent in mature object relations and characteristic of the depressive position (Bion, 1962b; Klein, 1937).

7.1.2.2 Affect-tone of relationship paradigms

This dimension assesses the affect-tone of the individual's object world projected into the TAT stories. It relies primarily on "the extent to which the person expects relationships to be destructive and threatening or safe and enriching" (Western, 1991, p. 59). This differs from other dimensions in that the 1-5 scale score, according to Western, does not evaluate a dimension of the internal world that is a function of developmental maturity. Benevolent and malevolent affect-tone may occur at all levels of development. In this sense this dimension is scored independently of the maturity of the representational system.

7.1.2.3 Capacity for emotional investment in relationships and moral standards

This dimension evaluates the stories in terms of their expression of need-satisfying demands, security and gratification in relation to others. This is contrasted with the more mature representations of a relationship based on love, respect, and concern for other objects.

Moral values revealed in immature object relationships are represented in an idealized fashion attached to feelings of guilt and shame. On the other end of the scale, 'mature morals' are evident in stories that depict deep committed relationships where unique qualities of the object are valued and viewed as separate from the self.

7.1.2.4 Understanding social causality

This scale assesses the logicity, accuracy and complexity of attributions of others' intentions and is based primarily on some of Piaget's (1951) theoretical conclusions regarding child development. The scale ranges from immature, illogical, inappropriate attributions to the complex psychological processes evident in thoughts, feelings and actions pertaining to causality that are accurate, increasingly abstract and internalized.

Western's (1991) system makes it possible to develop an assessment of the stories which is both qualitative and quantitative. Each of the scales allows for a general quantitative analysis of the maturity of the individual's object relations. The specifics of themes related to particular object relationships, on the other hand, can be considered from a qualitative perspective.

In terms of the present study, a synopsis of the quantitative analysis of object relations and a description of the most prominent themes evident in the stories were prepared for each case. Emergent themes across all nine cases were then, documented. The TAT findings were also used within each case as a corroborative source of information in the analysis of the interviews.

7.1.3 The Psychoanalytic Research Interview

The *Psychoanalytic Research Interview*, comprising four 60-minute interviews per case, was used in the study. All interviews were recorded and transcribed. The interviews were used as the main source of material to explore the object relations, phantasies and defensive organizations present in each case. As mentioned earlier, the development and use of the interview in this way will be discussed in detail in the following chapter.

The narratives that emerged in each case, as well as the formulation of object relations and identifications, are included in the case material to follow. The intrapsychic themes that occurred across cases were then explored.

7.2 SELECTION OF OFFENDERS

Nine adult male offenders were selected to take part in the study. Before their consent was obtained (see Consent Form in Appendix C), they were informed about the details of the study and briefed on what would be required of them. Their prison files, which comprised court summaries of their case and a brief report of their conduct in prison, were then used to evaluate their suitability for the study. The following criteria were used to select participants:

- a) The offender had been convicted of murder and had confessed to the crime.
- b) The murder was committed within a particular context that indicates that an explosive state of rage in the offender was the sole motive for the murder.
- c) There was no evidence that the individual was involved in any form of organized crime.
- d) There was no evidence that the murder was politically motivated.
- e) There was no history of previous criminal activity or previous convictions.
- f) The offender had successfully completed high school education at an English medium school.
- g) There was no evidence of neurological impairment.

The above criteria were selected so as to exclude offenders whose offense had been triggered by motives other than those congruent with the profile of rage-type murder (Abrahamsen, 1973; Blackburn, 1971, 1986; Blackman *et al*, 1963; Bromberg, 1961; Gilligan, 1997; Hollin, 1989; Hyatt-Williams, 1996; Meloy, 1992; Wertham, 1937). Apart from the other motives that have been discussed previously, an evaluation of

the formal educational level achieved was used to rule out any gross intellectual impairment that may have contributed to the offense. If there was any doubt about the information, or the information in the file was lacking, the case was excluded. Fifteen cases were screened. Six were excluded, as it became apparent after the first interview that they did not fulfill the above criteria.

No priority was given to a particular race or cultural group. The time or date of murder, the amount of prison time served, or the length of sentence, were not considered in the selection of offenders. However, it was specified that each offender needed to have served at least four months of his sentence to ensure that he had had sufficient time to adjust to prison surroundings.

7.3 RECORDING, TRANSCRIPTION & TRANSLATION

All interviews and TAT assessments were audio taped. To ensure confidentiality I transcribed all the material. Each completed transcription was checked against the original to assess the reliability of each written transcript (Terre Blanche & Kelly, 1990). No translation was required as all interviewees, with the exception of one, spoke English as their first language. The remaining interviewee had been educated in English and spoke it proficiently.

7.4 CASE ANALYSIS

Edwards (1993b) outlines a number of “phases of discovery and hypothesis testing” (p. 8) that characterize the steps that can be employed in case research. The steps of analysis used in this study were loosely based on this approach. Here, the researcher begins with an analysis of the case as a descriptive account. Secondly, he or she then proceeds by adopting a qualitative methodological approach, such as the *Hermeneutic* (Packer & Addison, 1989) or *Grounded Theory* approach (Strauss & Corbin, 1990), or any other qualitative method, to develop a theoretical account for each case. Finally, the last phase of the analysis involves testing the developed theory

against other cases and other theories. The steps used within and across cases in the present study were as follows:

a) *Descriptive accounts*

Descriptive accounts from all three sources of material were gathered.

b) *Preliminary analysis*

A preliminary analysis of each source of information was developed within each case.

- i) The court records and some points of information gained from the interview material were used to develop a case history for each case.
- ii) The TAT stories were analyzed using Western's (1991) Object Relations approach.
- iii) The key interview narratives and object relations were developed using the methodology proposed for the Psychoanalytic Research Interview.

c) *Intra-case analysis: Case formulation*

Making use of all the above research material a formulation of the object relations for each case was developed. Here, within the broad context of psychoanalytic theory I used the TAT and case history to corroborate the analysis of object relations that emerged in the interviews.¹ As mentioned earlier, the interview material was used as the primary source of information from which to begin this inquiry process.

Material from all three sources was analyzed for thematic content. A coding system (Terre Blanche & Kelly, 1999) was used to mark off different parts of the text that appeared to be consistent with the same category.

Although *Grounded Theory*³ was not used as general methodological approach, Strauss & Corbin's (1990) *basic operations* were used to systematize the analysis of each case. Briefly, basic operations refer to two key procedures used interchangeably and repeatedly in order to develop a coherent theoretical account. The first, *asking questions* of the material, was used to open up a particular line of inquiry. The second, *making comparisons*, was used to compare these points of inquiry with other research material within the case.

The comparative inquiry process moved from asking general questions about the interview narratives and the object relations that emerged in the interview⁴, to more specific questions informed by theoretical concerns discussed in the previous section. General questions asked here included: What prominent themes emerge in the narratives? How do they compare with other narratives in the case? How do the narratives and object relations compare with the TAT themes and case history?

The comparative analysis began by firstly considering points of convergence between themes (Patton, 1990). Secondly, divergent themes were compared and contrasted using the techniques of bridging (making connection amongst the different theme elements) and extension (building up the theme from other information already known) (Patton, 1990).

Once the thematic structure of the case had been fully developed specific questions informed by theoretical concerns were asked of the material. They included the following: Are there any fantasies of aggression evident in the interview material? If there is evidence of trauma in the case, how does it manifest in the individual's object relations? What are the key object relations? What defining identifications are present? What

³ The methodology used in *Grounded Theory*, by definition, involves a process of inquiry which is not based in a particular theoretical orientation. Clearly this approach is not fully applicable here as the analysis of the interview and TAT are already grounded in psychoanalytic theory.

⁴ The specific methodology used to isolate narratives and object relations in the interview is discussed in detail in Chapter 8.

defensive structure is evident in the interview? What is the representational capacity of the offender? How do the above themes compare with the TAT analysis and the case history?

Through this process of inquiry a general account, outlining the most prominent object relations and identifications, was developed for each case.

d) *Analysis across cases: The development of emerging themes*

Here I attempted to build a framework of distinctions and relationships in order to develop a *case law* (Edwards, 1993b) across all cases. Once again, at this level of analysis, Strauss & Corbin's (1990) *basic operations* were used to compare concepts and categories across different sources of research information (i.e. the case history, the TAT and the interview analysis). After the final interpretive account was compiled, a checking procedure, suggested by Terre Blanche & Kelly (1990), was adopted to eliminate possible contradictions, over-interpretations or excessive prejudices that occurred in the account.

e) *Theoretical comparisons*

In the final level of analysis these findings were compared with prominent theoretical findings in the area as a means of establishing the coherence of the account and evaluating the theoretical contributions made by this study. This phase of the analysis takes place in *The Nature and Quality of Object Relations in Rage-Type Murder* (chapter 11).

It should be noted that the interpretation of unconscious phenomena poses a number of problems and limitations regarding the validity and verification of interpretations (Grunbaum, 1984). To address this problem, corroborating evidence from the different sources of information within each case was required to justify each interpretation (Spence, 1982). This involved returning to specific case details - the TAT, interviews and court records - to evaluate and elaborate on the specific interpretive meanings that were suggested by the general account.

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE PSYCHOANALYTIC RESEARCH INTERVIEW

Some concern has been voiced recently about the future of psychoanalysis and its growing isolation from other intellectual and therapeutic disciplines (Emde & Fonagy, 1997; Kirshner, 1998; Schachter & Luborsky, 1998). Kirshner (1998) points this out in a panel report at the 40th Congress of the International Psychoanalytic Association and writes of the historical isolation of psychoanalysis. The report claims that "organized psychoanalysis has failed to promote psychoanalytic knowledge appropriately" (p. 595). There are many reasons why this may be the position. One of the central reasons relates to its poor track record in using and developing different forms of research methodology both within the clinical setting and in other areas (Emde & Fonagy, 1997; Schachter & Luborsky, 1998; Thoma & Kachele, 1975). From this point of view one might argue that psychoanalysis, as a broad theory of human behavior, has not done enough to make itself 'usable' and accessible to research inquiry. Emde & Fonagy (1997) express similar thoughts in their recent editorial reporting on their efforts to facilitate a more diverse research initiative within psychoanalysis. They argue that too little has been done to develop alternative research methods suitable for psychoanalytic inquiry that do not limit psychoanalytic insights to clinical psychoanalysis and the case study method. Of course, psychoanalysts and psychoanalytic therapists are continuously engaged in research in their documentation of analytic work. This however, confines us to a single method limited to the clinical setting.

There are three related reasons that, to some extent, explain why the development of research methodology in psychoanalysis still remains in its infancy: (1) Psychoanalysis has primarily developed within a treatment setting where treatment

aims have overshadowed the need to adopt research methodologies from other disciplines. (2) Psychoanalysis is not only a theory but is also a methodology in itself developed specifically for exploring unconscious processes. As a methodology of inquiry it has always been inextricably linked to the treatment setting, making it difficult to develop other forms of research methodology using psychoanalytic principles. (3) As a consequence, other possible forms of research from the empirical and hermeneutic traditions are seldom taught or encouraged in training institutions (Schachter & Luborsky, 1998).

By way of addressing this problem, this chapter intends to explore key considerations related to developing the interview as a research tool in psychoanalysis. The development of the *Psychoanalytic Research Interview* is part of an ongoing project aimed at developing research methods which focus on the specific needs of psychoanalytic inquiry. Standard interview methodology developed in other disciplines remains inadequate for the purposes of psychoanalytic research and perhaps this further explains why so little interview research has been attempted in the psychoanalytic field. To be sure, some methodologies do attempt to 'read' and understand implicit or unspoken meaning in the interview. For instance, discourse analysis attempts to discover underlying patterns in communication whilst ethnographical research seeks to uncover the meaning of particular cultural practices (Tesch, 1990). None, however, is specifically equipped to explore intrapsychic processes and unconscious meaning, which I shall define as the main function of a psychoanalytic research interview.

Although the Psychoanalytic Research Interview encompasses some of the basic principles of the psychoanalytic method and may contain some of the content of the typical clinical interview based on psychodynamic principles (e.g. Kernberg, 1981), its intended focus is much broader and not fixed to the treatment setting. It offers an opportunity to broaden the psychoanalytic lens and gain access to phenomena not encountered within the limits of the psychoanalytic treatment setting, whilst at the same time focusing on very specific areas of research. The interview thus need not focus on psychodynamic processes related to treatment, but may be used to understand the psychodynamics and unconscious meaning of many different forms of behaviors, psychological processes, social actions or life situations. For example, one

may be interested in understanding the unconscious meaning that underlies sub-cultural practices like body piercing or tattooing. To use more commonplace examples, one may be interested in using the psychoanalytic interview to understand the psychodynamics of everyday situations such as falling in love, leaving home or growing old.

The Psychoanalytic Research Interview also provides a methodology for a more systematic and focused analysis of psychoanalytic concepts and processes across a small sample group. One may be interested, for instance, in verifying and exploring the existence of a particular defensive system or metapsychological constructs in a particular population group. For example, I may be interested in exploring the nature and quality of the superego in men who engage in domestic violence. In this way it could also be useful in understanding the common factors present in the pathogenesis of certain conditions.

The interview method used here essentially focuses on understanding the construction of meaning and the underlying intrapsychic dynamics present in this process. In developing a methodology, a set of guidelines around technique and the analysis of interview material are required to ensure that research can be carried out in a methodical and verifiable fashion. One of the most difficult tasks in this regard is working out what psychoanalytic concepts and methods can be used, and in what way, to come to 'know' and interpret the interview process. I shall argue that the research interview has very little in common with clinical psychoanalysis and thus the portability of psychoanalytic concepts needs to be carefully evaluated and developed for the interview setting. The methodology here primarily makes use of two applied ideas. Firstly, the 'narrative mode' of understanding psychoanalytic communication and secondly, the role and function of transference-countertransference interaction in the technique and analysis of the interview. In this sense, the research interview falls into the category of applied psychoanalysis. The interview does differ, however, from other forms of applied psychoanalysis in that it does not simply involve the analysis of an already written text that is subject to many interpretations. The interviewer also has an important role to play in the development of what will eventually be the fixed text. This, I shall argue, has some important implications for technique and analysis. I shall begin by drawing on some existing

theoretical aspects of the interview developed in other disciplines before going on to relate this to psychoanalytic concerns.

8.1 THE THEORY OF THE INTERVIEW

Kvale (1990) points out that although the qualitative research interview is a widely used research method across many disciplines it still lacks a coherent theoretical understanding. Papers in this area, he argues, usually simply focus on technique without grasping that research outcomes are always relative to the way the interview method is understood. Perhaps one of the main reasons for this is that the interview, along with other qualitative methodologies, is often considered to be atheoretical in nature (Morse, 1994; Sandelowski, 1994). Kvale attempts, from a phenomenological perspective, to elucidate the mode of understanding that is arrived at through the interview. The central aim of the interview, he asserts, is to "understand the meaning of what is being said" (p. 175). But underlying the apparent simplicity of such a statement lies the complexity of the problem of interpretation: From what, or whose, perspective does one interpret the meaning of what is said? This poses a number of hermeneutic problems pertaining to method and analysis of the interview which have been dealt with in many different ways (Kvale, 1990; Mishler, 1986; Packer & Addison, 1989).

The Hermeneutic tradition offers a useful framework for grasping the circularity of understanding and interpretation that occurs in interview dialogue or the analysis of texts. From this perspective understanding and the construction of meaning occur within a 'hermeneutic circle' where pre-suppositions, or what is already known, inevitably shape further interpretation. Understanding is circular in the sense that parts are interpreted within the context of the whole and *vice versa*. As Packer & Addison (1989) explain, the hermeneutic circle contextualizes interpretation and moves it away from the bounds of arbitrariness. In their words:

... an interpretation is orientated by the researcher's effort to come into the hermeneutic circle in an appropriate manner. It is guided by the fore-structure that is worked out in this entering. And the

the researcher's preliminary understanding. All this means that interpretation is far from being an undisciplined guess (p. 278).

In terms of methodology, emphasis is therefore placed on making all tacit pre-suppositions, or the fore-structure, explicit in order to arrive at the most accurate interpretive account (Habermas, 1973). There are a number of complex philosophical debates regarding the conditions of understanding, interpretation and truth whilst engaged in this circular process which need not be entered into here (cf. Gadamer, 1975; Habermas, 1973; Hanly, 1992; Riceour, 1981; Strenger, 1991; Thoma & Kachele, 1975). Of importance here is simply the idea that pre-understandings influence one's method of interviewing and subsequent interpretations. They are, following Gadamer (1975), a pre-condition of understanding.

These broad hermeneutic principles are often used in interview methodology because of their emphasis on understanding the contextual nature of interpretation and meaning in the analysis of interview text (Kvale, 1990; Mishler, 1986; Packer & Addison, 1989). It is often suggested that the hermeneutic approach "cuts below specific methods and techniques" (Packer & Addison, 1989, p. 111). The hermeneutic approach however, does not deal with issues of technique and how specific theoretical influences impact on the interview itself. As a result those who have based their interview method solely on hermeneutic and phenomenological principles tend to under-emphasize the impact and use of specific theoretical influences on *the development of interview methodology*. Here, theory is mainly used as a means of understanding the outcome of the interview. In practice, however, specific theoretical influences and their concomitant preconceptions influence technique and the generation of information right from the beginning, or even before the interview has taken place. In this sense, the notion of pre-understanding, so important in hermeneutic theory, is not often successfully translated into interview methodology in these cases.

Kvale (1990) for instance, suggests a six phase model of the processes involved in the interview in moving from the interviewee's description to different levels of interpretation but only considers the influence of a particular theory very late in the

interpretive process after the interview has taken place. His approach does not fully account for the ubiquitous influence that theoretical assumptions have on method. In doing so, the methodological contribution that different theories have to make in generating and analyzing interview material is under-emphasized. It raises a hermeneutic problem regarding the place of *a priori* knowledge in the interview process and its role in shaping and influencing interview material. Theoretical assumptions influence every aspect of the interview method: the kinds of questions asked, the way the interview is conducted, and the focus of interest. In the interview process, for instance, a phenomenologist would concern himself more with asking questions that facilitate intricate descriptions of lived experience whereas an ethnologist would ask questions in a way as to elicit a cultural understanding of behavior (Hutchinson & Wilson, 1994; Morse, 1994).

In sum then, although the 'hermeneutic circle' is useful in creating a general framework of contextualizing meaning and interpretation, it cannot in itself provide an adequate methodological or theoretical basis for the interview. This is especially the case in psychoanalysis where psychoanalytic knowledge is derived and elicited through a specific set of well developed methodological principles. Free association, abstinence, the fixed frame, dream analysis and so forth give the analyst access to interpretations regarding unconscious meaning. In as far as psychoanalysis concerns itself with understanding unconscious meaning and intrapsychic processes it has required a particular method of investigation. This brings us to our next problem: It does not follow that these same methods and techniques can be used in the interview setting.

The interview is vastly different from the psychoanalytic session or therapeutic encounter. Although some similarities have been pointed out, such as the need for rapport and empathy in both cases and the therapeutic effect that an interview may have (Hutchinson & Wilson, 1994; Kernberg, 1981; Kvale, 1990), the context of each differs greatly. In the therapeutic encounter the patient comes for treatment and to be helped, which places it in a very different context from the interview where the researcher is interested in gathering together a number of research participants in order to understand a specific research question. Further, the central goal of the psychoanalytic interview is to obtain specific information and to arrive at an

understanding and interpretation of unconscious meaning and intrapsychic processes. Although the interviewee's reaction to what the interviewer asks still remains important, unlike therapeutic interaction, the interview does not concern itself with the difficult and time-consuming work of trying to convey this understanding to individuals in order to effect therapeutic change. More obvious differences include the relatively superficial nature of the interview relationship and its brevity.

The research interview thus differs in terms of context and motivation. Following from this, the basic methodology, method of confirmation, understanding and verification of interpretive accounts will inevitably differ from that of clinical psychoanalysis. For instance, the classical principles of abstinence, neutrality and free association cannot be used to understand unconscious processes. The interviewer is far from a neutral participant in displaying a specific research interest in an individual and the interviewee, by definition, cannot free-associate when the interviewer intends to focus on a particular area.

Despite this, I believe there are some aspects of psychoanalytic theory that can be utilized in the interview process and its subsequent analysis to gain a comprehensive understanding of an individual's internal world in relation to the subject of inquiry. If one accepts that meaningful unconscious material can be accessed and verified in the short span of a few interviews, what are the most suitable means for gathering such information in the interview context? It is not enough I believe, to say that this can be accessed by simply collecting dreams, parapraxes, transferences (Hunt, 1989). This does not do enough to emphasize the importance of context and the interactive nature of the interview process and runs the risk of interpreting elements of the interview without specific reference to any context.

In order to determine the portability of psychoanalytic concepts and techniques to the interview setting one first needs to establish what epistemological conditions are assumed to exist in the psychoanalytic interview. In other words, what constitutes psychoanalytic knowledge, and how psychoanalytic knowledge is constructed between interviewer and interviewee, need consideration if one is to develop a means of eliciting analyzable material and a method of inference and analysis within the confines of a few interviews. The interview procedure and analysis I have used rely

on a number of key epistemological assumptions drawn mainly from a hermeneutic or narrative understanding of psychoanalytic dialogue.

8.2 EPISTEMOLOGICAL ASSUMPTIONS OF THE PSYCHOANALYTIC RESEARCH INTERVIEW

The narrative tradition in psychoanalysis places much emphasis on understanding the processes that lie behind the development of meaning and interpretation and thus readily lends itself to the concerns of understanding the interview. The narrative approach is also more accommodating when it comes to emphasizing the development of new theoretical insights in psychoanalysis. Proponents of this approach, notably Donald Spence and Roy Schafer, stress the importance of allowing theory to emerge from the narrative whilst guarding against the hasty imposition of current 'ready made' theory on analytic material (Sass, 1992; Schafer, 1989; Spence, 1982, 1998).

I have found it important to make explicit four assumptions that have implications for technique in the interview and the analysis of the transcribed text.

8.2.1 The Construction of Meaning

The central assumption relates to how the interviewer and interviewee co-construct a narrative around a particular focus in the interview. In this sense, the interview is not about finding the historical or 'factual' truth that is thought to exist in the interview material; it is about facilitating the construction of a story or narrative. This is based on the theoretical assumption outlined by Spence (1982) who holds that historical truth is impossible to access after the fact as it is subject to numerous revisions and interpretations. It is thus best viewed as a narrative of the self, a metaphorical elaboration of what was 'fact'. The emphasis thus shifts away from an interest in factual meaning to *how* the self reconstructs a particular happening. Therefore it is not only the content of the narrative that is of interest here, but the way the narrative takes form. How the researcher best facilitates this process thus becomes an important part of the interview process.

The narrative mode relies on the metaphorical nature of language. Here, language is viewed as a metaphor for parts of self and is always at some level saying something about the self, whilst ostensibly describing something other. It is the way the self constructs meaning or organizes associations to create narratives that is of importance here (Schafer, 1989; Spence, 1987).

Adopting this basic epistemological stance is also important in terms of understanding how theory construction emerges from the interview. From this point of view, theoretical concepts are also essentially abstract metaphors (Spence, 1982) that emerge from the construction of meaning in the interview. This view opposes the more positivistic sense of there being a 'fixed deep structure' that the interviewer sets about 'excavating' from the interview material.

I shall draw on one of the core narratives developed in *case five* (in Appendix A, 501) to illustrate this point. Here the narrative '*My weak father*' emerges from the offender's constant references to his father as being a pathetic, weak, absent figure. But the offender shapes the meaning of this narrative in a particular way here by making reference to himself not being 'a drinker' and being non-aggressive. My comment about not being supported by his father changes the narrative further and it seems to bring him back to the present where '*he has grown to love his father*'. All these references occurred a number of times in the interviews creating the parameters of the narrative. As far as its metaphorical value pertaining to structures of the self is concerned, parallels between the 'weak father' figure and the absence of a clear and coherent internalized paternal object were made. Further, references to his not being like his father were seen as constructions - mostly unconscious - of his own identity opposing the existence of this 'weak' internalized paternal object.

8.2.2 Associative Nature of Interview Material and Interaction

As already discussed, free association, along with other psychoanalytic methods used to facilitate access to unconscious meaning, is not appropriate for the interview. One of the key assumptions however, that lies behind the method - the associative nature of thought and affect - has relevance in the interview situation. It is an accepted part of everyday communication and the way meaning is constructed, and forms the foundation of most theories of meaning (Hopkins, 1988). Psychoanalysis however, is

particularly interested in unconscious forms of association. The idea that thoughts are associated with one another through unconscious forms of psychic determinism holds great importance in understanding the interview dialogue. The way the interviewee begins to tell me about himself and then changes to another subject at a specific point, how the tone of his voice alters in association with particular subjects, and how things are described in different ways; all these suggest possible ways in which elements of the dialogue are unconsciously associated. This in turn yields an underlying structure that can be used to understand the intrapsychic processes most apparent in the interview material related to the topic that is being discussed.

By way of example, in *case six* (Appendix A, 603) of the present study, Frank has a number of different associations when I ask him about having contact with his father. Notably, he feels rejected, ignored, and uncared for by him. When I ask him whether he could ever talk to his father about this his associations change to depict a more aggressive part of himself that still cannot get through to his father, implicitly indicating to me that his relating to him feels as if it is beyond words. Later on his associations deepen and he makes reference to the absence of a father figure (referring here to himself as an absent father) as being a better option than having violence in the home. He then alludes to his own suicidal thoughts as a child. In the context of his previous references the structure underlying these associations appears to include unconscious references to making himself 'absent' in the face of conflict by turned aggression inward.

The fact that a particular area of interest is being discussed does not exempt the interview dialogue from underlying non-directed ideation that is not governed by conscious 'rational' thought association. This assumption does not tally with the Freudian archaeological or depth model of psychoanalysis where it is assumed that the more 'free' associations are of conscious thought, the more deeply they signify unconscious meaning. It relies more on a narrative understanding of the unconscious. Here, the fact that a story is consciously constructed and intentional does not necessarily disrupt our ability to discern unconscious meaning in the dialogue as it is the way in which the narrative is constructed, and the structure of the narrative, that are used to understand unconscious processes.

Despite this, Freud's (1900) understanding of the unconscious is an example of a well developed theory of association. His observations regarding the language of the unconscious and how disparate elements of communication are organized through mechanisms of displacement, condensation, symbolism, reversal and so forth, still has relevance in understanding the construction of psychoanalytic knowledge in the interview. Bollas (1995) has effectively illustrated how these processes can also be used to understand everyday thinking and communication that is not essentially part of the method of free association *per se*. There is a danger however, of simply limiting interpretation of the interview to these well-known determinants. One should rather use the patterns of association that emerge in the interview to research further other ways in which the narrative is constructed or shaped and how this is related to intrapsychic processes. Given that the associative nature of thought and related areas still remain relatively under-researched in psychoanalysis, this may itself be an important area of research using interview methodology (Kris, 1983; Mahony, 1987; Zilboorg, 1951).

It is important to note that the associations that make up a narrative are not simply joined by virtue of their proximity or thematic affinity (Grunbaum, 1984; Hopkins, 1988). If one is to base interpretations solely on this assumption the accuracy of interpretive practice would be seriously questionable as it is relatively easy to make many different and conflicting interpretations based on the same associations using this principle (Grunbaum, 1984; Spence, 1986). What is excluded from this is the understanding and location of the context, internal or interactional, around which associations are organized. This becomes specifically important in the interview situation where the boundaries of the interview and its brevity give rise to many different and fluctuating contexts.

Two return to *case six* (Appendix A, 602), there are persistent references to 'bad' dominating female figures that could lead to a simple interpretation about Frank's impotent status in relation to women. Once the context was considered, however, the interpretation gains more substance and validity. In this instance, I had just asked Frank to tell me about his aggressiveness. Secondly, I was feeling unusually irritated with his constant references to being a victim at this point. Acknowledgment of these contexts added essential meaning to the way this interview was interpreted. I was

able to understand more fully how his 'victim' identity portrayed here was essentially a defense against his own aggressiveness. Furthermore, our interaction at this point suggested that he makes use of projective mechanisms to maintain this conscious understanding of himself. This brings us to a consideration of the importance of context itself.

8.2.3 Context

The relevance of context in the psychoanalytic setting with reference to making accurate interpretations has been increasingly emphasized by a number of analysts (Gill, 1979; Langs, 1982; Schafer, 1997; Spence, 1982). Context refers broadly to the host of factors, internal and external, that come to bear on the way an individual communicates and how the communication is understood. This resonates with the way understanding is acquired through the gradual contextualization that occurs in the 'hermeneutic circle' referred to earlier (Packer & Addison, 1989). As opposed to the philosophical tradition of hermeneutics however, analysts interested in the hermeneutic nature of dialogue emphasize both intrapsychic as well as external contextual influences on meaning (Chessick, 1990; Thoma & Kachelle, 1975).

From a different perspective, Spence (1998) makes an important point regarding the use of recorded material relevant to conducting research interviews. When one listens to recorded material, he explains, it is "the lack of context that explains why recorded segments of sessions often seem dull, pointless and boring to the degree that we rarely experience in the actual session" (p. 643). It is the lack of what he calls a "context of consciousness" (p. 647) - how things are heard and experienced - that leads to spurious interpretive accounts. Although this cannot be under-emphasized, I think that the danger of misinterpretation can be somewhat reduced through the careful documentation of transference-countertransference states and emotional states during the interview.

How does this relate to the generation of unconscious meaning in the interview?

Compared to the analytic setting, the issue of contexts in the interview becomes a far more complex and difficult matter which is perhaps a reason why some will remain skeptical of the validity of the interpretation of unconscious meaning in the interview setting. In the analytic setting the fixed frame and the formation of a constant long-

term emotional relationship minimize the extent to which different factors impinge on the relationship, and make it easier to isolate the context around which associations are organized. On the other hand, many factors constantly impinge on the interview, often changing the context from moment to moment. The brevity of the interview also makes it more difficult for these influences to settle in a way that would make them more analyzable. Influences like the interview setting and location, the reason given for the interview, the subject of the interview, attributes of the interviewer, his or her technique, and an interviewee's suspicions regarding the interview are but a few factors constantly affecting interaction and communication. What is more, each question or clarification defines and alters the context of the interview.

Although this makes understanding unconscious communications difficult, what becomes most important is the acknowledgment and exploration of the interview context in order to yield the most accurate interpretive account. I have found that unlike the therapeutic setting, the interviewer has an important role to play in bringing a particular context to bear on the interview setting. Here the interviewer is interested in bringing to the foreground particular foci related to the area of study to ensure that associations are organized around these points of interest. It was important, for instance, in the present study, to ensure that the offender's murderous behavior remained a prominent context around which he associated. Other contexts, internal and external, such as the prison setting and other immediate influences on the offender, although inevitably present, were not emphasized unless they were linked to themes of aggression or murderous behavior.

8.2.4 Transference - Countertransference Impressions

Much has been written about how transference and countertransference play an important part in our implicit and intuitive knowledge about our patients (Bion, 1962; Brenman Pick, 1985; Carpy, 1989; Cartwright, 1997, 1998; Heimann, 1950; Langs, 1982). During the interview transference and countertransference can be used as a valuable source of information not only about the researcher and interviewee but also about the interaction that occurs between them. Once again however, the therapeutic use in transference-countertransference cannot simply be transferred onto the research interview situation. Although I am of the opinion that transference-

countertransference are always present to some degree in all situations, the short space of time in which the interview takes place makes it difficult for transference and countertransference feelings to develop fully or to consolidate. For this reason, they are often difficult to detect accurately or be immediately understood by the interviewer. I shall return to this problem shortly. We will consider two ways in which transference and countertransference, as sources of knowledge, influence the outcome of the research situation. The first I shall call *preliminary transference*, the second refers to the role of *countertransference-transference interaction* during the interview process.

Preliminary transference refers to the researcher's own motivations, feelings and perceptions regarding the particular research endeavor prior to his undertaking it. Some degree of insight is required and needs to be made explicit if the researcher is to be offered a full opportunity to evaluate the interpretive accounts elicited from the interview. This aspect of the research interview makes it a rather vulnerable process. Of course, the nature of the preliminary transference would be dependent on a number of factors, such as whether the researcher has undergone analysis or has some capacity for personal insight related to the area of study.

There are two reasons why this is an important part of the interview process. Firstly, the nature of 'objectivity' in psychoanalysis, as Renik (1998) argues, is such that it can only be arrived at through taking one's subjectivity into consideration. Renik himself, however, does not see this process as a hermeneutic endeavor and chooses to restrict the definition of hermeneutics to the interpretation of fixed texts. Secondly, insight from exploring one's own motivations, perceptions and conflicts related to the research subject forms an important part of the preparation required for the interview itself (Hunt, 1982). We are drawn to certain research topics for particular internal and external reasons that will inevitably have some bearing on the interview process.

These influences need to be understood as far as possible so that adverse effects on the interview process can be minimized. To use a simple example, if I am drawn to research in the area of physical abuse because of my own personal experiences of abuse, my own assumptions about the type of men or women who commit acts of physical abuse will greatly influence my approach. The type of questions I choose to ask and the way I choose to hear the interviewee will be strongly determined by my

own personal influences and understandings. To return to the present study, my own societal and personal prejudices and fears related to the ominous subject of murder required considerable reflection to ensure that such influences did not side-track the interview process.

These influences will inevitably be part of all interviews to some degree, but unexplored transferences run the risk of turning the interview into a self-fulfilling prophecy. That is, the interview situation and its analysis become an arena where conflicts and fantasies are subtly acted out to confirm unconscious assumptions that the researcher seeks to verify.

The second aspect I wish to consider here relates to the influence and function of *transference-countertransference interaction* during the interview process. I am using transference-countertransference here to refer to all inchoate feeling states that are evoked or emerge during the interview process in either the interviewer or interviewee. From an epistemological perspective, these thoughts and feelings greatly influence what and how we come to understand what is significant in the psychoanalytic interview.

I include in this the processes related to the establishment of rapport and empathy. It is often simply stated that empathy and rapport need to be established for either therapy or an interview to proceed successfully (e.g. Ivey, 1994; Morrison, 1995). Whilst this is partly true, it is often taken as a given, ignoring the fact that how empathy is or is not established yields valuable information in trying to understand the psychodynamics of the interview. Sandler (1987), and more recently Bolognini (1997), are instructive on how empathy might be used to understand the object relationships present during the interview. I shall not expand on this here.

The explicit acknowledgment of countertransference states further takes into consideration that feeling states established in the interviewer during the interview may well be carried over into the actual analysis of the interview text, influencing its outcome. Although, in part, this is unavoidable, acknowledgment allows for some degree of control over the process of contextualizing interpretations in the interview.

Reflecting upon countertransference states should thus become an integral part of understanding how psychoanalytic knowledge is co-constructed.

The above epistemological assumptions suggest some guidelines towards a method of engagement and analysis to be used in the research interview. I shall now turn to some of the technical and procedural aspects of the interview before discussing the analysis of the interview.

8.3 TECHNICAL AND PROCEDURAL GUIDELINES.

I found that 3-4 recorded interviews per interviewee were sufficient in gaining enough information for the analytic process. In keeping with the general assumptions regarding the interview process outlined above, it was important initially to allow the interview to take its own shape and be as unstructured as possible. All participants were informed about why I was interested in interviewing them. This in itself elicited important responses.

It was also useful, on commencing the interview, to make it very clear that I was interested in understanding the offender's own thoughts about the murder he had committed. I then went on to say that I was also interested in hearing about anything he might want to tell me about his life or background. Finally, and most importantly, I encouraged each participant to begin his reflections wherever he wished to.

Making it clear to the interviewee what the specific subject of the interview was served not only to inform about him why he was selected; it also provided the central context around which the interviewee was urged to associate (consciously and unconsciously). From this point I was interested in how the interviewee chose to start and where this eventually led in his reflections. In other words, we are interested in the emergent structure or 'shape' of the narrative here. I saw my role at this point as simply being a facilitator of this process, making mental notes of any difficulties in accessing some degree of empathy for the interviewee and any other countertransference responses.

It proved fruitful to begin the subsequent interview by inquiring about the interviewee's thoughts regarding the previous interview. Of interest here was whether the process had elicited particular thoughts or feelings about the subject, or towards myself or significant others. Often interviewees, having had time to reflect on the interview, recalled particular details, or began to experience what they had spoken about in the previous interview differently. Responses here often provided important cues to guide the interview towards significant unconscious meaning that was precipitated by the process.

Although the interview was recorded for further analysis, it was important to document in detail my comments and impressions of the interview immediately following the session. I also attempted to record my fluctuating countertransference responses and other 'emotional happenings' that occurred in correspondence to certain parts of the material. As pointed out earlier, without this, the analysis of the final interview text loses its emotional impact, making it difficult to understand the context within which certain things are said or heard.

I found it best to reserve the first two interviews in each case for this type of unstructured dialogue where I was primarily interested in understanding the narrative construction of the interview. Following this, a more structured and direct approach was adopted similar to the interviewing process suggested by Kernberg (1981). Here I concentrated on: (1) seeking clarification on information gathered in previous interviews; (2) confronting the interviewee with contradictions, idiosyncratic forms of speech, conflicts and defensive operations; (3) putting forward preliminary interpretations of my understanding of some of the emerging conflicts, defenses and so forth. The preliminary interpretations I am alluding to here refer simply to comments that suggested possible connections between different aspects of the interview that had not previously been made by the interviewee. Responses to these tentative interpretations were useful in testing various hypotheses present in the interviewer's mind, as well as in analyzing the defensive system of the interviewee.

Adopting a more direct approach also gave me an opportunity to ask specific questions about historical and personal details that had not yet emerged in the interview. It was important at this stage to do a traditional Mental State Examination

and ask specific questions in order to investigate structural aspects of the personality (Kernberg, 1981). The main emphasis of the interviews, however, remained with the first two interviews where the associative material that structured the narratives was most prominent.

8.3.1 Analysis of the Interview

There were three main steps to the analysis which did not necessarily follow each other successively the way they are presented here: (1) Transference-countertransference analysis, (2) the search for core narratives and, (3) the exploration of identification and object relations. Implicit in these steps are a number of cognitive processes, outlined by Morse (1994) as being an essential part of all qualitative methods and the researcher's analytic approach. They are the processes of comprehending, synthesizing, theorizing and re-contextualizing. A brief verbatim extract from one of the interviews will be used to illustrate the procedure used in analysing interviews.

8.3.1.1 Preliminary transference/ transference-countertransference analysis

In the analysis of the interview, emphasis is usually only placed on the finished transcribed text (Kvale, 1990; Mishler, 1986; Tesch, 1990). I hope to have shown previously that the analysis of the interview not only takes place in a significant way during the interview itself, but essentially begins before the interview with an exploration of the motivations for conducting a particular piece of research.

An exploration and analysis of the interviewer's preliminary transference is intended to make explicit, as far as possible, the repetition of unconscious motives that may influence the construction of the interview narrative. This ensures that any particularly impressive preliminary response to the research subject can be checked and monitored as to its potential influence over the interview process. Referring back to the idea of the 'hermeneutic circle', making pre-suppositions explicit also helps further contextualize interpretations when analyzing of the interview.

The documentation of countertransference states immediately following the interview also plays an important part in contextualizing meaning in the final analysis of the transcribed text. Unlike the therapeutic setting however, where a full

analysis of the countertransference can be conducted over an extended period, the interviewer can only record brief emotional impressions of the interaction. For this reason, transference-countertransference influences were not simply used in isolation in the present analysis, but rather as a corroborative source of information that confirmed and disconfirmed analytic impressions of the interview. This form of analysis was characterized by a constant comparison and checking of object relationships evident during the interview, from transference-countertransference interaction, against the object relations discerned from the recorded interview text.

There is no means of evaluating subjective experience such as countertransference states in the interview and this poses numerous problems in both empirical and hermeneutic research (Grunbaum, 1984; Strenger, 1991; Thoma & Kachele, 1975). To use countertransference as a means of evaluating interpretive accounts can thus be problematic. Despite this, countertransference states still provide key references in the interview process that are indispensable in contextualizing the meaning of the text. In this sense countertransference can be used in both the analysis and verification of an account. I shall use a brief extract from one of the interviews to illustrate this. I deliberately give no context:

O⁵ : I want to help people now that I know I have learnt from my mistakes. You know my son is now ten and I regret more now than ever that I wasn't there for him. I want to ... phone him and talk to him

I love people and want to help them the way I have been helped I have contacted a number of people about trying to help with stopping all the crime in the country I have given much thought to this and have also got a number of my friends interested. You know, all this crime has to stop to ensure that our children can live safely

In analyzing this interview, perhaps the most obvious interpretation for this extract would relate to the offender's need for reparation and the restoration of infantile objects. One's reading and interpretation of this passage would change drastically however, if I were to tell you that I was filled with fear when this man crouched forward on his chair and began to tell me about his need to help. The initial

⁵ 'O' and 'I' refer to Offender and Interviewer.

interpretation does not fit with the my emotional state and thus cannot be verified as a correct interpretation. This serves to illustrate how essential countertransference is as a means of contextualizing interpretations.

8.3.1.2 Search for core narratives

There is no single technique for working out the core narratives that emerged from the interviews. Most of the literature on interview analysis begins with the task of summarizing specific themes to make the interview text more workable and to eliminate the 'noise' of the interview (e.g. Edwards, 1993; Mishler, 1986; Tesch, 1990). Although this is an important step in dealing with a large amount of transcribed material, it is often the 'noise' that, particularly from a psychoanalytic perspective, interests us most. A constant repetition, a cough in a particular context, an apparently meaningless digression and so forth, are important potential signifiers of unconscious meaning and risk being lost. A summarizing exercise also tends to pull themes out of the particular context that informs us of their meaning.

To ensure that this did not occur, the interview text was rather engaged with in its totality, allowing all aspects of the interview to influence the analysis of the flow of associative material. This was done until satisfactory and coherent core narratives had been constructed and matched with significant countertransference impressions. The extract I shall use to demonstrate this process comes from the first interview with Simon listed as *case two* in the analysis that follows in the next chapter. (Square brackets are used to indicate my thoughts and feelings during this brief extract.)

I: Simon, I am interested in hearing about your story related to what you have agreed to talk about ... the crime that you have been convicted of. I am also interested in hearing about you as person and anything you feel you want to tell me. I would like you to begin wherever you wish to.

O: All right Okay, my background was not good. My mother died early, after that I had a step-mother who would treat us badly. She would send us to school with moldy terrible food - when I took my lunch to school I was too embarrassed to show anyone. Our clothing and school uniforms were in tatters. But even through this I tried to do well. I even stitched my shoe and used to polish my shoes. But even when I was young I

knew I wanted to get out of home you know... step-mother had so much control over me and no-one would visit. And we were always busy, sometimes until two o'clock at night.

At school I was very private, I was looking for a professional career My brother left home, he went to work for the bank. There wasn't that love in the family So.... So I wanted desperately to leave home and thought about the defense force. I thought of it because my neighbors were going. So I thought about it and went to the navy. I went when I was 16 years old

[He stresses this and I have a sense of him wanting to impress me with this statement].

I: You are telling me that it was important in some way that you were very young.

O: Yes, and wow, the guys were big there [He stresses this]. I was young, but I guess I realized I would be strong enough. I would ... um ... (pause). Yes, so I took the exam and got in.

So I started my apprenticeship and achieved distinctions Then I went away for two-and-a-half weeks and while I was there I saw families visiting others ... you know, when families come on Sundays to visit. In my case no-one ever turned up. My father was rich - he had a car - but everyone would come by bus I used to watch and ... and ... it affects you, you, you know... um So when I came back I didn't want to go home, I couldn't stand it. I felt much better, it felt good. I would get up for work, wash the dishes and iron my clothes because I'd been doing that since I was 10 years old I never did anything wrong. [I remember feeling sad and understanding towards him at this point.]

I qualified in 1981. The pay was good ... then I bought my own car ... and then, um My 21st birthday was coming up and I had a big party. I did it all myself Afterwards I met my love. When I found her I thought ... wow, this is a good experience for me.

So everything I did, I did on my own - I kept my parents out of it. I was independent, I could stand on my own two feet. In 1986 I paid eleven thousand for my wedding, which was a lot of money then. The wedding was very lavish and I had to buy jewelry and there was lots of people. Then I got a flat to stay in ... things were perfect between us. We wouldn't fight and could talk to each other for ever. It was a perfect marriage [I felt I was not able to really relate to him and what he was saying as a 'real' person at this point].

- I: The 'perfectness' you felt seems to be related to you moving away and creating a life
- O: You know when you have some one close to your heart, like she There is nothing you can do ... go to the shop, you push the trolley, the excitement is there ... even just walking into ... into your house it's exciting, it's different.
- [I am confused about who it is that he is talking about, and am also aware that he does not refer much to his wife, especially by name]
- I: You are talking about your wife?
- O: Yes, she, my lovely wife. I do everything absolutely everything, for her.

[My feelings dramatically change at this point I feel somewhat intimidated and uneasy about him. Then finally, I feel angry at him doing that to me.]

(There is a brief pause here)

- O: You know in the navy some of the marines are very aggressive. My friend Peter is like that - he just drinks all the time and has no one to go home to. The other night he got into a fight and almost killed this man I talk to him sometimes about this because I am not an aggressive person. I think I can help him because I get him to forget about it by talking about things like cars and stuff ... men's stuff. His wife wants him to leave the navy and do something in the 'real' world ... demanding as usual
- I: I guess you are talking about women in general...?
- O: Yes, you know the way they always want things, we do all the work ... but this is still not really enough I never meant to kill her, you know ... it just got, you know, so frustrating ... hurtful.

The possible core narrative here is about a boy who, after losing his mother, feels abused, uncared-for, over-worked and 'poisoned' by a replacement mother. He triumphs over this by becoming self-sufficient in maternal tasks and cutting himself off from her by leaving to go to 'the world of big men'. Here, he enters a 'perfect world' and is extremely proud of his own achievement without needing others' help. His next association suggests that despite being successful he is very alone but goes

on to marry an unnamed woman who is perfect and ideal. It seems clear here that the 'success of his own creation' is more important than who he is marrying.

My countertransference at this point suggests that a sense of 'unreality' surrounds his ideas about 'perfection' which I then focus on to make a reflective comment. In reply to this, he continues along similar narrative lines extending the idea of 'perfection' to his image of 'her', which now seems tinged both with helplessness and excitement.

Our interaction in the construction of this narrative becomes important at this point. It appears that my question aimed at clarifying who he was speaking about activates an intimidatory presence about him in the transference. The main interpretation of this part of the narrative, using my countertransference, related to how dangerously frightening 'she' becomes when she become more 'real' in the interview setting.

After this the context shifts with my intervention and the narrative changes to a story about a violent man who feels threatened because he has spent too much time in the navy and cannot find 'a wife in the real world'. His 'man's world' keeps him safe from needy women. Some confirmation for this preliminary interpretation is also found in the transference-countertransference interaction where he tries to co-opt me into thinking like him in his 'man's world'.

This is an example of the first reading of a brief section of an interview and fails to capture the complexity of doing such an analysis with a full interview. The full narratives of this case constructed from all the material such as, *'Afterwards, I met my love ...a very strong love'* and *'the bad step-mother'*, can be found in the next chapter. From this point in the analysis, if we are on the right track regarding the core narratives evident here, one would expect different aspects of the narrative to begin to repeat themselves in different forms, whilst the interviewer's questions attempt to deepen or probe their significance. The assumption here is that repetitive themes represent more significant and stable intrapsychic aspects of the individual. For instance, the theme of 'perfection' linked to an isolated little boy in the above example constantly recurs throughout the interviews, with increasing elaboration each time. If one concurs with Schafer's (1997) argument that all narratives can be

traced back to the experience of corporeality, then one would expect the elaboration of narrative themes to turn eventually into metaphors for bodily functions. This is not unlike Freud's (1923) dictum, "the ego is first and foremost a bodily ego" (p. 451). However, this assumption may not necessarily be accurate, and may itself serve as a research hypothesis to be explored using the Psychoanalytic Research Interview.

In the search for core narratives, and with each new reading of the material, a number of questions should constantly arise in the analyst's mind concerning the nature and scope of the story being told. This should lead him to return to the text in a circular fashion, with a more informed reading each time. It is here that the idea of the 'hermeneutic circle' is most useful in trying to contextualize the meaning of the interview through constant comparison of parts of the narrative with other general themes in the interview. As Thoma and Kachele (1975) point out, the analyst's attitude within this circular process should be one of perpetually correcting and refining pre-understandings. If done in this way, interpretation move towards greater accuracy and complexity, rather than becoming a process where the analyst simply finds exactly what he has been looking for in a self-fulfilling way.

This kind of reasoning should occur in terms of both the content and form of the narrative. For instance, returning to the above example, I was interested in examining other references to female figures later in the interview, the way they were described, and whether they were always associated with persecutory oral themes similar to the 'step-mother' figure. In terms of form, I was interested in particular points of resistance in the story, where it stops, changes course or omits detail. The way the interview changes its course after the last question, for example, deserves further consideration to determine whether in fact the reference used in 'making his wife more real' is the context around which resistance occurs, or whether there is another organizing context that I am unaware of. Further, the shape of the narrative, in terms of the relative absence of the father, was also worth pursuing in the rest of the interview material. The strategy of verification and confirmation of interpretive accounts such as this will be discussed shortly.

8.3.1.3 Exploration of identifications and object relations

The next step in the analysis relies on the assumption that core narratives serve as metaphorical representations of different aspects of the interviewee's internal world. If one accepts that the self relies on narrative modes of thought, where meaning takes precedence over 'factual' happenings, this assumption is not difficult to make as narratives reflect the workings of the self and how the self has internalized and appropriated various happenings (Spence, 1987). This is not to say, however, that the actuality of the individual's life history and central events related to the subject of the interview are not important in themselves, in analyzing the interview. They often become very important in establishing and inferring the origins of particular identifications and internalizations. For instance, it was important in the above case to establish more directly later on in the interview the circumstances around the loss of the interviewee's mother, the nature of the family structure and so forth. Such aspects of the individual's history might also be useful in corroborating some of the interpretive findings later on in the analytic process.

In terms of the process of the interview however, we are essentially interested in understanding how the individual, consciously and unconsciously, locates himself in the narratives that he develops in relation to his objects. This allows us to begin to develop an account of the individual's objects, phantasy life and related defensive organizations.

The analysis of the narrative at this point is not unlike the way one listens to analytic material in the therapeutic context, allowing it to impress on the listener different hypotheses about how the individual locates himself through various forms of identifications and object relations. The interview will contain numerous references to the self and its relation to various object representations. Adopting a view similar to Schafer's (1989) proposed analysis of clinical material, the self is commonly represented in multiple forms, as both subject and object, with each version of the self expounding a different narrative. When approached in this way the interview begins to read like a script with different versions of the self and its objects representing different actors, some being much more prominent than others.

To return to the interview extract from *case seven*, two themes repeated themselves throughout the interviews giving rise to two key identifications in the narratives. The first relates to a self-sufficient, perfect self that can only tolerate idealized objects. What seems important about this identification, however, is that it is strongly associated with a persecutory female object. From this it was concluded that whilst he indicates how important this 'self-sufficient self' is, the interviewee is ambivalent about it as it also mobilizes a persecutory female object in him. The second key identification emerges through displacement when the narrative shifts to a story about a violent friend. This identification is characterized by a baseless masculine image almost solely constructed around violence towards 'real' female objects. The threatening nature of this object relationship is partly actualized in the interview further supporting the probability that this identification is characteristically disowned through projection. As is also encountered in the transference, men in the narrative appear to be used as part of a kind of defensive system that begins to suggest something about the possible relationship between these different parts of the self and its objects. This is substantiated by other similar references in the interview text.

Hopefully this serves to illustrate how I worked to construct the object constellations and their corresponding phantasies and defenses in the cases researched in this study. There are a number of other aspects of psychoanalytic theory, that have not been emphasized here, which may be worth considering at this point in the analysis. For example, developmental considerations such as the maturity of symbolic representations with reference to particular objects (Berands *et al*, 1990; Bion, 1962b; Segal, 1978, 1997; Western 1991) and the evaluation of dimensions like affect-tone and social causality of the object world, developed by Berands *et al* (1990) and Western (1991), could be useful forms of analysis. The use of Bion's (1962) grid to analyze the nature of the dialogue in the interview may also be worth considering and developing further. It may also be the case that useful analytic insights are not always derived from a particular explicable method (May, 1994). They are arrived at in more intuitive ways and can only be validated retrospectively. Either way, validation and confirmation of interpretive accounts taken from the interview need to be employed to determine the veracity of the research findings.

8.3.2 Method of Verification & Confirmation

Psychoanalysis is often criticized for not being able to produce a systematized process of confirmation and evaluation, leading to claims that it lacks scientific credibility (Grunbaum, 1984; Hanly, 1992). Others argue that these problems of confirmation emanate from an impossible quest to find fixed historical truths and predictable cause-effect relationships in analytic material instead of evaluating narrative meaning (Hopkins, 1988; Sass, 1992; Spence, 1982). Of importance here is considering what specific methods of confirmation were used in the analysis of the interviews, given that one is dealing with a multiplicity of possible meanings.

In clinical psychoanalysis the confirmation of an interpretive account can be verified by both the analysand's response (Beland, 1994; Langs, 1982) over time as well as its therapeutic effect in the progress of the analysis (Stranger, 1991; Thoma & Kachele, 1975). Although preliminary interpretations were made in the interview process it is difficult to verify interpretive accounts solely through this method simply because one cannot read too much into a response that has arisen within a few interviews.

Given that one is less able to confirm an interpretive account within the interview process itself, the method of confirmation mostly shifts to considering the fixed text of the interview. It is important that the method of confirmation be rigorous if one is to be able to account for how certain interpretive accounts or findings were achieved. Put another way, the quality of the research will depend largely on the reader being able to understand the inferences being made by the researcher, something that is often lacking in psychoanalytic accounts (Spence, 1982, 1989; Stupp, 1981). There are three different ways through which narrative meaning was evaluated here - all should be considered in evaluating any interview account of this nature.

8.3.2.1 Internal consistency and coherence of the account

Consistency and coherence refer to the plausibility and intelligibility of the account (Schafer, 1989; Sherwood, 1969; Spence, 1982). In other words, to what extent does the account make sense, and is it devoid of contradictions or gaps in understanding? The test of coherence however, has been found to provide an inadequate assessment of the validity of the account when used as a single criterion because it lacks any

particular validation procedure against which it can be evaluated (Packer & Addison, 1989). Spence (1982, 1986, 1998) has also often pointed out that processes of 'narrative smoothing' are often present in analytic accounts where the analyst smoothes over inconsistencies in order to make an account more coherent. In this sense, coherence would be a poor indicator of the accuracy of the interpretive account. Although Spence is referring specifically to clinical psychoanalysis, this process would be no different in the analysis of the interview narrative. As Packer & Addison (1998) point out however, coherence is not always inevitable and it may be a useful criterion when proposed interpretations are checked against material that does not make sense. This is similar to Spence's (1982, 1998) recommendation that 'theory disconfirming' cases, or aspects of the material that do not appear to fit immediately into current theory, should be focused on if the coherence of an account is to be adequately evaluated.

8.3.2.2 Comprehensiveness

Comprehensiveness refers to the extent to which the account is able to incorporate the totality of the person's experience, life history and other reported events (Sherwood, 1969). If the interpretive accounts of the psychodynamics of the individual are adequate, one should be able to understand various events, past and present, using the same interpretive framework.

8.3.2.3 External consistency

This mode of evaluating interpretive accounts stresses the need to move outside of the interpreter's 'hermeneutic circle' and question the consistency of findings with other theories and empirical data (Packer & Addison, 1989; Strenger, 1991).

Although internal consistency and comprehensiveness ensure some coherence, one needs to evaluate the account against theories outside the researcher's current 'circle of understanding' to ensure that it does not become self-fulfilling. As Strenger (1991) points out, this is a key requirement of acceptability for all scientific theory. Aside from seeking some consistency with other theory, this is also a place where other forms of evidence can be used to corroborate interpretive accounts. In the present study, court records and the TAT analysis were used to corroborate interpretive accounts in this way.

8.4 CONCLUSION

In exploring the application of psychoanalytic ideas to the interview setting I have attempted to outline some of the key considerations in both theory and in practice. I emphasize that this is a preliminary account aimed at discussing some of the key concerns in developing an interview of this nature and hope that it will initiate further discussion on the matter. There are many areas and problems that require more detailed consideration: The extent to which the interview can be used to explore stable intrapsychic structures; how one is to distinguish between fleeting dynamics and more stable character structures; whether causes can be attributed to interview accounts; the role of the psychoanalytic interviewer; the process of confirmation and validation, are but a few areas that require further exploration.

Specific to this chapter, I hope to have shown how the narrative tradition in psychoanalysis and the use of transference and countertransference in the interview provide the analytic researcher with a means of exploring intrapsychic processes related to specific research interests. In exploring narrative accounts across a number of cases, as is the case in this study, the interview has potential in developing new theory as well as assessing some of the theoretical assumptions previously laid down in psychoanalysis. Inasmuch as all other psychoanalytic work is vulnerable to 'wild analysis' (Schafer, 1989), I have suggested that the interview is just as, if not more, susceptible to hasty assumptions. One cannot over-emphasize the need for adherence to rigorous analytic and verification procedures in this regard.

SECTION IV

NINE CASES OF RAGE-TYPE MURDER: CASE REPORTS, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

CHAPTER NINE

RAGE-TYPE MURDER: NINE CASE REPORTS AND ANALYSES

The presentation of each of the cases conforms to the following format: Firstly, a brief case history, as gathered from court records and the interviews is outlined. Secondly, the TAT and interview narratives are set out. Finally, an analysis of the object relations evident in each case is explored.

All interview material referred to in the narrative analysis is to be found in Appendix A with each interview vignette being given a corresponding reference number. The TAT findings are presented using the scoring method and description of themes outlined by Western (1991). All story cards made reference to in the analysis are listed under each corresponding case in Appendix B.

9.1 CASE ONE: RALPH

Ralph shot and killed his ex-girlfriend and a friend whilst they sat together in her flat. He walked in, felt them to be a severe threat to him and opened fire until his gun was empty. A week prior to this, his brother, a policeman, had been killed whilst on duty.

Ralph is serving a fifteen-year prison sentence for his crime and has currently served one year of this period.

9.1.1 Case History

Ralph, a 33 year-old black man, grew up in a rural village. He is the youngest son of a family of ten. His father was a farmer and his mother a housewife. Ralph shared a very close relationship with his mother. He is described, in case reports, as an 'ideal

child' who did everything right for his mother and was known for his politeness and good behaviour.

Ralph feels that he never really knew his father as he was always out working. He died when Ralph was 13 years old and from that early age he occupied the position as 'head of the family', took on a lot of responsibility, and felt he had to look after his mother. During his schooling years he spent all his extra time working for money to support her.

His mother died when he was 21 years of age. Following this loss, he still occupied an authoritative position in his family with family members often turning to him for help. He spent a large amount of his time helping members of his community and doing work through his local church.

Ralph's life changed when he won a scholarship to go to university. During his university career he quickly established himself as a well-known student negotiator, dealing with student and staff affairs. He was well known to the rector of the university for his good work in solving problems on campus. One of these cases involved implicating a number of security staff members in fraudulent activity. He received a number of death threats as a result of this work and, in turn, acquired a gun 'as a means of defense'.

His girlfriend at the time had been a family friend who came from the same village as him. Ralph had made it possible for her to study through raising funds for her and supporting her at the same university. After two years he ended their relationship because she had been unfaithful to him. They parted 'on good terms' with her still doing some of his domestic chores. They maintained regular contact with one another for this reason. After the separation Ralph found himself becoming obsessed with the thought of being with her again, but could not discuss this with her. He would often have sleepless nights, feeling compelled to drive to her flat. He would sit outside but do nothing. Eventually, however, he was able to overcome this difficulty and carry on with his studies.

Two months after this he received a message that his brother, a policeman, had been killed whilst on duty. Ralph was considerably traumatized by the news and dealt with it by trying to get as much information from the police as he could. Witnesses report that he began to behave oddly at this point. He did not eat or sleep, and irrationally began to associate his brother's death with threats on his life. He also had thoughts, at this point, about killing his brother's attackers.

Two days following his brother's murder, Ralph was invited to his ex-girlfriend's flat to talk about what had happened. On entering the flat he suddenly felt threatened by the presence of his ex-girlfriend and another friend who was visiting at the time. He immediately opened fire killing both of them after firing several shots.

Ralph attempted to commit suicide after the act. Prior to this incident no history of violence is reported. Apart from the constant anxiety he found himself under when working as a student negotiator and the obsessive symptomatology related to his break-up with his girlfriend, no other symptoms are evident in his history. He denies having any conscious aggressive fantasies towards his girlfriend.

9.1.2 TAT Analysis

9.1.2.1 Themes and Observations

Ralph's descriptions are very brief. Only one story (Card 2), depicting a traditional farm and church scene, extends longer than two lines. He appears defensive and hurried in completing the exercise. The most prominent theme involves the projection of conflict/aggression when it occurs in the cards. In card 4, for instance, 'fighting' is projected onto someone else and in card 9, the murder is projected onto burglars who are absent from the actual picture. Further, female figures are depicted as expressing negative emotions, whereas men show very little emotion and are not described at all on some cards (See Cards 2 & 18BM). This may indicate either a denial or lack of representational space related to internalized male figures.

Card 16 (blank) suggests the presence of something negative that is unpredictable and cannot be seen, leaving him feeling as though anything may happen. This appears important in the context of his perception of negative affects and aggression.

9.1.2.2 Complexity of Representations of People (2) .

People are represented as struggling, damaged or attacked with little help in sight. Representations are unidimensional with very little elaboration of the different themes being apparent.

9.1.2.3 Affect-Tone of Relationship Paradigms (2).

Relationships are hostile and empty. Most of the figures in the cards do not relate to one another but exist side-by-side looking hurt, hateful and angry (see cards 1, 4, & 6BM). There is only one card in which relating between figures can be observed, namely card 2. Here, some concern is expressed between two women. Apart from this, no creative or caring interaction takes place between any of the figures

9.1.2.4 Capacity for Emotional Investment (2).

There is very little capacity for emotional investment evident in Ralph's stories. Relating is restrictive and negative in all themes evident.

9.1.2.5 Understanding of Social Causality (1).

No causal relationships between actions are apparent in Ralph's stories. This is, in part, due to their brevity, but there is also no attempt to associate actions and feelings with any logical attribution or explanation (see cards 12M, 13MF, 15 & 17BM)

9.1.3 Interview Analysis

9.1.3.1 Transference/countertransference Impressions and Process

Ralph impresses as a very helpful and obliging person but gets slightly irritated when confronted or asked about something he did not raise himself. In discussing the murder directly or other possible areas of conflict, he becomes defensive and re-emphasizes his role as a 'peaceful caring person'. It was also important, at times, for him to impress me with his achievements and his connections with people in high places.

During the last interview it becomes clear that rationalization and intellectualization are the most prominent defenses used in dealing with his own murderousness. He quotes a number of incidents where he had been told about similar attacks, leaving an

impression that he exonerated himself from taking full responsibility for his actions. 'It could happen to anyone' was a motto that made sense within this context.

One particular parapraxis emerges three times in the interview: In referring to a political conflict between two warring factions, he keeps confusing the one with the other. He makes statements like, 'There was conflict between the NNS and NNS' instead of saying the conflict was with another party which is his conscious intention.

During our interviews Ralph often forgets details about his life, especially the specifics related to his role as a negotiator. It is also apparent throughout the interview that Ralph is unable to articulate any negative feelings towards his ex-girlfriend and, at one stage, he refuses to continue talking about her.

One prevalent transference-countertransference paradigm evident in the interview relates to references to being suspicious about my motives, which are strongly linked to a sense that I cannot understand or help him. Two related feelings and thoughts are most prevalent in my countertransference reaction to this. I find myself feeling great sympathy for his zealous approach to helping others. At the same time, however, I am aware of an element of suspiciousness in my own thoughts about this overstated 'all good' role.

9.1.3.2 Core Narratives

'I was very very close to my mother'

Ralph grew up to be the good, polite son. He worked very hard, went to church and did good deeds for others. He describes himself as being very close to his mother. From age 13, when his father died, he sees himself as looking after her, working to earn money solely for this purpose. She and other family members always called on him for advice, despite his very young age.

Two other similar story lines are related to this narrative. The first concerns his taking on bad, dangerous things for others, whilst in no way participating or being tempted by these implied 'bad activities'. Doing this never compromises his relationship with others. Secondly, the 'good polite son' storyline is also associated with the maxim 'to hate means to suffer' (Appendix A, 101).

The good negotiator

A strong core narrative that ran throughout all four interviews relates to his role as a 'negotiator of conflict', a position that Ben found himself in as far back as he can remember (Appendix A, 102). He casts himself as always helping those in need, with a knack for solving people's problems. He does this in the family, with friends, in the institution in which he was studying, and carries on doing so in prison. This is strongly associated with a position of respect, authority and self-fulfillment. Apart from being linked to mediating conflict situations for the good of the underdog, this narrative only holds true as long as he is successful, otherwise it is abandoned. In other words, if the conflict cannot be solved, or escalates towards aggression or violence he no longer continues and ends all negotiation or communication in order to, in turn, put an end to feeling 'bad'. He puts it as follows: "I don't go to any place where I feel that there might be some problems, because if you have done something wrong I rather keep quiet because I know that I am going to feel bad" (Appendix A, 102).

His negotiator role is also associated with storylines about people in high positions. And when his position as a negotiator feels threatened, he attempts to turn to them for assistance. This role is also linked to a very distressed and agitated part of him. Ralph is unable to articulate how this role has made him successful and is conscious of the fact that it seemed somewhat 'unreal' to him.

'Unfinished business'

This narrative is clearly placed within the context of the 'good negotiator', but refers specifically to his relationship with his girlfriend. He relates to her from a position of authority, organizing her life for her and 'taking responsibility for her'. Their relationship ends when she is unfaithful.

Despite his breaking off their relationship, ostensibly feeling resolved about the situation, he clearly struggles to separate from her. This is related to his no longer being able to look after her and be her negotiator as he had done before. Ralph maintains contact but the structure of their relationship changes considerably. She becomes a more frustrating and 'scary' figure to him, whilst he becomes more needy and vulnerable. He feels pulled towards her by a 'mystical force' not under his

control, making him 'love her intensely' (Appendix A, 103). Importantly however, when he experiences this feeling becoming too powerful, he worries about it turning into a deathly force. Her being unfaithful is associated with making him feel degraded and is related to his needing to 'check up on her'. He always keeps his distance, however, and can never bring himself to make actual contact with her when he is in this state.

'I should have shot the hijackers'

The firearm is strongly associated with being attacked. It is also associated with the point at which 'the good negotiator' can no longer serve its function. Ralph never 'displays' his gun when around his girlfriend because, in his reasoning, he is not afraid of being attacked. He had never used his firearm before. It is associated with being threatened by others (hijackers and thieves) where he avoids using his firearm because he 'feels sorry for them'. The gun is further associated with becoming more distressed.

In this narrative he expresses a strong wish that he had aggressed those who had threatened him rather than 'the one he loved'. He shot his ex-girlfriend and her friend, according to his own conscious reasoning, because he had no conscious experience of violence and it was a foreign entity to him.

Confusion and chaos after the murder of his brother

The murder of his brother sends him into a state of confusion and anger. Ralph cannot alleviate his distress in any way and he feels no one is able help him. He feels extremely threatened by others around him. When he visits his ex-girlfriend at her request to 'sit down and talk' he feels extremely threatened and has 'forgotten if he loved her or not'. The man with her is confused with one of the men on the opposite side of the negotiations team he had been so involved in. A second later, he visualizes himself dead alongside his brother and, as a result, opens fire.

An ideal world together

Ralph's dreams and corresponding associations suggest a narrative related to his ex-girlfriend being alive, caring for him and removing dangerous things out of his path

(Appendix A, 103). He associates this with the 'ideal world we could have had together'.

9.1.4 Identifications and Object Relations

The primary object relationship evident in the interview narratives relates to his strong identification with the role of a negotiator, a caring problem-solving self aimed at helping the underdog. It is an all-good self that withdraws when this image cannot be upheld. This identification appears to have its origins in his relationship with his mother, an idealized figure who needed his help. The identification is further related to his internalizing 'bad things' thereby keeping them safe for others, but at the same time, not allowing 'bad' representations to interact with the 'good self' in any way. It appears then that 'bad things', such as hate, could be acknowledged, but at the same time were kept away from the self. The TAT uncovers a more struggling, damaged part of Ralph which seems incongruent with his 'negotiator' role, suggesting that this may serve as a defense against more painful parts of the self.

There are a number of other indications that his negotiating role serves a key defensive function. The over-statement of his negotiating function, his control of this theme and irritation in the transference, his intolerance of bad affect (as also observed in the TAT), and the strong link between this role and 'all good' outcomes all suggest this. Defensive aggression is also associated with the breakdown of the negotiator role. The identification is functional as long as it reflects success for him, otherwise it is immediately displaced onto another situation. Within this context, the parapraxes alluded to earlier might be understood as an important sign of an unconscious intolerance of conflict. The conflicting sides are unconsciously perceived as the same to eliminate the possibility of real conflict in his mind. Similarly, it may also relate to a deficit in appropriate discriminatory processes that serve to separate conflicting object representations.

This main identification extends into Ralph's personal life with regard to his girlfriend but no longer works once they are separated. She begins to represent something frightening. The separation is extremely difficult for Ralph but this, along with any negative affect or thoughts about her, cannot be acknowledged consciously. It appears likely that this frightening image emerges as a result of disowning and

projecting negative feeling states into her. Without being able to fend for her and have her mirror a sense of goodness in him, these alien feelings began to take on 'a deathly force' and are accompanied by a phantasy of wanting to disown them.

It appears that the trauma of the loss of his brother is experienced as a direct assault on himself. There are signs of a deterioration in the discriminatory function between self and object in the narrative leading to an over-identification with his dead brother. In this desperate state he easily displaces this internal state onto his girlfriend, experiencing it as an overwhelming threat to his life which cannot be contained.

It appears that his dreams about his girlfriend and the continued importance of his 'negotiator' identification in prison further illustrate the significance of his use of idealization and the compulsive reinstatement of all-good objects as a defense.

His fantasies about wishing he had aggressed those who had hurt him, rather than hurting the one he loved, show that his aggression is directed at bad objects rather than good ones. Other associations, however, suggest that aggression is linked more to good objects *turning* bad, rather than bad objects *per se*.

9.2 CASE TWO: SIMON

Simon stabbed his wife 17 times in a fit of rage. He had minimal recall of the incident and was taken to hospital the following morning because he had taken an overdose of tablets prior to the attack. Also prior to the incident he had become considerably withdrawn and was not eating or sleeping. The murder occurred after he had been separated from his wife for two weeks.

Simon is serving a sentence of ten years imprisonment and has served one year of his sentence.

9.2.1 Case History

Simon is a 32 year-old Indian sailor. He is the youngest in his family and has a sister two years his senior and a brother four years older than he is. When he was 8 his mother died from a sudden illness. A year later, his father remarried but remained largely absent from the family due to work commitments. Simon, his brother and sister, were largely left alone with their new mother. From the very beginning it appears that his relationship with her was difficult. He felt controlled and manipulated by her. Court proceedings make little reference to this relationship, but from his descriptions, it appears that it involved considerable abuse. He would have to do work around the house for extended hours. His mother often did not feed them or allow any of their friends to visit them. Immediately after school Simon made a decision to go to the navy based solely on his need to get away from, in his view, a domineering and controlling stepmother. After this he had very little contact with his father or stepmother. For the first six years, before he was married, he had no contact with them at all.

Simon married and had one child. He paid for an elaborate wedding himself and saw it as an opportunity to show what he could provide for his wife. He only invited his father to his wedding, his stepmother was excluded. After a year of marriage Simon discovered that his wife had been having an affair whilst he was at sea. He quickly 'forgave her' and responded by trying to pay more attention to her and ensure that she had everything she needed. A few months later a friend told him that this wife was still having an affair. The same scenario followed, with him forgiving her and trying to make things better for her. His wife, however, continued to have an affair and soon separated from him.

Simon grew increasingly depressed and withdrawn after the separation and could not deal with being away from his wife and child after all he had done for them. He begged her to come back to him. Eventually, after much persistence, she moved back into their family home. That night they had an argument that eventually led to her murder.

They had begun arguing about her affair. Simon's wife began to insult him and wished that he were dead and would leave her alone. Promptly after this he took an overdose of pills. Angry with him for doing this, his wife attacked him physically. Following this, he remembers very little. He remembers 'rolling around the floor with a knife' but he felt as if he was 'doing nothing with it'. The medial report indicates that multiple deep stab wounds to the body killed his wife. The knife he used was an ordinary kitchen knife. Simon was arrested at his house the following day. Reports indicate that he was extremely depressed and suicidal during the trial.

Simon has no prior history of violent behaviour and claims to have had no fantasies of hurting or killing his wife. The only conscious fantasies he recalls were related to the distress he felt about her leaving him. No history of psychological signs or symptoms of distress are reported as occurring prior to the build-up to the murder.

9.2.2 TAT Analysis

9.2.2.1 Themes and Observations

A number of the characters feel left alone, 'disheartened' and in need of parents. Simon displays a difficulty in articulating themes of aggression and there is an idealization of much of the emotional pain evident in the stories (see cards 3, 5 & 8).

9.2.2.2 Complexity of Representations of People (2).

People are represented as needy and distressed, otherwise they have no feelings at all. Apart from the first card, figures are unidimensional in their representation.

9.2.2.3 Affect-Tone of Relationship Paradigms (2).

Representations of relationships are mixed with a mild negative tone. In a majority of the cards there is no relating between objects, it is rather the desire for relating that is expressed. This leaves the identified figure alone and 'disheartened' (cards 1, 4 & 5). Secondly, where relating does occur it is emotionless and depicted in an obligatory way between parent and child. Here, the stories themselves are mildly negative. There is no expression of nurturing or caring relationships in any of the cards.

9.2.2.4 Capacity for Emotional Investment (2).

A limited investment in people is evident in Simon's stories. He displays a need for emotional warmth, but this is met with disappointment (see cards 1 & 4). The identified figures are limited to feeling distressed, painful emotions, but are unable to invest in others around them. In cards 3 and 8 there is evidence of a poor distinction between 'normal' emotions and destructive or painful emotions.

9.2.2.5 Understanding of Social Causality (2).

Apart from card 1, where there is minor evidence of thought-mediated action, none of the other cards demonstrate this. Even here, the thoughts are unable to lead to action. In the other cards there is only rudimentary stimulus-response causality evident.

9.2.3 Interview Analysis

9.2.3.1 Transference/Countertransference Impressions and Process

A number of transference impressions are evident during the interviews. When talking about his stepmother, Simon often speaks in the present tense during the interview. He addresses me as 'sir' during the interview. It is also important for him to impress me with his achievements with constant reference to his 'doing it on his own' (Appendix A, 201).

The last two transference references appear related to the only countertransference impression recorded during the interview. It relates to feelings and thoughts that both myself and Simon have to do more than most people in life to succeed, but in some way this makes us superior to most.

Finally, in terms of the interview process, Simon constantly makes use of the phrase 'there was nothing I could do' throughout all the interviews. It is associated with despair and suicidal thoughts.

9.2.3.2 Core Narratives

'My mother died'

In the first short narrative Simon constructs, he relates to his mother as providing good things for him. He has very little memory of this, but relates to it as if he saw the last of 'a good providing mother' when she died. This narrative soon changes and is dominated by 'the bad stepmother narrative'.

The bad stepmother: 'what everything boils down to is that I did not have enough love'

Simon constructs a very negative and hateful narrative around the theme of his stepmother which has a number of associated storylines. There are many themes of abuse and neglect leaving an impression that he feels persecuted by her. He associates this with feeling ashamed about his past, never telling anyone for fear of feeling humiliated about it.

In reaction, he creates a 'private part' of himself that is always thinking about ways of escaping from her and dreaming of 'doing great things'. This part is also 'the adult' and is associated with a need to protect vulnerable things around him. Further, Simon's father is a 'stranger' to him in his narrative constructions. The father is felt to be inaccessible and complacent in dealing with any of the difficulties at home and as a result, he is perceived to be allied with the stepmother's motives. There is also a strong link to Simon feeling 'ashamed' of the way he and his siblings were treated and he would make every effort to hide this part of his life from others. As soon as he could, he reports, he cut all ties with this part of his life (Appendix A, 201).

'Afterwards, I met my love ... a very strong love'

With never having had any love he 'knew he had to make this bond strong'. Here, Simon constructs an ideal relationship where he does everything himself but always for his wife. He cannot help himself nor do anything for himself because of how he feels about her. Nothing negative ever happens. If it does, it is quickly 'forgotten about' and is associated with him needing to do more to build their relationship 'because we had a perfect relationship'. His recurrent dreams of being 'an angel bringing her [his wife] back', typifies this narrative (Appendix A, 202).

When she wants to leave him, however, the narrative changes and she becomes a threatening figure who does not listen and does not understand him.

'I needed a professional career'

To be a 'professional' and go to the navy was primarily a way of being able to leave home at age 16. The theme is strongly related to the achievement of becoming an adequate man. There was a clear sense of him feeling that he had to do a lot more than other men to measure up, but in the end, he would achieve great things (Appendix A, 203).

'She wouldn't come back' / 'Something took her ...'

The narrative around the night of the murder is closely associated with his wife not coming back to him. She expresses a hurtful impulsive wish that night saying that she wishes he were dead. The narrative theme around her shifts here and he begins to fear her. His response is to fulfill her wish. He takes an overdose of tablets, a motive linked in the narrative to a desperate need for her to show that she cared for him. Instead, she attacks him. From this point on he has no recall, but the murder is linked to a sense that 'something took her'; Simon still cannot believe that he did such a thing. He is left towards the end of this interview feeling some despair about loving. In his words: 'I don't think I will be able to love again'.

The theme of 'not killing', or 'not killing himself', is also linked several times in the interviews to a need to protect his vulnerable children (Appendix A, 204).

'Nobody knows that I am here'

It is extremely important for Simon that the murder and his imprisonment are kept as confidential as possible. It is his perception that very few people know that he is in prison and most are of the understanding that he has been transferred to another navy base.

9.2.4 Identifications and Object Relations

Simon initially identifies himself opposite a good caring maternal figure. This narrative is soon consumed and dominated by a damaged, abused and shame-filled character that had to battle against a cruel 'poisoning' mother. This object relation

appears to be the primary constellation around which most of his internal world is organized. This is perhaps most readily observed in the transference where, through changing the tense, he unconsciously shows how 'present' and very real this experience still is for him. His relating to good objects is largely dominated and suppressed by this experience.

The extent to which we can assume that this 'bad stepmother' imago is the result of an incomplete mourning of his original good object is highly speculative and cannot be clarified further by the interview analysis. However, the lack of supportive internal objects in his narratives suggests that the loss of his mother would have been difficult to adequately assimilate.

Within the context of this dominant object constellation, it appears that Simon still manages to keep a part of himself away from this entrapping experience. This 'private self' is driven by fantasies of freedom, independence, and a rejection of his external and internal situation. Here, he becomes more identified with a masculine self that needs to do more than most men to measure up (as also observed in the transference). The emergence of this identification in the narrative also occurs in conjunction with his feeling the loss of a supportive paternal object. Nowhere in his interview narratives are there references to supportive paternal objects. They are either experienced as inaccessible or allied with persecutory objects. This part of him, and all that he manages to do independently of others, is strongly idealized, fostering a sense of strength in overcoming the odds. These identifications, the 'disheartened abandoned child' and the 'idealized independent' identification, are also evident in the TAT analysis.

Simon's wife and marriage appear to become an extension of this set of object relations. The internal representation of her is heavily idealized and she can do no wrong. When, in reality, difficult experiences occur, they are quickly removed from consciousness in order to salvage an idealized image of her. He does this by attempting to further bolster this image by compliantly doing more for his idealized object.

The threat of losing her, and what he desperately needed her to represent, appears too difficult for Simon to tolerate. The narrative relating to the murder suggests that there had been a growing deterioration in his ability to discriminate between self and other. Within the context of the above object relations, it appears that his self-destructive behaviour in front of his wife was a desperate attempt at compliance combined with a wish that she would 'save him'. When this goes wrong, and she attacks him, he is far more vulnerable and the suicidal wish is defensively shifted onto her.

It appears that everything bad is quickly assigned to the vulnerable, ashamed part of himself - most predominantly linked to his stepmother - and then, in phantasy, rejected. However, the separation and his wife's aggressive behaviour appear to bring the 'stepmother' imago back into the forefront of his mind, leaving him feeling persecuted by what he thought he had freed himself from.

Simon's reference to 'not being able to love again' conveys a sense of a powerful danger associated with love in his fantasies. It appears to be a reference to the idealized nature of his love also being very dangerous. The content of his dreams, his attempt to 'hide' his crime from others, and his reference to 'something else taking her away' all suggest that mechanisms of dissociation are still prominent in separating his 'independent self' from more vulnerable victimized parts.

9.3 CASE THREE: GRANT

Grant, a 38-year-old Indian teacher, shot and killed his wife and 3 year-old daughter after his wife had insulted and slapped him for not doing a household task that she had asked him to do.

Grant had been given the death sentence at the time of his trial. However, given the change in legislation prohibiting the death penalty, his sentence is due to be commuted. He has thus far been imprisoned for six years.

9.3.1 Case History

Grant comes from a family of five. He is the middle child, with a brother 4 years his senior and a sister two years younger. His father was a successful store manager and his mother a housewife. Grant's upbringing is reported as being unproblematic with his parents being described as very caring, at times 'spoiling' him. The family is described as being extremely close and family members would often spend time together. Grant is especially close to his mother.

After finishing school he began training to be a teacher. It was here that he first met his future wife. From the outset, their parents were not happy with the relationship as the pair came from different religious backgrounds. As a result, they eloped and were married in that same year.

Soon after this, problems in their marriage started with his wife becoming violent towards him for petty reasons such as him coming home late from school and wanting to go and visit his family. They had one daughter together but soon got divorced because he could no longer tolerate his wife's violence and anger. Although she had been to see a number of doctors and psychiatrists, none of this appeared to help. He went back to live with his parents but remarried her a year later. The trouble continued, however, and this pattern repeated itself with them getting divorced for a second time. Once again, however, he remarried her, claiming that he felt responsible for his daughter and also believing that he still loved her. This time they had another daughter.

It is reported that Grant had no close male friends but had a number of female friends he felt he could confide in, especially in terms of the difficulties he was having with his wife. During the court case the principal at his school testified that he was a 'model teacher' who was responsible and hard-working. He further reported that Grant was non-aggressive in his manner and this made it difficult to believe that he could have committed murder.

Nothing out of the ordinary appears to have happened on the day of the murder although his wife had continually argued with him the previous week. That night, whilst he was bathing his daughter, his wife began insulting him for not having done

a particular chore. She then slapped him, throwing him into 'a different state of mind'. After this, she went to her room to say her daily prayers alone. At this point, filled with rage, Grant went to fetch his firearm and ran into her room shooting his wife several times in the head whilst she was praying. Immediately following this, his daughter ran into the room and was also shot in the frenzy. At first, after the murder, Grant claimed that this daughter had accidentally shot her mother and herself. After a few hours, however, he admitted to the crime.

The gun had been purchased three years previously after Grant had been hijacked in his car. He had wanted to be able to defend himself in the event of it happening again. After the murder he claims to have found forgiveness in religious faith and has become a Hare Krishna devotee.

Grant admits to having had fantasies of killing his wife during her attacks, 'but never thought' he 'was ever capable of carrying them through'. Most dominant in his mind however, were fears of being humiliated and attacked by his wife. He has no history of violent behaviour and reports no history of psychological symptomatology.

9.3.2 TAT Analysis

9.3.2.1 Themes and Observations

Most of his stories are characterized by identification with a suffering figure who does not understand the suffering. There are hopes expressed for an end to the suffering that appear fantastical and lack any emotional investment. This is mostly depicted in his description of 'unpleasant' stories where he ends his description by saying things like 'I hope she will be successful'. These 'hopeful' actions never become part of his stories. Amongst others, Card 8BM illustrates this well.

9.3.2.2 Complexity of Representations of People (3).

Grant displays some capacity to elaborate on the internal make-up of the figures in his stories. Most figures are depicted as hurt, damaged or attacked, but cannot comprehend why such suffering is occurring. Men are perceived as attacking figures, whilst women are seen as suffering figures.

Another vague representational image is also apparent in his stories typified by a sense of 'hope' that may save these suffering figures. These themes lack any coherent elaboration.

9.3.2.3 Affect-Tone of Relationship Paradigms (3).

Grant's stories depict two representations of relationships. (1) Relationships characterized by malevolence, (2) Relationships that are idealized and unproblematic. Neither of these relationships is related to a need to care for objects.

9.3.2.4 Capacity for Emotional Investment (2).

Emotional investment is limited. Individuals are depicted as largely isolated, passive and alone.

9.3.2.5 Understanding of Social Causality (2).

Grant's 'positive outlook' in many of his stories displays no sense of causality. Some sense of causality is reserved for the 'painful' stories. This, however, does not extend to a particularly complex level and is met with a passive acceptance of difficulties encountered.

9.3.3 Interview Analysis

9.3.3.1 Transference/Countertransference Impressions and Process

The nature of the transference is clear from the outset and changes little throughout the interviews. Grant is overly submissive and obliging. He finds it difficult to maintain eye contact and often wants to make sure that he has given me the 'right' answer. Throughout the interviews there is also a clear sense of avoidance in talking about more difficult topics. He often changes the course of the interview towards what is good and 'valuable' to him. At one point he needs to leave the room during a particularly difficult time in the interview when he is talking about the murder.

There are subtle hints of the transference changing, however, when the crime or his violent relationship is discussed. He forgets to mention anything about his daughter during this time. He is also careful to end his statements about the violence by saying something 'good' about the difficult issues he is talking about (Appendix A. 302).

Interestingly, in one part of the interview he keeps on saying that he 'had left through the back door' to escape the abuse. After being questioned about this, he realizes that the 'back door' reference has no literal relevance to what actually happened. This suggests that it may be an important unconscious reference within the context of the story being told, related to his 'back door' way of coping with the abuse. A further significant slip occurs in his reference to his in-laws as '*late* in-laws'. In the context of the interview it appears most strongly associated with an unconscious attempt to make all things associated with his wife 'late' in his mind.

The most impressive feature of my own countertransference state during the interviews is the depth of my empathy towards him. I feel 'sorry for him'; I feel that he is essentially a good man who has suffered unduly. I find myself wanting to spend more interview time with him than I need to. It is very difficult to believe that he has killed someone, particularly his own child, as he appears to be the most unlikely perpetrator of such a crime. A further occurrence that appears significant to the transference-countertransference interaction occurs during the interview where I find myself uncharacteristically finishing his sentences for him and hence talking over him.

9.3.3.2 Core narratives

Mother

Grant constructs a highly idealized picture of his mother associated with her endlessly providing. His mother is so 'cooperative', calm, and compliant that there is nothing that she cannot do. She is also associated with creating a place of safety for him.

To be good at all costs

The central narrative that emerges across all the interviews is about a boy who grows up in an extremely supportive and good family. His father 'spoils' him by allowing him to do 'adult things' and there is no sense of any negative or difficult experience in the family. Despite this, he feels that he cannot reveal all of himself to them and has to secretly do things that are associated with his own independence.

He grows up as a good obliging person with an appreciation for 'ideal good' things in life and makes sure that all he does turns out 'excellent'. He also seeks good ideal things for himself which centre around appearance. The acquisition of his firearm is partly associated with what was 'fashionable' at the time (Appendix A, 301).

'My loving violent wife'

Associations about his wife relate to her being both extremely good and caring, on the one hand, and frequently abusive and violent on the other. When it comes to the violence, he feels he could never hit back to defend himself as 'I just never had it in me'. Instead he submits in a desperate attempt to calm her. He does this because his main concern is keeping the neighbours from hearing or knowing that something is wrong. He reports that most people around him saw them as a 'perfect loving couple'. Grant tries to escape the violence several times but is always drawn back by focusing on the 'fantastic good' things about his family. He further fears that something, or someone bad and abusive, would enter their lives if he did not go back. He feels he was 'dependent' and drawn in by his wife's goodness. Grant went back, in his words, 'because I wanted everything to be perfect'. The romanticized 'perfect' dreams he reports to continue to have about his wife also appear related to this theme (Appendix A, 302).

'I could never hit back'

He cannot think of himself as being a violent person whilst in relationship with her. He can only think about defending himself from her and his relationship with her. The fact that he could not defend himself made him feel less of a man. Killing his wife and daughter still feels 'like a dream' to him as he has never been violent.

Furthermore, he often makes reference to a frustration related to not being able to discipline his own children or his pupils. This is associated with a fear that this would threaten the good relationships he maintained with them. He also makes reference to how his wife's violence began to destroy the commitment he felt towards his pupils.

The murder

Grant's murderous actions are associated with a 'different state' that emerges through not being able to bear her insults and violence anymore. His own violence is strongly

linked to self-protection. His identification in this narrative still remains somewhat passive. The narrative reads as if the situation grants him a new opportunity to act differently. However, when he becomes active in committing the offence, it takes place whilst his wife is disengaged and passive.

Regarding his daughter, he claims: 'I did not mean to kill my daughter, she accidentally got in the way'. There are no other associations to this in the interview apart from his conscious understanding of its being a part of his own uncontrollable rage (Appendix A, 303).

'I have placed my faith in god'

The most coherent post-murder narrative relates to him placing all his faith in god and, as a result, being 'exceptionally well since then'.

9.3.4 Identifications and Object Relations

Grant's narrative constructions strongly suggest that his most dominant object relations constellate around an idealized relationship with a maternal object that is easily transferred onto other situations. The most stable identification apparent is characterized by passive submission in order to preserve or maintain a phantasy of ideal love and bliss. This part of him rejects all violence or associated themes, such as discipline, to ensure that his object remains in a symbiotic relationship with him. This pattern of relating is present in the transference-countertransference paradigm. His portrayal of a good, obliging person engenders a strong sense in me that he is not capable of an act such as the one he committed, as well as a sense of wanting to 'help' him by finishing his sentences. It seems to represent a form of relating characterized by goodness and caring, with him in a passive state, very separate from the reality of the pain and difficulty of what he had really been through.

It seems that it is this idealized symbiotic phantasy that is challenged by his wife's abuse and he manages to separate it from the external situation when it becomes too unbearable by leaving the relationship. This phantasy, however, remains unmodified and he is drawn back into the relationship, illustrating how dissociated it is from the reality of the relationship.

There are a number of other points in the interview that support this claim and illustrate how this split is maintained. Grant keeps on wanting to shift the interview away from issues of conflict towards what is 'good' and 'valuable' to him. He leaves his children, a strong reference to his fantasized ideal, out of any violent or abusive narratives. His reference to the 'back door' way of dealing with the abuse and his slip about his '*late* in-laws' also appear to relate to a desperate attempt to rid himself of thoughts of an aggressive internal situation. The latter may also be a reference to an unconscious phantasy linked to the annihilation of the aggressive object that had become generalized to other internal objects associated with his late wife. The split between suffering vulnerable objects and the more idealistic parts of the personality is supported by the main themes evident in the TAT.

Importantly, separation from this object relationship is more readily associated with themes of aggression. It is only here that he could assume a more aggressive identification, with defense being the central motivation. It is also possible that his wife's violence came to represent a projected potentially violent part of himself. This may explain his difficulty in leaving, and his inability to take on anything vaguely associated with aggression.

With reference to the murder, there is an absence of the defensive idealized narrative so clearly defined before. This narrative is characterized by a sudden intolerance of the violent object and the adoption of another solution that is facilitated by the external situation. Instead of submitting, he identifies with the violent object. This murderous identification occurs whilst she is disengaged and in a passive state.

Although Grant separates his daughter from this motive, it is difficult to identify a separate unconscious motive from the interview and it is left open to numerous interpretations. The extension of his annihilation phantasy onto other objects associated with his wife however, suggests that this may have been the case here. Whatever this motive, the killing of his daughter, a loving vulnerable object, bears testimony to how unbearably overwhelming this internal object constellation was and how it eventually overwhelmed his concern and relatedness to his good internal objects.

The idealized object constellation appears to have continued in his dogmatic and somewhat obsessive religious faith. The need for this object relationship appears clearer here where the self is identified as bad or victimized, opposite an idealized good object. This does not mean, however, that his religious faith is not also, in part, a dedicated attempt at the reparation of damaged or lost internal objects.

9.4 CASE FOUR: BEN

Ben, a 37 year-old white man, killed his girlfriend, Jane, by stabbing her 37 times in a blind rage whilst she lay sleeping in her bed. They had just got back together again after a two-month separation.

During his trial a number of Neuropsychological tests were performed as well as MRI and EGG scans to try and establish a neurological cause as the murder was so extreme and out of character. None was found. Ben was given a ten-year sentence for his crime and has served three years of this time.

9.4.1 Case History

Ben grew up in a modest home. His father is a construction supervisor, and his mother a housewife. He has an older brother and sister, and one younger brother. Growing up Ben's family lived close to many other relatives and lived next door to his father's brother. From age 5-16 Ben reports that he was consistently sexually abused by his uncle without any intervention from others around him. The abuse took place within the context of a seductive relationship in which he was given toy cars and other gifts in return for sexual favours. He was also threatened a number of times, by his uncle, not to disclose the incidents of abuse. Ben barely managed to make it through school and was a very withdrawn and shy child.

He found it very difficult to break away from this abusive relationship. It was only once he had found a girlfriend, at age 16, that he became able to resist the pattern of 'abuse and reward' that characterized the relationship. At this point he also turned to drugs (marijuana) as a 'wonderful escape from it all'. Following school, at age 18, he

left home to undergo his compulsory military training. Reports indicate that he refused to carry a gun and took up special 'pacifist' duties in his unit.

After the army he began working with his father doing odd jobs in the construction trade. He had a number of brief sexual encounters but was unable to sustain a relationship. Eventually he married a mute woman whom he had met at work. The relationship only lasted two years, however, after which she returned to her parents. From most reports, it appears that the most significant factor leading to the break-up was his excessive demands for sex.

A year after this he met Jane, a 'high-class' call-girl with whom he had an intimate relationship for seven months. Their relationship was characterized by excess. Jane essentially supported Ben, often buying him extravagant gifts and giving him 'pocket money' on a weekly basis. They had a very active and experimental sexual relationship with Jane often wanting him to perform sexual acts that he was not always comfortable with.

Two months prior to the murder Jane had called their relationship off for no specified reason. She also wanted him to return some of the belongings that she had bought him, most notably the new motorcycle she had purchased. He refused and it was left at that. Ben reports that after this, they had no contact with each other until the day before the murder. That night they bumped into each other and decided to try and talk about why they had separated. After making up and deciding to continue their relationship they spent a night of heavy drinking and drugging on the town.

They returned to her flat where they began to have sex. At this point he remembers being unable to get an erection and her falling off to sleep. Ben reports that he also fell asleep shortly after this. In the morning he awoke and, although he does not recall this, he must have gone to the kitchen, got a bread knife and returned to kill her. The court report indicates that he must have stood over her whilst she was sleeping, and in an inexplicable rage, continually stabbed her. Ben tried to cover his tracks, only partially recalling what had happened and not believing that he had actually done it. He left taking her car and some of her jewelry. Ben eventually gave himself up to the police a few days later.

At no time in Ben's history had he been violent towards anyone. This is corroborated by a number of the witnesses at his trial. He has a long history of drug abuse and also reports two incidents of mild self-mutilation. Apart from this, no other psychological signs or symptoms of distress are evident in his history.

9.4.2 TAT Analysis

9.4.2.1 Themes and Observations

All Ben's descriptions are very short. Most of his stories are somewhat ideal with a denial of any aggressive content apparent. Sexualization of the cards appears to replace any potential aggressive content. He also appears disengaged from the story-telling, treating the cards as prescriptive and concrete in that they 'indicate' particular unequivocal themes. Cards 13MF, 8BM, 7, and 10 best illustrate this trend.

9.4.2.2 Complexity of Representations of People (2).

Very simple one-dimensional figures are apparent in Ben's stories. Most figures are depicted as needy in some way. Emotional or hurt figures are depicted as waiting for punishment or as not being able to get help from others.

9.4.2.3 Affect-Tone of Relationship Paradigms (3).

Representations of emotion in relationships are perceived in a negative way in that they are associated with punishment or hardship. Need-gratifying females appear to be the only source of 'positive' emotional engagement between objects (Card 13MF & 4).

9.4.2.4 Capacity for Emotional Investment (2).

Very little capacity for emotional investment is evident in the stories. Moral standards are compromised by the need-gratifying orientation of most of the figures in the cards. Apart from this, there are no other themes of relatedness evident in Ben's stories.

9.4.2.5 Understanding of Social Causality (2).

Very basic cause-effect relationships are evident but there are few signs of the characters having to mediate their behaviours through mental processes. A number of the stories do not follow a logical sequence of attributions.

9.4.3 Interview Analysis

9.4.3.1 Transference/Countertransference Impressions and Process

Throughout the interviews Ben is very softly spoken, reserved and avoids eye contact for much of the time. A large part of the interview time is taken up by him talking about his relationships with three significant women in his life. During this time he continuously confuses one with the other. He also strikingly often refers to them as 'these females', leaving me with a sense of them as not being 'real people' he is referring to.

The most dominant feelings and thoughts impressed on me during the interviews relate to a sense of 'unreality' whilst trying to listen to his story. Similarly, thoughts Ben has about his own future goals are markedly unrealistic and idealistic. He shows little acknowledgment that possible achievements would have to take place in a world where there are realistic limitations, where others' thoughts and feelings need to be considered. This changes, however, when he speaks about his achievements as an artist where he appears more engaged when discussing this new interest with me.

There are some transference references in the interview related to feeling trapped and badly treated by men/the interviewer. There are also unconscious references to him feeling that only female helpers are able to understand him properly (Appendix A, 401).

9.4.3.2 Core Narratives

Destroyed, confused and afraid of men

The prolonged sexual abuse has left Ben feeling very confused. He feels both seduced and threatened by his experience. Associated with this, he sees men as being 'spineless' and weak, but at the same time, extremely threatening. He reacts by avoiding relating to men in any meaningful way.

At times, there are references to him also feeling 'spineless' in the presence of women. He feels that he has been left feeling transparent and all women can see the 'shameful things he had been up to'. This is associated with a common theme that 'women always leave me'.

It is striking how, despite inquiry, his parents are virtually non-existent in the narratives that he constructs and there are no strong negative or positive affective attachments towards them.

'My mute wife'

The theme associated with his mute wife relates to how she was 'the only woman I could love'. His usual associations of feeling passive or shameful with most people disappear in this narrative. Ben is puzzled about why she left, but relates it to his 'wanting too much sex'. In terms of feeling comfortable in relating to his wife, he also makes a number of references to how he could only really talk to adolescent children or young children.

Sex, call-girls and aggression

Almost all of Ben's relationships had been with call-girls. This is strongly associated with him being able to 'relate to them on the same level'. But these relationships are also associated with the 'dirty feeling' the thought of his uncle left in his mind. He said once: 'she was being used for other men's pleasure the same way my uncle used me for his'. He would be 'shy' with them, they would feel sorry for him. A conscious motive here is to 'get sex without having to pay for it'. After this is achieved a 'relationship' can begin. It appears much more important that he is able to satisfy them sexually rather than himself. If this does not occur, women become associated with evil figures. He reports a dream that also expresses this theme: Jane is being satisfied sexually by him, but as soon as there are no signs of this being achieved, she turns into an 'evil devil thing'.

Ben assumes a position of 'needy child' in these relationships where he is constantly being bought presents and given 'pocket money'. He would also attempt, in his words, to 'give my love to girls by buying them gifts' (Appendix A, 402).

He describes himself as a pacifist, never having to be aggressive towards others. As he puts it, he 'would rather be shy'. He refuses to take up arms whilst doing his national service for this reason (Appendix A, 403).

Making up and the attack

There are three prominent narrative theme evident about his attack. Firstly, he and his girlfriend had separated and she had tried to take gifts from him that she had given him. He claims that the separation meant nothing to him emotionally. Associations in other parts of the interview, however, suggest that separations have led to hateful aggressive displays (Appendix A, 403). Secondly, he could not get an erection and this is linked to the fear that he cannot satisfy women. Thirdly, he is intrigued with why he took her car and some of her jewelry after the brutal murder. The only association he has to this was that it was 'out of greed'.

The painter

There are a number of references in the interviews to how he is able to express a 'shy' part of himself through taking an interest in art. This is also readily associated with helpful caring women.

9.4.4 Identifications and Object Relations

Supportive parental references or objects are conspicuous by their absence in Ben's narratives. The central object constellation centres on internalizations and identifications that emanate from his protracted abusive relationship with his uncle.

The primary object here is no longer the maternal object. Ben's uncle dominates object relations, forming a perverse symbiotic relationship with him. Here, the primary object is split in two. On the one hand, he is perceived as being a seductive 'caring' figure, on the other, he is an extremely threatening, evil and powerful figure. Ben's predominant identification opposite this internalized object is portrayed as a weak, timid, needy, childlike figure.

The threatening part of this object remains associated with men and is dissociated, preventing any meaningful contact with men. This is evident in the transference as well as in the numerous references made about him struggling with relating to male

figures. The seductive-gratifying object relationship, however, is prominently actualized in his relationships with women. Representations of this female internalized object are complex. They provide a primitive form of gratification for the desperate needy part of him, conveyed mainly through sex and excessive gift giving. But these female objects also allow for a reversal of this object relationship where he is able to act out the role of the seductive gratifier inducing in him a sense of omnipotence. The TAT further suggests that the omnipotence gained from this sexualized experience also serves to defend against aggression or potential conflict. All this appears closely related to re-enactments of his abusive relationship. This is particularly the case when one considers the parallels between the seductive nature of his abuse and the prostitution of oneself. Ben places some importance on needing to get his sexual pleasures for free. Although not substantiated anywhere else, this may well be a reference to an attempt to 'undo' or rework this pathological object constellation.

There are a number of references in the narratives to this object relationship also forming an important defensive system. Firstly, gratification is obsessively sought in order to avoid the strong identification of being a weak 'spineless' man. Secondly, there are a number of references to the emergence of hate and aggression once this gratifying relationship is threatened. A similar dynamic is observed in the TAT where emotionally needy figures are attacked and are unable to feel helped or contained. Separation from this gratifying relationship turns the internal object into a threatening evil object that evokes hatred and is attacked. In other words, it appears that the gratifying aspect of the original object relationship develops into a defensive system in an attempt to keep away 'bad' parts of the original object.

The 'mysterious' attack has three important elements to it that are strongly suggestive that the above object constellation plays an important role in the murder. Firstly, the separation, although not consciously acknowledged by him as important, is strongly linked to the source of his aggression in other instances. Secondly, his inability to get an erection seriously challenges his capacity to maintain or uphold this defensive system based on gratification. With both these threats in place, it is

of his girlfriend shifts to the hated, evil object that 'these females' always threaten to become.

Ben's stealing behaviour is more difficult to understand. In the context of the above object constellation, it is possible that it is part of a desperate attempt at reinstating the gratifying defensive system that has been threatened. Alternatively it may also occur due to a temporary identification with the bad part-object once the defensive splitting has been challenged.

Finally, idealization appears to be an important component of this gratifying defensive system as is most readily observed in the initial transference. There is, however, some evidence of his being able to express difficulties and problems related to him in a more mature, realistic and reparative way. This is most readily expressed through his artwork.

9.5 CASE FIVE: ANDREW

Andrew, a 38-year-old white male, murdered his former business partner after a long dispute that lasted over a year. He is serving a sentence of twelve years imprisonment and has served four years of this term.

9.5.1 Case History

Andrew is the younger by four years of two sons. Although both brothers were fanatical sportsmen, they had little contact during childhood. Andrew's relationship with his father had always been considerably strained. The father is an alcoholic and would often become violent towards the mother when drunk, but had never been violent towards Andrew or his brother. He and his brother would often spend long nights having to search the local bars for their inebriated father. Andrew had always been very close to his mother and often attempted to persuade her to leave his father as he worried about her safety with him.

During his schooling years Andrew remained very independent, keeping very much to himself. He developed a keen interest in sport, in which he excelled. As an

outstanding sportsman he pursued his sport professionally after school for four years. As a result of his sporting success he became popular and well known in his community. At this point his life changed a great deal and most things became possible for him.

Shortly after this, Andrew began a textile business selling goods closely linked to the sporting world. After three years he decided to take on a partner - a friend and fellow sportsman - to help the business expand. The business ran successfully for a year. Suddenly, however, his partner decided that he wanted to leave the country to pursue a career elsewhere and the business was liquidated. The closure of the business with little warning angered Andrew, but he did not discuss this further with the partner or anyone else. They managed to settle financial matters amicably which essentially led to Andrew taking over the liquidated company's assets.

Andrew once again set up a similar business on his own that proved to be very successful. Eight months later his previous partner arrived back in the country and wanted a job in Andrew's company as his career prospects had not materialized and he was in need of financial help. Despite Andrew's attempts at convincing him that he did not want to work with him, he persisted. His demands for Andrew to take him on as a partner soon escalated into aggressive threats. A considerable amount of evidence at the trial showed that his partner was known to be very aggressive and had a history of violence. It was also well known that this man carried a firearm.

On the morning of the murder Andrew agreed to meet with him to see if he could settle the matter once and for all. However, the meeting escalated into a heated argument about their past business relationship. Alert to the possible danger at this point, Andrew had made sure he was in close proximity to a firearm kept on the business premises. Moments later, without hesitation, he shot his former partner once, killing him instantly.

Shocked by what he had done, he tried to revive the man. Soon afterwards he realized the gravity of what he had done and attempted to hide all evidence of the crime. He drove around for several hours with the body in his car not knowing what to do. He decided at that point that he would go to his mother's home and tell her

what had happened. Nearing her home however, he could not bring himself to face her and buried the body in a shallow grave on a plot of land close by where he had played as a child.

It took him a week before he eventually handed himself over to the police and confessed to the murder. During this time it was evident to most around him that he was distressed and had become suicidal.

In terms of his adult personal life, Andrew married at age 26. He and his wife had two daughters. His business and sporting commitments, however, took up most of his time, leaving little space in his life for his family. Andrew reports that his marriage had virtually collapsed a year prior to the murder although this did not cause him any great distress or concern. His wife knew nothing about the business problems he was going through at the time.

Andrew had no history of violence whatsoever. He had used his gun a number of times 'shooting cans' on a friend's farm, but had never used it against another person. He is unaware of having any psychological distress prior to the murder and he reports no conscious thoughts of hurting or killing his victim, nor did he experience any paranoid or obsessional thoughts related to the situation. He had, however, been concerned about his own safety as he was aware that this man could become aggressive.

The prison authorities describe him as a 'model prisoner' and he has been granted special privileges for good behaviour.

9.5.2 TAT Analysis

9.5.2.1 *Themes and Observations*

Most of Andrew's stories are told with a sense of 'defensive indecision'. He appears unwilling to commit himself to a particular story and often prefaces his stories with 'maybe'. His stories are very short and he appears to hurry through them.

The most prominent theme relates to the inaccessibility of most of the figures, with very little communication present. This is most evident in card 6BM where the story relates to the inaccessibility of a maternal figure.

9.5.2.2 *Complexity of Representations of People (2).*

There is some differentiation between objects although representations of people remain extremely shallow and unidimensional. Descriptions focus on concrete actions and there is little indication that the story figures are able to think for themselves.

9.5.2.3 *Affect-Tone of Relationship Paradigms (3).*

The affect-tone of relationships was mildly negative or blunt in tone. Interactions between objects are minimal and generally lack any enriching qualities. There is also a tendency to deny or ignore potentially conflicting or malevolent themes in the stories through briefly stating a story in a dismissive way. This is most evident in card 8BM.

9.5.2.4 *Capacity for Emotional Investment (2).*

Andrew's stories reflect a very poor capacity for emotional investment. There is little sense of caring or relatedness between characters.

9.5.2.5 *Understanding of Social Causality (2).*

There is only a rudimentary sense of social causality in his stories. Where it is present, it is determined by behavioural action and cause-effect relationships, and is not mediated by thought.

9.5.3 Interview Analysis

9.5.3.1 *Transference/Countertransference Impressions and Process*

Andrew is a very softly-spoken likeable man. He leaves me with a strong impression that he has been treated unjustly by the legal system and that the murder was an impulsive defensive act, somehow releasing him from any direct responsibility for his actions. It is striking that through most of the interviews Andrew chooses not to talk about his family. It is only in the last interview that he speaks about them with

some prompting. It appears important to separate his family from the information that he has given me about the crime or business. I also have a very clear impression of most of what he is saying, apart from information about his family and personal life.

The only evident transference impression gathered from the interview is reflected in his interest in the type of car I drive and where I live. It appears to be motivated by an attempt to place me in terms of my social status.

During the interview process he is initially defensive and slightly anxious when discussing his father. Later, however, he says that only since the murder has he realized that he had felt rejected and angry towards his father. He makes sure, in ways that are clearly unconscious to him, that he identifies with nothing that he associates with his father.

9.5.3.2 Core Narratives

'My weak father'

Andrew grew up thinking of his father as a weak and pathetic character. There are a number of conscious and unconscious references indicating that his father does not feel like a father to him at all. This narrative is associated with having no contact with persons like him and a rejection of everything he associates with his father because it is linked with feelings of shame. A lack of love and encouragement is further consciously associated with his father (Appendix A, 501).

'I had to protect my mother'

This narrative is specifically about protecting his mother from his father. He often wanted her to leave his father. She did not do this, however, and, although only unconsciously acknowledged, it appears that this leads to his losing respect for her too. He moves away from this protection theme and introduces a more independent mother figure in the next part of the interview. He describes her as being 'very independent, the breadwinner who could look after herself'. Andrew associates this with his own need for independence and a move away from the family.

His mother is not associated with much emotional warmth in the interview. Using some of his words, he relied on her as a 'house-keeper', providing all the 'necessities needed in a home'.

'It actually made me stronger'

This narrative centres on his turning away from his family, feeling that his movement away had made him 'hard' and 'stronger'. He grew in apparent 'willpower' and was 'able to shut things out and carry on'. 'Keeping things in' means that Andrew is able to be very 'independent' (Appendix A, 502). That he may need real love and support cannot be consciously considered and is strongly linked to a suspicion that his problems will not be believed. His 'independence and success' consume his life and there is little else that occupies his mind.

His thoughts about the family and needs related to them are replaced by sporting opportunities and involvements with his 'sporting group' of friends. Andrew talks much about finding ample support in his sporting successes, which turned him into a very popular figure in his community. It suddenly became possible to do most things and he quickly developed a taste for the 'high-life', becoming preoccupied with making sure that he possessed all the necessary symbols of status. The acquisition of his firearm is associated with these material possessions. No particular figures or people appear significant here and it is his success and preoccupation with material wealth that dominate this narrative. His marriage also appears to fit this theme. It is most readily associated with the 'successful image' that it is so important to portray.

To trust without consequence

Andrew sees himself as a very trusting person and makes business deals with his friends 'on the trust of a handshake'. His trust is broken several times within his 'sporting group' of friends but this is associated with very few signs of difficulty or distress about maintaining relations with such people. In keeping with this, negative responses from others are always avoided or down-played, which often leads to protracted disputes.

'He was known to be a violent man'

All associations to the crime scene depict an intensely threatening situation for him. It is the perception that his victim is 'aggressive' that lead to Andrew keeping a gun available. He reasons that violence 'is not a part of my life', meaning that he has no experience of violence and therefore does not know what to expect when violence occurs. In his understanding, this is what made him react hastily (Appendix A, 503).

The cover-up: 'no-one would believe me'

There is only one option for him after the crime: he needs to hide the body and cover it all up. This is strongly associated with thoughts that no one would believe him, not even his mother. Significantly, however, he buries the body where he played as a child.

A new relationship with a difficult past

It was important for Andrew to tell me that after the murder his relationship with his father changed significantly. Through his initiation, in his words, 'we were able to have the first conversation we had ever had'. This is also associated with how it is only now that he can see how much he hated his father. Further, he feels thankful that he managed to keep his wife and children as his family through the entire trauma and speaks very fondly of them towards the end of the last interview.

During the last interview he reports a dream: 'Me and my wife were in a long queue waiting to order take-away pizza. We were about to be served and this guy who was in a hurry and kept on nudging me ... you know ... to move along. Eventually I stood back and said please go and get your pizza, I will wait'. His associations suggest that the nudging man represents a 'hurrying hungry person' whom he associates with a part of himself. He avoids him by letting him through as it is more important to be with his wife.

Andrew also reports a recurring dream about the murder. It simply involves an image of his victim falling before him after being shot by him. He reports no associations to this dream.

9.5.4 Identifications and Object Relations

A clear split in Andrew's object relations emerges from the narrative analysis. His family, the rejection of his father and the associated emotional pain, appear to represent a vulnerable childlike part of himself surrounded by aggressive or emotionally absent parental objects. The TAT findings further support this observation and also suggest that his primary objects feel inaccessible to him. As a means of compensation, the other part of himself that emerges in the narrative is a much stronger 'independent self' that is initially associated with an identification with his mother but also represents a move away from needing her. This part of him is successful and supported by the admiration of external objects. There are few signs, however, that these are well defined, emotionally meaningful relationships to him. Furthermore, this 'hard', strong identification appears based on the rejection of the 'feeling' or nurturing parts of himself and the need for 'replacement' objects that are easily accessible and reflect only his success. My countertransference and the interview process appear to support this idea. Firstly, his need to keep his family, a more vulnerable part of himself, away from the interview/me supports the kind of splitting process observed in the narratives. Secondly, his need to compare himself with me along material lines illustrates the importance of this as an internal rating of himself related to a 'successful' masculine part of him.

The more personal, emotional part of himself appears to have far less representational space as evidenced in the countertransference and in his narratives. There is, however, no evidence in the narrative analysis that he manages this more vulnerable part through using projection as a defense. Any aggression or conflict related to this system of object relations is denied and aggression is dissociated from this part of him.

The victim clearly represents a threatening intrusive object, someone who has previously let him down in his business and was threatening his business again. It is this unbearable threat that is most readily linked to his aggressive action. His business is strongly linked to his 'successful' identity and it appears that this felt most threatened.

It is difficult to understand his actions after the murder. But perhaps in the context of his split object relations, it expresses disbelief in his own actions and the need to get rid of everything it represents in a very concrete way. His preoccupation with no-one believing him hints at the latent distrust he feels exists between objects.

The final narrative suggests that, since the murder, the split between an emotionally needy but rejected part of himself and his isolated 'independent self', is being worked on internally. Here Andrew is able to relate to his own aggression and the original object relationship with which it is associated. His first dream could be interpreted in a number of ways. In the context of its occurring during the course of the interview process, it appears likely that the two male figures in the dream relate to the two different parts of himself discussed above. The first representation is the independent 'rushed' part of him who survives by feeding himself. The other is complacent and content to be with his wife. It appears to indicate recognition of emotional relatedness with his wife, instead of rejecting this as he had done previously.

His final dream has little symbolic meaning and closely resembles the trauma of the violent act that still remains in the form of unrepresented concrete images that cannot be integrated into the psyche.

9.6 CASE SIX: FRANK

Frank, a 31 year-old coloured policeman, shot and killed his wife and son. After a minor dispute at work about his being late, he disobeyed orders and went out on a drinking binge during working hours. He returned home and after an apparent⁶ argument with his wife he began shooting indiscriminately. He has no recall of the incident and was arrested later at a friend's house, apparently going to visit them because he wanted to get away from his wife.

⁶ There were no witnesses present to confirm that an argument took place.

Frank had been given the death sentence at the time of his trial. However, given the change in legislation prohibiting the death penalty, his sentence is due to be commuted. He has thus far been imprisoned for five years.

9.6.1 Case History

Frank has two siblings, a twin sister and a half-sister five years younger than himself. His mother fell pregnant with him and his sister at age 18. She did not marry his father and instead married another man a year later. Frank was only made aware that his mother's husband was not his father at age 13. He felt very hurt and unjustly treated on hearing this from his mother, and it appeared to contribute to a number of difficult incidents as an adolescent. Notably, he attempted suicide on one occasion, he began failing his school exams, and would often rebel against his mother's wishes. He often felt unfairly treated by his mother, feeling that his siblings were given more love than he was.

Frank made periodic contact with his biological father, but found him to be uncaring and rejecting. In the only act of violence committed prior to the double murder, Frank attempted to slash the tyres of his father's car after he refused to see him and support him financially. He reports, however, that he could not successfully complete the violent act.

After a poor school career he worked as a shop assistant for a short period and then joined the police force. At the same time he married and had a son. His marriage always remained unstable, with him feeling dominated and oppressed by his wife. She would sometimes physically attack him during disagreements. He would always remain passive and non-violent during these incidents. About six months prior to the murder, case reports indicate that he turned to alcohol in an attempt to cope with his wife's behaviour.

The day of the murder Frank had been reprimanded for being late for work but felt that he was being wrongfully treated because he had been told to report for duty at another time. He felt considerably unnerved by the incident and decided not to do his work. Instead, he began drinking at work. Significantly, although not consciously

suicidal, it is reported that he had been inquiring about life insurance policies earlier that morning. Once he returned home his wife began to argue with him. Frank cannot recall any details of the actual incident that followed. The court report indicates, however, that he fired six shots at very close range, killing his wife and child (age 3) who was sitting close by.

He had never assaulted his wife and has no prior history of violence. He denies ever having fantasies of killing his wife, but consciously feared her. In terms of other psychiatric symptoms, Frank reports that he occasionally feels depressed but this has never stopped him from working or engaging in other activities. He attempted suicide once, after feeling rejected by his father. He also reports a history of somatic complaints such as headaches and backache that have persisted for much of his adult life.

9.6.2 TAT Analysis

9.6.2.1 Themes and Observations

Frank's descriptions are very brief. Two prominent themes are apparent in the stories: (1) Women are restraining figures opposite male figures but are, at the same time, needed for a man's survival; (2) there is a sense of defeat portrayed when in the hands of malevolent forces.

9.6.2.2 Complexity of Representations of People (3).

There is only minor elaboration of the mental life of the figures described. Men are depicted as restricted and empty figures. Women are seen as strong, restraining figures. There are no signs of any particular motives for these themes and representations remain simplistic throughout all his stories.

9.6.2.3 Affect-Tone of Relationship Paradigms (4).

Representations of relationships are depicted as potentially hostile. Turning away from conflict or aggression in order to make the relationship successful is a common rationale in the stories. Relationships with female figures are viewed as being emotionally draining on the one hand, but deeply dependent, on the other. Figures needing support in his stories can only obtain this through compliance and submission to parental figures. This is most evident in card 7BM.

9.6.2.4 Capacity for Emotional Investment (2).

Limited evidence of emotional investment is evident in the stories. His emotional investments are unidimensional in nature where people are viewed as an emotional end rather than a means of growth. Emotional investment is painful and cannot be tolerated. Emotional dependence on parental figures best characterizes the type of investment here where 'moral standards' serve as an attempt to avoid punishment or emotional pain.

9.6.2.5 Understanding of Social Causality(2) .

A basic understanding of social causality is evident in his stories. Causality is mainly based on the physical appearance of the figures and actions in the stories do not always follow a comprehensible logical sequence. Both these features are most evident in Card 6BM where the story is created around the man's appearance with little explanation.

9.6.3 Interview Analysis

9.6.3.1 Transference/Countertransference Impressions and Process

Frank speaks to me in an over-obliging and submissive way, often apologizing for not being able to remember things verbatim. He also thanks me for the questions I ask him before responding. I am left feeling in two minds about him. In responding to his sense of remorse, I feel some sympathy for him, but I can also imagine myself becoming quite irritated with his constant claims of victimization.

He has considerable difficulty reflecting on what occurred on the day of the murder as well as on any themes related to him being the violent perpetrator. After the first interview he does not turn up for our appointment. He arrives for his next interview explaining that he had found it very difficult talking about the murder and only wanted to think about 'good things'. It was apparent that he felt 'victimized' in the first interview. On reflection, it appears that his apparent remorse in the interview is more about his own feelings of victimization than anything else, perhaps explaining my sense of irritation.

9.6.3.2 Core Narratives

Domination that kills

A strong theme that runs through all his interviews related to his sense of being dominated by female figures. Frank portrays himself as a neglected child who has no freedom, feels trapped, and ruled by women. They always misunderstand him and, more importantly, never believe 'his own story'. This theme is also evident in the TAT. In some cases these feelings also extend to the way he feels about his young son's behaviour. In response to this, he tries to hide most of his own personal experience from other people, particularly his mother and wife. To be real and relate to others means that he will have to be 'honest and open', which he cannot do. The hope of being believed by others was associated with him having to fabricate a dominating abusive role for himself in order to get the attention of others (Appendix A, 601).

All this is closely associated with a sense of 'feeling disappointed by others'. There are strong indications, in turn, that this is linked to a sense of him feeling 'killed' in his narrative. In his words, "... I hate disappointment, I hate it ... it is a killer, it's like a shun, like being rejected". Feeling rejected or abused is associated with being 'killed' in two other places in the interview (Appendix A, 602).

A child needing guidance

At the same time as Frank feels dominated by these female figures, this narrative is also linked to his constant dependence on 'advice' from them. Frank relates this to a part of himself that feels 'childish'. He feels, however, that no one will listen, help him, or give him the advice he needs. This is further associated with being unaware of other sources of help outside his immediate family and dependence on a wish to be directed to sources of help. This however, is always met with a sense that people do not want to understand him (Appendix A, 602).

'No father is better than violence'

This narrative is told from his son's perspective and revolves around making himself absent to stop the 'abuse' directed at him. The only two other references to violence (apart from the murder) relate to 'failed' violence, once towards his father and once

towards himself. Both are associated with a theme of 'feeling trapped and rejected' (Appendix A, 603).

The police and freedom

Frank's move to the police force was strongly linked to a need for 'freedom', power and respect. He manages to act in a compliant manner and begins to feel good about himself 'because I was now achieving what I wanted'. This narrative, however, soon changes to themes similar to the domination and oppressive themes evident in the first narrative where he feels ruled by most things around him.

The Murder

In the narrative related to the murder there are a number of references to feeling empty. Alcohol was associated with anger towards oppressive figures and there is a move from 'care for his child' to 'wanting to drink' in this narrative. Frank's murderous action is associated with suicide and his wife's hate for him. Towards the end of this 'murder' narrative, the storyline shifts away from the murder towards him finding refuge in talking to a male figure about his hardships.

9.6.4 Identifications and Object Relations

Frank most readily assumes a paralyzed identification with a victim role where he is dominated by female objects who never acknowledge him. The sense of feeling trapped by this internal and external situation is intensified by his childlike dependence on them. This is easily transferred onto other situations including the interview situation where he plays out a submissive victimized role. Disappointment and rejection by these objects lead to a part of the him constantly feeling annihilated. This theme is also evident in the TAT where, whilst needing to be dependent on a maternal object, he at the same time feels smothered or destroyed by her.

Three main solutions to this situation are evident in his narratives. Firstly, he escapes the feeling of victimization by leaving or 'making himself absent'. Although not directly related to suicidal ideation in the narrative, this solution appears to relate to a similar theme. Secondly, he 'fabricates' a conscious identification with a victimizing or aggressive role in an attempt to feel acknowledged. Importantly both these

defensive manoeuvres 'fail' when actualized (once in a suicide attempt and once in his anger against his father). Both are suggestive, however, of underlying phantasies of hate and annihilation towards entrapping bad objects.

The third solution, which appears to be his predominant way of coping, seems not only to be a defensive response to 'violent' intimidation, it is also an attempt, in phantasy, to eradicate signs of aggression altogether. Frank does this by adopting an over-obliging submissive stance towards his objects in an attempt to please others around him and more importantly, to avoid any possibility of being associated with conflicting or aggressive emotions. This is most apparent in the transference where he continually apologizes or thanks me. It also forms part of the narrative related to female objects. Further, Frank struggles to talk about himself as being aggressive or even assertive towards others. He wants to replace this line of thinking with all-good objects. His object relations are thus constituted in such a way that he is identified with a 'good obliging self' whilst all his surrounding objects are hostile and aggressive. The aggressive affect perceived or elicited in other objects appears strongly linked to a projected and split-off part of his own aggressive self. This hypothesis is not only supported by the narratives but also explains the irritation that his pitiful self mobilized in the countertransference. The paradox of being able, in fantasy, to get rid of his aggression and conflict is that it is this defensive manoeuvre that keeps him trapped and feeling aggressed. In other words, whilst he is able to split off the aggression, it is always projected into the object that he remains dependent on, perpetuating a dynamic of victimization.

There is no clear narrative found related to the presence of male identifications or internal objects. His need to join the police force, however, appears closely associated with 'freedom' characterized by occupying a position of authority and identification with a more assertive masculine image. Frank cannot sustain this, however, and assumes his childlike victimized role once more. The lack of a stable internalized male object appears to be an important contribution to his inability to appropriate any characteristics, such as assertiveness and discipline, which are mildly associated with aggression in his narratives.

In Frank's retelling of the murder, the over-obliging self and concern for his objects disappears. He makes reference to an 'empty' self that consumes, or is eventually consumed by rage. He then seeks refuge in relating to a male object. The emptiness referred to here appears to reflect the extent to which his 'over-obliging' self occupies most of his internal space, leaving him feeling defenseless and helpless once this is given up.

9.7 CASE SEVEN: KEVIN

Kevin is a 24 year-old student. Three years prior to the interview Kevin had viciously stabbed a vagrant who had been sleeping in the cemetery where he and his friends used to meet. He was with a group of friends at the time and as they approached their meeting place, he grabbed a friend's knife and attacked this defenseless man, stabbing him several times.

Kevin is serving a sentence of ten years imprisonment for his crime. He has served one year of this term.

9.7.1 Case History

Kevin comes from a family of four. He has a brother two years younger than himself and lived with both his parents before being imprisoned. In the court records his parents describe Kevin as an 'extremely needy child' who in his adolescence became isolated and withdrawn and spoke very little to them.

At age 10 his brother was seriously injured in a car accident leaving him with permanent neurological damage. After that, his mother and father had to invest most of their time in caring for him. Kevin himself had very little to do with his brother after the accident. Little else of significance could be found relating to Kevin's parental care. During his adolescence however, there are some reports of him becoming destructive at school and getting into a number of fights. After leaving school he got involved with a particular group of friends whose social interaction revolved around abusing drugs.

On the morning of the murder, Kevin and his friends were drinking alcohol at a bar. He then left his friends, returned home for a brief time, and met up with them later in the afternoon. They had planned to meet at their main meeting point, under a tree in a nearby cemetery, where they would 'smoke drugs'. On approaching the meeting place with his friends, one of them spotted a vagrant sleeping under the tree and became angry and began shouting at him to move away from where he was. The friend picked up a stone and threw it at him. At that point, Kevin grabbed one of his other friend's knives, and without any sign of external threat or provocation, stabbed the victim several times. Following this they fled from the scene. Only once one of the other members of his group had confessed, did Kevin confess to the crime.

Apart from when Kevin was in primary school, there are no indications that he continued to be aggressive or violent. He claims never to have experienced any conscious fantasies of killing or hurting another person prior to the murder. Ongoing symptoms reported by Kevin include complaints of 'mood swings', depression, chronic emptiness and suicidal thoughts. No psychotic symptomatology was reported.

9.7.2 TAT Analysis

9.7.2.1 Themes and Observations.

A strong theme of an isolated, confused, sad, emotional figure is evident in the cards (cards 1, 2 & 6BM). Dead or absent figures are present in cards 1, 8BM, 12M and 13 MF, indicating a loss of contact with objects around him. No specific object representations could be isolated. However, card 12M is consciously associated with his brother being sick and dying. Here, belief in a strong male figure is associated with transcending difficulties around him. The wish, or need, to be a strong male/father figure is also expressed in two other cards (cards 1 & 7BM).

Aggressive themes are defensively idealized or turned into something good in a number of the cards. Some displacement and dissociation of aggression from the key figures in the stories is also apparent (cards 18 BM, 15, 13 MF & 12M). In one card, where aggression is more overt (card 4), anger is depicted as uncontrolled and irreparable.

9.7.2.2 Complexity of Representations of People (3).

Some minor elaboration of the mental life of the characters in Kevin's stories is evident. This is limited, however, to key figures that were depicted as sad, confused and isolated, leaving them thinking about the need for a good supportive object. Some distinction between women being allowed to feel emotion, and men not being able to express emotion, is also observable.

9.7.2.3 Affect-Tone of Relationship Paradigms (2).

Representations of relationships are seen as overly negative and empty. The main figure is always sad and confused in relating to others, whilst the figures remain emotionally blank and inaccessible. In two cards (cards 12M & 7BM) where some love and caring is expressed, it is somewhat idealized.

9.7.2.4 Capacity for Emotional Investment(2).

Emotional investment in others is minimal, with most of the figures being absent or dead. Emotional investment remains with the key figures and there is little exchange between objects. Some need for emotional relating is expressed in the cards.

9.7.2.5 Understanding of Social Causality(2).

There is very little evidence of understanding of social causality in Kevin's stories. The stories are told in a somewhat dissociated manner, with little emphasis on the attribution of causal links between actions, thoughts and figures.

9.7.3 Interview Analysis

9.7.3.1 Transference/Countertransference Impressions and Process

Kevin is very evasive throughout all his interviews. He appears uncomfortable with the interview setting and avoids eye contact. Kevin finds it difficult to think about the causes, or effects, of his actions on others or himself. He blames his actions on his drug habit. Further, the particular effects of his brother's accident on him and his family are avoided during the interview. Despite this, he expresses an important need to try and help others in his position through participating in my research. Towards the end of the interviews he expresses some concern about 'being too negative' in the interview and the TAT cards. Consistent or clear narratives are difficult to follow in the interview material.

It is difficult to establish any further clarity regarding other transference impressions during the interview. In terms of countertransference, I feel very distant from him and do not feel I could trust in what he was saying entirely. I feel his description of the murder to be particularly brutal. This appears connected to the emotionless way in which he retells the act.

9.7.3.2 Core Narratives

'My parents did not care about me'

Kevin feels that his parents never really cared about his welfare. This is associated with his withdrawal from them in an attempt to show that he does not need them. His attitude towards them is summed up in the following comment: 'If they wanted me to do badly at school, then I would do badly at school'. There are no apparent associations between this theme and his brother's accident. Although there is no overt anger expressed in this narrative, a sense of frustration is evident in his comments (Appendix A, 701).

'I used to make people fight with me so I could get hurt'

Kevin's period of fighting at school is consciously associated with a need to get hurt by others and he would pick fights for this reason. This is also linked to the feeling that his parents did not care for him and this was a means of gaining recognition and attention.

'Drugs helped me forget'

The drug theme in the interview is strongly linked to the need to forget 'how hard things are' for him. This is also associated with a wish to forget that he needed his parents in any way.

The group of friends

Kevin's group of friends are depicted as being both supportive family substitutes, on the one hand, and untrustworthy individuals on the other. The theme of untrustworthiness and betrayal is linked to his friends turning into 'good people' or doing good honest things. His friends are most prominently associated with a 'rebel image' that finds some good in doing 'bad' destructive things (Appendix A, 702).

'He had taken our place'

Their meeting place - a cemetery - is consciously associated with being their own private place where they 'could be themselves'. They had always met there and 'nobody else knew about it'. This is also linked to a theme characterized by a show of power in being fearless of what others feared by making it their own. The vagrant is described as a 'nobody' who was taking their place. Kevin cannot give any other associations to this theme (Appendix A, 702).

9.7.4 Identifications and Object Relations

Kevin conveys a sense of being abandoned by parental caring objects and expresses a particular need for an internal male presence to ameliorate the sense of emptiness he feels (as observed in the TAT). Within this context he internalizes his parents 'threats' related to wanting him to work at school as a wish for him to do badly. This kind of phantasy appears to have formed the basis for much of Kevin's behaviour. The structure of this narrative is consistent throughout the interviews. It is characterized by a rejection of nurturing or nurtured relations with good objects and identification with bad object representations. References to the cemetery being their secret and safe meeting place, his constantly getting into trouble and his drug-taking habits, all point to this kind of identification. Two elements of this object constellation appear prominent. There is a reversal or perversion of object relations where comfort is sought in destructiveness, and where good is bad and vice versa. Identification with the bad object also has an idealized omnipotent quality to it where good honest behaviour is felt to be 'betraying' to him. Secondly, masochistic tendencies evident in the narratives appear to result from the projection of this sadistic identification as seen, for instance, in his fighting at school. It appears that Kevin's aggressive motives are usually expressed in this fashion, as he tends to often identify with the role of 'the aggrieved victim' rather than being the perpetrator of aggressive acts.

This is not the case, however, on the day of the murder where Kevin is clearly identified with omnipotent destructive motives against a defenseless 'nobody'. There is no external threat or provocation. There is, however, support around him for his destructive motives. The situational elements of the murder are instructive here and appear very closely related to an internal situation involving two very different parts

of him. The idealization of omnipotent destructiveness is clearly represented by the cemetery meeting place and the group's destructive intentions. The vagrant 'nobody', on the other hand, was unconsciously associated with a rejected disowned 'nobody' self-representation.

Viewed in this way, it is possible that the situation itself, where the vagrant 'takes Kevin's place', sets up a particularly threatening internal situation. Here, the 'nobody' self has taken the place of the omnipotent destructive self and must be annihilated in order for him to re-appropriate and control his internal objects. In this sense it is the situation that sets up a perceived provocation, rather than the victim himself. In other words, the situation lends itself to Kevin projectively identifying with the vagrant who is then destroyed. It is difficult to say from the interview analysis why this part of him is so threatening. One could assume, however, that it is this part of him that is associated with feelings of unbearable emptiness and depression.

There are no direct narrative links that indicate that the trauma of his brother's accident had a particular bearing on his murderous behaviour. However, the court reports show that his behaviour significantly changed and became more readily associated with aggression. Coupled with his avoidance of any discussion of the accident in the interview, there are indications that this is a significant intrapsychic reference point. Perhaps however, it is the fantasy of feeling that his parents had rejected him at this time that is more important than the family trauma itself. The distance and evasiveness evident in the transference-countertransference interaction appear most readily associated with his sense that his parents feel distant and rejecting to him.

During the interview Kevin expresses some insight into his behaviour in showing concern about 'being too negative', and in his wish to help others. His description of the murder, however, and his inability to take some responsibility for the murder, indicate a lack of integration of good and bad objects and an intolerance of ambivalence and emotional vulnerability.

9.8 CASE EIGHT: WAYNE

Wayne killed a man who allegedly had an affair with his wife. He invited him into his house, ostensibly to discuss the matter but, after being offered a bribe, attacked him and beat him to death. The man died from repeated blows to the head.

Wayne is serving a sentence of twelve years imprisonment. At the time of the interview he had served eight months of his sentence.

9.8.1 Case History

Wayne is a 36 year-old coloured man who worked, until the time of his imprisonment, as a businessman owning his own company. He had become very well known in his community for his sporting achievements over the past 16 years. As a result, his case was given much publicity in the media at the time. The manner in which he killed his victim, 'with his bare hands', also gripped the media's attention.

Wayne is the second youngest child of six children. His parents are wealthy, owning a number of businesses in the area. His father has a very keen interest in sport, but paid little attention to Wayne's sporting activities because he was 'playing the wrong sport'. Only after he became popular did his father begin supporting him in his achievements. Wayne recalls his father regularly going on alcohol binges but believes that this had no effect on his relationship with him.

Wayne felt that his parents had always provided for him and he had never felt in need for anything. He remained in close contact with them throughout his adult life and lived next-door. His mother is perceived as being his 'backbone and main support' and he could always rely on her for advice and support.

During his school years Wayne excelled in sport and at age 16 was playing professionally earning large amounts of money for his participation. He also became very popular amongst his friends. Wayne met his future wife within this context and courted her for six years before marrying and having two children. According to the court reports, his wife was known to be 'extremely demanding and materialistic'.

Shortly before the murder, Wayne suspected his wife of having a love affair with someone well known to him in the community. He confronted his wife about this but she denied it. Instead, she expressed a need for a separation, giving no explanation. A few days later she moved out of their home. Being sure about the affair, Wayne decided to confront the man involved. His decision to do this happened whilst his parents were away overseas.

Wayne realized he was angry at the time and did not want to do anything irrational. For this reason, he placed the firearm he owned safely away and out of reach. When Wayne confronted this man, after inviting him to his house, the man admitted that he had been out for a meal with her but 'nothing had happened'. At this point Wayne began to get angry and threatened to expose the affair. His victim responded by offering him a bribe. This appeared to be the main trigger for Wayne's explosive rage. His victim attempted to leave but was immediately overpowered by Wayne who then repeatedly beat his head against a step. Medical reports show that his victim died from multiple head injuries caused by repeated blows delivered with considerable force.

After realizing what he had done, he removed the body and hid it in a nearby dump, cleaning up any trace of the murder. Two days later, not being able to bear the guilt that he felt, he handed himself over to the police. He experienced considerable relief once he had done so.

Wayne has no history of violent behaviour, nor does he report any other overt psychiatric symptoms. It appears, however, that he was obsessively preoccupied with his wife's affair prior to the murder. He reports having had no homicidal fantasies towards his victim or towards anyone else.

9.8.2 TAT Analysis

9.8.2.1 Themes and Observations.

Key figures in Wayne's stories are often distressed, isolated, pressurized and uncared for (cards 1 & 18BM). After isolating some aggressive themes in the cards he tends to avoid elaborating on them, making the stories much shorter than others (cards 4, 6BM & 8BM).

9.8.2.2 Complexity of Representations of People (2).

No specific or defined representations are attributed to the figures. In most cards, however, the key figure is identified as being in some distress wanting 'advice', or having no support available.

9.8.2.3 Affect-Tone of Relationship Paradigms (2).

Potentially emotional encounters with women are avoided. More generally, there are indications that relationships are experienced as stifling (e.g. card 18BM). Relating is depicted as largely unemotional and based on parental 'advice-giving'. A number of the figures related to in the cards are either dead, or close to death. No cards elicited a caring emotional exchange between figures.

9.8.2.4 Capacity for Emotional Investment (2).

Emotional investment in other figures is minimal. Hurt and sad figures have no supportive caring figures in their proximity. Thus, all emotion displayed in the cards remains associated with the distressed figure. Emotion itself is confined to negative experience and is to be avoided in others.

9.8.2.5 Understanding of Social Causality (2).

Any sign of social causality in the cards is characterized by simplistic cause-effect relationships that lack a clear explanation for the actions described. For instance, in card 6BM, it is never clear why confrontation is avoided from the perspective of the characters. None of the action in the cards is motivated by the thoughts of the characters. Where there is some description of the individual's internal world, it is described as confused or puzzled, and goes no further than that (e.g. card 1).

9.8.3 Interview Analysis

9.8.3.1 Transference/Countertransference Impression and Process

Wayne is particularly defensive throughout most of the interviews. He finds it very difficult to talk about himself, making several references to written sources of information where he said I could get the information I needed. He describes himself as a 'private person' who has managed to achieve a lot in his life: 'I'm not a very outspoken person' he says, 'but my C.V speaks for itself'. This is his particular way of attempting, I thought, to impress me with his achievements. It also appears that he

is unconsciously attempting to match his achievements with my own in asking me about myself and then telling me about the work he had done at the university where I worked. It is noticeable that he often discusses areas of his life where he has achieved just as we begin to discuss more difficult topics such as the murder and his relationship with his family (Appendix A, 801).

Wayne appears very righteous in his attitude towards most things. He appears somewhat suspicious and does not seem to be able to relax and speak freely in the interview. I find myself being taken in by all his sporting achievements and spend a lot less time thinking about him as an aggressive murderer. His quiet, shy manner makes it difficult to believe that he committed such an offence

9.8.3.2 Core Narratives

'Ideal parents'

Wayne spent some time discussing his parents with me. The narrative he constructs is typified by an unwavering idealized love for them with a sense that they could do no wrong. Although this is the case, it did not always mean that they, particularly his father, felt the same way about him. The importance of needing his parents to be physically close to him also formed part of this narrative.

'I always stood out from the rest'

Wayne's sense of self is closely linked to the theme of 'achievement' in the interviews. Achievement is always associated with being the best, above the rest, or being a hero. His adult commitments, such as his business, are also discussed in this manner. He associates this with his parents' achievements being a reflection of his own.

This is further linked to an explanation of why so many people could not believe that he could have committed such a crime. This left him concerned that his parents and others would perceive him as 'a hidden aggressive person'.

My precious wife

His wife is portrayed as ideal and untouchable. There are a number of references to how 'materialistic' she was and how important it had become to work just to provide

for her needs. He creates an image of himself that is defined by righteousness and dependency on his wife, doing whatever she needed him to do. He denies having any strong negative emotions towards her and cannot understand why his wife 'was afraid that he may do something to her' regarding his suspiciousness about the affair.

'He offered me bribe'

Although the affair itself had left Wayne considerably distressed, this is not the most prominent theme linked to the murder in the interview. Related to this, he had consciously attempted to remove any possibility of violence prior to the meeting. It appears to be the offering of a bribe that immediately evoked rage in him. The bribe is clearly associated with illicit things and shame. To have been asked to participate in such an act appears to have been perceived as a massive personal insult (Appendix A, 802).

His attempt to get rid of the body is associated firstly with doing something illicit. In his words: '... after I did it, I remember thinking to myself that I had to now think like a criminal'. On the other hand, getting rid of the body is also linked to covering up something that 'he never could have done'.

Loss and death

The theme of people close to him dying or having some kind of illness was a prominent narrative in the third interview. Importantly, he appears to have associated these losses with his crime, saying that these deaths occurred prior to his murder, creating a sense that these losses could be related to his own personal state just prior to the murder. He later corrected this, as they actually occurred well after the date of the crime.

'I never vent my anger on anyone'

Wayne feels that he never gets angry because he is able to vent anger through his sport. This was strongly associated with the need to win in order to replace potential anger. Winning, which is associated with a position of leadership and authority, always takes priority over potential conflict. There are a number of references to this anger never entering other parts of his life (Appendix A, 803). If it does, it is because something is in the way of 'success', but this is always immediately forgotten.

'God works in mysterious ways'

Consciously, Wayne rationalizes that the murder as a punishment from god for his turning away from him and replacing god with a life of success and preoccupation with sport. In turn, god is associated with love and family values. Wayne often spoke as if he could not have committed the murder and felt that he had been wronged and badly treated in being sent to prison.

9.8.4 Identifications and Object Relations

One of the clearest elements of Wayne's object world evident in the interview was the veil of idealism that was present in much of what he said. The key constellation puts him in very close proximity to his idealized parental objects, with whom he then strongly identifies. They remain very important to him as external objects on whom he depends for advice. Wayne's wife is perceived and needed in a very similar way to his dependency on his parents. It appears that her 'materialistic' nature forms part of this dynamic where an idealized self/object is maintained through material provision.

There are some references to this object constellation being separate from bad or illicit practices. His narrative regarding the murder being a punishment from god suggests, firstly, that this idealized aspect of the self has a 'punishing' relationship with any 'bad' parts of the self that do not belong to the idealized part; and secondly, that the murder shows little sign of being integrated in a realistic way where some responsibility for the crime is demonstrated. This further suggests that a split between bad aspects of the self and an ideal self is a prominent feature of his object world.

The most prominent phantasy that emerges in relation to the nature of aggression involves that idea that 'winning' curtails and contains aggression. Aggression, according to his unconscious derivatives, only becomes destructive if something gets in the way of winning. Here, success is viewed as a means of circumventing conflict.

Apart from his idealized relationship with his wife being severely threatened leading, one would imagine, to an increased vulnerability, the bribe appears to have been a significant reference in the attack. According to the narrative it seems that it is the

idea of being identified as being amenable to bribe, and therefore bad, that cannot be tolerated. The victim, a representation of bad illicit things, is then defensively attacked. The narrative about 'loss and death', clearly associated with the murderous part of him, suggests the presence of a phantasy related to the potential destructiveness of this part of his self. His stories in the TAT appear to pick up on this 'covered-up' part of himself which, underneath all the ideals, feels uncared for and isolated.

The irony, however, is that Wayne does end up identifying with the 'bad aggressive self' when he murders his victim and needs to 'think like a criminal' in order to get rid of the body. Hiding the body, however, is also linked to covering up his crime because he does not 'believe' he could have committed the murder. It is perhaps an important metaphor for illustrating how quickly this part of the self is concealed internally.

The transference-countertransference interaction not only suggests that 'success' carries a lot of emotional investment, it also suggests something about its nature. The success he talks of does not appear synonymous with depth or openness of the self. This is most apparent when he alludes to his achievements whenever the interview moves to more difficult topics and I appear to collude with him in this regard. Of course this also highlights its importance as a defense. In addition, his defensiveness is characterized by a kind of righteous contempt for things that are 'wrong' and unjust. It appears that his references to his wife's sense of being afraid of him may be linked to this kind of contempt and potential aggression. Aggression thus emerges out of this defense in conjunction with his own feelings of being under threat.

9.9 CASE NINE: PRAVEEN

After being insulted by his neighbours whilst in his own house, Praveen flew into a fit of rage and ran outside firing indiscriminately at people around him. He killed one of the neighbours and seriously injured two others. One was an innocent passerby who had no involvement with the incident.

Praveen is serving a sentence of ten years imprisonment for his crime. At the time of the interview he had served 14 months of his sentence.

9.9.1 Case History

Praveen is a 27 year-old Indian man. He is the youngest in his family and has two brothers who are 8 and 10 years older. When he was a young child, his father worked for the town council collecting rental payments whilst his mother remained at home. He describes himself as being very close to his mother and as the youngest child, he would get most of the attention. Praveen's father died from a heart attack when Praveen was 17 years old. He feels that he never really got to know his father.

After his father's death, Praveen worked very hard at university so he could eventually support his mother. He obtained a bursary and used some of this money to support his mother and his eldest brother who was unemployed at the time. After completing an engineering degree he worked for three years close to where he lived and was then successful in getting a better job in another town.

His new job meant that he had to move out of home. He moved into a housing complex in the same neighbourhood as many of the employees of the firm he worked for. The housing complex where he lived was located in a predominantly a white area. According to him, he met 'acquaintances', but was unable to make any real friends. In a similar way, he had had a number of short sexual relationships with women but did not consider these to be significant relationships.

Praveen had become very popular and successful at his place of work during the year he had spent there. He was known to work long hours to make sure his senior colleagues would acknowledge his contribution. He is described as a diligent worker with a good record who was often commended by his seniors for his high standard of work.

The day before his outburst Praveen had had a heated disagreement with his neighbour because the neighbour had parked in his parking space. Prior to this altercation, he had had a cordial relationship with this man. Although there had been

no previous racial incidents or other forms of confrontation, Praveen felt that his neighbours were somewhat racist.

The following day his neighbour and some of his friends entered his house and insulted Praveen in the presence of some of his friends. At that point, in a fit of rage, he went upstairs, fetched his firearm and began firing indiscriminately outside his house. After the murder, he waited at the scene for the police to arrive and surrendered himself. After being released on bail he considered leaving the country and acted on these thoughts but pulled out at the last minute.

Praveen reports no conscious fantasies of violence towards this man or others prior to the shooting. Sometimes, however, when he felt people were being racist towards him, he would 'wish that something bad would happen to them'.

Praveen acquired his firearm whilst he was still living at home with his mother. He had felt it necessary because of the crime rate in the area and because he wanted to protect his mother. He had never used the firearm before and once he left home he felt he had no use for it and was planning to sell it.

Praveen has no history of violence. He reports that sometimes he worries about 'going mad' when he does not keep busy. Apart from this, he reports no other signs or symptoms of psychological distress.

9.9.2 TAT Analysis

9.9.2.1 Themes and Observations.

Praveen displays a harsh and demeaning attitude towards suffering characters in the cards. Suffering or other emotions are viewed as shameful and are accompanied by a judgmental attitude (cards 3BM & 13MF). The defenses most evident in Praveen's stories are splitting and intellectualization. A split between 'decent' and violent or emotional characters was most evident (cards 8BM & 13MF). Praveen displays considerable frustration at being unable to tell a story using the 'blank' card.

9.9.2.2 Complexity of Representations of People (3).

Attention to the appearance of figures is closely related to how they are represented (cards 8BM & 18BM). He displays a very limited representational capacity, placing figures either in 'decent', associated with positive appearance, or 'violent' categories.

9.9.2.3 Affect-Tone of Relationship Paradigms(2).

People are viewed as isolated, non-relational and not in need of each other. When relating occurs in cards (cards 6BM & 7BM) the other characters are rigid and inaccessible, or they are undermined for 'wanting' or being emotional (card 13MF). None of the exchanges depict a caring exchange between the characters.

9.9.2.4 Capacity for Emotional Investment (1).

The capacity for emotional investment evident in the stories is very poor. None of the characters is able to invest in others in an emotionally caring way. If emotional investment occurs, it is attacked and undermined (card 13MF). Figures are seen as unrelated and not needing each other. This is most evident in card 2 where all three figures are viewed as parts of 'different stories'.

9.9.2.5 Understanding of Social Causality (2).

A very simplistic understanding of social causality is evident in Praveen's stories. The assumption that shame and badness are associated with suffering is the most apparent (unconscious) association in his thinking. Causal actions in the stories are determined by the concrete physical appearance of the story cards.

9.9.3 Interview Analysis

9.9.3.1 Transference/Countertransference Impressions and Process

Throughout the first two interviews Praveen adopts a forced obligatory manner, that engenders in me a sense that he is doing me a great favour by being interviewed. At the end of the interview he voices some concern about confidentiality but, at the same time, suggests that I publish my research and 'make a book'. At many points during the interview I was struck by a sense that I was doing something wrong in the interview and was not asking the right questions.

One of the most apparent features of his interviews is his non-verbal approach. He often appears startled and shameful or embarrassed about what he is saying, checking with me to see if it is correct. He denies any embarrassment but instead, often refers to others' embarrassments. Much of his interview time is spent talking about what an 'outstanding achiever' he is.

9.9.3.2 Core Narratives

'I was my mother's favourite'

Praveen makes a number of references to how he is considered to be the favourite in the family, particularly for his mother. In return, there is a need to look after his mother, especially after his father's death, and this is his main motivation for living with her after his studies.

'My father should have done more to help us'

Praveen portrays his father as being a 'traditionally aloof' old man. He feels that he and his father had never had a close relationship. He consciously feels this to be a missing part of his life.

Praveen also feels that his family has been left impoverished by his father. He feels his father should have done more for the family. This is specifically associated with illicit material gain. He feels that his father had been too honest in his job and had therefore not been able to make more money 'on the side'. Although his father could not achieve this, he sees himself as 'being wealthy'. At the same time, in another part of the interview, he views all wealth as being acquired through corrupt means (Appendix A, 901).

"... an outstanding achiever with lots of money but I could never get close to anyone"

This is often how Praveen would describe himself. Being an outstanding achiever is often contrasted with getting emotionally close to both men and women. Despite this, there are always distant, but important, figures apparent in his narrative who constantly compliment his working achievements (Appendix A, 902).

'That white superior attitude really bugged me'

Indications of this narrative only emerge in the third interview. He feels that white people thought they were superior to him. In response to this, he consciously resolved to date white girls - an attempt, in his mind, to upset white men.

'I wasn't thinking I just shot everything white'

Praveen describes a confrontation which occurred the day before the murder with one of his neighbours. It appears that he is clearly enraged by this incident but denies any anger or insult from this encounter. The final encounter that led to the murders was related to three main factors: A breach of his personal boundaries, an enraged sense of being insulted, and the fact that it took place in front of three of his colleagues. In the interview he very quickly tells this story and the narrative immediately changes back to the core narrative where he is all-good in the eyes of others (Appendix A, 903).

'Others are embarrassed about what I did'

Praveen often speaks about others around him, particularly family members, being embarrassed regarding what he did and why he was in prison. He cannot understand this as he claims to feel no shame for what he did. He claims however, that he knows it was wrong and is seeking forgiveness from the families of the victims. He sees this as being very different from feeling ashamed about his actions.

'Losing my mind'

On one occasion Praveen expresses a fear of 'losing his mind' associated with being sensitive to criticism and being 'left alone'.

9.9.4 Identifications and Object Relations

The first prominent object constellation evident in the interview is characterized by Praveen identifying himself in a close protective relationship with his mother, whilst feeling abandoned by paternal objects. As a result he appears to have compensated for this with a phantasy related to paternal figures only being able to 'enrich' him and others through corrupt means. With this he clearly identifies, but this corrupt motivation is not consciously articulated. It emerges mostly in his 'forced' need to be continuously achieving in the eyes of others. Importantly, his achievements are

tinged with grandiosity as reflected, for instance, in the transference when he suggests that I should publish his interviews.

His real sense of inadequacy, however, appears to manifest itself in his references to the racial situation. Bearing in mind that there was no racial problem overtly evident at the time, this theme appears to say more about his internal dynamics. Here, he unconsciously identifies with a threatened object that is angered by superior representations. This is accompanied with a painful sense of shame that remains unconscious, but clearly evident, in the interview narratives and the transference. It most often manifests itself in a projected form where it is projected into objects that show concern and are associated with 'emotions'.

In sum, the narrative points to two core identifications, one superior and somewhat grandiose, the other threatened and ashamed, the latter being unconscious. The interviews and the TAT themes suggest a particular kind of relationship between these two identifications: The 'superior' identification relates to the part of himself associated with shame, violence and suffering, in a harsh and demeaning way. This dominant sense of identity works to split off emotional experience by attacking it in this way.

A substantial portion of Praveen's object world appears to be based on an avoidance of this core affect. Firstly, his fantasies regarding dating white girls appear to achieve this motive. These objects lack any clear representational definition apart from serving a key defensive function. They allow him to be 'triumphant' in winning over something that is associated with a threatening 'superior' world, in turn, projecting a sense of inferiority into them, precipitating their so-called defeat. It is possible that this dynamic is also evident in the transference where I often feel that I am asking 'inadequate' questions. Secondly, Praveen also assumes an overly compliant attitude towards his objects in order to avoid hostility and maintain control over the immediate situation. This is also an important part of his interaction in the transference.

The night before the murder, Praveen had an argument with his neighbour, but importantly, he denies any hostility towards him. Again, this seems to be related to

his need to preserve an 'unfaltering' self-image. The murder and assault are strongly associated with a breach of this well-preserved self-representation. The breach is felt to be devastating and exposes him to a sense of shame. For this reason, these overwhelming feelings are immediately projected back into his victims and are accompanied by a rage-filled state that aims to destroy the threat these objects now represent.

In both the interviews and the TAT there is some evidence of a rather tenuous hold on reality associated with a lack of structure and an inability to successfully use the defensive system discussed above.

CHAPTER TEN

A SUMMARY OF EMERGENT THEMES ACROSS CASES

Each of the cases outlined in the previous chapter has particular idiosyncratic presentations in terms of both situational and psychological factors. Each also tends to have its own particular focus depending on the nature of the case. Not all these factors can be discussed in detail in this study. There are, however, a number of themes that are common to most of the cases. Below is a list of the most prominent themes that have emerged across the nine cases explored. The specifics and complexities of these themes, as well as some of the exceptions, will be further contextualized in the next section.

10.1 CASE DETAILS

- a) Each murder took place in reaction to some perceived provocation. The realistic nature of the provocation varied across cases.
- b) Six cases were most consistent with Wertham's acute catathymia discussed earlier (cases 5,3,4,7,8 & 9). Only in three cases was it evident that the individual displayed clinical signs of chronic catathymia prior to the rage murder (cases 1,2 & 6).
- c) In five cases a firearm was used to commit the murder. In three cases a knife was used and in the remaining case no weapon was used. In eight cases multiple repetitive injuries were inflicted on their victims, characterizing the 'overkill' nature of rage-type killings. *Case five* was an exception in this regard.
- d) In all of the cases, apart from *case seven*, problematic situational factors (e.g. an affair or separation) were evident in the build-up to the murders.

Their significance, however, was not often consciously acknowledged by the offenders. This was consistent with the TAT finding regarding the denial of conflict or aggression.

- e) None of the offenders interviewed had a history of gross acts of violent or aggression in adulthood. Only reports of mild violence were evident (cases 2 & 6). Three individuals had a history of mild impulsive behaviours (cases 4, 6 & 7).
- f) In *cases one* and *three* conscious fantasies of killing were evident, although in the latter, the fantasies were not aimed at the eventual victims. In all the other cases, however, there were no reports of conscious fantasies to carry out violence or murder.
- g) In eight cases the victims were known to the offenders and shared a significant emotional attachment with the victim. Only in *case seven* was the victim unknown to the offender.
- h) In *cases two* and *six* the offender was suicidal prior to the murder.
- i) In *cases four* and *six* symptomatology such as depression and somatic problems was noted but not prominent. In *case seven* more severe prior symptoms of depression, chronic emptiness and erratic mood changes were noted. In all other cases little evidence of psychological distress was apparent.
- j) Apart from some evidence of dissociative psychotic signs occurring at the time of the murder (cases 1, 2, 3, 6, 7 & 8), no other psychotic symptomatology was evident in any of the cases.
- k) In six cases close, partially idealized or dependent relationships with the mothers of the offenders were evident (cases 1, 2, 3, 6, 8 & 9).
- l) In seven cases fathers were reported to have been absent or ineffective (cases 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7 & 9).
- m) Significant trauma was found to be present in the histories of seven cases (cases 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, & 7). In five of these, the trauma occurred in the offender's distant past. Whereas in the remaining two cases, the trauma was ongoing or occurred within a week prior to the murder (cases 1 & 3).
- n) In five cases, whilst problems persisted within a relationship, the offender found it difficult to remove or separate himself from the situation in order to engage the problems in a constructive manner (cases 1, 2, 3, 5 & 6).

- o) Six of the offenders had been markedly successful in their careers (cases 1,2,3,5,8 &9).

10.2 TAT FINDINGS

- a) The TAT reports are consistent in finding the representational capacity of these offenders to be considerably impoverished. Related to this, their ability to discriminate between different objects was consistently poor throughout most cases. In a number of cases the offenders appeared considerably defensive and hurried in participating in the assessment (cases 1,2,4,5,8 & 9).
- b) In all of the cases the most prominent identification was with a hurt, uncared-for emotional figure. The inaccessibility of objects, with little exchange between them, was also a prominent theme.
- c) People were represented as unidimensional figures with a focus on actions and little attention to the complexity of the character's internal world.
- d) The affective nature of relationships was largely negative. Although this was the case, there was a tendency to deny, or under-represent, conflicting or malevolent themes related to the self as identified in the cards.
- e) The capacity for emotional investment was assessed as being poor throughout all cases with little evidence of there being caring emotional exchanges between figures.
- f) Concrete cause-effect relationship typified the most prominent means of engagement with surroundings. There was little indication of thought-mediated action being present.

10.3 THE PSYCHOANALYTIC RESEARCH INTERVIEW

10.3.1 Underlying Object Relations

- a) In all cases the victim was represented as a threat to an established intrapsychic defensive system. Although each case displayed different

manifestations of this system, a number of striking similarities emerged across cases:

- i) There was evidence, in most cases, of a defensive split between bad object representations and idealized good objects. Only in one case was this reversed where bad object representations were idealized to form an object constellation typical of a perversion (case 7).
 - ii) The belief in an idealized good object world is upheld by defensive manoeuvres that attempt to maintain this as a reality. This appeared to be the 'holding' position of the personality, giving the impression that the individual lived in an all-good idealized world behaving in all-good ways towards his objects. The all-good object system occupied very little 'internal' space in the individual and was more readily perceived in his relating with external objects.
 - iii) Excessive concern for external objects was also evident (cases 1,2,3,5,8 & 9).
- b) This defensive system was maintained through various strategies:
- i) Most evident was a form of narcissistic object relating where ideal 'goodness' and/or success is constantly perpetuated through the projection of all-good objects onto external objects in order to separate them from the aggression and conflict that has been equated with badness and kept 'inside' the offender (cases 1,2,3,4, 5,8 & 9).
 - ii) This system was also upheld through an identification with an overly compliant and obliging object that aims to appease and circumvent conflict (cases 2,3,4,5,6,8 & 9).
 - iii) In some cases the above identification was synonymous with a victimized position where aggression and badness were split off and projected into the object. This left the offender feeling perpetually trapped and aggressed, but at the same time, not able to separate from the object (cases 3 & 6).

- iv) In three of the cases the idealized self was also preserved through attacking 'feeling' parts of the self that were equated with vulnerability and 'badness'.
- c) Conscious identifications with this narcissistic structure were closely associated with the perpetuation of masculine identifications (cases 2,3,4, 5,6,8 & 9).
- d) Dependence on this object constellation as a defense and a sense of identity made separation from apparently traumatizing situations difficult (cases 2,3,5,6,8 & 9).
- e) Bad, aggressed and conflictual aspects of the self were denied and lacked any clear mental elaboration (cases 1,2,3,4,5,8 & 9). There was, however, evidence of an unconscious identification with these parts of the self. This is most apparent in the TAT where most of the identifications related to hurt, attacked, negative figures.
- f) Feelings of shame were readily associated with the 'hidden' bad object system (cases 1,2,3,4,5,6,8 & 9).
- g) *Case seven* was an exception to the above finding as a reversal of this defense system is evident where badness itself is idealized.
- h) Maternal figures were often idealized and associated with the upkeep of a good compliant self (cases 1,2,3,8 & 9).
- i) Paternal objects were often not evident, or were perceived as rejecting. Precarious identifications with internalized paternal figures were evident despite there being, in some cases, prominent identifications with ostensibly strong masculine role models (cases 1,2,4,5,6,7 & 9).
- j) The role of trauma (past and present) appeared related to the object constellations apparent in the relevant cases, contributing to the idealized good-bad split referred to earlier and associated with the split-off bad part of the self.
- k) Conscious fantasies of being attacked, rather than attacking, were most evident in the interviews (cases 1,2,3,5,6,7 & 9). The most predominant and consistent unconscious phantasies related to the perpetual replenishment of 'good' in the offenders' objects to ensure the confirmation of an all-good self.

10.3.2 The Act

- a) In all cases it was evident that the individual acted defensively against a perceived threat. In most cases this was initiated by some form of provocation, whilst in others, the threat emerged solely out of intrapsychic dynamics (cases 4,1 & 7).
- b) The 'attack' threatened the narcissistic object constellation referred to above and was accompanied by a defensive forceful attempt at re-instating this narcissistic object system (cases 1,2,3,4,5,7,8 & 9).
- c) It was evident in all cases that the deep split in the object world, described above, that maintains a homeostatic balance in the personality, was felt to be in danger of collapse just prior to the murder. The provocation was perceived - both unconsciously and consciously, depending on the case - to be a life-threatening 'attack' and could not be tolerated internally. The experience was momentarily identified with and became associated with the bad split-off part of the self. It was then immediately evacuated and projected into the victim where it was destroyed.
- d) The direction of the attack, represented internally, was mostly characterized by the idealized system attacking bad objects. *Case seven* is an exception to this observation.
- e) After the crime, six cases displayed 'criminal motivations' which were most readily associated with two contradictory themes: (1) A 'cover-up' and re-instatement of the defenses. (2) Identification with the bad object system that was previously split-off (cases 3,4,5,7,8 & 9).
- f) Most offenders were suicidal after the incident (cases 1,2 3,4,5,6 & 8).

CHAPTER ELEVEN

THE NATURE AND QUALITY OF OBJECT RELATIONS IN RAGE-TYPE MURDER

In exploring the trends that have emerged across the nine cases analyzed the *Intrapsychic Dimensions of Violence*, outlined earlier, will be used as a guiding structure. Most significantly, a specific type of defensive organization has emerged as a key factor in understanding the offender's object relations. For this reason it will be given priority, and provides the context within which many of the other dimensions can be understood. Following this, we shall return to the act itself and explore some of the inferences that can be made about the sequence of intrapsychic events that ultimately lead to the murder.

11.1 INTRAPSYCHIC DIMENSIONS OF RAGE-TYPE MURDER

11.1.1 Defensive Organization: The Narcissistic Exoskeleton

Most of the cases explored share a similar defensive structure. It is characterized by a rigid split between a constellation of idealized object relations and internalized bad objects, where the former assumes the position of an outer 'holding' personality. In *case five*⁷, for instance, Andrew's identification with an independent, 'successful', all-good object dominates his interactions and is readily supported by the admiration of his external objects. Likewise, Simon [case 2] desperately holds onto the fantasy of an ideal relationship with his wife using various defensive strategies that will be discussed shortly. Still further, Ralph [case 1] maintains his all-good object system

⁷ Hereafter case numbers will be cited between square brackets when the names of interviewees are used.

through a perpetual need to identify with a 'negotiating rôle' that only engages good objects. In different ways, all the cases aside from *case seven*, display this trend.

The key defensive aim here is to maintain an apparently all-good compliant personality in order to deny and split off intolerable elements of the self that have become associated with badness, weakness or aggression. The compliant part of the personality is characterized by a form of narcissistic relating that appears to be responsible for maintaining this exterior in a rigid but effective manner. The concept of a 'narcissistic exoskeleton' appears to describe best how this outward 'holding' personality functions and requires some qualification.

It is my contention that this part of the personality, although prominent in appearance, holds little interior psychic space in these offenders. In other words, there is little evidence that this all-good image of the self is a stable part of their internalized object world. Although the TAT reflects some idealized elements, the most dominant theme reflecting the state of their internal world is one of sadness, hurt, and isolation. In the interview narratives there is a preoccupation with an ideal good object that relies on external objects for its survival. Internalized goodness thus relies on projective identifications with good external objects. In this way it appears that projective identification is used to hold idealized good outside the self as a kind of exoskeleton. I use the term 'narcissistic exoskeleton' for two main reasons. Firstly, the external objects that form part of the system have a narcissistic quality to them. They are invested, in phantasy, with parts of the offender's self and the distinction between self and the external object's needs, feelings and motivations are blurred. Secondly, the image of an exoskeleton best depicts the nature of this structure as being situated outside the self, enclosing an interior.

An exoskeleton has a dual function which parallels the kind of object relations evident in most of the cases explored here. It both supports and contains an internal structure whilst simultaneously protecting it from outside threats, much like a rigid sheet of armour. In the case of Andrew [case 5], for instance, he attempts to abandon his established internal objects through creating new identifications which are typified by an idealized form of independence based on his sporting achievements. These form the basis of the exoskeleton structure, hiding an interior that can no

longer have contact with the external world. At the same time, the vulnerable interior is protected from the threats of the outside world. As evident in most cases, Andrew is preoccupied with searching for confirmations of an idealized good world in other objects in order to uphold the defensive structure. It appears that the rigidity of this defensive system goes some way in explaining the apparent stability of this kind of personality, which commonly features in rage-type murder.

The idealized object system varies across the cases depending on the specific characteristics of the objects involved, but its essential structure and function remains a key feature. The self is identified with an all-good object world that constantly maintains itself through cycles of relatively benign projective identifications with external objects. Here, projective identifications are used to enlist collusively the support of external objects in fostering a 'belief' in this perception of the self. The projections do not appear to be evacuative or intrusive in nature in the sense that they are 'forced' into external objects (Bion, 1962a). Evidence from the case histories and the *Psychoanalytic Research Interview* suggests that in a majority of the cases this is achieved through appeasing and constantly satisfying the object, which maintains the image of an all-good self and avoids any potential conflict. Simon [case 2], for instance, spends a lot of time describing the importance of constantly worrying about his wife and making sure she was always happy. If she was not he would immediately try to remedy the situation by doing whatever she wanted. Alternatively, if she did anything wrong, even in terms of the love affair she had, Simon would quickly forgive her and do more things for her in order to maintain an 'ideal world'. His appeasing manner is also very apparent in the transference.

In some cases, however, the perpetuation of this veil of goodness is also maintained through a rigidly held righteous, and sometimes attacking, attitude towards objects not perceived to reflect the ideal self. The case of Praveen [case 9] best illustrates this where he maintains a 'successful' good image through attacking or belittling objects that reflect vulnerability and emotion.

The interaction of this part of the self with other objects is similar to Kohut's (1978) description of the *mirroring* and *idealizing transferences* he found to be present in narcissistic patients. Kohut's understanding, however, does little to explain the

rigidity of this system and how active the individual is in manipulating his objects to maintain narcissistic reflection. Here, the mechanism of projective identification is more instructive.

In its non-pathological form, projective identification is the mechanism through which communication occurs between mother and infant (Bion, 1962a). In this process the projection of part of the self into another is contained and returned in a modified form to be used for further emotional and mental growth. This does not seem to operate in the cases isolated here, as the cycles of projection are not mutative or able to nourish the individual's internal world in any way. They are simply repetitive and self-fulfilling. For example, Ralph [case 1] involves himself continuously in negotiating activities in an attempt to perpetuate an image of himself as all-good. He benefits from this as long as the negotiations are successful, but breaks contact when the situation becomes difficult and conflicted. He displays little tolerance if the object does not simply return what he projects, expressing little desire, conscious or otherwise, to be changed by the object. Thus no change or emotional growth can occur here. The strategy becomes self-fulfilling, essentially serving a defensive function. Ralph's own astonishment in not being able to grasp why the 'negotiating role' was so important to him also suggests that the role fulfils a defensive need and is not a source of mental stimulation or growth.

A similar process occurs when the offender is the recipient of bad experience or intolerable projected states. In many of the cases there are indications of bad experience simply being denied or immediately covered up by the ideal good self, giving the impression it has been dealt with, or that the offender is left unaffected by the incident. Andrew [case 5], for example, is unable to deal with the true impact of his business partner's desertion. Simon [case 2] continually forgives his wife for her behaviour but does not address the psychic pain that this would ordinarily cause, whilst Grant [case 3] continually understates the abuse to which he is exposed. More generally, there is a consistent theme in the interview analyses of a denial of bad, aggressed and conflictual aspects of the self. But it appears that there is not only a denial of conflict here; a kind of pseudo-digestion of the conflict also occurs. All indications are, however, that it remains undigested in the psyche and is allocated to

a 'bad' self in order to salvage the ideal self and the apparent normality that it portrays. I shall return to this shortly, in discussing the borderline personality.

As also noted by Hyatt-Williams (1998), there are indications, in most cases, of a reluctance to engage in any behaviours associated with aggression, even when defensive or adaptive. This further illustrates the need to split off anything associated with aggression which, in turn, is associated with badness.

Thus far we have explored the idealized good object system prominent in most of the offenders considered here. What, however, is the nature of the 'bad' self that results from identifications with bad internalized objects? In most of these cases it remains split-off and dormant in the personality, protected by the all-good object system. This is most vividly evident in *case four* where the trauma of Ben's sexual abuse is split off and associated with all men, preventing any meaningful contact. Prior to the murder, there are few signs that the abuse and its consequences were ever consciously acknowledged - they remained suspended in the psyche like concrete indigestible objects. His interaction with the world is very restrictive as a consequence of avoiding confrontation with this part of himself represented in external objects. Instead, Ben interacts only with women and even then, they are represented as one-dimensional objects within a defensive system that uses them to bolster the split between good and bad objects.

Fairbairn's (1952) idea that the infant internalizes bad object relations as a defensive manoeuvre, as discussed earlier (see Section 4.1), appears to be particularly relevant here. He believed that the internalization of bad objects serves, in fantasy, to 'remove' the bad object from the external world thus saving good object relations from its destructive influence. The internalization process is also an attempt to bring the bad object under the control of the self. In Fairbairn's formulation, however, the internalized bad object then dominates the personality through attacking libidinized good object relations. Although clearly a feature of Kevin's [case 7] internal world this does not appear to be a defining feature of the defensive system here. Kevin's object relations appear more typical of the kind of destructive narcissism (Rosenfeld, 1987) evident in particular kinds of borderline personalities and found in its extreme in the psychopathic personality (Meloy, 1992; Kernberg, 1992). In this case, bad

objects are idealized, forming gangs or systems that work to attack good nurturing object relations. In all the other cases, the internal 'attacking' or aggressive dynamic is not reversed in this way. Although the articulation or engagement of the 'bad' self with other parts of the internal world is minimal, when it is evident in the analysis, the 'attack' takes place in the opposite direction. The dominant good self attacks the damaged, 'feeling' part of the self that has become assimilated into the bad object system.

In *cases three and six* one could argue that the 'bad' self exists in a stable projected form long before the actual attack itself, where the murder victim becomes an 'all bad' attacking object. Frank [case 6], for instance, appears to have a vested interest in his wife being a bad aggressive object, leaving him constantly victimized, but at the same time, free of having to identify a bad internal object within himself. This appears to contribute to the entrapping nature of the relationships observed in these two cases where the offenders display a chronic inability to deal with the situation by walking away from it in order to engage the problem constructively. It is entrapping because the offender has an unconscious vested interest in the victim continuing to play the role of an all-bad attacking object. I do not wish to undermine the reality of the difficult situations they find themselves in here, but only mean to explore how the defensive system is invested in this reality. The impact of external factors on offenders is explored as a separate dimension.

In most cases, however, there are fewer indications that the bad object system is projected in this way, perhaps supporting Weiss *et al's* (1960) finding that explosive offenders are unable to use projection successfully (cf. Section 6.1.4). They hypothesize that projective mechanisms are not used because they leave the individual feeling swamped by bad objects, further reminding him of his own inadequacies. Certainly, in the immediacy of the act of violence, a massive projection of intolerable bad objects appears to occur, but this is due to a sudden rupturing of the defensive system and not part of the action of the defensive system itself. We shall discuss this in more detail later in considering how the prevailing intrapsychic dimensions contribute to the act itself.

For most then, the 'bad' self remains concealed and held in behind the narcissistic exoskeleton. Returning to Fairbairn (1954), what appears to emerge here is an accumulation of bad experience that remains unmodified and is prevented, in most cases, from gaining some relief via projection. If one accepts that the offender's personality is essentially dominated by the perpetuation of idealized good objects, unfettered by any bad objects, then the problem with the projection of bad experience appears understandable. Thus from a slightly different perspective from that of Weiss *et al* (1960), it is also likely that the projection of the 'bad' self would run the risk of contaminating the ideal world they have, in phantasy, created. In this way, the separation between 'external' and 'internal', as corresponding representations of idealized good objects and all-bad objects, is important to maintain.

The splitting of the personality in this way may be understood as the suspension of the Ps <-> D process of psychic digestion. Although he does not refer to it specifically as psychic digestion, Bion (1962a) introduces this model to illustrate the constant oscillations that occur in the psyche between splitting 'paranoid' processes (Ps) and integrative depressive processes (D). According to him, all emotional and mental processes continually oscillate in this way in order to accommodate new material and create 'new thoughts'. Thus thoughts and emotions undergo a splitting process and thereafter couple together in a different way provided the individual can contain such a process. This, however, is not evident in many of these offenders where the defensive organization interrupts and polarizes the process. Here, interchange between Ps and D is suspended and bad objects remain unmetabolized. The bad object system remains encapsulated and consists mainly of paranoid experience, in the Kleinian sense of the word, that cannot achieve temporary resolution in the depressive position.

It is tempting, following Wertham (1934) and some of the other earlier formulations, to conclude that the accumulation of undigested bad experience is what ultimately leads to a cathartic explosion when it becomes intolerable (cf. Section 6.1.1). Viewed in this way, the attack or murder is perpetrated by the 'bad' self when it bursts through all psychological defenses. This certainly appears correct in terms of the phenomenology of explosive rage. However, the situational factors evident here, the interview and the TAT analysis, appear to indicate that the mechanism of action is

very different. We shall return to this in discussing how some of the other intrapsychic dimensions of violence contribute to the act of rage-type murder itself.

The above defensive organization bears some similarities to a number of other formulations. Wertham (1962) notes a kind arrogance in the personality of the catathymic offender that lies in opposition to extreme inadequacy, fear of incompetence and passivity. This appears similar to the split found to be evident here. Arrogance is perhaps a useful description of the ideal good self, typified by a conscious attitude of being able to tolerate anything that comes their way.

The defensive organization also bears a resemblance to Winnicott's (1965) notion of the False and True Self. The False Self emerges when the mother "repeatedly fails to meet the infant gesture; instead she substitutes her own gesture which is to be given sense by the compliance of the infant" (p. 145). Later, he describes the situation as follows: "When the mother's adaptation is not good enough at the start the infant might be expected to die physically, because cathexis of external objects is not initiated. The infant remains isolated. But in practice the infant lives, but only falsely." (p. 146). In a similar way the narcissistic exoskeleton and the False Self maintain a defensive system through compliance with the external object. According to Winnicott, through compliance with mother, or environmental demands, the False Self defensively hides True Self potential. It is hidden because it has become associated with 'unthinkable anxiety' due mainly to maternal neglect. It is likely that this kind of primitive anxiety is also associated with the hidden 'bad' self in the above formulation.

For Winnicott, such individuals lack an ability to nurture and sustain an interior mental space or make use of internal resources. The fate of the True Self is ultimately restricted to bodily sensation and is not able to gain representational space in the psyche. This manifests in experiences of emptiness, isolation, and boredom. The TAT analysis clearly reflects this pattern across all cases. Further, many of the offenders, particularly Ralph, Ben, Wayne and Praveen, reflect a sense of meaninglessness in attempting to understand their own behaviours [cases 1,4,8 & 9].

The term 'False Self', however, carries with it the connotation that it is simply defensive and makes no real contribution to the individual's development. As Glasser (1997) points out, whilst the False Self may be compliant, this should not be interpreted only as a useless, empty part of the self. He believes that the False Self is capable of being quite a functional part of the personality and also serves to protect others from the individual's aggression. Indeed, this appears to be the case for many of the offenders here. Most are reasonably successful as a result of False Self activity. This is so until they are forced, by internal and external factors, to confront split-off parts of the self.

Referring to the False Self and its association with apparent normality, Glasser (1996) suggests that some violent individuals display a greater propensity for 'simulation'. In his words, simulation is "a defensive process in which the individual *appears* to develop qualities or features which are valued by the person to whom he or she is in relation" (p. 278). Glasser seems to be referring more to the psychopathic personality here, where this process is conscious and deliberately deceptive. The 'simulation' observed in the individuals participating in this study appears to be more characterized by unconscious forces, where over-compliant parts of the narcissistic exoskeleton attempt to guard against destructive impulses. The over-compliance and over-obliging nature of these individuals, most readily observed in their initial transference impressions and later confirmed in the narrative analysis, illustrates the kind of 'simulation' that occurs here.

This is similar to what Gaddini (1992) has referred to as 'imitation', a primitive form of identification that will be discussed further when considering the offenders' capacities for object relating. Suffice to say here that Glasser's (1996) concept is formulated as being associated with a bad destructive part of the personality, whereas here it appears more aligned with the good compliant self.

The similarities between the above defensive organization and Deutsch's (1942) description of the 'as if' personality are also important to note. The 'as if' personality is characterized by 'disavowal', the denial of the realistic significance of things. This differs greatly from the more psychotic obliteration of reality. Deutsch claims that the inability to truly engage the realistic qualities of the object has the advantage of

ensuring a conflict-free psychic reality that makes the individual appear 'as if' he leads a 'normal' unproblematic existence. Although such individuals are able to show apparent emotional, sensitive capacities, Deutsch (1942) finds that a closer analysis reveals that they display a marked absence of inner experience. The narcissistic exoskeleton shares similar characteristics. It has been formulated as disavowal of the realistic nature of 'badness' in the object in order to uphold an 'as if' engaging interaction with an all-good object. As is the case in Deutsch's formulation, this part of the offenders' interaction however, lacks any clearly defined representational or psychic space. We have understood this to be the consequence of a defensive split between bad objects that occupy internal space, whilst the all-good objects are 'kept alive' by keeping them, in phantasy, outside the internal world.

This division, or stand-off, between internal and external reality is further supported by Britton's (1998) recent formulation of the 'as if' personality. Although not relating this defensive organization to violence, he views the split as a consequence of the individual feeling unable to truly engage internal or external reality as both appear equally terrifying. The only option therefore, is to 'exist' on the borderline between the two. In this state the individual may appear very well adjusted, with the stand-off also serving a pseudo-containing function for the individual. In reality, Britton (1998) argues, such individuals can only maintain this defensive strategy by enduring a passive existence and by suspending all belief in self and others. A similar situation appears to be apparent in the defensive organization observed in offenders interviewed for this study. On the one hand, the internal world is dominated by the bad object system, making internal experience dangerous and unavailable. On the other hand, real engagement with external objects is equally dangerous as the ambiguous good and bad nature of real objects threatens to disrupt the defensive strategy that strives to keep bad experience, and its specific associations with shame and aggression, out of their perceived external reality. In other words, this part of the psyche displays little tolerance for depressive experience.

But how does the defensive predisposition outlined here compel an individual to commit murder? Although this would also depend on other factors still to be discussed, there are indications that the rage-type murder takes place when narcissistic defenses are breached, exposing the 'bad' self in a way that can no longer

be tolerated. The situation triggers an internal crisis whereby this part of the self is, in phantasy, evacuated and destroyed in the external object. This is similar to Batemen's (1998) understanding that violence is more likely to occur in narcissistic organizations when there is a sudden shift in the defensive system. The details of the act itself will be discussed further once all intrapsychic dimensions have been explored.

11.1.1.1 The Question of Chronicity

In attempting to understand the impact this kind of defensive organization has on the offender's murderous behaviour, we cannot avoid questions regarding the chronicity of these defenses. By definition, defensive organizations are fixed and enduring parts of the personality that prevent growth or learning from experience (Spillius, 1988; Steiner, 1993). But how can we be sure that this is what emerges in the interviews and TAT findings? Given the trauma associated with the murder and all the implications it has for the offender, surely the construction of an idealized defensive self is an effective means of dealing with unbearable psychic pain after the murder? In other words, how do we know that these defenses are not simply a consequence of the murder? This is very difficult to ascertain within the limits of the methodology used here and indeed is the case with all *ex post facto* analyses.

There are, however, two factors that support the claim that the narrative analysis picks up on enduring defensive patterns. The first simply draws on the theory in this area claiming that defensive organizations are deeply rooted in the personality and require considerable psychic work if they are to change in some way (See Section 5.6). Whilst traumatic experience may rupture defensive patterns, it is unlikely that the defensive system will be entirely transformed by the murder and all its implications. The second factor refers to the historical material gathered from the court reports and the *Psychoanalytic Research Interview*. Part of what has contributed to the final interpretation of intrapsychic processes in each case has been the historical reports of enduring behaviours in each individual. Certainly, material from the *Psychoanalytic Research Interview* is inevitably subject to a process of 'narrative smoothing' (Spence, 1982) by both the offender and myself. Nevertheless, most of the evidence that supports the idea that these character patterns existed prior to the murder can be corroborated by the court reports.

11.1.1.2 Borderline Personality?

Does this defensive system constitute a borderline personality organization? It is clear from most of the case reports that a majority of the offenders interviewed did not fit the typical impulsive and unstable borderline pattern that typifies *The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual IV's* (American Psychological Association, 1994) diagnostic classification of Borderline Personality Disorder. Only in one case, *case seven*, were symptoms typical of this kind of borderline instability evident.

Significantly, this case also differs from the others in two ways: (1) There is a stable conscious identification with the 'bad' self resulting in a perversion of object relations. Here, the 'bad' self becomes omnipotent and powerful, aiming to destroy good nurturing objects. (2) This is also the only case where the victim was unknown to the offender. It suggests that the quality of object relations evident during the act differ considerably from other cases where a specific external object becomes the target of murderous violence. As pointed out earlier, this impulsive borderline pattern has been previously implicated in rage-type offences by a number of authors (Satten *et al*, 1960; Meloy, 1992; Kernberg, 1992; Millon, 1996). The object relations are most similar to those proposed earlier by Gallwey's (1985) first category formulation of the borderline personality (cf. Section 6.2.4). Here, the ego remains fickle and regressed, collapsing in the face of minor frustrations and manifesting in impulsive antisocial behaviours. According to him, the unconscious motive for murder here emanates from the threat of the loss of an object. In keeping with this, Kevin's murderous behaviour is, in part, triggered by a perceived threat of losing his 'special meeting place' which is closely associated with the self.

I proposed, in discussing the borderline organization earlier, that the kind of presentation observed above may simply be a regressed presentation of the *overcontrolled* personality often observed in rage-type offences (see Section 3.3). This, however, does not seem to be supported here. Kevin has a long history of unstable impulsive behaviour, suggesting that the controlled exterior evident in many of the cases is not present in him. Perhaps without this outward appearance it becomes more understandable why such individuals end up committing acts of violence or murder because this presentation conforms more to the image of a person who may be murderous.

All the other cases show signs of a more rigorously controlled borderline organization, similar to Gallwey's (1985) second dual-personality formulation. The borderline pattern is characterized by a rigid split between 'bad' objects and an elaborate idealized 'good' object system. Here, the ego remains relatively coherent as long as destructive 'bad' objects remain split-off and the system remains unchallenged. These individuals are seldom excessively withdrawn, appear stable, and deterioration of the personality is seldom observed after violent acts. As mentioned earlier, Gallwey further observes that the encapsulated part of the self, what he calls the β -system, is seldom projected and remains stagnant in the psyche.

Steiner's (1993) concept of a 'psychic retreat' is also relevant here. He uses the term to describe a particular internal structure where relief is sought through a withdrawal from any meaningful contact with others because it is felt to be too threatening. The withdrawal forms an encapsulated system that remains isolated and stagnant. In some cases the system of defenses used is so successful that anxiety is seldom experienced and because the withdrawal brings relief, it is often idealized as a haven free of conflict. There are however, some instances where this part of the self is felt to be persecutory or 'deadly'. The defensive organization observed in most of the offenders is more typical of this pattern. Further, it is not the retreat itself that is idealized but the pseudo-enriching contact that occurs between self and external objects.

The way the defensive system operates sheds some light on the internal dynamics of Megargee's (1966) original concept of the *overcontrolled* offender (cf. Section 3.2 & 3.3). It was proposed earlier that a rigid borderline system appears to underlie the personalities of this group. The above findings suggest that the control has its source in a system of defenses which rigourously controls split-off aspects of the self by establishing an idealized 'exoskeleton' that denies and controls the existence of the 'bad' self.

This does not mean that we should expect these individuals to be withdrawn and disengaged as some have inferred (e.g. Abrahamsen, 1973; Hollin, 1989; Satten *et al*, 1960). Most of the offenders interviewed here do not fit this pattern and therefore

differ in this way from the general overcontrolled group. They seem to be better described by Blackburn's (1993) conforming category of overcontrolled offenders as opposed to the inhibited type referred to earlier (see Section 3.2).

11.1.2 The Representational System and the Body.

The TAT findings indicate that all offenders participating in this study had considerably impoverished representational capacities. Figures were viewed in a concrete one-dimensional fashion with little acknowledgment of internal mental space. As discussed earlier in some detail, the inability to mentalize, manipulate, and symbolize psychical processes leaves the individual more vulnerable to acts of violence (see Section 5.2). Mental objects remain concrete and are felt as more associated with the body than with the mind, hence more prone to physical action (Fonagy *et al*, 1993; Fonagy & Target, 1996; Hyatt-Williams, 1996, 1998; Segal, 1997).

A poorly defined 'reflective self', to use Fonagy *et al*'s (1993) term, has a number of related implications clearly evident in some of the research cases. Firstly, it delineates a relatively primitive psychological state where repression as a psychological defense cannot operate effectively. By definition, internalized objects or processes that are not 'mentalized' cannot be recognized as objects to be potentially repressed. Given the representational capacity evident in this study, one could assume this is the case here, making repression, a relatively mature defense, unavailable to this part of the psyche.

Secondly, without an adequate capacity to re-present one's own emotional states to oneself, the ability to 'think about' and work through psychic pain is foreclosed. The suffering of self and others cannot be truly acknowledged or tolerated which, in turn, makes the process of mourning and 'psychic digestion' impossible (Hyatt-Williams, 1998). This is apparent in a number of different ways in the cases explored, I shall only mention the most prominent.

In the cases of Ben and Simon [cases 4 & 2], there are indications that past trauma cannot be adequately represented in a way that would facilitate the mourning process.

Simon, for instance, still talks about his abusive relationship in the present tense as if the trauma continually occurs inside him. In the cases of Ralph and Grant [cases 1 & 3], more contemporary traumatic experience cannot be 'thought about' in a way that gives them some 'psychological distance' from the trauma so that the trauma itself is not equated with one's own experience of it. This, however, may not only be a function of a predisposed personality. Certainly, particularly in Ralph's case, the trauma of his brother's death is clearly a key factor to be considered in understanding the loss of his representational capacity. Here, it is likely that a sudden collapse of the representational system is more prominent. Finally, in many of the cases, offenders make reference to an inability to re-present their own aggressive potential. Ralph, Andrew, Kevin, Wayne and Praveen [cases 1,5,7,8, & 9] consciously indicate that if they had 'known' about their own aggression they would have had a better chance of avoiding the final outburst. As Andrew states: "If I had thought about being aggressive, this would have not happened". Similarly, Ralph claims: "I was a mediator of conflict, doing good. If I had known I could get that bad, maybe I would have thought about it first instead of losing it I had nothing to measure that by."

The third implication, following on from Fonagy and his colleagues, relates to the importance of the reflective or representational capacity in creating mental space. The retardation of this process has implications for the individual's sense of psychological space, feelings of entrapment, claustrophobic phenomena, and so forth. This kind of experience has often been noted in borderline dynamics (Meltzer, 1992; Rey, 1988; Steiner, 1993). On reviewing the build-up to the murder in some of the cases [cases 2,3,5 & 6] a lack of mental space may well have contributed to a claustrophobic sense of feeling consumed by the situation. The experience is felt to be endless and annihilatory and must be stopped through violence.

All the above go some way in explaining the offenders' inability to 'think through' their problematic situations or the distress they were experiencing at the time of the murder. Nevertheless, this does not appear to be the case all the time and in all situations. If that were so, one would expect these offenders to have a history of impulsive behaviour along with intermittent explosive episodes. There are two other factors that emerge from the case material associated with other intrapsychic

dimensions that help explain this. The first relates to the defensive organization discussed earlier; the second relates to external situational factors.

The representational capacity appears to differ across the split in the object relations between the idealized self-object system and the bad object system. The representational capabilities of the idealized system appear to be far greater than those of the 'bad' encapsulated self. Simon and Wayne [cases 2 & 8], for instance, spend much time with me thinking about all they had done for their wives and how much they have achieved. They do this in reasonably elaborate and sophisticated ways. When asked to reflect their own emotional states, however, they have great difficulty. As pointed out earlier, specifically in Simon's case formulation, most of his emotional capacity had become associated with a childhood abusive relationship allied with the 'bad' self that cannot be adequately 'thought about' or represented.

More generally, it follows that, given that this part of the psyche is not perceived as consciously being part of the self, it would comprise less representational capacity than other areas. This implies that the vulnerability to act violently is not only precipitated by the sensitivity and exposure of split-off bad objects when narcissistic defenses break down; it also has its roots in a poor representational capacity. But how should we formulate the origins of violence when considering the representational capacity of these offenders?

It could be that aggressiveness serves as a means of defending the psychological self as Fonagy *et al* (1991) have it (cf. Section 5.2). On the other hand, the key aggressive dynamic could be the opposite, where it serves to attack the representational self and the ability to think (Bion, 1970; Fonagy *et al*, 1993; Segal, 1987). In terms of the latter, one wonders to what extent the narcissistic defensive structure, found in these offenders, works in this way to prevent the creation of new thoughts and the elaboration of the internal world. Put differently, is the poor representational capacity here a consequence of defensiveness or the result of a deficit in the personality? This is a very difficult question to answer without being able to engage offenders in a more sustained and intricate process of investigation such as psychotherapy or analysis. These individuals show few signs that would otherwise indicate serious deficits in ego functioning. I am referring here to signs of psychosis, chronic

instability, or emotional lability. However, the kind of stability experienced as a consequence of their defensive system, makes it difficult to assess the source of these representational failures with any further clarity.

11.1.3 Interaction with the External Situation

In most cases offenders were immersed in problematic situations that undoubtedly impacted on their internal world rendering them more vulnerable, fragile and consequently, more defensive. Ralph [case 1], for example, was trying to deal with the daunting news that his brother had just been killed whilst Grant [case 3] had been subjected to considerable physical abuse from his wife. But to what extent do factors such as these drive an individual to murder? Would anyone under these kinds of stressors commit murder? These factors would have certainly contributed to these individuals' vulnerability, but they cannot explain why particular intrapsychic pathways or processes occur in one individual and not another.

There are, in a number of the cases, specific features of the interaction prior to the murder that appear to further contribute to their actions. It has already been argued that particular dissociative processes in the psyche predispose these offenders to rage offences (cf. Section 2.1) But there is another way of understanding statements often made by offenders, such as "The anger did not feel like a part of me", as Grant put it. Such statements might easily be understood as being part of their experience of dissociation consistent with the split in the personality. From an interactional perspective, however, 'not being a part of me' may have a more literal interpretation. Possibly the murderousness or unmanageable experience is not felt to be a part of them because it belongs to their victim, but is forced into them via projective identification. In other words, the offender becomes an unwilling recipient of the victim's projections. Hyatt-Williams (1998) describes a similar interaction whereby both parties juggle an indigestible projection. An escalating conflict situation ensues that can no longer be tolerated by the offender who then, after re-projecting the intolerable experience, attacks it in the victim. This scenario can best be observed in those cases where the victims themselves are reported to have been violent. In Grant's case [case 3], for example, the final violent provocation is felt to be an intrusive projection from his wife, forcing an identification with the projected

aggressive state. It cannot be contained and is returned with even greater aggression. Likewise, one might infer that Andrew [case 5] experiences his partner's aggressive threats as indigestible and therefore dangerous. His only defense is to return the intrusive projections.

Viewed from this perspective taken to its extreme, the victims themselves play a crucial role in their own murder. They become the original perpetrators of violent action whilst the offenders become the vulnerable recipients who can no longer contain what is projected into them. In essence it is the offender who is the victim here. This should not be taken to mean that the offender is exonerated from responsibility for the crime in any way, as some of the offenders [cases 4, 6, 8 & 9] themselves have claimed. The offenders' intrapsychic make-up, as discussed earlier, still holds the key to why such an interaction ends in murder. It is also unlikely that the interactional sequence is ever as clear as outlined above. In an escalating violent situation the boundaries between self and other become far less distinguishable along with the constructs of victim and offender, projector and recipient. In other words, the 'borderline situation', where there is a lack of differentiation between self and object, at this point, is constituted *between* the individuals in the interaction. Internal factors alone cannot account for this process.

On reviewing the importance of the external situation as an intrapsychic dimension of violence, it was pointed out that the crime scene, and the events leading up to the crime, allow another point of access into understanding the internal world of the violent offender (see Section 5.7). A number of these factors have already been mentioned such as provocation, absence of a plan, and the 'overkill' nature of the murder. Indicators like these tell us about the explosive mental state of the offender at the time of the murder. Moving away from the crime scene itself, the nature of the relationship between victim and murderer also reflects certain aspects of the offender's psychological make-up. In most of the cases analyzed here the offender's associations point to some dependence on the victim, usually for narcissistic reflection, as indicated earlier. If this is the case, one wonders how much of the conscious sense of entrapment felt by some of the offenders is not also the reflection of an unconscious need for the object, no matter how problematic it is in reality. The general inability to play an assertive, constructive role in the interaction may also

reflect a passivity that serves to avoid any confrontation of the defensive splitting that has occurred in the personality. Precisely what this means in terms of the nature and quality of the object world is to be further explored next.

11.1.4 The Nature and Quality of the Object World

We have already discussed the poor representational capacity of these offenders. There are, however, a number of other factors of significance here. With no history of violence prior to the murder, the 'target selection' (Meloy, 1988) of these offenders appears to be very narrow and finite. This implies that it is unlikely that these offenders would commit murder again.

Although we can infer from previous findings that internalized objects are poorly represented in the psyche, the offenders still display considerable discriminatory capacity in selecting particular objects as targets of violence. Ralph [case 1], for instance, did not attack just anyone during his catathymic turmoil, despite his deteriorating state. He killed his ex-girlfriend because she represented something very specific to him. In broad terms, she became the initial threatening object that breached his narcissistic defenses forcing him to confront the 'deadly force', to use his words, that lay within him. The act of rage as it is experienced here is far from being 'objectless' in nature. Even at moments when explosive affect is in ascendance, the offender's rage is clearly directed by internal object relations.

This in itself, however, is not an adequate explanation for the actions leading to murder. These individuals would surely have felt under threat in other situations that did not lead to murderous rage? Nevertheless, as is being argued here, a number of dimensions ultimately contribute to the act. But the nature of most of the relationships observed between murderer and victim may further help understand the impact this particular object has on the offender. There are two factors to be considered here. Firstly, the internal threat is sustained and experienced over a long period of time, the full repercussions of which are continually denied. Secondly, most of the relationships are close and intimate in nature. As the interview narratives reveal, the closeness of this relationship also means that the victim becomes the ultimate ally in supporting and in fact becoming the main object embroiled in the

offender's defensive system. At this level, it is felt to be the ultimate act of betrayal when 'bad' aspects of this object are experienced as being forced into the offender whilst he is defenseless.

What can we discern from this regarding a general capacity for object relating? Most of these individuals were relatively successful and lived relatively normal lives, suggesting that some nourishing engagement with external objects must have taken place. The interview and TAT findings suggest, however, that these object relations have a narcissistic core. These individuals lack the capacity to relate to an object's interior and are only able to see the object as a reflection of self. Relating is thus flat, unemotional, and removed. In this way, objects are somewhat dehumanized and devoid of realistic qualities. The way most of the offenders spoke about their most 'intimate' relationships illustrates this where objects are seldom discussed as having thoughts and feelings. Ben's [case 4] constant referral to his lovers as 'these females' best typifies how these objects are represented in the psyche as distant and lacking in personal qualities. Objects are also often portrayed in a idealistic way, another means of maintaining distance from the realistic qualities and demands, good and bad, of the object.

It has been suggested earlier that 'imitation' (Gaddini, 1992), as a primitive form of identification, may help us further understand the nature of object relations that make up the defensive system. Essentially imitation refers to a primitive identification process whereby behaviours are appropriated through imitation of the object. The objects, however, are not internalized and thus depend on the constant presence of the external object. The over-compliance observed in most of these cases seems to have its source in a constant imitation of what is perceived to be 'good', as opposed to a process where an individual draws upon his own internal resources to inform his own behaviour. The idea that imitation occurs at this level is also supported by there being few signs, in the material, of an adequately internalized sense of 'goodness'.

11.1.4.1 The Primary Maternal Object

References to maternal objects vary in nature across cases. In a majority of the cases, however, maternal objects are represented in an idealized way, associated with a theme of over-protection and dependence. As discussed earlier, this has been noted

by a number of authors. One of the cornerstones of Meloy's (1992) argument, for instance, is that pathological attachments with the primary object emerge again in the build-up to the murder. Weiss *et al* (1960), on the other hand, focused on the entrapping qualities that surround the maternal object. Here, dependence on the all-good loving mother leads to the repression of inevitable hostility that arises as a consequence of over-protectiveness.

Importantly, in the present analysis, references to the maternal object are consistently linked to the emergence of what I have called the 'narcissistic exoskeleton'. A mutual over-protective and idealizing form of relating between offender and maternal object, so characteristic of the defensive system observed here, appears to explain partly how the 'narcissistic exoskeleton' is established. This is especially so in the cases of Ralph, Grant, Andrew, Wayne and Praveen [cases 1,3,5,8 & 9] where concern for the primary object is first and foremost aimed at ensuring that affirmation and idealization are reflected back from the object in order to uphold the 'good' self.

It is possible that Brenman Pick's (1995) observations regarding excessive concern may be relevant here. She discusses a group of patients who display a spurious kind of concern that predates the genuine concern that belongs to the depressive position. In her analysis of two patients she finds that the pivotal dynamic that lies behind the apparent concern involves the manic 'take over' of the maternal function. In her words: "...there is an early 'take over' of the breast, in which the infant 'becomes' the breast and shows behaviour which is in part a fake of a very concerned mother" (p. 257). The manoeuvre is primarily an attempt to overcompensate for deprivation experienced and to avoid negotiating the painful demands of separateness. Ralph and Grant's [cases 1 & 3] often-overstated statements of caring, being concerned, and wanting to constantly 'do for others', appear to closely resemble Brenman Pick's descriptions.

Viewing the idealized maternal object as being embroiled in the creation of the defensive system certainly appears to resonate with Shengold's (1991) main contention about rage reactions and murder. Overstimulation, according to him, creates an idealized system of object relations that are believed to resemble the true self. When this collapses it is not only experienced as an annihilation of the self, but

also brings with it the sense of being betrayed or deceived by the original maternal object. The case of Praveen [case 9] provides an interesting example of this where the fear of his idealizing objects abandoning or deceiving him evokes a paralyzing sense of shame in him. He also expresses a fear of 'losing his mind' which I think is paralleled by a phantasy of 'losing himself' if his narcissistic defenses collapse.

As discussed earlier, attachment formations with the primary object have implications for understanding violent behaviour (Bolby, 1936; Zulueta, 1993). From an Object Relations perspective, however, it is not the attachment *per se* that explains the offender's murderous actions. It is the implications the attachment has for the object world that counts. Attachment and separation are found to be particularly difficult in many of the cases analyzed [cases 1,2,3,5,6, & 8]. This is principally because the primary object has become the repository of part of the offender's 'good' self, a crucial aspect of their defensive organization. Separation from this object thus not only feels like a loss of the self in a very concrete way; it further means a loss of an essential means of defending the self.

11.1.4.2 The Paternal or Third Object

The absence of a constant, supportive paternal object was a remarkably consistent finding across all cases. The paternal object is poorly developed and is felt to be inaccessible or rejecting. The implications of this have already been outlined in some detail regarding how this affects the individual's self-reflective and symbolic capacities (see Section 5.1.3). Without a third object there is no point of reference outside symbiotic object relations, adding to a sense of entrapment that may already have been felt to come from the maternal object. This is certainly evident across many of the cases reported here. Despite an escalating conflictual situation, offenders felt a third object to be inaccessible and thus did not seek help or intervention. In the few cases where help was sought, such as in Grant's case [case 3], it did not modify the situation, perhaps because it remained idealized, not assisting him in any real way.

The role of the absence of a significant third object is also supported, to some extent, by a consideration of the motives for the murders. If the internal drama being played out here included a third object, we would expect the motives for the murders,

explored in the interview narratives, to be overshadowed by themes of revenge, jealousy, and sexual conflict. This, however, is not the case. In three of the incidents [cases 1, 2 & 8], particularly the case of Wayne, a third party is involved, suggesting that revenge or jealousy may well be a motive. However, there is no evidence of this in the interview analysis or the TAT.

In some cases there are signs of conflict between son and father, self and paternal object, but aggression is constantly denied or cannot be expressed. In Andrew's case [case 5], anger towards his father can only be acknowledged after the murder, in turn enabling him to mourn what was previously split off. Prior to this, all elements associated with aggression, good or bad, are internalized as part of a defensive manoeuvre, still remaining dissociated in the psyche. Similarly, Frank [case 6] attempts to access his own aggression towards his father, but fails in his rather 'pathetic' attempts. Following this, he resorts to his usual coping style of re-internalizing it defensively. In Frank's case, it is then turned against the self, something not typically found in the other cases.

Identifications with male figures are somewhat precarious across cases, adding to a more vulnerable position regarding challenges to their masculinity. We shall discuss this further in considering the role of sexuality. In terms of precarious identifications *per se*, Perelberg (1995a; 1999b) has noted, in her detailed analysis of violent patients, how rapid oscillations between male and female identifications contribute towards violence. Here, female identifications are experienced as extremely threatening, initiating violent outbursts. This is not directly apparent in this study. However, given the nature of the primary object relationship discussed above and the absence of the paternal object, it is probable that entrapping female identifications are present in many of these cases.

11.1.4.3 The Superego

The quality of the superego evident in most cases does not appear to be excessively aggressive or destructive. This, however, is difficult to assess given the submissive and appeasing nature of the ego or representations of self. The split between

'internal' and 'external'⁸ objects, consistent with the defensive organization, gives the superego a 'two-faced quality'. Towards external objects it is allied with the compliant ego, moulding itself to gain complementarity with the object to ensure that no confrontation or conflict occurs.

On the other hand, when the superego is turned inward, whilst still aligned with the defensive system, it attacks damaged internalized objects that are associated with 'badness'. The 'two-faced' nature of the superego appears to account for the overly righteous and moralistic attitude evident in some of the cases, further contributing to rigidity in the defensive system [notably cases 1,2,8 & 9]. Their righteous attitude would read as follows if it could be stated outright: 'I will not only keep the external world free from destruction, damage and badness. I will take it all into myself and destroy it'. As mentioned earlier, damaged internalized objects are obscured by a strong association with bad intolerable objects. They therefore receive little attention from the offender's internal resources that might otherwise be capable of containing or supporting this part of the self. In most of the cases this attitude is epitomized by disdain for recognizing one's own suffering. Furthermore, the conflation of 'damage' and 'badness' possibly also serves to vindicate the offender from overwhelming feelings of guilt related to the destruction of damaged objects. For this reason it seems unlikely that attacks are motivated by a persecutory sense of guilt found by Anderson (1997) to be an important factor in attacks on damaged objects. Here, attacking an already damaged object serves to annihilate any traces of 'persecutory' guilt related to the original damage done. Possibly, this dynamic holds some meaning with regard to the 'second attack' in a number of the cases explored here where the damage already done in the first instance is obliterated, in phantasy, in the second attack [cases 3, 6 & 9]. There was relatively little interview material available to fully confirm that this was the mechanism of action. Feelings of guilt, however, were more readily associated with the 'second attack' in the above three cases.

Glasser's (1978) division of the superego into proscriptive and prescriptive aspects provides a useful means of thinking about the 'two-faced' nature of the superego in these offenders. Briefly, the *proscribed superego* is concerned with moral restrictions

⁸ The word 'external' is used here to refer to how the intrapsychic objects are organized in the individual's phantasies and does not refer to the actual external object.

and prohibitions. The *prescribed superego*, on the other hand, functions to set goals and ideals as well as ways of attaining them. Referring to the offenders, the proscribed superego has a harsh restrictive quality that is largely turned in on the self. The prescriptive superego, on the other hand, 'abandons' internal objects and bases all goals and affirmations on interactions with external objects. As Glasser points out, when this fails the individual is exposed to feelings of shame and worthlessness. Most important here, however, is the split that occurs between internal/external and the proscribed/prescribed superego. Contradictory attitudes, particularly towards situations that depict 'damage', in the TAT and interviews support this idea.

11.1.5 Brutalization of the Self: Trauma and Loss

To what extent does trauma play a role in the actions of these offenders and how is it managed intrapsychically? In five cases differing degrees of trauma are evident in childhood, whilst in two other cases contemporary trauma contributes to the incident. In the latter two cases, the trauma has a direct impact on the offenders' immediate ego functioning. The role of trauma in the other cases is more difficult to understand. In all of the cases the trauma was ongoing and in this sense could be considered to have had a cumulative effect. The area of trauma, as assessed in the interviews, is relatively inaccessible and cannot easily be articulated. It is probable that this reflects how indigestible the traumatic experience is felt to be. As Hyatt-Williams (1998) points out, traumatic experience often exists in the psyche in an unmetabolized form as it is too difficult to tolerate the psychic pain involved in its assimilation.

It is further evident that the part of the self exposed to the trauma becomes strongly associated with the split-off bad object system referred to earlier. In Ben's case [case 4], it is clearly evident that trauma, above all other factors, is responsible for the formation of the defensive organization. The sexual abuse he sustains leads to the construction of a narcissistic exoskeleton that is based solely on gratification of the object or self. Hints of a continual re-enactment of the trauma are evident here. It is idealized and sexualized within the context of this narcissistic structure whilst the real damage is split off. The real impact, as hypothesized earlier, is felt only when Ben can no longer sustain the split, turning his good object into an 'evil' bad object, revealing the true impact of the trauma.

Although identification with the aggressor (Freud, 1937) is perhaps one of the key defensive means of dealing with indigestible traumatic experience, this does not appear to be the case with this group of offenders. There are few indications in the case material that reveal a stable identification with a traumatizing object. This is understandable given the nature of the defensive system and the internal control it exercises over aggressive objects. The rage attack itself might be understood as a sudden identification with the aggressor in cases where trauma clearly took place [case 2,4 & 6]. But even in these cases, the attack does not appear to be perpetrated *via* an established or cohesive identification with the aggressor. The dynamic motivation for the attack is more about the elimination of traumatic or shameful experience and the restoration of an all-good object system.

The trauma of the murder itself is worth considering briefly because it appears to have been dealt with in a similar way to past trauma. In most cases the offender's murderousness is still experienced in a dissociated manner [cases 2,3,5,6,7,8 & 9]. That is, it is still not felt to be a part of the self and thus cannot be mourned. The ability to truly mourn the destruction of the object requires a re-negotiation of the central split in the personality. Only in two cases [cases 5 & 4] are there signs of this occurring. Here, a negotiation of the depressive position is evident, leading to the toleration of psychic pain and consequent mourning of the lost object. In most cases, however, depressive experience cannot be tolerated, a finding consistent with Hyatt-Williams' (1998) and Gallwey's (1985) work (see Section 6.2). The effect is that no *real* loss is experienced. Psychic change in the depressive position always involves some form of loss and mourning at an intrapsychic level to facilitate the transformation process. The fact that there is little evidence of this in most of these offenders appears to reflect the rigid and immobile nature of the object constellation that dominates psychological processes. As outlined earlier, the narcissistic manner in which offenders relate may also give the impression that trauma, bad experience, and the like, are being processed and mourned. There are few indications, however, that this is really engaged with. It has been referred to earlier as a kind of pseudo or 'as if' digestive capacity.

Consistent with research discussed earlier, childhood or early trauma is not evident in all these cases and cannot, in itself, account for the perpetration of violence. This

appears to be particularly the case here, where the usual defense, identification with the aggressor, used to perpetuate the cycle of violence, is largely absent. It appears that the defensive system, whether trauma has occurred or not, is the key to understanding these cases in terms of how intolerable experience is managed.

11.1.6 The Role of Phantasy/Fantasy

How we understand the fantasy/phantasy world of the offender has important implications for what we think goes on in the offender's mind prior to the murder. In what way does the propensity to murder exist in his conscious or unconscious mind prior to the incident?

It was pointed out earlier that self-preservative violence has often been associated with phantasies related to an engulfing maternal object (Bergaret, 1984; Biven, 1977; Glasser, 1998; Kernberg, 1984; Perelberg, 1995b; Shengold, 1989; Sohn, 1995). Here, phantasies involving the maternal object revolve around a dilemma between fusion and separateness. Either way, the self is felt to be under threat of annihilation. This kind of dilemma is most evident in Frank's case [case 6] where he is overly dependent on his mother and wife whilst at same time, he feels ignored and annihilated by them. Although this dilemma appears significant with specific reference to the build-up to violence, to which we will return shortly, it is not the most significant phantasy to emerge out of the analysis.

The most prominent phantasy reconstructed out of the case material relates to the constant replenishment of good in the external/maternal object ultimately to ensure the survival of the self and to prevent the object from 'seeing' any bad in the self. This is also accompanied by a strong misguided belief that the 'bad' internal world has no impact on his interaction with external objects. A corollary of this relates to the unconscious belief that if 'badness' is taken into the self or internalized, it will disappear and can be forgotten. As illustrated earlier [cases 1,2,3,4,5, 8 & 9], conflict or bad experience is not internalized for the purposes of assimilation and integration. It is more readily associated with a phantasy of removing bad experience from the external world in the hope that it would disappear.

The core phantasy, understood in terms of primary object relations, suggests a more mature structure than phantasies related to annihilation and an engulfing object, discussed above. The infant is less passive and maintains some control over the symbiotic relationship with the maternal object. Aggression and 'bad' part objects or sensations are split off and locked inside the infant away from the maternal object. In a particular way, Biven's (1977) observation of the individual "borrowing as it were, the strength and cohesiveness from a more powerful object" (p. 351), resonates with the present findings. The cohesiveness of the object, in phantasy, is relied on here to further confirm the existence of a good external world, in turn, confirming that it is different and separate from the internal bad world.

Importantly, there is little evidence that these individuals are plagued by a violent and destructive phantasy world, which is typical in most violent individuals (Biven, 1997, 1977; Meloy, 1992; Satten *et al*, 1960). If this were the case, one would expect to encounter many more references in the interview analysis to destructive interchanges between persons and internal objects. There are, however, signs of destructiveness in some of the cases that suggest a particular kind of phantasy structure. This is most evident in Praveen's case [case 9] where his identifications with a superior grandiose object enable him to attack internal objects associated with emotional pain and a consequent unbearable sense of shame. The phantasy here thus appears to be related to the destruction of a vulnerable 'feeling' part of the self that is closely associated with the bad object system.

Turning to conscious fantasy, very few offenders experienced aggressive or murderous fantasies directly related to the murder. A far more prominent fantasy prior to the murder relates to a fear of being attacked. Here, the unmasking of the bad object world, seen mirrored in external objects, is experienced as sudden, uncontrollable, and therefore extremely threatening. Why should it be that these offenders did not generally experience conscious fantasies of murder? Indeed, a number of offenders in the interviews wish that they had entertained such fantasies and had a history of aggression [cases 1, 2, 3, 5 & 6]. They believe that if this were the case, they would have been able to prevent the attack. The absence of conscious fantasies of aggression appears to be best explained by the nature of the defensive

system where potential aggressiveness is kept away from external reality and consciousness.

In sum then, unlike Satten *et al*'s (1960) findings that these rage offenders usually have a primitive and violent phantasy life, little evidence of this could be observed in the cases studied here. No clearly formulated and focused fantasies/phantasies of attack were observed to be present in these individuals. An important implication of this is that the intention to kill, as present in fantasy content, was not a key factor in influencing the course of events in these murders. This differs greatly from most murderer profiles where fantasy is usually present and is often one of the key determinants of the violent outcome. Some such cases were discussed earlier (cf. Chapter 5).

It is worth noting that the above observations have important implications for considering the issue of criminal responsibility in rage-type murder. How should we determine their criminal responsibility if such offenders do not have conscious fantasies or intentions of killing? It is not my intention, however, to explore this further in the present study. I refer the reader to Goreta (1990) who provides a usual review of factors to be considered in assessing criminal responsibility from a psychoanalytical perspective.

We posed a question earlier about whether there are any signs showing the difference between fantasies that are acted out and those that are not. This still remains difficult to answer given that in one case only was there evidence of the act being accompanied by conscious fantasies of instigating violence. It appears, however, that other dimensions, particularly the individual's defensive pattern, representational capacity and external situation, will greatly influence the outcome. In Grant's case [case 3], where fantasies were experienced, the long history of strife and abuse that he endured appears to be a key factor in forcing him to enact his fantasy.

11.1.7 Sexuality

Acts of violence observed here are not motivated by any direct primitive sexual need such as is found in sado-masochistic violence or perversions. To be sure, there is one case, *case four*, where sexual themes dominate. They have been understood, in the earlier formulation, to represent a primitive source of gratification partly emerging as the re-enactment of a seductive and abusive relationship. The sexualization of his object relations, however, does not directly motivate aggression (cf. Section 5.4). Rather, the object constellation acts as a vehicle through which narcissistic reflection can occur as a defensive strategy. In other words, sexual needs serve the same function as the excessive and extravagant gift buying that occurs between victim and offender. The sexualization of the object relations in this case is an exception to what is generally observed here and occurs as a result of Ben's specific psychodynamics.

There are two main themes related to sexuality that emerge across cases. The first simply addresses the fact that sexuality and related subjects are not prominent themes in the narratives. If one accepts the structure of the defensive organization proposed here, it is most likely that sexual and sensual excitation are experienced as chaotic and disruptive. Pleasurable sexual or sensual excitation requires that the offender relinquish aspects of his over-controlling defensive system. Given its importance however, it is likely that he would have great difficulty doing so. This seems to be the case unless it is incorporated into the defensive system itself where it becomes a means of perpetuating a narcissistic ideal as in Ben's case.

The second theme draws on much of what has already been discussed in considering the nature of Oedipal experience evident here. We have already established that the quality of object relations is somewhat primitive, impacting on the precarious nature of male identifications. Nevertheless, this does not mean that Oedipal experience does not exist in some form in these individuals. This has been discussed earlier with reference to the problematic distinction between Oedipal and 'pre-Oedipal' experience (see Section 5.4).

There are a number of references to an inadequate sense of masculinity found in the analysis of the present cases. Most emerge from a sense of isolation from a paternal figure, leaving them more dependent on maternal objects. This precarious sense of

masculinity thus develops in relation to the maternal object and the absence of the father, rather than in conflict and rivalry with the father. As a result, Oedipal experience is stunted. Masculinity is associated more with attempting to be separate from the maternal object than it is a symbol of virility and rivalry. For this reason the core dynamic behind the rage reaction is not clearly associated with being exposed as sexually inadequate as Bromberg (1961) has it (cf. Section 6.1). His earlier formulation, however, where the main vulnerability appears to be far more primitive, appears closer to what is observed in the present cases (Bromberg, 1951). In this formulation the attack emerges out of a perceived annihilation of the self where oral aggression dominates. This does not mean that rivalrous challenges or sexual jealousy would not impact these individuals. Rather, such encounters would be experienced as persecutory and not at a level typical of Oedipal experience. The countertransference-transference impressions reported in the cases of Andrew, Wayne and Praveen [cases 5,8 & 9] may be understood in a similar way. All spend a lot of time in the interview overstating their achievements and successes, sometimes with direct reference to me. These may be understood as statements of masculine rivalry. But in the context of their defensive organizations, they refer more to primitive attempts at establishing a narcissistic transference where precarious masculine identifications can be mirrored and affirmed.

11.2 THE ACT REVISITED

Thus far we have explored the intrapsychic processes that most readily characterize the rage-type offender and his interactions. We return now to the act itself. Taking the accounts of what transpired at the crime scene along with the dimensions discussed, how should we understand the dynamics of the act?

The surge of rage that accompanies the murder might readily be understood as a violent cathartic release. The idea of catharsis leaves one with an image of a repressed murderous part of the personality waiting to erupt once the ego is forced into a fragile position. The term 'latent murderousness' is perhaps in danger of conjuring up this image. It has been used here, however, to focus on the idea that

aggression, psychopathy, or other signs usually associated with murder are not apparent in rage-type murder.

Focusing solely on the build-up of affect, so significant in rage murder, runs the risk of obscuring the complexity of the interactional process that occurs during the murder. It also creates a false distinction between affective processes and underlying object relations. Following Kernberg (1984), I have previously argued that affect is always a product of the emotional valences carried between particular object relations. With this in mind, the sequence of events, considering both internal and external factors, is outlined below.

11.2.1 Weakening of the Narcissistic Exoskeleton

The murderous event begins long before the actual attack when conflict between victim and offender begins to escalate. In most cases explored conflict most commonly emerges in response to themes of separation or antagonism linked to the external object. From this point on the victim begins to threaten the offender's defensive system. Due to the nature of the defensive system itself, however, much of the impact of the conflict is denied. Nevertheless, because the offender's identity is almost solely based on the defensive system he begins to feel increasingly threatened.

With the defensive system weakened, the offender is forced to face an internal crisis where the existence of neglected unarticulated parts of the self can no longer be split off with effective rigidity. From our previous analysis it should be noted that this part of the self largely lacks any representational capacity in the psyche. In other words, it exists as a system of β -elements unelaborated by thought, leaving the offender with no means of articulating his distress. It is possible at this point that boundaries between self and other, internal and external, begin to diminish. This is more typical of chronic catathymia and can be observed in *cases one* and *six*.

11.2.2 The Final Provocation and the Collapse of the Defensive System

Given the poor representational capacity of the psyche the final provocation is experienced as a devastating attack on the self. It cannot be subject to thought and consequently overwhelms the offender and his defensive system. The collapse of the

defenses magnifies the intrusive experience to a point where it becomes life-threatening.

Some of the trigger events are 'objectively' extremely stressful. Someone known to be aggressive, for instance, aggressively threatens Andrew [case 5], and Frank [case 2] is physically abused. But why are these experienced as life-threatening? There appear to be two reasons. Firstly, at an intrapsychic level the victim-to-be is a key object in the offender's defensive system. The defensive system cannot function without the victim's compliance in confirming or mirroring the existence of the 'ideal' self. The provocation by the victim-to-be thus triggers in the offender a sudden loss of self-identity.

Secondly, with the collapse of the defensive system, all that had been defensively internalized, split off and 'forgotten' is suddenly thrust to the foreground of the personality. It is probable that, at this moment, the ideal self is felt to have been annihilated and replaced by 'bad' internalized objects. In sum, the sudden loss of this part of this self and its replacement with unmanageable experience appears to explain why these threats are felt as being so 'deadly'. This process can clearly be observed re-enacted in Ben's dream [case 4]. He is engaged in sexual contact with his 'ideal' lover, but once she stops telling him how good he is - the lapse in the defensive system - she turns into an 'evil devil thing' - a symbol of the dangerous bad object system.

The thrust at which the 'bad' object system is felt to contaminate the self is of great importance here. The speed at which it happens certainly lessens the chances of any psychic digestion occurring (Hyatt-Williams, 1998). More importantly however, the bad object system is synonymous with the suspension of the PS <-> D process of psychic digestion (Bion, 1962b), referred to earlier. Therefore it comprises mainly destructive paranoid experience. The collapse in the defensive system releases a surge of persecutory anxiety that makes psychic digestion nearly impossible, as most objects are perceived as extremely threatening. Further, it is probable that any attempts at containment, at this stage, would be experienced as dangerously entrapping rather than comforting. The incubation period of this highly dissociated state varies across the cases explored here depending on the specifics of the situation.

As mentioned earlier, the extent to which this experience is contained or delayed greatly depends on the type of interaction that occurs between victim and offender. The extent to which the murderous exchange is a consequence of the victim's violent projective identifications and the offender's personality would also depend on each particular situation (cf. Section 5.7).

11.2.3 Intrusive Identification with the Bad Object

In a number of cases identification with the bad object occurs at this point, and is experienced as being forced into the offender by the victim. With the 'ideal' self destroyed and with no experience of good supportive objects accessible to him at that moment, he has no option but to identify with the 'bad' object system. For instance, Simon [case 6] takes his wife literally and identifies with her impulsive statements about 'wishing that he were dead' leading to him taking an overdose. Andrew [case 5], in a split-second, is forced to identify with his ex-partner's aggressive statement that, in turn, resonates with his own split-off bad objects. In one further example, Ralph [case 1] clearly remembers seeing images of himself in a coffin next to his brother just before his outburst. Here again, he is forced to identify with the persecuted object. Swamped by persecutory experience it is also likely at this point that the offender is overwhelmed by indigestible fantasies of death in the way that Hyatt-Williams (1998) has suggested.

There is, however, another element to this momentary lapse that appears to add to the escalation of the explosive situation. There are indications that the identification, in turn, evokes an unbearable sense of shame and humiliation in the offender. As isolated in the analysis, shame is directly associated with the internalized bad object system in most of the cases [cases 1,2,3,4,5,6,8 & 9]. I use it here to characterize a state of 'defenseless exposure' evident just after the moment of provocation when the defensive system is breached. Shame, in part, appears associated with exposure to indigestible aspects of the self that have resulted from trauma. Frank, Grant, Ben and Andrew [cases 2,3,4 & 5] all associate feelings of shame with trauma. However, even when the interview did not uncover any particular trauma, there are clear references to being vulnerable to shameful exposure in the interviews [cases 8 & 9].

It appears that the forced identification with the bad object system magnifies this residual sense of shame to an unbearable extreme, forcing the individual into violence. Shengold's (1991) description of the rage reaction as being evoked by a shameful loss of what the self represents appears fitting here. In his terms, it is felt to be a sudden collapse of 'everything' and the daunting exposure of the self as 'nothing', the ultimate narcissistic injury. He links this to the sudden loss of narcissistic forms of relating, what I have called the narcissistic exoskeleton here and what Ruoloto (1968) terms the 'pride system'. The nature of the explosive rage that occurs in response to the collapse of defenses appears consistent with the literature reviewed earlier (chapter 4) where rage is seen as a primitive defensive response to 'excessive unpleasure' (Parens, 1993). The "deathly" nature of shameful emotions that initiate the rage, and their links to fantasies of annihilation (Schafer, 1997), also appear to be present in the narratives related to the 'death of the self' in some of the cases [cases 1,5 & 6].

11.2.4 Evacuation *via* Projective Identification and Annihilation of the Bad Object in the Victim

The intolerable life-threatening nature of this internal state leaves the offender little option but to project it outwards. The projective identifications used here, however, are not dispersive; they are aimed specifically at where the distress was perceived to have come. In this sense, these acts of rage-type murder differ from psychotic acts of violence (Blackburn, 1993; Sohn, 1995)

In the final devastating move in this sequence, the 'bad' object is destroyed in the victim in a frenzy proportionate to the devastation that the offender has felt internally. In the way the act is being formulated here, this eruption is more than simply a cathartic release. The rage is perpetuated by a desperate need to annihilate the bad object and the psychic pain it causes. This is in keeping with Meloy's (1992) and Hyatt-Williams' (1998) observations.

11.2.5 Re-establishment of the Defensive System

After the murder, the offenders are typically traumatized by their own actions and ultimately by the overwhelming nature of previously dissociated experience. In most cases an impulsive reaction follows where there is an attempt to cover up the killing

or to flee the scene. It is probable that, whilst the offender is still in a dissociated state, these actions resemble a last-ditch attempt at reinstating the defensive system and defensively internalizing, or 'covering up', the damaged object. Andrew's case [case 5] illustrates this well, where he buries the body in a field associated with his childhood, a representation of his previously abandoned bad objects. Of course, this process has little effect on the reality of the situation. When the offender emerges from his dissociated state he is left to face the daunting realization that his distressed psychic state has been irreversibly imprinted on his real external objects.

In some of the cases there are signs that the 'cover-up' may also emanate from a continued identification with the bad object system where the individual acts with criminal intention. Most notably, the case of Wayne [case 8] illustrates this when he describes himself as needing to "think like a criminal" in order to get rid of the body. It is difficult, however, to make any clearer distinction between these two intrapsychic motivations and perhaps this is a reflection of the fragmented and chaotic state of the internal world at this point in time.

CHAPTER TWELVE

CONCLUSIONS & IMPLICATIONS

12.1 THE RAGE-TYPE CONSTELLATION

A number of questions have been raised throughout this explorative study regarding the psychology of rage-type murder, not all of which could be adequately answered here. The lack of motive and the sudden explosive nature of the offence make it especially difficult to understand. This is particularly so when one considers that such offenders have no significant history of violence and are often described as being 'normal', with few overt signs of psychopathology. The parameters of the act, reviewed in chapter two, were consistently found to be present in the cases explored in this study. Some signs of psychopathology were evident in three of the cases. The symptoms reported were consistent with the diagnostic categories of Depression, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and Borderline Personality Disorder; categories that were reviewed earlier as being the most likely diagnoses present in rage-type murderers. More importantly, however, it has been argued that the diagnostic approach is inadequate for the purpose of understanding the complexities and dynamics of rage-type murder. The central aim of the dissertation has been to explore the intrapsychic make-up of the rage-type offender to further contextualize the nature and meaning of the aberrant act.

Two observations have been consistently reported in this area of research: Firstly, offenders are reported to have a borderline personality organization. Secondly, the act is ultimately described as being defensive in nature. In terms of the former observation, there appear to be two types of borderline personality organization reported. The first is characterized by instability, impulsivity and ego fragility. The

second has a far more stable and over-controlling presentation, held by a firm outer structure. The research undertaken here has highlighted the latter as being most prominent in the rage offenders interviewed for this study, a finding that is consistent with the apparent 'normality' of such individuals.

The broad use of the term 'borderline personality' in the literature often makes it difficult to understand how the borderline pattern is implicated in different forms of violence. Frequently the borderline personality is referred to, either by name or description, with little reference to the numerous different dynamic constellations that may occur in the offender. Findings in the present study suggest that careful distinction between different borderline patterns and their corresponding violent presentations are required to better understand intrapsychic motivations for violence. The dimensional approach that has been employed here to understand multiple intrapsychic factors implicated in different forms of violence constitutes an attempt to move away from this simplistic approach.

In exploring the dimensions of rage-type murder, the defensive organization appears to best elucidate the core dynamics behind the aberrant reaction and its defensive nature. I have isolated two essential features apparent in the cases explored that contribute to the formation of a 'narcissistic exoskeleton' as a rigid defensive structure. Firstly, a split in the personality occurs between good idealized objects and bad objects. More importantly, the split occurs in a particular way whereby the phantasy of the external world as being an all-good reflection of the self is rigidly maintained, forming a defensive shield around the personality. This does not mean, however, that the individuals interviewed here were not exposed to actual bad experience or were not 'motivated' to invite bad experience or conflict. We have discussed a number of ways in which the defensive system manipulates the object world to ensure that the all-good self is maintained despite being confronted with real conflict. The kind of defensive strategies employed here have been shown to share a number of similarities with the way False Self pathology and the 'as if' personality are conceptualized.

The second feature of the defensive organization is characterized by the internalization of bad objects to further preserve the all-good 'external' world. As a

consequence, the 'internal' world, in phantasy, is largely disowned as it becomes the vessel for compacted internalized bad object relations associated with aggression. It is ironic, of course, that what is 'designed' to defend the personality against bad experience - through internalization - is also precisely what leaves these offenders vulnerable to committing rage-type murder. Once the external environment is no longer perceived as supporting the all-good self, provocation forces the offender to identify with the bad object system. It is experienced as intrusive and shameful and is evacuated *via* projection where it is destroyed in the object.

Other prominent dimensions appear to take on a particular form that is consistent with the defensive system. The bad object system, for instance, appears to be more closely associated with the part of the personality that has a poor representational capacity. Paternal and maternal representations have been understood as being allied with specific areas of the defensive system, contributing to its structure. Still further, the way trauma is internalized and associated with the bad object also appears to add to this kind of defensive structure.

Although emphasis has been on how intrapsychic factors create a vulnerability to commit a murderous act, these cannot be considered in isolation from effects external to the individual. Such influences would include immediate stressors, the actions of the victim, and the nature of events that surround the build-up to the offence. I have considered some of these effects by including situational factors as a dimension of violence in acknowledgment of the importance of such factors in understanding rage-type murder.

Similarly, there is little doubt that broader external factors - social, cultural, and environmental - also have a role to play in this kind of offence. For instance, one might argue that a number of the murders discussed in this study may not have taken place if firearms were not so easily available or sought after in South Africa. Perhaps, we could argue, the offenders' rage would have had less tragic consequences if a firearm were not available. A lot more could be said about the interaction between internal and external factors here and indeed it remains an important area of research. It has not been my intention to debate or explore these factors any further here. No matter how impressive such influences are, however, there will always be particular

predisposing intrapsychic factors and consequential psychic states that accompany such acts.

Findings regarding the dynamics of the act itself are largely consistent with the main observations made by Meloy (1992) and Hyatt-Williams (1998), particularly in terms of their understanding of the defensive use of projective identification in the murderous interaction. I hope to have further contextualized this by elaborating on the intrapsychic dimensions that set up this situation. Findings regarding the defensive organization, trauma, representational capacities, the quality of object relations and so forth, suggest specific vulnerabilities to committing such an act. Observations regarding the collapse of the narcissistic exoskeleton; the exposure of the unarticulated bad object system and the unbearable shame related to this; the intrusive identification with the bad-object system; have helped us further understand the intrapsychic mechanisms that underlie the rage that eventually leads to projective identification.

It is important to note that I am not suggesting here that all assaults or murders committed during a bout of rage have the same psychodynamic pattern. Earlier, in *Aggression, Rage and Violence*, I have argued for a clear distinction between different acts of violence and corresponding personality characteristics in order to avoid such an oversimplification. Clearly, more overtly destructive personality types, not fitting the definition of the rage-type murder outlined here, are equally capable of committing rage offences (Revitch & Schlesinger, 1981; Roth, 1990). The psychodynamics and meaning behind such rage acts committed in different contexts - internal and external - would be very different from that of rage-type murder. Some of these differences evident in the literature have been pointed out in *The Intrapsychic Dimensions of Violence*.

It should also be pointed out that one needs to be cautious in inferring any direct causal links between the intrapsychic dimensions of rage-type murder outlined here, and the act itself. Assessment models of dangerousness often fall prey to simplistic assumptions regarding causal links between personality features and violence (Blackburn, 1993; Bottoms, 1982; Cox, 1982; Farrington & Gunn, 1985; Glasser, 1996; Hinton, 1983). This has often led to gross over-predictions of dangerousness

with little consideration being given to the dynamic complexities of the case. The idea of a 'profile' of the violent offender has unfortunately become associated with this kind of one-to-one deterministic reasoning. It is for this reason that I have deliberately avoided referring to the intrapsychic factors explored here as a 'profile' of the rage-type murderer. These dimensions, I would argue, should be viewed more as vulnerability factors that need to be considered in relation to one another. It is how these factors come together, specific to each case, that determines the offender's propensity to act violently.

In some cases, for instance, the indigestible nature of traumatic experience combined with the rigid defensive structure observed here made offenders particularly vulnerable when external factors threatened the status quo. We have also observed how the interaction between the borderline defensive structure and external objects is especially important in understanding why the offender kills. The predisposing defensive structure alone cannot fully explain murderous behaviour. The interaction between offender and victim/external object, and the intrapsychic exchanges between them *via* projective identification, also requires consideration. This was most apparent in the cases where the victims themselves were found to be violent. In discussing the dimensions earlier, I used the term 'borderline situation' to emphasize that the murderous action observed here is more than simply a consequence of the offender's own personality or defensive structure.

12.1.1 A death impulse waiting to happen?

In the cases explored here there was little evidence that rage-type murder is propelled solely by a death impulse that eventually erupts when ego functioning is vulnerable. This is not to say however, referring back to my central argument in chapter four, that other forms of violence do not more readily fit this pattern. The rage constellation, as conceptualized here, is primarily a last-ditch attempt to preserve the self and is not motivated by a preconceived 'wish' or impulse to destroy the object. The attack is better explained as having its origins in the defensive processes in the psyche. As Glasser (1998) points out, the fate of the object is less significant in preservative forms of violence. Emphasis is on survival of the self. Destruction of the object, as tragic as it is in the reality of the situation, is only a secondary consequence.

It has also been argued that catharsis, or the unburdening of aggressive psychic energy, does not adequately account for the complexity of object relations and the particular nature of interaction that precedes the act. The specific object selection, representational capacity and interactional patterns are not given adequate emphasis if one is to conceptualize rage-type murder as simply being the eruption of a death impulse.

To what extent can we conclude that the rage attacks explored here constitute the reenactment of past conflict? Reenactment of conflict is often taken to be a given in understanding violence from a psychoanalytic perspective and certainly is clearly evident in a number of different forms of violence (Biven, 1997; Bollas, 1995; Cordess & Hyatt-Williams, 1996). In *cases two, six and seven* there is some evidence that the murder follows a particular pattern that constitutes a reenactment. However, in a majority of cases this could not be observed, suggesting that the defensive murder is more a manifestation of a breach in usual patterns that are reenacted. I am referring here specifically to defensive patterns that serve, in phantasy, to uphold the ideal good self. In this sense, and in agreement with Ruoloto (1968) (cf. Section 6.1.5), the act constitutes the emergence of a new immediate solution that differs from old forms of reenactment. In other words, the murderous act represents a desperate attempt to move away from the repetition of conflicts that have begun to escalate. This is more typical of what Bromberg (1961) calls a new 'creative' response to what feels to be an impossible entrapping situation (cf. Section 6.1.3).

Can anything be said about qualitative or quantitative differences between violence and murder? Is it simply a matter of extremes where rage-type murder constitutes the ultimate act of violence? This problematic is difficult to assess given that this is not a comparative study. The assumption behind conceptualizing all forms of violence on a continuum, with murder at the extreme, implies that all individuals prone to outbursts of rage would, if pushed to their limit, ultimately kill. If this were the case, one would expect that murderers would have a history of intermittent outbursts of rage. Whilst this may be a correct assumption for some violent individuals, it is not supported in the cases of rage-type murder explored here. This suggests, if only tentatively, that qualitative differences exist between rage-murder and other acts of violent rage that do not end in murder. Therefore it does not follow that individuals

prone to intermittent bouts of rage would be more likely to commit this type of murder. More importantly, findings regarding the intrapsychic dimensions of rage-type murder indicate that rage-type murder is not an inevitable endpoint solely determined by an unconscious wish or repetition. The cases explored here illustrate how the act is dependent on a multitude of factors – internal and external – coming together at a particular point in time. As Hyatt-Williams (1998) points out, many individuals with similar personality characteristics may go through life without committing murder if these factors do not constellate in a way that feels unbearable and ‘life threatening’ to the individual.

12.2 ASSESSMENT, TREATMENT AND PREVENTION

The intrapsychic factors explored here have a number of implications for the clinical assessment of dangerousness. Much has been written about the problems involved in assessing dangerousness and opinions differ on the validity of actuarial and clinical based models of prediction (Blackburn, 1993; Bottoms, 1982; Cox, 1982; Farrington & Gunn, 1985; Glasser, 1996; Hinton, 1983). Most, however, agree that the best ‘predictor’ of potential violence is a previous history of violence. This, of course, would not help us at all when it comes to the rage-type offender who, by definition, has no significant history of violence. The apparent ‘normality’ of these individuals and their ‘as if’ way of dealing with conflict further complicates the assessment of potential violence. These problems would occur in assessing the premorbid personality of individuals who later go on to commit acts of acute or chronic catathymic murder. In terms of the actual build-up to the incident, however, it is worth distinguishing between acute and chronic catathymia.

In chronic catathymia the murderous intention is more easily detected in the incubation phase where signs of dissociation and distress are more overt (cf. Chapter 2). It appears for instance, in Ralph’s case, that catathymic turmoil was overtly apparent to others despite nothing being done about it. These are the typical signs used to claim *diminished responsibility* after the fact. When the action is acute however, there is much less chance of identifying potential offenders. This is where

observations regarding the intrapsychic world of the offender may be particularly useful.

From a psychoanalytic perspective Glasser (1996) has emphasized the importance of interaction between assessor and offender as a further source of information for testing hypotheses related to dangerousness. Cox (1982) suggests that the clinician focus on a number of areas in order to assess potential violence. They are: the nature of the defensive organization, evidence of change in libidinal organizations, the availability of alternative sources of self esteem, and flexibility in altering interpersonal functioning. In addition to the above areas, drawing on some of the conclusions regarding rage-type murder, some specific observations may be useful in assessing an individual's vulnerability to carrying out such an act. Points of vulnerability include:

- a) A defensive organization that is characterized by the disavowal of bad, conflictual experience and the presence of an idealized good object system that is identified with as a means of reaffirming an all-good self. Over-obliging and submissive strategies, in order to avoid implicating the self in the conflict, may often be a part of the organization;
- b) Evidence of an entrapping dyadic situation often experienced by rage offenders where little internal space is allocated to a 'third object';
- c) The presence of an attacking internal object associated with fantasies of being attacked. Although not always the case, this may be reflected and reaffirmed in the external situation in which the individual finds himself;
- d) The presence of precarious male identifications;
- e) Indications of a poor representational capacity. Projective assessments such as the TAT, as used in this study, may be particularly useful in assessing the representational capacity of the object world;
- f) Evidence of trauma, past or present, that has not undergone a process of psychic digestion and instead becomes associated with the bad object system;
- g) Little indication that sexualization plays a prominent role in the individual's object relations. As discussed earlier, I am referring to 'sexualization' here as a defense against mature object relating;

- h) The prominence of a sense shame or shameful experience harboured by the individual that is related to a fear of the bad object system being exposed.

Following Glasser (1996), the use of the initial countertransference response may be an important source of information regarding the above guidelines. It is important, however, to emphasize that given the brevity of most assessment encounters, countertransference impressions need to be corroborated by other sources of information such as projective tests, collateral information, court records and so forth.

It is not my intention here to explore the details of treatment regarding therapeutic technique or management. However, some broad observations related to the findings of this dissertation are worth noting. In the case of chronic catathymia, where an escalation of psychic distress has occurred but has not yet led to violence, some intervention may be possible. However, given the lack of representational or symbolic capacity, particularly in this distressed state, it is unlikely that any psychotherapeutic intervention would have any effect at this point. First-line interventions would rather require the removal of the individual from his present situation that is experienced as entrapping. In other words, the clinician is required to act as the 'third object' in a very concrete way when the symbolic function deteriorates.

Given the structure of the defensive organization, potential rage offenders seldom seek help prior to the event as is evident in the histories of the individuals interviewed here. In the cases when psychotherapy is possible however, before or after the event, emphasis should be placed on facilitating a process psychic digestion (of the bad object system as conceptualized here) and the gradual move towards depressive experience in this area of the personality. Hyatt-Williams (1998) has written at length about the therapeutic problems encountered here. I shall not discuss them further.

12.3 PSYCHOANALYTIC RESEARCH

The present study has involved the use of psychoanalytical clinical observations and concepts in an applied research setting. The psychoanalytic perspective has been used in conjunction with psychological and criminological observations to elaborate a deeper understanding of the intrapsychic processes that underlie rage-type murder. I have argued that in order to do this effectively, appropriate methodology is required to suit the aims of psychoanalytic investigation. The Psychoanalytic Research Interview was developed for this purpose.

It is important to note, however, that the insights gained here are limited when compared to the consolidated observations that emerge as part of the analytic treatment process. In the treatment process there is greater opportunity to observe and verify interactional patterns and intrapsychic processes that emerge over an extended period of time. For instance, although I would argue that the analysis of phantasy in the interview process was accurately assessed in terms of general content, it unavoidably lacked clarity and depth. Further, although the psychoanalytic interview was able to reveal the broad structure and quality of object relations evident in the offenders, the potential for change could not be adequately evaluated within the limits of the interview setting. In this sense, exploration of these particular aspects in the transference proper, within the bounds of a fixed therapeutic setting, could further supplement the observations made here.

At a more general level, the broader context within which the present observations were made also requires acknowledgment. The prison setting and all the implications of a confining, restrictive environment, the oppressive nature of the setting, and the kind of living conditions offenders were exposed to, were all inevitable influences on the interview setting. My own response to interviewing in the prison setting also required considerable adjustment and thought before I was satisfied that such effects would not unduly influence the interview. As discussed earlier, the interview method attempts to minimize such influences on the immediate interview setting. Despite this, however, effects such as these have an inevitable impact and require acknowledgment as an inherent part of the interpretive process that has led to the observations made here.

As an explorative study, observations made here raise many questions for future research. How other types of offenders compare to the rage-type murderer on the intrapsychic dimensions outlined here would be a useful area of study. Without a comparative analysis, little can be said here about the status of the rage-type personality in relation to other offenders, or indeed, non-offenders. In other words, to what extent, and in what way, are these factors unique to the rage-type murderer? The defensive organization observed here bears some similarity to dual-personality organizations and 'simulation' processes that have been found to be present in different types of violent offenders (Gallwey, 1985; Glasser, 1996; Meloy, 1992). How does this organization differ across different types of offence?

A number of specific questions emerge out of the present study that have not been discussed further. For instance, what implications does the rage-type constellation have for understanding the legal concept of diminished responsibility that is often claimed to be present in cases of rage-type murder? How can we explain the dissociative amnesia that is linked with such acts? Is it the result of dissociation during the act, or does the dissociation occur as a retrospective process? The implication of the present findings on the rehabilitation of rage-type offenders is another area that requires further exploration. Here, factors that determine their capacity for mourning and reparation require further evaluation. Finally, as mentioned earlier, it is generally agreed that rage-type offenders will very seldom offend again (Blackburn, 1993; Hyatt-Williams, 1998; Meloy, 1992). Whether this is accompanied by any significant adjustment in the individual's object relations is, another question that remains for future research in this area.

APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW VIGNETTES

(I: Interviewer/O: Offender)

Below are a number of interview vignettes that highlight some of the narratives outlined in the analysis. Clearly, however, given their brevity, these extracts cannot convey the weight allocated to specific themes and how these were repeated across all the interviews.

CASE ONE: RALPH

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I: So there is a lot of you, you say there are twenty of you - can you explain that to me? ... brothers, sisters and so on?

O: Well, we ... my mother had four boys and four girls ... so the others are just my extended family ... but it is because we lived together.

I: Can you tell me more specifically about your relationship with your mother?

O: Well, what I can say I'm the eighth in the family and I was very very close to my mother So both my parents are deceased now I was very close to my mother and I had to do everything with her. Even boys on the class who were just doing lower standards ... I had a friend and he was carrying dagga ... and I used to keep it for him whilst in class but I didn't smoke because the values of my family, of my mother, the discipline she gave me was going accordingly ...um ... that means even other people. Youngsters were not going to church but I went to church She used to tell me that I shouldn't do such and such ... she was taking care of me ... other than the members of the family ... because whenever she sent me somewhere I had to run and be able to fetch that thing quickly and in the easiest manner I didn't fight with my mother and I was not cheeky and even other people The most important thing about that is that I liked to go to school - even if it was raining I would go to school. I had to do it myself So I was very comfortable with my mother. Because I was the only boy who was attending the church ... even I had to keep the youth of the church ... even when my mother was with other women ... they used to talk about my discipline and my mother was very happy about me I was always very polite

Even my father ... herding I had my own way of safeguarding the cattle If I had to choose some sport I don't even come back early I didn't do

that ... but others used to take some rope and put the animals in the forest When I found them I used to make them loose, because I always wanted to do things the right way ... and that's all I could say But after ... because my father died in '87 and my mother in '70, no ... my father died in '77, my mother in '87 So after that I tended to the head of the family because we find that the other brothers were away and I had to look after the house ... and I had a better education so they could listen to me easily Better education made them listen to me properly and even if there were feuds I would have to talk to them nicely and I never had any problems So it's just the same today

So even when I was at university ... they used to call me and I could solve the problems I had a way of talking to them so they would not fight ... because I attended these conflict-handling workshops ... so I used those skills in the family ... but those things I use them even outside to try to be the negotiator ... skills helped me a lot ... and I think that was what boosted me. If they did not listen I would walk away because my mother taught me ... to hate means to suffer ... so I would walk away and stop helping others if they did not hear me I was always polite.

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O: So I negotiated on campus ... So then I found the owner of that house I negotiated with the landlord, he said okay ... actually he didn't want to put students in the house but because he wanted ... he did not like students, because they are corrupt and all those things. I was polite and the landlord said he would put students there. So I filled those rooms with students, one was my girlfriend. So the landlord was happy, the students were too ... so if they had a problem then they had to approach me and I had to speak to the landlord.

I: So you were the negotiator sorting things out

O: And even when the NNS and the NNS where fighting. I became the chief negotiator in that area ... people listened to me ... they solved their disputes ... so fighting stopped and even today there is no fighting. I even gave support for the community because, as I told you, I had to organize some food for them during the '87 floods. I went with a whole truck I gave them, but I didn't take anything ... and that in itself amazed them, why I didn't I take anything, they said. Because I understand the society ... the minute you take something they know that things are for free and they start to have some negative impact on your surroundings ... so I didn't take anything because I knew that you cannot satisfy everybody and one has to have ... you need to cater for that.

[I was confused by his reference to conflict between 'the NNS and the NNS'.]

I: When you go back to you being the negotiator ... NNS and NNS conflict.

O: Oh! I mean the NNS and the CCC.

I: Go on

- O: Things changed after the death of my father My mother was not working at that stage so I had to go and get a casual job on weekends ... so I could pay for myself ... do everything ... so that in itself made it easier to continue schooling because my mother was not having the pressure to pay.

So then even now, just from '95 one of my friends was running a taxi, but since '96 they had some fights, so there in itself I became the chief negotiator again I had to sit down and talk to them I played a very important role, so I had to go to the houses of these men so that we could set up private meetings then see what could be the solution So I played that role too there because I was busy doing research about taxi violence One of these men I know is working for the ministry of transport, Mr. P., so I was busy helping them.

[I was somewhat suspicious of what seems to be an overstating of his negotiator role.]

- I: A lot of your negotiating is to do with conflict. I was wondering, with yourself, whether you have ever been exposed to violence?
- O: No, not at all, never. I have always made sure that I am never near violence ... even if I have a disagreement I will not say anything at all about it ... because I know it will make me feel bad. Even in prison now there has been no trouble ... in fact I am negotiating here as well.
- I: Sounds like you find yourself drawn to that role all the time?
- O: I think it is one thing ... the jail system is not going to change me ... and I am 100% sure of that ... because ... what I can tell you, whilst I was still young I used to carry the dagga for another guy - he was my friend - he was smoking, he was drinking, he was doing everything ... but I didn't do it at all ... and I come from a very strong family. Here in prison, prisoners are doing all such things, but I am not going to do that ... there is one thing I am happy about and that is the prison system is not going to change me at all If I can tell you that I have proposed that they should do some form of research about prisons, because when I came in here I found that's what they were supposed to do ... they didn't ... and they are not doing it ... and we found that.

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- I: Can you tell me more about the dreams you mentioned the last time we met?
- O: Well, the dreams are positive because I used to dream of my ex-girlfriend whilst we were together ... a couple of times she used to come to me, shaking me, you know, as if ... and the other day I dreamt about her I dreamt there was a pool of water, and she told me that I must not go in that pool of water, it is very dirty. And she said she is going to move that water away ... and she moved that water away and I just walked ... and those are the things. I have thought often as I did with her, that because I was able to get her into

University that I could help her all the time that she made me feel good ... so I used to have good romantic thoughts about her and we do everything together. We were the perfect couple ... but that changed when I was separate from her ... I still loved her a lot ... but she somehow seemed horrible now.

I: Do you feel you are angry?

O: No, not at all ... I am never angry See, in my life, um ... I don't hate people, I don't grudge people, because um ... I always tell myself, if I grudge you, I am the one who is suffering, rather let the suffering be somewhere else.... So I am always a friendly person ... because I don't fight with people. But I sometimes worried

[His attempts at trying to convince me of his friendliness appear 'forced'.]

I: What were the worries?

O: I don't really remember. I suppose because I could not help her any longer, the way I do with everyone. I don't know.

I: I want to go back to some of the dreams you spoke about - positive dreams You mentioned a specific dream about a puddle of dirty water Can you tell me about your thoughts about that dream?

O: Well ... there are various interpretations of that, because water in our belief, it is not something that is lucky, but because ... so if I went inside that water I was going to be unlucky Because she removed that water, that is peace in itself ... and even if it is dirty water, it symbolizes something bad, but because she removed it, she is okay. Actually I had just gone to buy a candle, in a dark place. She asked me why did I do that, she was going to get me a better one ... and I said, 'I got this one for you,' and I gave her some chocolate ... before we went to that pool of water this is the ideal world we could have had together.

[I am unsure if he is still referring to the dream.]

I: Sorry, I'm not sure if that is part of the dream.

O: This is part of the dream before the pool.

I: Any thoughts about the candle?

O: No ... but maybe it is about peace and romance between us Another thing ... um ... most of the time whenever I sleep, you know ... when I am half asleep, I find myself kicking ... it reminds me of stories about the 'muti'. 'Muti' is traditional medicine

I: Tell me about that

- O: Well 'muti' is supposed to affect you ... you don't really understand other people It could have been this that made me love her intensely. It also shows you the opposite side of things Your mind doesn't function properly. And you tend to be passive in most of the things you do. You don't become active at all. Even if you do things, you do things you that are stupid but you ... you won't see that the thing that you're doing is not right. But once it comes to an end it is very dangerous You can commit suicide, or kill your wife or child, whatever the case may be. I think this happened to me because there was something wrong with me, but uh, I could also notice that I was not normal then. I was a mystical force.

CASE TWO: SIMON

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- O: What everything boils down to is that I did not have enough love A year after my mother died, my father re-married ... so when he remarried ... so the only alternative was to get my aunty out of the house ... and she worked on this so my aunty moved away and then we had to get used to the new system when my stepmother was there Like, she was strict, she started off like in a heavy mood - like, you weren't allowed to go anywhere. You are not allowed to open the fridge and take anything. Even if the fruit is on top there, you leave it and when she offers it you take it There was nothing I could do ... and then it started off, you know ... that all the way ... and then she made us wash clothes and things like that

- I: That was about age eleven?

- O: Ten-eleven, yes. She divided the work between me and my sister. So I'd get up in the morning at five in the morning, I keep water, make sure the tea is ready ... 'cause my father must leave at about six, he gets up then. So each one has a turn right through, keep the water boiling, make sure the tea is made. She would wake you up in the morning When you finished, you start with the kitchen ... you wash the units, you wash the floor or whatever Okay, the following week it is probably my turn to wash the toilets, every morning you got to do it and if there are clothes wet, you wash the clothes also and you squeeze ... you put into a bucket ... in the container and she gets it dried during the day ... everything is done for her in the morning

Like the lunch part of it, she'd leave it. She'd come down just before we're going to school, she would find whatever old bread she had ... even if the old bread, it's rotten or whatever, she butters it for you ... peanut butter, wrap it for you You have to take it to school ... so I used to throw it away because I'm not going to take that to school ... it used to stink when I put it in my bag. I was very embarrassed and ashamed I think So, um ... like um ... School starts at about eight o'clock. We'd leave at about ten to eight ... and a long walk. So you have to rush all the way to school ... okay, you get to school ... do your normal school stuff The moment school closes you got to be running back home ... you can't be there ten, five minutes late ...

because you know you have to get back home and you know She will want you to work You start in the garden, you start polishing the floor. You were kept busy till about ... if it's winter time, okay, it gets dark early ... ah ... winter is not a problem, summer you even work later, you're in the garden. So my studies were even pushed further away so like I could only study late in the evenings, whenever ... there was nothing I could do.

Then we had three dogs, and I loved dogs ... always looked after the dogs, you know. I mean those were our closest ... you know ... somebody who I could play Three of them, and we always used to be around the dogs and things like that ... clean the kennel So after that, they were building and I was so young I could even lay bricks ... I could do anything ... push the barrel across the road, ditch the sand ... could do anything. So like the moment you get back from school, she'd never wake up, she would be sleeping ... my stepmother would sleep right through to five o'clock ... right ... like So I was in standard five then ... we could not have a bath alone, she'd insist that she wants to give us a bath ... you know what I mean ... she is not our mother and things like that she would make sure she would give you a bath and things like that

Then, I mean we were small, the logic didn't strike me - why must she give me a bath? But there was no sexual thing involved, but I wanted my privacy I couldn't say no, I want to have a bath ... no, and I was going into standard 5 then. You could see other guys were having baths, at class two - look at us, we are big guys working like men ... but we are treated like kids when it comes to a bath and things like that. And then, when her sisters used to come, her sisters used to give us a bath then, when we were little you know, and then it carried on, and then I was beginning to get tired of it

My father used to never respond to anything It's like he just turned away, like a deaf ear, he'd never take a stand for us, never. It's like if she shouted at us, he would keep quiet ... and then she was always having arguments with him.

[I feel distressed about the story he relates and feel identified with him against his tyrannical stepmother.]

- I: When you think back over ... particularly with your stepmother, a long period, I can see when you speak about it, it was difficult for you. Do you remember how you felt towards her? ... I can imagine you having strong feelings ... about what she was doing?
- O: It's like, even up to this very day Like if I think about her it just goes back to the times like when she is like a stepmother she is worse than anything. It's like, so strong like, I was feeling ashamed of telling people I was married to my wife for two years ... then only I told her exactly what happened ... yet it took a long time for me to tell her. I was feeling ashamed like because of what people would think ... you know, you were doing this, you were doing that ... there was nothing I could do.

I: What was the ashamed part of it?

O: It was like my childhood was taken away from me, it's like everybody else says, Oh ... when we were kids we went here and there, we did this, and I couldn't. So I just pretended I've done all that. I've played cowboys and crooks, I played marbles and football on the road like kids did. But I didn't do all that I missed everything ... it's like ... she just took everything, I didn't experience Like now, I make sure my kids get everything. Whatever they want, I make them do it so I'm never going to rob them of that.

As kids we were scared of talking to people, I was scared of talking to my brother When my brother left he used to come to school to visit us quickly I wouldn't even talk to him I have to go ... we were scared ... she's going to know and then we've had it. That was going till sixteen I said, I got to get away from home at that point.

I: You were constantly scared?

O: Totally ... when you are eating you are scared ... the way you eat she would watch you. If you stick your finger out she would shout ... she was on your back continuously You were like there was nothing you could do wrong ... I mean right

She is a wicked witch and I hate her guts ... I hate her ... but inside me will tell me, ah ... this woman is not good. I think god assists in another way ... in that she looks like she has got older before her time ... and she is like sickly and things like that So she is paying for her ... but she deserves it But I am not an angry person at other people, or generally.

[I feel doubtful about the way he says this to me.]

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O: Afterwards I met my love ... a very strong love I never knew what love was so the bond between us was strong ... so I kept on giving her everything because it made me happy.

The wedding I did it all on my own - I kept my parents out of it, just to say I was independent ... I could stand on my own two feet. In 1986 I paid eleven thousand rand for my wedding, which was a lot of money then Indian weddings are very lavish and I had to buy jewelry and lots of people Then I got a flat to stay in, but it was only until we could get a house ... things were perfect then between us. We would talk to each other I could talk to her ... it was a perfect marriage I would make her happy, which would make me a happy person.

[The 'perfectness' appears unreal and is used as an attempt to impress.]

I: The perfectness you felt seems to be related to you feeling very in love

- O: Yes, when you have some one close to your heart, there is nothing you can do ... you do everything together and everything is filled with excitement
Like I said before, it was like a new experience for me

I knew that this is what I wanted in life ... you know ... even all that I was going through, I wanted to keep it there, got the kids there ... wanted to buy a house Even then, I bought a house, a nice big house ... made sure we had everything inside, and people respected me ... and you know, at work people respected me like I was doing some good ... perfect ... and even though all I was going through ... I always did my job properly ... always did my best at everything and people liked me because of this.

I looked for everything to make her happy, buy her something, make sure there are things in the house, make sure the kids have things even. There was nothing more I could do. As long as I could make her happy I was happy, because this was my new life, and so there were no problems. I would just ignore them because we had a perfect relationship I often have a dream of her ... we are in different places, but it is always about me being some kind of an angel bringing her back We look like the perfect couple again.

203

- I: You mentioned that you wanted a professional career?

- O: As I said in the last interview, my background was not good I wanted to forget it. At school I was very private, I was looking for a professional career. Like my brother left home, he went to work for the bank. There wasn't that love in the family from my father, and my stepmother was worse. So I wanted desperately to leave home and thought about the defense force, I thought because my neighbors were doing it. So I thought about it and, you know the navy? I went when I was sixteen years old.

- I: You went straight in the navy from school?

- O: Yes, and hey, the guys there were big ... I was young, but I guess I realized I would be strong enough I took the exam and got in. So I started my training and achieved distinctions, and then I went to Cape Town for two-and-a-half weeks While I was there I saw families visiting others, you know, when families come on Sundays In my case no one ever turned up. My father was rich ... he had a car....

[I find myself identifying with a sense of being 'hard done by' and feel that he views me in a similar way.]

So anyway, I had to do more than others, but I was better than most. When I qualified I was getting good pay ... good pay ... as I said I bought a car and I paid for my 21st birthday. I did it all myself and then I met my love So

when I found her, it felt like it was the right, perfect person for me
Marriage made me feel like a new person.

I had a career, I had achieved well and this made me able to forget about the past. Everything was perfect, nothing better ... because I was independent and didn't need my father or stepmother.

[I am impressed by his achievements.]

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O: But then she left me. I had forgotten about the affair I had forgiven her. I tried to make it right so she would stay. Anyway, coming to the incident now....

She had come back because I pleaded with her. But she was being aggressive with me ... the kids were asleep She was saying, 'I wish you were dead, I wish you weren't living,' ... so I thought, I'll just commit suicide So I took a whole lot of tablets ... she didn't even bother ... I don't know whether she knew or whether she thought I was bull-shitting Then she was just sitting on the bed ... it was frustrating ... and she became frustrated with me for saying that I had done that. I must have fetched a knife then ... she came close to me and I remember we were rolling on the floor But I can never remember doing anything with it That is what is odd, odd The next morning, when I woke, I saw that the cops were there. It's like I never remembered doing it ... it's like the knife was there ... could have said ... I could have said, 'No, call the cops.'... I didn't have the knife I thought maybe she fell and she walked into it ... I don't know. I still don't remember taking the knife ... because in me I could feel I couldn't do that. I have never done any fighting at all ... it was like something happened

I look at my kids ... they were small. When I was small I went through the same situation ... and now something took her ... my wife was exactly the same It's like there is nothing I can do to correct it. You know what I, mean

Something took her, it didn't feel like it was me. I don't think I will ever love again ... after this. I did my best, I worked hard, I always did good things for my wife, everyone always said that ... and now

I: It sound like it is difficult thinking that it was you

O: Yes, that's right I would know because there was blood and all those kind of things. But if she passed away then I am responsible.

I: How do you find yourself thinking about the incident now?

O: I was going on Prozac afterwards, quite a few medications they gave me. And you know I used to sit and think if I had a choice of going back or ahead in time, I would still want to go back in-time. Maybe I could change my career, or something or make another life. When I look at my kids, I still

think, ah ... you know what happened to our lives. I was very religious - I would ask, 'Why did god do this to us, why did this happen to me?' I never thought it was going to happen to me.

It's like I've done so much ... forgiven people. I have given so much, there is not much more I can do. I tried to commit suicide two times after the event, then I stopped I thought there is nothing I can do. Suddenly I thought life is precious. I saw my kids and thought, 'Well, I can't leave them when they're so small, what is going to happen to them?'

CASE THREE: GRANT

301

I: I want to go back to your background. You told me that you had a very good upbringing ... you told me that your father had spoilt you ... can you tell me more about that? What was your role in the family - how did you see your mother and father?

O: Basically the most important thing is that there was a lot of love in the family ... they cared a lot. Whatever we needed, wanted, we sort of got. My father, mother and my sister and brother always sat together and ate together ... we had good conversations During the young days, my brother and I used to play a lot together. We never ever, never ever, used to fight, even with my sister ... there was always that timidness in all of us. I think we got it from my parents. It was they were very very very good. Even if we did something wrong, my parents never ever scolded us ... My father took us to lots of places on weekends ... park or to visit some relatives far away.

My dad also taught me to drive at a very very young age - in fact, that's why I say I was spoilt in the sense that he took me to one of these quiet outback roads and used to teach me. But I would do good things for my father, we never would fight, it was always perfect.

I: Can you tell me about you mother?

O: Growing up she was the perfect mother and was absolutely kind and cheerful, helpful If you got hurt as a kid she always cared absolutely to the 'max' ... make sure that we were neatly dressed for school, had lunches ... everything was ready when you came back from school - tea, supper ... fantastic, absolutely no problem. Even if my father didn't want to give us something ... I can remember this ... always I went back to mother and pleaded with her ... like for example, in college I wanted a motorbike. My mother permitted it.

Even when I came home after my divorce we would say, forget it, I will just continue doing all the right good things at school and with my family ... and even though she hurt me, I still made sure she had the car because she was a

wonderful, very good person, and when she was like that I could feel that I was a good person.

[Things feel unreal to me in the way he talks about the 'goodness' of things. I also have a sense of him being a submissive child and me being the parent he strives to please. I experienced the same sense in the first interview.]

I: How did you deal with coming back home after the divorces?

O: My parents were sad about the whole thing and felt sorry for me. They used to see the wounds and how my clothes were cut. There were times when I would go home late at night without my car and things like that. They always advised me never to go back, I should learn my lesson, but they always gave me the independence to make that decision. They never forced me. But the thing is, what they didn't really understand when they said that, and no-one would understand it ... was the feeling I had towards my wife I suppose only the person in that position would know that.

I: How would you describe that feeling?

O: I think I had a sense of dependence on my wife. I love her, but I also detested her when she showed the other violent side of her I really loved her. I wanted to spend as much time as possible with her. But I think there was a dependence on my wife ... I also felt it's because of the love So that is also probably what made me really go back a number of times I was concerned at the fact that some other person would be the male figure in my daughter's life ... and there were so many stories of men abusing stepchildren ... used to give me a lot of anxiety. I knew I could make the difference. I knew that doing special things, allowing her to be her good self and not getting in her way, I would be able to be very happy.

I: When you said that maybe you were dependent on her ... you seem to have said that in a way, she was part of your identity?

O: I was dependent on my wife first of all in terms of love; secondly, the fact that she was very, very organized, in the home ... she was well-organized in terms of the finances I used to spend freely - I never bothered about how much I had or saved for the next day, she would take care of some of those details ... so it depends. We would buy wonderful things together, and people saw us as the perfect couple on the outside ... and I believed that, these things were most important to me. I had all the fashionable right things to have. I also bought my firearm at the time because everyone had one and there were a lot of hijackings at the time.

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O: I suppose maybe I started to dislike her in a way ... but I was still in love with her ... but I used to dislike her actions and so on ... but she made me feel good about myself because I could do things for her ... and then there came a stage where, if I came late from school, she did not listen to the explanation or

anything like that. She would start a violent argument and then my clothes would be thrown out of the house There was a couple of nights that I had to go to friends ... and I was really embarrassed, because I really didn't want anyone to know what was going on with me. In everyone's eyes, we were a loving perfect couple, this was the important thing I had a nice car, we dressed well, everything was fine, you know, in that sense ... because we earned well I always ... both of us were used to a certain life-style ... from our early life with our parents ... so nobody really knew what was happening. If anyone ever asked, it was just quietened down. In the situation where we live, where it all started off, teachers were respected - that was a couple of years ago - and if someone saw this ... it was something new to them and straight away this word will spread. There were times also while I was there that I wanted to leave, but I somehow couldn't. Something about the good things she made me feel But I did leave to my parents.

I: Yes, you said you left twice

O: Yes, I had to leave my car, I felt sorry for her in a way I had to leave my car with her ... she could drive also ... and used to borrow my dad's car. Now you'll see how nice my father was, he used to lend me his car ... yah.

I: So did he have to know about the difficulties?

O: Well, he got to know. Look, they felt sorry for me. Because they always knew what kind of person I was ... always very, very good and kind. In the sense, I would be rational, you'll sit and talk about something ... let's not get violent about the whole thing So eventually I got divorced. I came home. But I still went back to my wife Sorry, sorry sir, I missed a point ... before this divorce my late daughter was born ... yah ... in between the violence and everything my wife fell pregnant and my daughter was born on the 4 December 1984 Yah, thereafter I left, I couldn't take any more of it

I used to sneak in at lunchtime at school just to have a peak at her, there was somebody who used to take care of her, you know ... that kind of thing So I got divorced, I came to Durban, she also came to Durban. I even found her a nice flat. She moved her things and so on, and after a while we were So eventually I got to stay there, you know, on weekends, and then eventually we got married again Yah, so as usual it was nice for a little while then the whole thing got back to square one again, and the violence used to be quite heavy ... and this was the worst part of it - I don't know whether you can understand this - I couldn't hit back, I don't know why ... I couldn't hit back, it wasn't in me, and there were occasions where I used to sort of try to resist, but she got more violent for the whole thing.

I: What would she do?

D: She would slap and kick, and sorry, during all this time, she also used to go for psychiatric treatment and so on, but nothing really helped You know Duncan ... she was on the one side an absolutely perfect, perfect person ... she was a nice teacher at school, she was a beautiful woman who took care of the

kids fantastically well, she cooked everything in a fantastic way, she bought me everything I wanted, she would buy clothes which I didn't really need ... that kind of thing. She would cook the best kind of foods ... on the other side, there was a terrible violent side.

I: So you remarried and things started repeating themselves. So you felt a lot of the time very attacked? But for some reason you never felt you could hit back.

O: Yes, but she was a very good person. I used to have constant dreams about us going on romantic holidays together. I can't remember details ... but going to the beach and stuff. It used to make life feel worthwhile. Funny enough I still have those same dreams of her even now.

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I: I don't know if you feel you can take me through what happened

O: On that night?

I: Yes.

O: What happened was, a frame had fallen and ah, she blurted out that I ... had done nothing about it I always used to do things for her to make me ... um her, feel better Then I had gone to the bathroom, and she asked me to take care of the little girl because she was going into the room to pray ... ah ... my younger daughter ... so I had taken her to the bathroom, it was her bath- time, so I had taken her into the bathroom with me. Everything went on well there, she used to play with her toys next to the bath. I had come out of the bathroom, I was going into the room when she had just happened to be coming out from there and she accidentally ... we just touched each other ... and she was in one of those moods. We just touched each other, and she ... she started swearing at me ... she said, 'Don't touch me!' ... it was just a shoulder, and then she gave me a sudden slap ... a hard slap, and that is when I went into a different state I was in a different state and ah ... I told you I purchased a gun just for protection you know. There was nothing in it. I don't really feel like I needed it anyway whatsoever. But I purchased a gun a couple of years back while I was divorced at one stage ... because there was a lot of crime and so on around.

I am going back now, that is that reason why I purchased the gun I was car-jacked at the robot and my car was taken away, and I only got it back eventually after a month, but luckily, the same night, the police had got hold of it, but after phoning so many police stations I still got it after a month. Anyway, so that was the reason for getting the firearm, just in case I probably needed it So after this slap, something just went. I was in a sort of different state I saw my unit open, and my elder daughter - she had been standing there where the safe was I don't know, she was fiddling with some clothes or something like that, and I saw that open and I just went and I opened the safe ... and I grabbed the gun ... and in the meantime my wife had already gone to the other room ... I just ran in there and I just shot her. Now in

that state I never think about this, you know In some way I have never really thought about it.

I: Um.

[During this part of the interview I recall realizing that I was having great difficulty believing that this man was capable of the act he was describing.]

O: Yes, because it was painful ... so I think I remember turning around ... you know ... my hand was shaking because I saw blood and that coming out, you know ... she had been sitting ... and I did turn around and I knocked my little girl, she had run into the room because of the sound, I think ... and then another shot went off and that shot hit her right on the head also I don't know which angle or whatever it was, you know ... but I tried to figure it out I got sick of it ... yah ... so that was the ... and then the neighbors ran in and so on, you know

I: Can you tell me what happened at that stage Grant? So you um ... after the neighbors ran in ...

O: I did a terrible thing ... which I am so ashamed of, you know, what I was thinking about I can't, you know, in that state - at that state ... I suddenly saw my daughter there ... and I remember thinking, 'What is going to happen with her now?' ... because he told me, the one guy was trying to ... he reckoned he couldn't feel any pulse.

The next thing which I was so ashamed of and caused me so much of grief and ... is that I said that my daughter shot my wife ... she was accidentally playing with the gun and she shot my wife I don't know what I was I thinking, Duncan ... I can't really ... because I just remember one thing looking at my little girl there, and knowingly I couldn't do anything to myself, or ... it wasn't that I was going to run away. I wasn't that type of person, you know...and at that time I just said that Then a few hours later I gave myself up.

CASE FOUR: BEN

401

I: You were talking about the kinds of females you knew....

O: Well, all the females I knew in my life so far have been dancers or cabaret dancers, strippers Now since I have been in prison ... I've been writing to one Christian from '91 ... since my arrest two years back was the first time we laid eyes on each other ... she's married now, got a husband, D., they are blessed with the lord - sometimes they give me such inspiration She helps me ... and I have a psychiatrist friend in Australia, she was my psychiatrist in TM, and we have been writing to each other as well.

I: She sounds important to you.

O: Yes. The court sentenced me to FCC to see if I'm mad ... because they said no normal person would do such a thing ... stab someone so many times in the right state of mind, so they sent me for observation. While I was there, I was being me ... normal, I was just myself - I was drawing, I was doing things for them, and then she came along ... Mrs. P., and she observed me, and from there we just became friends ... because I was doing nice things for her ... drawing and making tea. She comes down once a year every December.

I: What did you think of that period, the assessment ... and her assessment of you?

O: She gave me a lot of uplifting, not to put myself down. I also used to put myself down after I committed the crime. I used to always say my life should be taken too, because I have taken someone's life ... but she could make me feel good, like with other females, I guess I would do things for them, buy them things, they would feel good ... and I would feel better.

.... I saw another psychologist during the trial, a male psychologist like you. He didn't give me the right therapy ... or the one time I was there with leg-irons and the police were holding me for the courts ... they took me to his office in town and as I arrived at his office he said, 'Why are you trying to run away? ... That's why they put you like this.' ... I mean, how can you say a thing like that? ... So he couldn't help.

Mostly I have always had female friends

[I feel that although 'these females' are important to him, they do not appear to be 'real' figures in his life.]

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O: She ... I was staying next door to my neighbor, I met her on a mynah bus She said she had just opened a business and that I must come around there some time. So that I went there As I walked in there ... there was a female sitting there all dolled up ... and she said to me, 'Where have you been all my life?' ... And then we got talking to each other ... then she said we should meet sometime for a drink. We left it for another week and then, a week later, I went back to see ... and she says, 'Why are you only coming back now?' ... then we started talking again, and that day she took me home, got there to the house, woke her daughter up at six in the morning - 'I want you to meet someone.' And she left the daughter and me in the room talking until she had to go ... and her daughter accepted me ... into her life ... I could relate to her as a child ... we connected and I would always talk to her.

I: Can you tell me more about your relationship?

O: It was all-great; no arguments, no fights. I mean after the first week I met her, when she took me home ... within a few months she bought me a brand new motorbike, out of the box, cash. She bought me one of those expensive

helmets. Every day she used to give me pocket money while I was working. And if someone needed money she would always leave some money.

And my mom and dad accepted her, she used to sleep by their house. She would get invited to their place for lunch and supper ... but the relationship was really growing I would always buy her gifts as well, every day. That is just the kind of person I am ... I don't want anything back really, I just feel good making other people happy seeing the good in others ... so we did that all the time. I could give my love to them by buying them gifts ... that was the best way of caring ... but also being able to show that I am worthwhile.

403

O: I never had a fight in my whole life, I never had a fight with any human being Also it could be all the anger that has been building up ... but still it doesn't make sense ... if I could change back the time I would...

In the army, I didn't want to go, because I would have to carry a gun and I did not want to. So in the end they gave me a special pacifist position as a guard. I didn't want to shoot anyone, it wasn't in me to do it. I am not that kind of person. I would rather give to others and make them happy in that way

I: You obviously don't see yourself that way Can you tell me about that ... whether there have been times in your life when you have been more angry

O: I think, the one female I told you about, Z., who wanted to have a separation. It made me so mad that I took scissors ... and I used to buy a lot of clothes for my females, because I loved them, you see. Not because I have money and I want to express my love through gifts ... it is just the way I am. I buy rings, jewelry, clothing which I think suit them So when this happened I went back to the flat and I took the scissors and I cut some of the clothes ... and I threw them away

I: What was that about for you?

O: It triggered my mind off ... she didn't have many clothes so the clothes I bought her really filled up her wardrobe. She didn't like what I was doing, making her happy by giving her gifts.

I: You once said that it always seems that women leave you?

O: Yes ... for what reason I don't know ... maybe I am too quiet - I don't like going out, socializing with other people much. But usually when I am myself, and I do things to make them feel good then they stay I could remember when I was young, thirteen-fourteen, when I saw a bunch of females walking on the one side of the road, I used to cross over and walk on the other side. I don't know why, but it's the way I felt ... probably because I couldn't do anything then ... I mean buy them things

CASE FIVE: ANDREW

501

O: My brother is older. He kind of had his friends and I had my friends. Then ... we played a lot of sport, I played a lot of soccer ... we lived just around the corner from the HPC sports club. I got involved in a lot of sports ... things like soccer, got involved in ice-skating, and then I got involved in surfing [raised intonation]. When I started surfing I was in Standard Six. And then, as far as my family goes ... any disruption in my family or any thing like that would ... my actual father, okay, he was an alcoholic. He still is today but it is controlled and he has his drinks at night when he stays home ... but right from a young age I can remember him going on binges and things like that and ... I can remember, for a couple of years actually, me and my brother, we were still small, man - maybe twelve, we used to go round to the local hotels looking for him ... he used to go drinking for days, sometimes weeks ... we used to find him in rooms and dirty and money gone ... the whole thing So that kind of thing had an impact on me... I suppose ... but I think it actually made me stronger ... yes, it made me stronger, it did, because I don't drink at all. I never have, I don't smoke, I am pretty health conscious.

[I found myself easily drawn in by this story and able to empathize with his position.]

I: You say it had an impact on you

O: Um ... yes. The other thing is ... I actually have never brought this up with him and I think I should You know with all my sport and everything ... I actually excelled in all the sport that I took part in ... and, um ... and it was always a kind of looking on the sidelines for my father you know ... my father was never there. He never ever came ... that was the other thing, it was always related to drink, not supporting, you know I never really had any love or affection from him ... my mother was the opposite to that though, she supported me, you know, things like that In terms of impact I think that is the only thing I can really remember, you know as far as violence and things like that, he used to sometimes beat my mom up, you know, being a young kid I couldn't really do anything But other than that I don't think there is any real impact I am a very healthy person, I never drank or smoked

I: It sounds like it was difficult for you, especially not being supported by him.

O: We used go and look for him more for my mom's sake you know. Um ... how can I put this ... I never, before the crime, had his support and stuff like that ... it has only come out in the last couple of years. You know, obviously I have always known he was my father, but the support that he has given me through these years, I've only grown to love him recently. But when I was younger he was like a stranger to me There was no love, nothing at all, I totally disrespected him, I felt nothing for him

My mother was always supportive Maybe what I meant was, she was ... um supportive in general, where my father was reckless - he did his own thing whenever he wanted he didn't care about anyone else Maybe I meant that ... that my mom held the home together Maybe that's why I wanted to achieve and be the best with my sporting side

I don't know, I think about it quite often now, only after the incident ... and I can remember certain memories in flashes where my father used to be in one of those drunken binges and he used to break things and put his arm through a window, and if I think about all those things, I always remember never ... I never understood why because it achieved nothing, and I was a young guy ... that's why I'm probably non-aggressive - well, I think I am anyway. It just didn't achieve anything, it was pointless I don't drink, never have and I don't smoke either as I have said before I've always been into the healthier side of life

I: Do you recall consciously making the decision not to drink?

O: No, it wasn't a decision that I made that I'm not going to drink because of my father. Maybe it was in my subconscious or psychologically or whatever ... it just did not agree with me

502

I: How did you experience that?

O: That's why I am so independent now. Right from when I left school I haven't been a loner because I had a lot of friends and everything I think I have got strong willpower and perseverance as well. I kind of shut things out, shut things away and carry on with my own life, I get through the day. I actually ... when I think back to it now ... my mom had my father's problems, and the boarding establishment's problems, and although she was very supportive in a way that she always did breakfast and supper, she never really sat down and looked at my report card, or spoke I never really had any problems at school where they had to go to school, but they kind of left me alone although the family situation was there ... but they left me alone, and that's why I am so independent I think I said earlier it actually made me stronger ... to do things on my own. I kind of sort out all my own problems maybe that's what happened in the case as well, after I had actually shot S., I didn't talk ... or even beforehand as well I didn't go to the police and report it, I didn't speak to my wife or folks or whatever beforehand, I kept things in ... maybe because I was so independent.

[When he talks about independence I feel somehow less convinced by what he is saying. Almost as if it is overstated.]

I: Your parents seemed unapproachable in the way you were talking about them just then ... which you're saying made you stronger?

- O: I actually ... when you hear people on TV and films there is a close relationship between a child and parent ... you hear people saying, 'You can say anything to me.' ... I never really had that ... it was out of the question with my father. I never had that relationship with my mom either but she was supportive in the family thing ... but I suppose I felt somehow protective of her as well Up until I can remember I always used to worry about her ... she was the breadwinner of the family because she used to hold things together, you know ... so in a sense she was independent as well I respected that about her but I think I lost some respect for her for staying with my father ... I often told my mother that she should not put up with it, get divorced from the guy.

[It occurs to me that up until this point I have only a vague image of his family and personal life as compared to his 'business' and 'independent' side.]

503

- I: Can you tell me about your thoughts about the feelings between you two ... anger perhaps
- O: In the first couple of meetings things were fine ... but the last two meetings I think I had, in the back of my mind, that he had a short fuse ... everyone knew he had a very bad aggressive streak So I thought that there was a possibility of him hitting me.
- I: Did you know he had a firearm?
- O: Yes, I knew he had one.
- I: And did that cross your mind at all?
- O: No, not throughout the whole thing You know, if I could see into a crystal ball and I could see into the future, I would have approached the thing in a totally different manner I didn't think he would go that far ... I didn't know, for some reason, it was getting that bad ... maybe because things were going so well for me
- I: In terms of tracing back You say you are non-aggressive and also, you had a firearm can you tell me a little about that?
- O: As far as me saying I was non-aggressive, I never, throughout my sports career and stuff, I never have actually been in a punch-up or anything like that I don't go looking for fights like some do. I just lived my life like that. I actually you know, when it came to a confrontation with anyone or anything - I can't remember when, but ... I'm referring to business now - I would deal with it myself without aggression running through my mind. There was always a situation where ... whatever ... but you can talk and avoid that sort of thing, try and help the person, and I have always been like that.
- I: So generally that is a pattern dealing with anger.
- O: I don't know, I mean I actually don't really have any ... anger Generally I am a positive person and that is how I have managed, and people like me, so it must work Violence is not part of my life and I think that is why this situation was weird and out of my experience ... I was not used to it.

[Statements like this, evoked a sense in me that he had been unjustly treated and it was difficult to think that such a 'good' man was capable of murder.]

CASE SIX: FRANK

601

O: On the Saturday afternoon there was a knock on the door, I was seated in my friend's flat ... he was in lounge with me, his mom and one of his friends ... drinking beer. Where I was seated it was head-on to the front door. As my friend opened the door my mom was there ... in walked my mom, aunt, twin sister, brother-in-law's wife and lastly my wife ... and as she walked past she said, 'There he is, I told you he was here,' ... and she had a smirk on her face. They went into the bedroom and came out and said, 'Come, you are going home now' !...

So, what I've told you, you can see how I was treated at home ... so I had to get up, obey and I went with them. I was seated in the car I thought, 'Well, here is a chance - let me try and talk to her, because she did come there for me, it shows she has an interest in me'. So I tried speaking to her but she wouldn't listen and just kept on telling me what I should do I couldn't say anything to her. So when I got home, all I did was have a bath, got changed and went out From there I forget what happens now. I can't forget what happens... let me think nicely and tell you

I: It's not clear at the moment?

O: In any event ... from then the relationship got stronger and stronger I think she saw the folly of her ways ... not to say that I've got no problems, that I didn't do anything to contribute - we are human and we all make errors So we set a wedding date The first or second month of marriage was fine ... and from then it just went wrong I discovered that I was the new maid ... because I was doing shift work as a policeman ... if I worked in the afternoon shift ... so I have the entire day to work So what I would have to do was, in the morning wake up, have a wash and something to eat and then tidy out the entire place, make the beds, vacuum, the dishes, everything. If I was working morning shift I would come back, tidy up the place, do the cooking ... it was that kind of a thing. I was busy all the time I did whatever my wife wanted. I said, 'Okay, no problem,' and carried on, carried on ... everything was perfectly fine fine fine I liked to go to my cousin's place to watch sport to be with company I would ask my wife. She would say 'Sure, fine, what time you going to be back?' ... I say the time, I come back that time or before time ... and she would not be happy She is angry with me, she is shouting at me, screaming and swearing me. I ask her, 'Hold on, what's the story?' She would say, 'Yah, go back to where you came from.' I said, 'Wait, I was at my cousin's place.' ... She says, 'Don't lie, you were not there.' I say, 'Hold on, what is the story?' ... Then she told me a friend had seen me walking and I was headed in that direction, which is well and true, yes - I was on my way to my cousin's place ... but my wife took it the other way ... I'm on drugs,

I am having an affair ... all these things thrown in my face. She would never believe me ... on and on and on

You know I would always do what was expected of me, and because of that things went well for the time being ... but when my wife accused me of doing something I felt ashamed ... because I had not done anything. Sometimes I would just agree with her and say, 'Look, yes, I am doing bad things' ... and then she would listen, and so would my mother.

[I have a clear sense that I am talking to an over-obliging/submissive child.]

602

I: What kinds of things are you talking about, regarding doing and then never doing things?

O: Okay, I would say to her, 'Let's go to a friend's place, let's go out to a nightclub,' ... when the time came she would say no. Now if we have more sessions and I go back you will see And one thing, I don't know if I am immature or not, some people tell me I am childish, I don't know, but I try and do everything right ... if I'm happy, I'm happy and I hate disappointment, I hate it ... it is a killer, it's like a shun, like being rejected Now my wife could see these things and she would still do this stuff

On the one day I left for work normal now, no lunch, no breakfast, not a cent in my pocket, no cigarettes to smoke ... off to work like that. So off to work I was I couldn't take it anymore Oh sorry, sorry, let's not go straight to the day of the scene My wife would sometimes phone my mother and say, 'Come over and speak to your son.' ... My mother would ask, 'What is it? ... What is he doing?' That hurt me - it hurt me real deep, so I said to my mom, 'Yes ... I am doing horrible things, come and see what I'm doing, come and see the conditions.' All I wanted was my mom to come over and ask my wife what is the problem ... and say, please explain what is going on

All these things, when they didn't go well, embarrassed me. I make it my purpose to be good to others

I: You were embarrassed

O: Yes So, anyway, the one time my mother came over So I said, 'Come inside have a seat.' ... I said, 'You just said my wife is phoning, speaks to you - there she is ... please speak to her.' I was embarrassed Sorry Duncan, the words I'm going to use now I hope are verbatim said when she is seated there So my gran turns to her and starts speaking to her Just then her cousin gets up and says excuse and was on her way to the bedroom ... so my gran stopped and asked her Still my wife refused to talk. Every time my gran asked me, I said, 'There is the complainant there I am not the complainant. I've got no problem - can't you see how happy I am?'

[I felt confused about where to locate the incident although it seems important to tell me about it.]

- I: Can I just ask, what you have just been speaking about was quite recent?
- O: The gran thing? It was, say four months before. No No No three months and a few days, to be safe, safe, safe ... late April.
- I: You were telling me about your marriage
- O: Thank you very much for reminding me What also contributed to the marriage going downhill was that besides not being able to speak to my family about the problems, I couldn't speak to a colleague about the problem and neither could I speak to a friend ... because they would all disappear or move off one by one ... because they knew all that I had to speak about was this problem with my wife. Divorce was out of the issue, for the love of my family that ... I mean. Okay ... I just kept things to myself because it was the best ... my friend also had problems at the time and no-one would believe him.

603

- I: Do you have any contact with your father?
- O: Yes, I do, but I don't like to have any contact with him. Uh ... The reason being, I can tell you this, he paid fifteen rand a month maintenance from the day I was born till the day I left school. That's all he paid. Um ... He had no interest in my schooling career, he had no inter ... interest in my sport, he had no interest in anything, but when I committed the crime, I was walking down the road past his house one day and he called me and he was having a drink with his mates. I'll never forget that day, how he said that. He cried when he told me I disappointed him. I let him down in life and I couldn't understand how he could speak like that. I felt if you are the father of a child, even if, your wife, if it's an extramarital ... results in an extra-marital affair ... even if your wife is against that child, you must in your own way, you are a man, you've got some intelligence, you will make a way, you will find a way of seeing your son, of speaking to your son. Finding out how things are going in his life, what does he need, what doesn't he need. But nothing, nothing was done by him. He wouldn't even greet me when he saw me on on the street. He'd just drive past. It was all confusing for me.
- I: It sounds like you felt he had rejected you, talking could not help
- O: Oh, I tried stabbing his er ... bakkie tyres one night and it didn't work.
- I: When was that?
- O: '84.
- I: So that was before ...

- O: Before ...
- I: You did it.
- O: Before the crime? Yes. Yes.
- I: And what was that, why did you do that at that stage. Do you remember?
- O: Because I found that he didn't care for me. He cared only for his other two children and his wife. What about me? What are we, are we nothing? So
- I: So you did it out of anger.
- O: Out of anger, but nothing happened to the tyres. I don't know whether to say unfortunately or fortunately
- I: You mean you couldn't stab them?
- O: No, the knife kept revolving off the tyre, so I was frustrated and I walked off.
- I: Were there any other acts like that, because of your anger towards him?
- O: I doubt he's reciprocated any love to me. As my twin sister on the other hand has always held him at arm's length and he's more interested in my twin sister. I feel that's because she's keeping him at a distance, whereas with me I'm trying to get closer to him so he knows he can win by me so he ignores me.

.... The marriage had its difficulties I said, 'Look,' (this is to my gran), I turned around and said, 'Look, I grew up without a father - not to offend you in any way.' ... I said, 'To grow up in an environment of violence is far worse than to grow up with an environment of no father figure. Because I have been through that ... and I can see what this abuse is doing to my kid.' 'What do you mean?' ... I said, 'This child cries, just on sight of seeing me this child cries how must I feel? It is my kid, how does it make me feel? Another thing: that same woman always tells me that, 'You are the head of the family, you must remember that, and also remember this: I am the neck that moves the head.' I tried to make things work, I do the right thing ... like I'm telling you the right thing now. Am I telling you the right thing? I always do good things. But it got too much when she didn't see it ... over and over. I think it got too much, but I couldn't see it coming, believe it or not, even with our difficulties I only wanted happiness ... that's all.

[I feel irritated by his constant claims of victimization and want to end the interview.]

CASE SEVEN: KEVIN

701

O: My parents didn't really care about me So I thought well, if they wanted me to do badly at school, then I would do badly at school. So I didn't work much at all ... I just kept to myself ... I can't really remember much about those days ... Just that I didn't talk to my parents ... and at school the teachers were all horrible and I found school boring I used to walk into people sometimes ... don't know why, and often they would fight with me for doing that. I would get into trouble for that when I was in primary school I used to make people fight with me so I could get hurt

I: Do you have any thoughts about that hurt?

O: No ... not really ... I just did it. I have nothing more to say

[He looks uncomfortable and I feel uncomfortable, feeling that I need to say something.]

I: So that was primary school

O: Yes, after that I think I became more quiet and ... that's when I got into drugs My parents would never ask me how was ... and I would never ask them They come up here to prison and they try now

702

I: You mentioned that you spent most of your time with the same group of friends.

O: Yes ... most of the time ... we had the same kind of interests and I suppose that is why we were together. because we didn't like all the straight kind of things ... like relationships and all that. We just wanted to have fun although ... I suppose taking drugs to some is not ... really fun ... in fact, I suppose most would say it is a bad thing I know that that is why I stay away from it in here ... but I suppose my friends used to get into a lot of trouble, but I was usually very quiet with them. I think they liked me because I wouldn't mind doing things for them because they were my friends I would get the drugs and stuff.

I: How did you feel about what your friends did?

O: Well, I think that they were great, but only when we kept together When they did things on their own they would sometimes do boring straight things or be with their families ... but like ... after the murder, the guy who went to the police, I mean ... he can't be a friend

I: Can you tell me what happened?...

- O: Well, we were supposed to meet up in our meeting place in the cemetery so that we could have a smoke. It was a secret place for us I know people rarely go into the graveyard, it is only groups like us who do that ... where we can be ourselves.... But that day there was this beggar guy sleeping there ... he woke up because we were shouting for him to go away ... my friend T. then threw a stone at him because he didn't move I think I was also shouting, telling him to fuck off ... but he didn't move. So I knew that this guy had a knife, so I grabbed it and I couldn't believe it, I was stabbing him and shouting When I saw the blood and what I had done we just all ran in different directions It was wrong, of course but he was in our place ... it was because I was on drugs

[His description somehow feels very brutal and makes me feel uncomfortable.]

[Throughout most of the interview I have a sense that I cannot trust him and that he feels superior to me.]

CASE EIGHT: WAYNE

801

- O: There's a lot of important things in my life, background
- I: You start, you start wherever you feel
- O: I don't know what you actually like to hear, I mean, can you be more specific, when you say background?
- I: Okay, um ... anything that you think is important to tell me about yourself, um, like what kind of person you are, um, tell me your story about you, about yourself.
- O: Uh ... where can I start ... ha, ha. I've actually got a C.V. here that I haven't handed in to the board yet, which they would like to see, but they didn't take it because it wasn't uh stamped, it wasn't My C.V. speaks for itself I'm a private person, I'm not uh, I'm not a very outspoken person. I would rather that, that uh speaks for itself. I was always class captain and school captain and sports captain ... uh ... primary schools, I was always the ball, I always stood out from the rest. I was a sports hero. In class I was, I would say about average, uh, I would say I really excelled in sport, especially soccer, ja, especially soccer

[I feel 'taken in' by his achievements and I am interested in hearing more about them.]

- I: So you are often in a position of achieving and gaining respect?

O: Ja, I was always being uh, given responsibility, ja. Captain of the sports team, soccer team, being in charge of this, in charge of that. Even when I did my apprenticeship, I had just finished my apprenticeship and I was as a setter out and the company it's one of the biggest shop-fitting companies in FF and uh, my journeyman still said to me, 'You're too young to be a setter out, that's when you retiring.'

I: Ja.

O: And uh, even he said to me, 'No it's not easy, you don't have to touch your age, your capabilities.' So I took the position and I enjoyed it ... my journeyman ... and from there I started my own business. I took my journeyman as a partner and uh

I: When was that?

O: 1990, 91. I also did a lot of work for universities: I was contacted to do two in a month. I refurbished the library and I think that there I, I, I was concerned in my work as well 'cause I got very involved in it.

I: Ja.

O: I, I think, it's hard to say but I, I, I got a good reputation from school, my work and uh, a lot of people in the workshop that I had, 'cause I only had one career, summertime came, went on my own and I was contracted to them - went completely on my own. There were a lot of people who were surprised ... ur, ur ... at the, at the incident. A lot of people. They were surprised that I did what I did. My family was overseas at the time. They were on holiday with my brothers in Australia, when this happened.

[Towards the end of this interview I felt more sceptical about his achievements. I also noted how I feared that I 'may do something wrong in the interview' with him and related this to a sense of righteousness and , goodness that he portrayed.]

802

O: I invited him round and everything was fine. We spoke. I asked him what had happened. He denied everything and said he had only taken my wife out for lunch. But he started to get nervous and kept on saying that I know he had been seeing my wife. I said that I was going to expose the whole thing and let the whole community know ... then, can you believe it? he offered me a bribe I could not believe he thought I would ever be the kind of person who would take a bribe I remember this is when I lost it. He could see I was getting angry now

I hit him, then he reached ... he reached for my clothes and I slipped and I fell and he tried to run up the stairs. I got up and I caught him and we both fell down There was no weapon used, um, 'cause with my arm, I actually smashed him with my hands ... hands against the step. I would never do it

again. I had just a feeling of shame, I did what I did Although to think I would take a bribe ... he was wrong Okay?

I: In the other interview you were saying to me that you did not want to hurt him?

O: That's correct. No, uh ... no intentions of killing him at all. No intention whatsoever. And uh ... it's first he had denied it - that he had gone out with, that my wife. So I thought, uh ... the, the best solution would be to expose him and that w ... would have been the right thing to do and ... and that's what I intended to do, and that is when he got funny, ja, and insulted me with a bribe.

I: Ja.

O: That, that money it was uh ... it was against my morals. I mean really. Even if I was that type of person. I mean, it wasn't ... it's ... I don't know, maybe somebody else would have taken it or ... or still reported him, but not me. It set me going mad like I have never done before. Ja. Th ... The repeated blows, I mean, that that, you know, but er ... because the prosecutor did say, 'What, didn't you know that by banging and smashing his head on the on the - there was a step in my in my lounge - that it would cause possible death?' you know? I ... that was one of the questions that weighed against me, and I suppose it did because ... but in that rage, I mean

803

I: Ja. And I mean in terms of that, to go back to the rage, and if you think back past that, um ... in terms of how, how in the past have you controlled that ... what kind of history do you have in terms of your own anger, those sort of things? Do you get angry, how do you get angry, all that?

O: Ja. I never vent my anger on any ... anyone. It's it's my w... it's a lot of er ... I, I do it on the sports field, soccer, I mean, I strive at winning, you know and that that is my only ... it never boils over into a work situation, I never had it at, at er... where I'm always, well, I did have my own business and I had a a lot of guys working for me and never, ever had worker/employer er ... bad relationships with any guy, I was always ... willing to listen and er ... it's even on the sports field, I strive at winning, you know. If you're gonna make silly mistakes I'll vent my anger, but then after the game it's ... it's all over, you know what I mean, if the guy comes to me and he says why did you shout at me 'cause I'm normally in in the in the captain's role or ... vice-captain's role or leading role. I was always given that role to play, be it on the field or be it in employment, so you know

I: So, so I suppose ...

O: I never really am. As it stands I've got no enemies. Not one whatsoever. And I'm That is why everybody was, the community was so, you know, shocked.

I: Mm. Mm.

O: Ja, that that is why they I mean I was always, not a quiet person, I'm not an introvert, but I'm also, I'm not a ... a loud person or, or, or, you know. Or a party, keep the party er ... going, or something, I'm not that type at home. I'm not quiet and I don't go into a a shell or ... No, I enjoy people's company. I, I ... like outdoors, ja. It's just that maybe I don't show it, you know.

CASE NINE: PRAVEEN

901

O: My father was traditionally aloof and I never really knew him. When he died I knew that I would have to look after my mother. Everyone looked up to me and I always was known to be the one who would look after my mother, um ... yes. So when I got money I would always give to her you know what I mean ... also because my mother is the one who I am very close to and she makes me feel good about myself ... but my father I didn't know....

I: You were saying that he was aloof - can you tell be more about that?

O: Well, he did his own thing ... he was old. He used to collect rents of the council people where I lived but he never did as well as he should, so I didn't really look to him. I think that he could have done a lot better if he made some money on the side. Everyone else was doing it ... you know everyone else would make more because they would manage to keep some money for themselves ... You know, I think everyone with money has to make a little on the side. I managed, though, to make it. I was doing very well. I had a really good job and everyone respected me for what I did You know, in the year I was there, I built up a whole system for the engineers where I worked and I was earning very well Is that what you wanted me to tell you?...

I: I was interested in how you thought about you father.

O: Yes, well, I used to try and please him and I think he liked me, but I always felt he was missing in my life. But our family, my mother, could have been a lot better off if he had done a few deals.

[Throughout this interview he portrays a clear sense of righteousness and an over-obliging need to please. I feel that I too have to do things right and fear that I may ask the wrong questions.]

902

O: But I never really had many friends when I was there. I just worked really hard. My boss would come in in the morning, I would have done all my work and they were always impressed. It would also make them look good because it was for the company I think basically I did most of his work I've

always worked hard, especially so I could see that it pleased my mother ... but it also paid off because I was earning well. But I think because I was doing so well in the company no-one believed that I could do such a thing ... the shooting, I mean ... but I think that I understand now ... although I know it was wrong.

I: Although you were doing so well, you didn't have anyone close to you?

O: Well, my mother was close, and I could confide in her ... but everyone else I was very popular though, and I was always doing things for people ... you know, to make them happy, like work ... but I would never get close, I don't know why. Even girls you ... I had a few girlfriends, but only short time ... I didn't let things get too deep ... anyway

I: You say, too deep ...?

O: Well, you know, I wanted to be on my own ... although have lots of people around me when I wanted to help them.

903

O: You know, I don't really have anything against white people, and I have a number of white friends My boss was white, and I would always do the right thing with him ... but these other guys were racist and that got to me It was never a big thing ... but after having that argument, which was just a little disagreement. It must have got to me I was doing so well there ... having some fun. I had some friends round from work and we were just sitting there talking ... then some guys came in and starting insulting me ... I just suddenly lost it ... and I ran upstairs because I had hidden my firearm up there I was shouting, but I can't remember much - I ... just that these whites had come into my house and insulted me made me so mad I ran outside shooting anything white.

I: What else do you remember?

O: After that I couldn't believe it ... what I had done ... I sent my friends home and the police came Everyone has forgiven me I think, though ... mainly because they know what type of person I really am I am someone who means well, and has always helped others.

APPENDIX B: TAT STORIES

CASE ONE: RALPH

Card 2

It is very traditional ... in the vicinity of church, because I can't see if it is a donkey or a horse. If it is a donkey it symbolizes the church and the presence of Jesus. The other woman is stressed or praying ... but I think she is stressed because she is not holding her hands in the manner of praying ... and the other woman with the books in the hand, she is concerned about the other woman.

Card 4

This lady is begging the man not to do something; the man just wants to fight. But the man is fighting with somebody else.

Card 6BM

These people it seems are having a war of words and they are both not happy, there is anger and hatred in their faces.

Card 12M

A man is sick and the other one is praying.

Card 13MF

This man has found that his wife has been murdered and he is crying. It seems as if people have been in the house and taken some items ... it was a robbery.

Card 15

This is a form - it is not human actually - it is a form after the death of somebody - it looks like a spook.

Card 16

This blank card I can say symbolizes that anything can happen. Anything can be there or not there. There is something that is present that you can't see ... you don't know what will happen tomorrow.

Card 17BM

Man is climbing - but because he is not wearing clothes ... he looks like a tribesman.

Card 18BM

This man is receiving some form of counselling.

CASE TWO: SIMON

Card 1

Quite a young man, ah ... maybe he is willing to play the ... what do you call it ... the ... violin. It's either that he is tired or other things on his mind and ... in the picture he looks drowsy and I guess most of the kids when you're small you look at the instruments you want to play with and things like that ... and you see other people playing it, and the problem is somebody has to teach you ... nobody can, so I guess you leave it alone ... like I've been through ... I've wanted to do things and ... parents are not willing to teach you and you say alright leave it, I can't afford it or whatever.

End? Looks like he is going to be disheartened, he'll watch people playing, and he will feel disheartened. I can't do it, other people can do it, and it does bother you a lot I guess.

Card 3

This picture could mean so many things ... it could mean ...(coughs) ... it's like looking at it as teenager, there is worries, like crying, it could be like abuse ... um, tired of the way of life ... and I guess sometimes ... I guess it is good to cry and ah ... to be alone ... and it could be, at times like this you could become suicidal or anything could happen The picture does show there is ... pain and hurt because you see the person lying there relaxing you know ... doesn't look like how normally a person would relax ... relaxing in a tired way.

Card 4

Here he is praying for the person, he could be sick. Um, praying ... or trying to get the person to sleep although I don't think so. This praying for the person, trying to speak to the person, but the person looks dead.

Card 5

Probably husband-wife situation. Um, probably an argument, the man seems to be tired ... and has turned wondering off ... this doesn't seem, he, doesn't seem to be right ... the lady seems to be asleep ... like a normal sometimes husband-wife situation It doesn't, you know, look like a happy situation. He has got his back and he is moving away ... doesn't seem to be happy about something.

Card 8

These are old pictures doctor? mmm

Um He feels much relaxed, probably his daughter and wife at the back, trying to get his I mean, trying to give him a hug to make him feel much better. He looks much more relaxed and ... (long pause) ... seems to be like anger in the male face, the female looks more like she is trying to calm the guy down ... and she seems to be trying to relax him ... it doesn't look like there is something serious that is going on ... it can be, you know handled ... either going to go away ... she is trying to keep him back.

He wants to go away, she is trying to comfort him.

CASE THREE: GRANT**Card 8BM**

Picture reminds me of a typical prison cell where a bunk, two guys are on the top and another guy is on the bottom, they seem to be ... one of the guys seems to have a sharp instrument pointed at the guy lying below him and he seems to be placing it in his stomach region. There is also a sort of warder, a lady ... or man depicted here ... a lady ... they also show a rifle. It seems these guys from the top are going to attack that man at the bottom. Because they have a sharp instrument. Hopefully this guard will turn around and see what they are doing.

CASE FOUR: BEN**Card 4**

This one is about a man and woman, either husband and wife, or could be from a brothel because there is a female in the back there sitting there with her legs crossed. Maybe he is not satisfied with her, the client he's got, and the other one now is trying to comfort him to stay and get his pleasure with.

Card 8BM

This one indicates a man lying on a table and doctors are operating on him because of a person that shot him or he is guarding him because he is a convict.

Card 13MF

This one is a ... indicates a woman lying in bed and a man just woken up or just finished making love to her and he is on his way out from a night of pleasure...

Card 15

This one here indicates maybe an undertaker standing by a grave and ... thinking about all the lost souls he has buried.

Card 17BM

This one indicates a man from the circus, performing for the audience and he has just finished his performance and he is climbing down the rope.

CASE FIVE: ANDREW**Card 6BM**

This is a story about a son and mother Looks like a dilemma in the family, or some problem they are trying to sort out ... looks like he has done something and they're having a discussion ... maybe came to get some advice or something. He asks his mother but she looks very stubborn.

Card 8BM

Don't know what to make of this one Maybe there was a shooting incident ... a young guy shot Maybe they're operating of the guy he shot.

CASE SIX: FRANK**Card 7BM**

Father is giving advice. The son will listen very diligently which shows that he will carry out whatever his father wants.

Card 6BM

This picture tells me that this is this guy's mother ... she has told him something that has made him think deeply. I see that by the tension in him and the mannerr in which he holds his hat.

CASE SEVEN: KEVIN**Card 1**

This is a boy sitting at home in his room from the look of his face he is sad or confused and is far away. He is looking at a picture his father drew for him. He is thinking back ... maybe his father is dead or at work or absent. This little boy needs to talk to his father.

Card 4

This man is very angry ... looks like he wants to kill someone. His wife is trying to show passion and says, please don't do it But this is not enough, it is out of control ... nothing can be done.

Card 6BM

This is an old woman, sad and distant about something Younger man who is the one who gave her the news. Both look very confused and sad ... I cannot say any more.

Card 7BM

A father is looking into his son's face. He looks troubled. Father has just stopped giving him advice. He needs the advice. You tell by the father's eyes that he had so much wonderful love to give to everyone.

Card 8BM

An operation ... a little boy with a concerned look on his face. Let's say it is his father on the table. He went hunting and got hurt. No, let's say a snake bit him and these two men are standing over him are his friends. One has a knife ... no, not a knife, a scalpel.

Card 12M

This little boy is my brother and a man is ... is my minister. My brother is sick and is busy dying but he is a strong believer and things will go wonderfully well with no problems.

Card 13MF

Let's say she is naked. The female must finish getting dressed he is wiping his face as if he has washed it. No, I'll change it The chair tells me he has been sitting there a long time - maybe she is very ill, saying her last words. He is grief-stricken - maybe it is a long illness.

Card 15

This is a cemetery. This is some kind of spirit. What I can't understand is why it is standing by the grave-stone ... because it is not human. I don't know how true this is but when you kill someone and the case doesn't get solved then the spirit just floats around ... (long pause) But I don't believe in spirits because I always used to hang out in the cemetery. This is not real.

CASE EIGHT: WAYNE**Card 1**

A kid is confused ... instrument, um ... he tried to play it but is confused ... he is looking puzzled, he found it unlike a guitar.

Card 4

Confrontation between husband and wife ... it appears that he does not want to be party to confrontation ... she is almost hanging onto ... saying, listen to me He doesn't want to enter into debate ... maybe he feels bad for turning away.

Card 6BM

This old lady is the man's mother. Things are serious because he getting strong advice from the lady. She is not tackling the issue head-on, she prefers not to look him in the eyes.

Card 8BM

(Long pause) Looks like a dream. It is a young lady in front. Probably had some evil thoughts about someone close to her.

Card 18BM

This man is feeling a lot of stress ... can see from all the hands ... it is as if the world is crumbling around him. Where he feels he is being stifled, can't come to terms with the situation as everyone is on him.

CASE NINE: PRAVEEN

Card 3BM

This is 'pathos'... like feeling sorry for the self derived from 'pathetic'. It is a collapsed, tired drug user. Given up hope.

Card 6BM

A typical family relationship between mother and son. There is lack of communication. He feels agitated because some rule is being applied and she is being rigid about it. They keep on missing each other and cannot relate.

Card 7BM

This looks like a father giving advice. The son will do whatever he says. But they do not face each other. They don't know each other.

Card 8BM

This is two different lifestyles. The one in the foreground seems to be a decent character, how one would see normal people. The persons in the background are portraying violence. It is the two sides of society. This is the underworld of murder and drugs and violence ... the people in the back appear to be content in what they are doing.

Card 13MF

This passion ... they have consummated some relationship. Woman's content and man is all dressed up. He has some sort of regret about the whole thing. She is not dressed up. She is even half-naked. She doesn't display much shame. The woman is a loser and is 'wanting'. He is much more of a decent character.

Card 18BM

I see a man resisting ... pulling ... heading in a forward direction ... a well-dressed man ... therefore people perceive him as a normal man. I don't think he is strong enough. He is not going to make it as opposed to the guy in the other picture, but, both are decent.

APPENDIX C: CONSENT FORM FOR RESEARCH PARTICIPATION

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

You have been selected to take part in a research project to do with an investigation into rage-type or 'sudden' murders. The aim of this research project is to develop a better understanding of these types of murders in order to prevent such acts and rehabilitate those who have committed this type of crime. This project is being run from the University of Durban-Westville and has been approved by Correctional Services.

If you agree to take part in the study you will be required to be interviewed 1-4 times. The interviews will be tape recorded but all personal details will be kept strictly confidential. Some of this information will be used in professional contexts (eg. conferences) to present the findings of this study however, the confidentiality of individuals will be maintained during such presentations. It is important to note that if you participate in this study:

1. Your consent will give the researcher access to your case file and other records.
2. Your participation, and the results of the study, will have no bearing on your parole details or the length of sentence you are serving.
3. You will not receive any reward, gift, or favour from the interviewer in exchange for the information you provide.
4. You will need to cooperate with the interviewer in answering questions about yourself.

Your participation will be a valuable contribution to research in this area and will contribute to future thinking about the rehabilitation of individuals who have been involved in rage-type or 'sudden' murders. Thank you.

I consent to participating in the above research and understand the conditions within which the research will be conducted.

Signature Date

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