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Serials: The contested and contextual meanings of seriality.

by

Rachelle MJ Larocque

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Examining Committee

Kevin Haggerty, Sociology

Bryan Hogeveen, Sociology

Rob Aitken, Political Science

Dedication

For Pierre, I know you're always with me.

Abstract

Systems of classifications are socially created and historically contingent. New classifications lead to the creation of new categories, new objects and new kinds of people. Over the last thirty years, some of the most successful categories have emerged from the study of seriality. This thesis examines the emergence of three categories of seriality, including serial murder, serial monogamy and serial arson through a genealogical analysis. This thesis argues that seriality is a complex category that involves a host of important attributes, traits, characteristics, social, legal and medical categories, institutions, expertise and knowledge. Combined, these factors shape our understandings and highlight the complexity of seriality by considering important aspects that are too often taken for granted. The focus on three diverse groups of seriality highlights the interdisciplinary nature of seriality and its growing dominance among both public and private discourse.

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Systems of classification are ubiquitous; they are entrenched in the structure of society. Classification of objects, ideas, and people are socially created and historically contingent. New classifications may lead to the creation of new objects, new categories and concepts, new kinds of people, and new ideas. For instance, Ian Hacking argues that the collection of statistics on deviance beginning in 1820 created new kinds of deviant behaviours such as prostitution, madness, homosexuality, and vagrancy (Douglas, 1986; Hacking, 1986). Over the last twenty years, “seriality” as both a category of criminal offense and a wider social phenomenon has become popularized by such notions as the serial killer and serial rapist.

This thesis studies the emergence of new categories of seriality. It examines some of the most successful categories to erupt in the last 20 years to try and understand if all categories of seriality are the same in their classifications. Politics of classification involve complex relationships between categories. When a new category is introduced, the epistemological domains of existing categories change and adapt. For example, what happens to the category of repeat offender when serial killer was introduced in the early 1980s? The creation of new categories is not always accepted and agreeable; rather, new categories are highly contested and debated. While some definitions and understandings will prevail over others, there is rarely one agreed upon definition about a category of thought and behaviour.

This thesis tries to understand how categories exist in relation to one another by focusing on three serial classifications, namely, serial killer, serial

monogamy, and serial arson. We know a little bit about the genealogy of the concept of the “serial killer.” There has been some writing about the emergence of this category of offender which emerged in the early 1980s.

While there is an abundance of research on social constructionism, little is as clear as Ian Hacking’s (2007) framework that describes the process for “making up people.” To clarify, “making up people” refers to how new classifications can bring into being a new kind of person (Hacking, 2007). In his account, “making up people” has five primary aspects. There is the classification into kinds of people, the individuals and people in the various classes, the institutions that do the classifying, knowledge about the people being classified, and experts in the administration of the classification (Ibid, 2007). Each of these aspects plays an important role in the making of a new category of person.

The first element of Ian Hacking’s framework is classification. While all humans categorize phenomena, the focus here will be on official classifications. Official classifications, “the categories officially adopted or approved by the state and incorporated into law and administration” (Starr, 1992:63) may give rise to several problems for institutions regarding which categories to adopt and which to reject.

The state is the main institution that creates official categories; it draws lines between kinds of people, objects and ideas when it formulates law, allocates benefits, collects statistics and sets criteria for employment or university admissions (Ibid, 1992). The categories that are adopted by the state are “sewn into the fabric of [...] society” (Ibid, 199:264) and the structure of institutions

where they influence our everyday understandings of our social environment (Douglas, 1986; Goodman, 1983; Starr, 1992). However, social categories are not always built within the structure of the institution. Durkheim and Mauss (1963) argued that social classifications are primal. Such classifications reflect the structure of society and can exist without mediation by the state (Bowker & Star, 1999; Durkheim & Mauss, 1983; Starr, 1992).¹ For this project, I focus on the role of institutions in creating categories because institutions have the most influence in this process. All classifications have consequences and official categories are particularly important in terms of exclusion and life opportunities (Starr, 1992). The type of category to which an individual is assigned may have serious implications for their identity since our sense of self is shaped by and dependent upon such categories. Jenkins (2000) argues that “[s]elf-identification is dialectically implicated in social organization” (21). The development of the racial classification system in the United States demonstrates the influence of categories in the process of self-identity. The “one-drop” rule created in the 19th century limited how an individual could self-identify. For instance, African Americans were required to self-identify as black under this rule (Davis, 1991). Their identities were attached to their social categories.

Official classifications involve a series of choices (Goodman, 1976) about domains of classification, identification of individual groupings, naming and the arrangement of domains and groups (Starr, 1992). First, domains of classification refer to the field in which the category is created. Starr (1992) argues that it would have been impossible to classify people by employment without the rise of the

division of labour. In fact, the category of occupation was originally rejected in the U.S. Congress since many Americans could not answer the question because their work life would not fit within the pre-established classificatory system (Cohen in Starr, 1992). Second, individual groups refer to how it is that people are assigned to a social group. Some people can be grouped together based on a common identity, while others will be grouped according to a legal status such as criminal.

My thesis examines those who are assigned by official agencies but is cognisant of how these can altar individual subjectivity. Third, naming refers to the different labels used to indicate a social category. A social category is not confined to a single name. One category may have multiple names which can have entirely different qualities (Ibid, 1992). For instance, serial offenders have often been called multiple offenders, dangerous offenders, repeat offenders, and risky offenders. The final choice is ordering or ranking which refers to how categories are arranged. For example, crime categories are meticulously ranked in relation to their degree and magnitude. Violent crimes are usually ranked as more serious than crimes of a non-violent nature. The four choices of official classifications are not mandatory for all classifications but they provide excellent insight into the complexity of categorization.

The second aspect of the “making up people” framework is the individuals and peoples in the classes. Classes of people are not always mutually exclusive. There will be cases that fall into several categories (Hacking, 2007). This is also

true regarding seriality; however, in most cases individuals will fall into one category and may begin to self-identify according to their category (Ibid, 1992).

Institutions make up the third aspect of the framework. Institutions are established organizations such as the state, academia, medicine, legal organizations, and the media. The state has an important role in developing official categories and managing people according to classifications. Official classifications create two kinds of political choices for the state: legitimate classification and legitimate inference (Ibid, 1992). Legitimate classification refers to state decisions involving types of groupings, names of classifications, and ranking of classifications (Ibid, 1992). Legitimate inference refers to how the state uses classifications to evaluate the behaviours of certain individuals. Risks can include committing a violent crime after being released from prison or dying prematurely after being insured (Hacking, 2007).

A fourth aspect of the framework is “knowledge about the kind of person in question [and] their characteristics” (Hacking, 2007:289). Hacking’s framework discusses two types of knowledge: expert knowledge and popular knowledge. I focus on expert knowledge and expertise because this type of knowledge is disseminated to the general public and applied in institutions. Moreover, expert knowledge may have a large impact on public understanding of a distinct type of person or category of behaviour which may not be known otherwise.

Methodology

My research consists of a genealogical analysis. Genealogy is a qualitative historical methodology often associated with Michel Foucault (and to a lesser extent Nietzsche) which “investigates how certain taken-for-granted truths and historical constructs have their roots in specific social and political agendas” (Saukko, 2003:115). For example, genealogy concerns itself with asking what historical processes, events or social forces produced the serial offender as a type of offender rather than tracing the linear development of this category of offence. Therefore, genealogy “studies history in order to challenge the present” (Ibid, 2003:116). In sum, genealogy involves a “history of the present” (Gutting, 2005:50; Kendall & Wickham, 1999:29). It begins with a contemporary idea, object, concept, classification, or person and works backwards to examine the historical events, social forces, and dominant discourses that allowed these to emerge in the contemporary form. Saukko (2003) suggests that genealogical analysis has two goals. First, genealogy opens up the space to think about categories differently given their historical constructs. Second, by unravelling the social and historical roots of certain ways of thinking, genealogy identify how these systems of thought could ostensibly support political regimes (Ibid, 2003). Rose (1996) argues that genealogy is inherently political since it dismantles authoritative forms of knowledge. The main theoretical framework guiding my research is social constructionism with Ian Hacking’s concept of “making up people” serving to direct my attention to key aspects of the powers and processes of official categories.

The main question guiding my research is what factors helped contribute to the rise of the concept of the serial as a distinct type of person or category of behaviour. Other sub-themes investigated include what institutional, technological, and/or epistemological pre-conditions allowed for the emergence of the concept of the “serial;” do classes of seriality differ from one another, if so, how; are they always the same in their specifics and implications; what are the social, legal, and institutional implications of something or someone being called a “serial;” how might the concept of the “serial” differ from “repeat offender.” While it will not be possible to address all such questions in every instance, attention to such issues will help to guide the inquiry.

Purposive sampling of research materials was employed since I selected and examined documents with a specific focus on seriality. I attempted saturation as a way to ensure that I examined an appropriate number and range of documents. Three “serial” categories are analyzed, namely, the serial killer, the serial monogamist, and the serial arsonist. In order to better understand the category “serial,” one non-criminal serial category is included. The inclusion of serial monogamy allows for comparisons across all three category to examine if the requirements for subscription as a “serial” are the same or different across various disciplines. Several types of documents are employed for genealogical analysis and these include books, biographies of the individual(s) who coined the term “serial,” government documents, legal proceedings, peer reviewed articles, non-peer reviewed articles, and documentaries. Examining the variable construction of the “serial” is particularly important given how new categories

create new ways to think about people, social processes, and influence our day-to-day interactions.

In what follows, I specifically discuss and analyze three different instances of seriality, primarily focusing on serial killer and serial monogamy. I examine the emergence of the serial killer by examining relevant literature, debates, and tensions across the different instances. I consider the resemblances and differences between the serial killer, the serial monogamist, and the serial arsonist. Primary attributes of serial murder are analyzed and distinguished from sub-themes not common to all serial killers. Subsequently, I consider the creation of the serial monogamist focusing primarily on the social agenda of the 1960s. My purpose in adopting such a narrow approach here is to focus on the changing morality, views, and opinions that permitted serial monogamy to emerge as a distinct category of thought and behaviour. In this section, I also investigate some social, legal, and institutional implications of being a serial monogamist. Finally, a brief coda is presented which examines serial arson as a further extension of the category of seriality. This brief discussion of serial arson further demonstrates the complex nature of “serial” as a classification.

Seriality and Murder

He was a man of many masks; a clown, a businessman, a political activist, and a serial killer. Physically abused and tormented by his alcoholic father, John Wayne Gacy turned his anger and abuse onto helpless victims. Incarcerated in the Iowa State Penitentiary for sexual assault and sodomy, John Wayne Gacy’s

imprisonment was soon followed by the divorce of his wife and the death of his father. Gacy would remarry and divorce once more leading his murderous tendencies to become more intense and habitual. In December 1978, Gacy was arrested for the murder of 33 young boys found raped, tortured, murdered, and buried in the crawlspace of his home where they were left to decompose while others were thrown into the Des Plaines River. On February 6 1980, Gacy's trial began in a Chicago courthouse where he pleaded not guilty by reason of insanity; however, his plea was quickly rejected. During his trial, a large crowd gathered outside the Chicago courthouse to cheer for Gacy's guilty plea and the request for the death penalty. On May 10 1994, Gacy was executed by lethal injection; his death was celebrated by the media and a crowd gathered outside Stateville Correctional Center in Crest Hill, Illinois.

Over the last thirty years, "seriality" as both a category of criminal offense and a wider social phenomenon has become popularized by such examples of serial killers. At first glance, the meanings and implications of this concept may appear obvious, but few, have analyzed in detail the rise of the category of the "serial killer."

The introduction provided a brief overview of systems of classifications and particularly Ian Hacking's important framework for understanding the emergence of new social phenomena. The following section examines one of the most important and familiar classifications of the last thirty years. The creation of the category of serial killer resulted in the emergence of new types of knowledge created by experts. This new knowledge created contestations and debates

surrounding serial murder through developing key themes essential to understanding serial killers. The creation of serial murder is not self-contained; rather it involves an intricate set of relationships across various classifications including other categories of seriality. Both commonalities and contradictions are discussed to illustrate the lack of continuity across the category of serial killer.

The social context of the 1960s

Between 1960 and 1980, American society underwent a demoralization and decline of social solidarity. During the late 1970s and well into the 1980s, several critical campaigns took place such as the gay rights referenda in Florida and California, negotiations over the Panama Canal, and protest against the Equal Rights Amendment. Similarly, the 1980s were fraught with moral panics over crack, sex and rock and roll, child sexual abuse, and a growing concern with the cause of social problems; deviancy and wrongdoing became viewed as personally errant (Jenkins, 1994). The tolerance of divorce, homosexuality, sexual liberation and drugs coupled with the rise of neo-liberal governance of individual responsibility resulted in the sense of a decline in an integrated society. Not surprising, this fundamental change provided a fruitful period for crime and violence to reach new heights. Indeed, in the early 1980s, American authorities, especially the FBI, drew attention to what appeared to be an 'epidemic' of serial murder cases (Jenkins, 1994). It was during this time that the term 'serial killer' was first coined by FBI agent Robert Ressler. Interestingly, Ressler named the serial killers he chased after the serial adventures he watched as a young boy in US cinemas (Jarvis, 2007).

During the 1980s, the FBI suggested that as many as 4,000 Americans a year under the age of eighteen were murdered, tortured, and mutilated by a serial killer. In fact, law enforcement officials argued that as many as 5,000 unsolved homicides committed by serial murderers occurred every year (Jenkins, 1988). The disintegration of the underlying social fabric provides the ideal conditions for the myths of serial killer panic to flourish. More specifically, social disorder provides serial killers with more opportunity for crime given weak moral codes and little social support from neighbours.

Institutions and definitional issues in the creation of the serial killer

The safety and security of society was a growing concern for the FBI during the time of the serial killer panic. Therefore, the emergence of the serial killer was influenced most profoundly by the FBI and the media who had a vested interest in this new category. In fact, the exaggerated crime rates were repeated extensively during the early 1980s throughout leading newspapers and popular television journalism. While serial murder is not a new phenomenon, the ways in which it was depicted aroused fear in the general public. These “new” killers appeared qualitatively different from their predecessors in that they were savage, bloodthirsty and callously mutilated their victims (Jenkins, 1988; Egger, 1998; Seltzer, 1998; Leyton, 2005; Schmid, 2005). It was advantageous for the FBI and law enforcement agencies to proclaim the existence of serial killers since political and institutional agendas were served by promoting serial killers as a distinctively social problem.

While the U.S. Department of Justice played a pivotal role in creating and maintaining the serial killer ‘scare’, the media also played a significant role in disseminating and promulgating the emerging myth. The role of the media can be expounded by examining the case of convicted killer Henry Lee Lucas. The case of Lucas became the most frequent vehicle for discussions of serial murder in the media at this time. The media paid attention to the demeanour of the killer, focussing on the lurid discussions of his crimes and frequently depicting Lucas as a wanderer, suggesting that anyone was a potential target at any given time. These statements play a pivotal role in creating and maintaining the serial killer “panic” despite the fact that few can accurately explain the serial killer as a distinct type of person. Serial killers are now national icons known by a large majority of the population. Historically however, multiple murder was the umbrella term used to describe all types of murder; serial, mass, and spree murderers did not exist as a distinct type of person or category of behaviour. The FBI Behavioural Analysis Unit (BAU) is the chief institution which defined different types of multiple murder. During the 1980s, the FBI conducted a large-scale initiative to study and document repeat offenders given that very little academic or professional research was dedicated to the subject.

Mass murder was defined as killings which involved the murder of four or more victims at one period of time. Both spree and serial killers were classified as repeat offenders by the BAU; specifically, they distinguished a serial killer from a spree killer based solely on the “cooling off” period – the length of time between each killing (Fox & Levin, 2005). A spree killer will murder for several

days without a break between his murders. Conversely, a serial killer will murder for days, months and years but will take breaks between his¹ killings during which time he maintains a seemingly normal life attending work and visiting friends or family (Fox & Levin, 2005).

The distinction between mass murder and serial murder is important as it serves the interests of the FBI which is legally responsible for crimes that cross state lines. By virtue of this new category, the FBI gained ownership of the category serial killer and became the leading expert on violent crime and serial offenders. This increased the FBI's image and provided them with national fame. The serial killer category is primarily an investigative tool used by law enforcement in trying to make sense of and investigate a pattern of killing. This category is especially appealing since it boosts the FBI's profile, provided them with a great deal of media attention and helps solve murder cases.

The category serial killer is also used by the media typically as a way to capture the mind of the public. There exists a symbiotic relationship between serial killers and the media (Gibson, 2006; Hickey, 2002); the media and serial killers feed off each other (Glyn Jones, 1992). Serial killer cases are the perfect story – gruesome, episodic and evil. The media provides in-depth details of the cases to the public which fuels their appetite for crime. The media sensationalizes serial killers rendering them celebrities; for instance, many serial killers are given

¹ The male pronoun will be used throughout the remainder of this section. It is appropriate given that the majority of serial killers involve male perpetrators.

nicknames by the media such as “the Son of Sam;” and “the Zodiac Killer” (Caputi, 1987; Guillen, 2002). While the literature does not adequately address rationales for portraying serial killers in this way, it has been argued that these portrayals make serial killers even more frightening and memorable in the minds of the public (Leyton, 2005). Additionally, the nicknames further serve to glorify and sensationalize them (Summerfield, 2005), which in turn increases the amount of coverage they receive in the media.

The creation of experts and new types of knowledge about serial killers

Academics also use the category serial killer when conducting research or experiments. It is through academic research that attributes and characteristics of serial killers are identified. Prior to the 1980s, there were no serial murder experts or group of people that worked to understand the psychology of the serial mind as the serial killer was not yet a category of thought. Since then however, interest in serial killers amongst the professions of criminology, psychology, law enforcement and sociology have grown exponentially. The Federal Bureau of Investigation prominently established the Behavioural Analysis Unit (BAU), a component of the National Center for the Analysis of Violent Crime (NCAVC). The BAU provides behavioural based investigative support through research, case experience and training to a host of crimes. When assisting a case, the BAU will help construct a profile of the perpetrator, analyze cases, assist with search warrants and expert testimony for court trials. One of the main tasks of the BAU is to conduct offender profiles based on research conducted by forensic psychologists and criminologists working with serial offenders.

There are several different types of offender profiling such as geographic profiling, and criminal profiling which are based on information acquired through research on various serial offender cases. The knowledge on which the BAU bases their profiles is all new information only recently acquired within the last 30 years and was contingent on the development of the serial killer as a type of person. For instance, geographic profiling can include information about the serial killer's disposal site, their spatial mobility as well as include information about other types of serial offenders such as serial rapists and serial arsonists (Canter and Youngs, 2008).

In addition to profiling, a plethora of books on serial killers and serial murders have emerged over the last 30 years. These specialized books on serial killers investigate their classification, their evolution, their childhood, and their different phases and typically include case studies of the most notorious serial killers (Vronsky, 2004). Elliott Leyton's (1986) famous book *Hunting Humans: The Rise of the Modern Day Multiple Murder* is one of the earliest and most well known serial killer books. It was one of the first to present serial murder as a significant social phenomenon rather than simply a psychological problem (Leyton, 1986).

The research conducted on serial killers by the FBI, law enforcement officials, criminologists and forensic psychologists led to the development of professional knowledge. These social and behavioural scientists developed the typologies of serial murder that highlights the motives that ostensibly influence offenders. These motives provide the offender with a personal justification for the

acts of violence he is about to commit (Holmes and DeBurger, 1988). The typology is as follows.

The first is the visionary type. This type of serial killer is impelled to commit murder because he has either heard voices or had hallucinations which urge him to kill (Holmes and DeBurger, 1988). For these offenders, visions can come from demons, UFO's, and even God. For instance, prolific serial killer Harvey Carignan killed six women due to the instructions he received from God. He believed that these women were "bad" women and it was God's instrument to do away with evil in the world (Holmes and DeBurger, 1988). This type of offender could be deemed psychotic and could certainly be defended by an insanity plea at trial.

The second is mission-oriented type. This type of serial killer is one who has a mission to fulfill or a goal to achieve which involves the murder of a certain group of people. This type of offender is not psychotic but may view himself as a vigilante eliminating society of undesirable and unworthy individuals who don't deserve to live with other decent human beings (Holmes and DeBurger, 1988). For example, there was recently a case of four young women who were murdered in similar ways. One was a known prostitute while the other three had reputations for casual sex encounters with males. These four women were murdered by someone with a personal mission to rid his community of filth and prostitutes. When the murderer was apprehended and questioned, he was not only aware of his killings but discussed them with pride because he rendered his community such great service (Holmes and DeBurger, 1988). This type of offender appears

seemingly normal often being described as a nice young man with a big heart who always lends a hand to others in the community.

The third is the hedonistic type. This type of offender kills for pure enjoyment and often leaves bizarre and striking physical evidence with the victims. For example, the nude body of a young woman was discovered in an alley; her body was mutilated and both breasts as well as her vagina were cut out (Holmes and DeBurger, 1988). Paraphilias such as necrophilia, dismemberment, anthropophagy, sadism, and other sexual perversions are prominent with this type of serial murder. This type of serial killer is often intelligent and geographically transient making it difficult for law enforcement to capture him (Holmes and DeBurger, 1988; Holmes & Holmes, 1998; Hickey, 2006).

Finally, power-control oriented is the last type. The power-control oriented serial murder receives gratification from the complete control of the victim (Holmes and DeBurger, 1988). Power-control oriented serial murderers include Ted Bundy and the Red Demon killer (Michaud and Aynesworth, 1983). During the killing of Kimberley Leach, Bundy's sexual pleasure came primarily from his ability to have complete control and power over her. Similarly, during his killings, the Red Demon killer would orgasm while performing picquerism on his victims (Holmes and DeBurger, 1988). The power-control serial murder is not psychotic and is aware of the rules of society but simply chooses to ignore them. He is most likely a sociopath and experiences an inflated sense of importance (Holmes and DeBurger, 1988; Hickey 2006).

While this classification systems for serial killers is useful in organizing existing data and assisting law enforcement, these typologies can also be problematic in that there can be overlap between two different typologies. Similarly, when condensing information into classifications and taxonomies, some information can become compromised due to the limited number of sub-groups created and the type of descriptors used. For instance, some typologies will primarily use information drawn from case studies while other typologies will focus on causes of serial murder. An additional problem is the lack of the precise number of serial murder typologies. Depending on the authority one chooses to read, the number of typologies can vary between 2 and 11 (Megargee and Bohn, 1979). Nevertheless, typologies are a good first step in trying to understand the psychology of the serial killer.

Research on serial killers has also yielded important general characteristics found among the serial killer population. First, most offenders are white and are between the ages of 25 to 34. They are usually intelligent, or “street smart”, charming and many of them are psychopathic or sociopathic. A selected number of serial killers are police groupies, that is, they are fascinated by police work and will sometimes inject themselves into the investigation (Holmes and DeBurger, 1988). Most serial killers have a preference for one type of victim; for example, Bundy prefers young women with long dark hair parted in the middle while Williams selected young black males (Holmes and DeBurger, 1988; Hickey, 2003; Hickey, 2006). Serial killers appear to be very mobile and geographically transient. Many of them are night hawks allowing them to stalk, and kill their

victims when the majority of people are sleeping. They are more likely to kill their victims in ways that are deemed personal and intimate such as with their hands (Holmes and DeBurger, 1988; Hickey, 2003). Many known serial killers were abused physically, sexually, or emotionally as children. Additionally, a number of serial killers abuse alcohol and drugs which may exacerbate their sadistic fantasies. Of the serial murderers who have seemingly normal relationships with women, these offenders will usually become involved with women who have no prior knowledge of their crimes or homicidal tendencies (Holmes and DeBurger, 1988; Hickey, 2003).

New knowledge about serial killers also includes the development of primary and secondary attributes that appear to be important fundamental characteristics of serial killers. The former involves characteristics that are common across a variety of serial killer classifications while secondary traits are found only within a small number of cases. At first glance, the attributes and traits of a serial killer may appear obvious; however, there is little commonality within serial killer classifications. Rather, a complicated set of relationships exists between primary and secondary attributes which together make up the category of serial killer.

Primary attributes of serial killers

The literature discusses various attributes and traits associated with serial killers. There are actually two levels of meaning associated with serial killers. First, there are very narrow definitions presented by criminologists and social scientists. Second, there are a host of other cultural, media, and academic

attributes that encompass practices and meanings that are not essential or evident in every serial murder case. Hence, some serial killer traits are main attributes while others are second order or sub-themes.

The number of victims is a main theme associated with serial killers; it is contained within most definitions of serial murder. Nevertheless, the precise number of victims is strongly debated in the literature. For example, the North American National Institute of Justice defines serial murder as two or more victims while the FBI suggests that three or more victims are required for serial classification (Kocsis, 2006). Jenkins (1994) argues that at least four victims are required for seriality while Egger (1990) suggests that two victims are sufficient for serial murder to take place. Unfortunately, the classification of serial killers based on the number of victims results in more contradictions than commonalities producing meaningless distinctions about serial killers. Moreover, comparative studies within criminology are difficult to undertake given the lack of agreement as to the appropriate number of victims required to define serial murder.

The relationship between the perpetrator and the victim is also a contentious issue. The following vignette illustrates the problems and complexities of this attribute.

Barbie and Ken. That's what the media called the two Canadian serial killers charged with murdering Leslie Mahaffy and Kristen French in the spring of 1994. Sex, torture, and rape were the main themes discussed in the death of these three young girls; particularly in the case of Homolka's younger sister Tammy who was offered by Karla to Bernardo as an early Christmas present. Some

authors disagree as to whether Bernardo and Homolka fit the criteria for being serial killers, the main area of debate being the familiar relationship between the killers and Homolka's younger sister Tammy's death for which no one was ever charged.

The relationship between the perpetrator and the victim is a contentious issue among academics. In particular, some literature on serial killers states that instances of serial killing must occur between a perpetrator and an individual unknown to him or her (Egger, 1990). That said, there is also research that fails to highlight this important distinction resulting in definitional issues surrounding serial murder. This qualification rules out serial killers who may have killed a family member, friend, or colleague. By that standard, female serial killers are effectively excluded from the serial killer classificatory system since they typically murder people with whom they are familiar including husbands, partners and their own children. For instance, "black widows" are female serial killers who murder a large proportion of intimate partners including husbands and lovers.

A classic example of this type of killer is best captured by Rudyard Kipling's famous line "the female of the species is more deadly than the male" (Schechter & Everitt, 2006:311) depicting the legendary Belle Gunness. Gunness came to the United States from a small village in Norway in 1881. In 1908, after a fire destroyed her farm, the remains of a dozen people were found all over her property including in the basement of her house as well as in her garden (Schechter & Everitt, 2006). The victims were largely Gunness' lovers and prospective husbands. After the murders, Gunness collected the victims'

insurance policies and looted their bank accounts. She subsequently murdered her own two children after purchasing their life insurance (Schechter & Everitt, 2006) and vanished without a trace.

The case of Belle Gunness presents difficulties with the qualification of unfamiliarity between perpetrator and victim. In particular, this case illustrates the complex relationships within the dynamics of seriality by highlighting that a case with the required elements of serial murder does not necessarily result in a serial killer classification. Rather, serial murder is a multifarious category that is not easily depicted as either black or white but instead includes various shades of grey.

Another main attribute of the serial killer classification is the cooling off period following a murder. Akin to the number of victims discussed in the literature, this particular category lacks consensus regarding the amount of time lapse between murders. For instance, Jenkins (1994) states that a period greater than seventy-two hours is required while Holmes and Holmes (1998) suggests a period of more than 30 days, with a significant cooling-off period between the murders. Unfortunately, Holmes and Holmes (1998) do not provide any suggestion as to how long or what a “significant period” may entail. Even the FBI fails to provide a set period of time; rather, they state that a cooling-off period can last for days, weeks, or months – and presumably for years” (Newton, 2000:205). Lack of knowledge defining a precise period of time to initiate a “cooling-off” period leaves the door open for various problems in serial murder statistics and

presents challenges for creating a solid classification system for serial murderers that is forthright and explicable.

Occasionally mentioned in the criminology literature is the requirement for a serial killer to murder his victims in diverse locations or settings. For instance, the FBI's official definition states that a serial killer must murder his victims in three or more separate events while Egger (1990) suggests that the murders must occur in different geographical locations. However, the requirement for different locations is seldom specified, leaving the question open for interpretation. The lack of concise definition illustrates the apparent ambiguity of the serial killer category as it is unclear if this qualification is required in all instances. What's more, this elusive criterion hinders the continuity that connects the category of serial killer.

The number of victims, cooling off period, different geographic locations, and type of relationship are generally agreed upon as consisting main attributes of serial killers. Yet, there is debate within each of these qualifications resulting in a complex understanding of what a serial killer consists of. The commonalities and contradictions found both within and across serial killer key attributes accentuates how categories are not naturally given; rather, they are created and shaped by public and academic discourse. Secondary attributes of seriality illustrate the complex nature of seriality; they highlight important traits of serial killers that help to untangle the constitution of the serial killer. They also reveal a vague understanding of one of the most important categories of the last 30 years.

Secondary attributes of serial killers

July 22 1991, the Milwaukee Cannibal's reign of terror is finally over. Seventeen young Asian and African American men and boys are dead. Jeffrey Dahmer is a name Milwaukee won't soon forget. This cannibalistic serial killer was particularly sadistic. He drugged, strangled, and dismembered his victims' bodies with an electric saw. Cannibalizing their bodies and performing necrophilia, Dahmer disembowelled them and had sex with their viscera. Some victims were even horribly killed through makeshift lobotomies in hopes of turning them into zombies.

Serial killer Jeffrey Dahmer engaged in various abhorrent sexual behaviours and paraphilias. These incommensurable behaviours are generally not evident in all serial murder cases; but they constitute important sub-themes within serial killer classifications and are often presented by the public to be synonymous with serial killing.

The number of victims, cooling off period, different geographical locations, and type of relationships are examples of main traits associated with serial killers. The serial offender's modus operandi is a sub-theme; it is a second order characteristic not contained within most serial killer definitions. However, one of the distinctive attributes of serial killer is that they have a massive media profile. Therefore, attention to the offender's method of killing is largely drawn from the media and the explosion of slasher films during the late 1980s and early 1990s. For example, *Silence of the Lambs* Hannibal "The Cannibal" Lecter plays an important role in conveying the serial killer's image as savage and violent by

engaging in acts of cannibalism, mutilation, and murder. As a result, features often associated with serial killers include brutal acts of dismemberment, torture, mutilation, and paraphilias. It is generally assumed that some serial killers will participate in these violent behaviours and derive some pleasure and gratification from them.

In particular, the media is the vehicle by which most serial killers achieve international fame. This is due to the fact that some characteristics of a crime generate more media attention than others such as violence, sex, unexpectedness, and gruesome details. By focusing on certain aspects of the crime, the media shapes the common understandings of serial murder by influencing how a serial killer is publicly perceived. The media's crucial role in giving serial killers notoriety is particularly true for those killers who contact the media by writing letters taunting the police, demanding attention, or boasting about their kills. A letter written by the infamous "Zodiac Killer" cleverly showcases the key role of the media in providing serial killers with national attention. On August 1 1969, the Zodiac sent three letters to the Vallejo-Times Herald, the San Francisco Times and the San Francisco Examiner with the salutation "Dear Editor, this is the Zodiac speaking." One of the letters states:

"I like killing people because it is so much fun it is more fun than killing wild game in the forrest because man is the most dangeroue anamal of all to kill something gives me the most thrilling experience it is even better than getting your rocks off with a girl the best part of it is thae when I die I will be reborn in paradice and thei have killed will become my slaves I will not give you my name because you will try to sloi down or atop my collectiog of slaves for my afterlife Ebeorietemethhpiti."

The publication of the Zodiac's letter in the newspapers influenced how he was perceived. In particular, the focus on killing as well as the grammatical errors suggests the presence of psychopathy or some other type of mental disorder. The sensationalization of serial murder tends to elicit the premature conclusion that the offender must have been "mad" (Dietz, 1986). It is common to hear one ask if he was "a psycho" when discussing a case of serial murder. This type of comment is most associated with Alfred Hitchcock's classic film "Psycho" (Schechter, 2003) which portrays a serial killer (based on real life killer Ed Gein) as being a psychopath. The trait of psychopathy is dominant in popular culture. For example, serial killer Richard "Night Stalker" Ramirez stated "serial killers have a dead conscience. No morals, no scruples, no conscience" (Schechter, 2003:15). The media, law enforcement, the public, and researchers commonly regard serial killers as "mad" based exclusively on their crimes which reflects the need to attribute these behaviours to alien forces through "the language of the gothic" (Schmid, 2005:6). Serial killers are regularly compared to a host of gothic monsters such as mythical werewolves, vampires, and the demons of the middle ages. These comparisons are made as a way to reassure the believer that people like them are incapable of such evil (Dietz, 1986).

During the 19th century, psychiatrists in Europe and America grappled with the problem of how to explain the psychology of criminals who are both irrational and intelligent, but who take pleasure in committing atrocious acts of violence so heinous as to appear insane (Schechter, 2003). As a way to understand this type of odd behaviour, experts coined the term "moral insanity."

Moral insanity is used to describe how an otherwise ordinary individual with advanced mental capabilities could deviate so far as to commit horrendous acts of violence while still remaining seemingly normal in their day to day activities. Generally, moral insanity defines patients as “having a good memory and understanding, ability to reason and contrive, much cleverness, and a general appearance of rationality, coexistent with very deficient control, absence of moral sense and human sentiments and feeling” (Schechter, 2003:17). Moral insanity provides a way of defending how “normal” people could suddenly transform into a different person. This new term clearly bolsters the fervent division between “us” and “them.” The media accounts of serial killers also reinforce the idea that serial killers are not like the rest of society, even to the extent that when a presumably normal person engages in extreme acts of violence they suddenly become insane, not mentally insane but rather morally insane. The following example highlights this distinction.

In the early 1870s, a twelve-year old boy named Jesse Harding Pomeroy attacked and tortured younger boys in Boston. He entered a reformatory and was released seventeen months later only to again commit gruesome murders of two young children. When arrested, a series of psychiatrists examined the boy and found that he had “sharp wits, a good memory, and no delusions whatsoever and possessed a knowledge of right and wrong in the abstract and had above-normal intelligence” (Schechter, 2003:17). At the same time, psychiatrists argued that Jesse was defective on the moral side due to the cruel nature of his acts, his lack of sensibility to the pain suffering of his victims, and the gratification he

experienced as a result of the torture he inflicted upon his victims. The combination of both his rational judgement and cruel nature of his crimes lead experts to conclude that Jesse was morally insane (Schechter, 2003).

The term “moral insanity” is no longer employed in academic research; rather, psychopathy is used to describe serial killers who exhibit symptoms similar to what was previously understood as moral insanity. The change from moral insanity to psychopathy is significant because it demonstrates that categories are continuously changing in relation to one another. Psychopathy encompasses a more serious classification than moral insanity in that it is associated with callous behaviour, persistent violation of another’s rights, lack of empathy or feeling for others, lack of remorse for any offense or behaviour, and an inflated sense of self (Cleckley, 1988; Blackburn, 1993). What’s more, the serial murder classification is also required to adapt to this new category since psychopathy is frequently cited by the media to describe serial killers. The growing psychologised culture also influences what attributes of seriality are included in serial killer classifications.

Some serial killer classifications consider psychopathy an important element of seriality. The absence of similarities in the media between ourselves and serial killers suggests there is a uniqueness attributed to seriality that cannot be found in “normal” citizens. Paradoxically, serial killers are seldom very different than the rest of the population; they look the same, they are employed, they are well educated, they engage in volunteer work, they are well known members of society and have families. Hence, mental disorder or “madness” is a

sub-theme of serial killers most notably popularized by the media and not found within most formal serial killer classifications.

Sexuality within serial killer classification is an additional sub-theme. The role of sexuality within serial murder is the catalyst through which seriality develops. For example: “He liked to parade around in high heels, bra, and panties. Serial killer Jerry Brudos has a foot fetish. Bludgeoning and strangulating his victims, Brudos engaged in sexually perverted acts with women’s feet. Nineteen-year old Linda Swanson’s foot was severed and kept in Brudos’ freezer while twenty-three-year old Jan Whitney’s breast was made into a paperweight. Brudos’ ritualistic behaviour of fantasy, murder, mutilation, torture, and sexual perversions resulted in three consecutive life sentences.

The sexual components of serial murder are well documented and aid in understanding some serial behaviour. These behavioural scripts result in the development of attitudes and values of sexual themes (Holmes, 1998). The four main sexual components include fantasy, symbolism, ritualism, and compulsion. The interaction of these four components provides an ideal scenario for serial victimization. These themes are discussed consistently across various groups of serial offenders, typically murderers and rapists. These elements speak to the importance of sexuality in the development of violent serial offences and are necessary elements of gratifying violence (Holmes, 1998).

The first sexual component is fantasy. “I knew long before I started killing that I was going to be killing, that it was going to end up like that. The fantasies were too strong. They were going on for too long and were too elaborate”

(Vronsky, 2004:285). The fantasy of the serial offender is generally sexual in nature. The serial predator's fantasy demands an escalation of violence to achieve a level of personal satisfaction which is capable of fulfilling the psychological addiction (Holmes, 1998). In fact, some serial offenders claim that the role of fantasy and violence are an addiction they developed since their debut as serial predators (Holmes, 1998). This is not unlikely given that with most addictions, the demands for gratification will continue to increase with subsequent use (or in this case, acts of violence); this in turn will result in increased personal violence in order to achieve ultimate pleasure. Fantasy is understood to be important for the development of serial behaviour because ideal fantasies are never truly realized to their full potential. As a result, a serial killer will continue to murder, sometimes changing his modus operandi to achieve the greatest sexual gratification possible. Unfortunately, this often results in disappointment because it did not parallel the offender's greatest fantasy nor does it provide him with enough gratification to be completely satisfied.

The second sexual component is symbolism. "The human meat, well, ah, it tastes like pork ... I don't know why I ate parts of people, but I just did" (Shawcross in Berry-Dee, 2003). For serial offenders, sex is symbolic and can be divided into two types: fetishes and partialisms. Both of these are paraphilias or sexual perversions. Fetishes are one type of paraphilias; there are numerous others involved in serial murder such as cannibalism and necrophilia. A fetish involves viewing an inanimate object in a sexual manner and can be erotically endowed, examples include shoes, panties, and women's clothing (Holmes, 1998). The

fetish of the killer becomes part of the fantasy and needs to be present during the execution of the murder if the act is to be gratifying.

The third sexual component is ritualism. While ritualistic behaviours such as shaving, showering, and eating breakfast are all part of the serial offender's everyday life, serial killers also engage in ritualistic criminal behaviours such as stalking, predation, and disposal of the body. The latter appears to be most important for the execution of the crime (Holmes, 1998). For instance, John Wayne Gacy turned his murder into a monstrous ceremony by reciting the Twenty-Third Psalm ("The Lord is my shepherd") while slaughtering his victims whereas Albert "Boston Strangler" DeSalvo left his victims looking like gift-wrapped holiday presents usually tying the ligature around his victims into a big ornamental bow (Schechter & Everitt, 2006). These ritualistic behaviours are important because they help to establish and set the mood for the fantasy and the symbolism to be realized. If something or someone interrupt one's ritualistic criminal behaviour, then the act of murder would not provide the required satisfaction and the offender may be forced to victimize again. If the ritualistic behaviour provides the appropriate amount of gratification, the serial offender will continue to engage in the same ritual. For example, one serial killer murdered white elderly women following them after having been out drinking. He would strip them of their clothing from the waist down, lift their blouses and leave their identification and car keys on their chests. This ritualistic behaviour was constant and rarely changed (Holmes, 1998).

The last sexual component is compulsion. “It all happened so fast. Once I started, I could not stop. It went so fast” (Berry-Dee, 2003). Compulsion is the strongest component of all because it is the end result of the act of serial murder. If the elements of fantasy, symbolism, and ritualism are present and interacting and the component of compulsion is thwarted, the thirst for satisfaction will be insurmountable. Compulsion is so strong that some serial killers have suggested that it takes on a life of its own. For instance, serial killer Ted Bundy calls this part of his personality “the Entity,” while other serial killers call it “the Beast” and “the Shadow” (Holmes, 1998). Ted Bundy’s escape while on trial for murder is the prototype of the compulsion component. During his incarceration of more than two years, Bundy escaped and traveled to Florida where he attacked four women, killing two at the Chi-Omega Sorority. The crime scenes for the two slain victims did not reflect any of his past crimes; however, three weeks later Bundy kidnapped and murdered a twelve-year old girl in a way that reflected his crimes prior to the Sorority killings. This tail of events demonstrates the strength of Bundy’s compulsion to kill. Once his compulsion was satisfied at the Sorority killings, he returned to psychological peace which explains why his last killing was more akin to his earlier murders where he was calm and in control. If the demand for murder is not satisfied, the killer’s compulsion will grow and result in extreme brutality and victimization.

Serial murder is a legal category created most prominently by law enforcement officials and further developed by researchers. Serial murder is often stranger-perpetrated indicating that this form of crime does not require

premeditation. More accurately, it tends to reflect irrational motives in a depersonalized relationship to the victim (Holmes & DeBurger, 1988) suggesting that anyone could be the next victim of a serial killer's destructive path. All of these characteristics highlight the apparent inevitability of seriality. What's more, the media's focus on the inevitability of another murder coupled with the glorification of the crime has raised the serial killer to an entirely different pedestal than its criminal counterparts.

Part of the differential way serial killers are understood can be attributed to cultivating a fear of their unpredictable behaviour. Since they are viewed as being unpredictable, it follows that their behaviours cannot be controlled or stopped by anyone other than themselves. Mass murderers in contrast, provide the public with a "sort of comfort" in that generally they will kill themselves during the commission of their crime. Therefore, mass murderers most likely will not act again while serial killers can continue to murder for years upon years with anyone being the next target. This paralyzing fear results in a perpetual state of trepidation and anxiety due to the incessant chance of another victim. The state of uncertainty perpetuated by the serial killer removes control from each individual and places it in the hands of the offender, thereby holding the entire city hostage.

As we will see, serial arson and serial monogamy also contain the element of inevitability; however, arson is a unique case since fires can occur for a variety of reasons including accidents. As a result, serial arsonists are much more difficult to identify.

The concept of inevitability as it applies to serial offenders can be better understood by the way it is discussed in the literature. Books and journal articles written about serial killers focus on specific details of the crime such as motives, modus operandi, number of victims, geographic profiling, and the psychological aspect of the perpetrators such as their state of mind, future trends, and case studies of notorious serial killers in North America and around the world. There is frequent discussion about treatment for sex offenders despite the fact that some authors and experts are sceptical of their usefulness; however, for very different reasons, there is rarely if ever a discussion about treatment for serial killers or serial monogamists.

The lack of rehabilitative programs or optional treatment for serial killers is based on the sense of compulsion to the point where it is meaningless to discuss potential rehabilitation options because they simply will not work. In other words, serial offenders are untreatable. While the literature suggests that seriality implies something inevitable, this is not always the case in practice such as the case of infamous Canadian serial killer Karla Homolka. Homolka was charged with the rape and murder of two teenage girls and suspected of killing her own younger sister in Toronto Ontario Canada. Karla Homolka is by definition a serial killer; she killed three or more victims with a cooling off period of 72 hours between her crimes. She was sentenced to 12 years in prison where she fulfilled the mandate of her sentence and was released into society in July 2005. As of yet, Karla has not committed another murder or other crime of which we are aware. This indicates that those classified as serial offenders do not necessarily recidivate.

These four sexual components are secondary attributes of serial killers; they illustrate the minimal continuity and intricacy throughout seriality. Nonetheless, they play an important role in differentiating serial offenders from other types of offenders such as repeat offenders or recidivists. Similarly, these four components are essential for the gratification of violent acts and for fulfilling serial killers' psychological needs. These components build upon one another, fantasy forming the basis for the subsequent components. A deficiency in one component could considerably affect another component; if any are components left unsatisfied, a fury of violence could erupt.

To this point, I have set out that the understanding of serial murder involves both main themes essential to its continuity such as the number of victims; the relationship between the perpetrator and the victim; the cooling off period; different geographic locations, and also sub-themes such as the modus operandi; media profile; sexual components; and the compulsion of seriality, all which illustrate the complex nature of serial murder.

Seriality is not a stand alone category but exist in a series of complicated relationships with other important social and psychological categories such as recidivist, sadist, and addict.

The offender's psychological drive is an additional second order category that some authors argue is important to understand serial murder (Kocsis, 2006; Petherick, 2006). The propensity to reoffend or recidivate suggests that serial crime is not simply the occurrence of several consecutive crimes committed by one person; rather, serial crime involves a specific inner drive which only lends

itself to certain types of crimes such as murder, arson, and rape given their intrinsic psychological functioning. It is thought that other sequential crimes such as theft as well as breaking and entering lack this psychological propensity for recidivism. Therefore, this approach suggests that seriality is inherently psychologically motivated; serial criminals are motivated by psychodynamics rather than by profit or any other motive found in various other typologies (Kocsis, 2006).

Recidivism is a key social category that is subsumed under the larger serial category. When speaking about serial murder, it is generally understood that a serial killer must necessarily recidivate in order to continue killing. In that sense, serial murder duplicates recidivism as a killer cannot become “serial” without reoffending. There are however, two restrictions in how recidivism and seriality are understood that are important to note here. First, while recidivism is commonly referred to as committing any other crime, seriality implies engaging in another instance of the same behaviour. The narrow definition is appropriate here as a serial killer will recidivate by murdering another victim. Second, recidivists are typically inmates released from prison will commit another crime subsequent to their release; however, serial killers are rarely imprisoned and then released. Accordingly, recidivism as it relates to seriality does not necessarily include a term of imprisonment. Rather, any second murder is enough to classify a serial killer a recidivist.

Sadism is another important psychological trait that is also related to seriality. Sadism is characterized by “a pervasive pattern of cruel, demeaning, and

aggressive behaviour” (Kocsis, 2006:74). Sadists take pleasure in torturing others through physical violence, psychological abuse or humiliation. This type of behaviour is most apparent in serial murder and serial rape; it is not usually characteristic of serial arson since the majority of these offenders do not become physically aggressive with their victims. Rather, serial arsonists commit their crimes from afar and often hide from authorities in order to watch the fire to admire the pace and destruction of the flames. Sadism is therefore yet another psychological trait that is subsumed under the larger category of seriality.

The discussion has revealed that seriality involves a constellation of important psychological traits including recidivism, sadism, compulsion, and psychopathy. Given the apparently obsessive and compulsive nature of seriality, one final key social category that needs to be addressed is addiction. Serial killers draw upon our understanding of addiction. It appears that that they will continue to kill until there is an “intervention,” that is, apprehension by law enforcement. For instance, Dr. Harold Shipman, Britain’s worst serial killer, killed 215 people over a span of 23 years; including 171 women and 44 men. An inquiry into Dr. Shipman’s life and murders revealed that it is possible that he was addicted to killing much like he was addicted to pain killers (Ottley, 2002; Sitford, 2000).

An addiction to killing ostensibly develops in a similar way as an addiction to drugs or alcohol. A serial killer may begin to experiment with murder, most often targeting small animals. Once he can no longer attain the highest level of gratification, our understandings of serial murder suggest that he will typically turn his attention to humans. Sometimes they will kill for the first

time by accident (Vronsky, 2004). After their first murder, serial killers appear to find themselves increasingly addicted to murder in “an intense cycle that begins with homicidal sexual fantasies that in turn spark a desperate search for victims, leading to the brutal killing, followed by a period of cooling off and a return to normal daily routine” (Vronsky, 2004:11). Once the killing cycle begins, experts suggest it is rarely broken. With time, serial killers are understood to become trapped in their addictive cycle and their behaviours become more frenzied. Subsequently, the violence escalates and the pace of the murders increases exponentially in order to achieve the greatest satisfaction and fulfill their sexual fantasies (Vronsky, 2004). This cycle of killing may continue for months or even years. Addiction also appears to be present in other serial categories such as monogamy and arson. Essentially, serial monogamists appear to be addicted to monogamous relationships. They will enter a relationship for a brief period of time and then suddenly it will end and shortly after another relationship will begin to flourish. Similarly, our understandings of serial arsonists suggest that they engage in cycles of violence in order to fulfill their arsonist addictions.

Despite the fact that addiction and seriality appear to be so closely connected, addiction is merely one component of seriality. The interrelationship between seriality and addiction exemplifies the complex shifting and overlapping nature of social categories. Specifically, the sub themes involved in serial murder tell only a partial story; it is the combination of both key attributes and secondary attributes that accurately make up our understanding of different manifestations of seriality.

Victim selection is the final secondary attribute that encompasses serial murder. While this attribute is highly debated, there is some literature suggesting an offender will select a victim that most resembles his “ideal” type. The more the individual resembles this ideal victim, the greater the sexual gratification. Some authors feel the extreme focus on victim selection is inappropriate as serial killers will change their victim type often throughout their killing spree. Such change can lead law enforcement officials’ astray and creates unnecessary panic in the community. For example, one serial killer stated that his ideal victim type is “blonde haired, blue-eyed, unmistakably young, very definitely female, cheerleader type. But if she was not available, another type would do” (Holmes, 1998:107). Since the offender could not find his ideal victim type, he simply altered the victim selection from ideal to what is available at the time (Holmes, 1998).

The type of victim selected by a serial predator will sometimes reflect the offender’s views or opinions on certain social issues. For example, one offender stated that he chose to victimize prostitutes because they were responsible for venereal diseases while another victimized drug users because they were responsible for providing young children with illicit drugs (Holmes, 1998). While victim selection is helpful for some serial killer investigation since it can help law enforcement officials to narrow down other potential targets; victim selection appears to be more important in assisting investigators with serial arsonist cases where the victim selected allows investigators to better understand the identity of the arsonist.

It's been established that sexuality and sexual components consist of secondary attributes of seriality. Nevertheless, the relationship between sexuality and murder is far more complicated. This complex relationship will be examined next.

The rise of sexual serial murder

Sexuality and serial murder are seen to be interrelated; they share a mutually reinforcing relationship with one another. In this instance, sexuality provides a framework to better understand the complexity of seriality by viewing sexuality as an enabler for serial murder rather than a just component.

Since time immemorial, murders have been sexually motivated. For instance, in the 15th century, Gilles de Rais, a nobleman and confidante of Joan of Arc, tortured, raped, and murdered more than 800 children. He derived great satisfaction from sadistic and necrophiliac acts with the dead bodies of the children (Holmes and Deburger, 1988). Similarly, the 19th century "Ogre of Hanover" whose real name was Fritz Haarman, sodomized and murdered scores of young men by ripping out their throats. Perhaps the most famous sexual serial killer of all was the infamous Jack the Ripper who in 19th century England murdered and mutilated prostitutes in the impoverished Whitechapel district.

The term "lust homicide" refers to a murder that is sexually motivated (Hazelwood and Douglas, 1980). They are sometimes referred to as sexual serial murders since these types of horrific murders always involve an element of sexuality and have captivated the mind of the

public through various blockbuster hits as *Silence of the Lambs* and *Natural Born Killers*. While it might appear as though all serial murders involve an element of sexuality, there are indeed serial killers who do not involve sexuality into their crimes. These types of killers will be examined further when speaking of serial killer typologies which have developed recently as a result of research by criminologists, law enforcement officials and psychologists. That being said, the majority of serial killer cases discussed in the media involve an aspect of sexuality, this is one of the most important factors in helping a story to achieve popularity. The primary difference between serial murder and sexual serial murder is the presence of an element of sexuality leading to the fulfilment of a fantasy. Specifically, in sexual murder the goal is to kill the victim as part of a ritualized attack. For this type of offender the primary motivation is acting out the sexual fantasy that has preoccupied him for some period of time (McNamara and Morton, 2004).

The role of sexuality in the creation of the serial can be included to represent more than just a component. It can be viewed as forming the context that allows serial killers to develop. This context where serial killers are permitted to be created, developed, and celebrated is what Jane Caputi refers to as the “age of sex crime.” Specifically, “the age of sex crime” has opened up a space within culture that allows serial killers and sexual serial killers to be viewed as cultural icons which legitimizes male violence against women (Caputi, 1990). Caputi’s argument suggests that sexual serial murder “is a product of the dominant culture. It is the ultimate expression of sexuality that defines sex as a form of terror that

constructs and maintains male supremacy” (Caputi, 1990:2). In this light, serial murder is rooted within a patriarchal and male dominated society where people who torture, rape, and murder are most predominantly men while the victims of such heinous acts are principally women and girls (Caputi, 1990).

Rather than sexuality being essential for the serial offender, patriarchy and male dominance are understood to be important precursors for the development and creation of the serial criminal. For instance, some argue that it is not until 1888 in London that the idea of the sexual serial offender first took shape as a cultural icon. The serial killer’s creation, development and enduring popularity is established in the patriarchal foundations of the time, that is, “his essential meaning is as an emblem of misogynist terrorism” (Caputi, 1990:3). Therefore, it could be argued that misogyny, patriarchy, male domination, and a culture that tolerates, promotes, immortalizes, and celebrates sexual serial offenders such as Jack the Ripper, Ted Bundy, Jeffrey Damher and Paul Bernardo is the real catalyst in the creation and endurance of the serial killer. Caputi clearly articulates this when she states “it is mythically necessary to leave the paternity of these killers nebulous and even multiple, for their true father is indeed a collective entity –the patriarchal culture that has produced the serial killer as a fact of modern life” (Caputi, 1990:8).

According to Caputi, societal failings such as sexual serial killers can help explain what scientists in the 19th century called “moral insanity;” rather than evil being a result of deviant or “morally insane” men, it is a cultural evil rooted in the systems of male domination and patriarchy reproduced and maintained by society.

It would follow that primitive legal systems and more egalitarian societies should see less serial murders occurring in these societies because the elements required for the serial killer to develop are absent (Vago and Nelson, 2004). Caputi's argument provides a unique perspective on the role of sexuality for the development of the serial killer and highlights the ways in which society can be influential in this process.

Caputi's argument fits nicely with feminist literature on female seriality. First wave feminists addressed the liberation of women and equality of females with the right to vote, the right to equal pay for work, fair hiring and equal opportunities (Vronsky, 2007). First wave feminists (also called liberal feminists) associated the rise in female criminality with the liberation of women. They argued that women became free and asserted their independence and equality to men (Vronsky, 2007). According to Freda Adler, female violence was viewed as self-empowerment. Specifically, women were ready to compete with men by their rules, and this meant that women would have to be as aggressive as the male criminal (Adler, 1985). This came to be known as the "liberation hypothesis."

Second wave feminists viewed female violence and aggression in a very different way. According to second-wave feminism, women had to liberate themselves from the oppressive male hegemony and to identify themselves as a unique collective (Vronsky, 2007). Second-wave feminists viewed female violence as self-defense against a patriarchal system of male domination (Vronsky, 2007). Therefore, the female killer was transformed into the victim and the male victim into the perpetrator. As feminist argues "Women do kill. And

their motives can usually be attributed to a very specific set of circumstances, underlying which are American principles of economics and property ownership, firmly legitimated by media coverage ... the basic issue is almost always one of survival” (McWhinney, 1993:48). Feminist views of female aggression do not provide room for female killers. As Patricia Pearson states “women were not to be held as men’s equal in villainy, they were to be shown as men’s victims” (Pearson, 1998:229). This view of women continued to be supported in new feminist analysis of female aggression. In particular, new feminists study explained female-perpetrated homicide as being an act of self-defense and rebellion against a long-standing tradition of male hegemony, rape, and battering at the hands of the male population (Vronsky, 2007).

Given that feminism has been so intimately connected with a political project that highlights violence against women, it is not surprising that feminists disregard women as being aggressive, violent and murderous for no apparent reason. As the American Civil Liberties Union highlights, most death-row women have killed an abusive husband (Tyson, 1996). This statement can be read as implicitly absolving female serial killers of responsibility by attributing their actions to the larger patriarchal framework. In some instances self-defense may be the case but generally women serial killers qualify under the same restrictions and qualifications as their male counterparts.

The difficulty in depicting women as serial killers is not solely influenced by feminism; part of the explanation is found in how we view serial killers more generally. The notion of the female serial killer has not entered the popular culture

consciousness nearly as rapidly as the male counterpart. Women killers do not alarm us in the same threatening way as male serial killers despite the fact that nearly one in every six killers in the United States is a woman (Hickey, 2002). Women serial killers are depicted in a comic or titillating way (Vronsky, 2007). For instance, the nicknames we give male serial killers are violent and aggressive (Jack the Ripper; the BTK killer, the Boston strangler) while the female nicknames are soft and flippant (the Barbie killer; Lonely Hearts killer; death row granny). Female serial killers are not taken as seriously as male killers, this is usually in part attributed to female's killing family members or intimates while male's usually murder strangers (Vronsky, 2007). Additionally, violence is still typically associated with males.

The rise of feminism and popular culture has certainly been influential in the debates and contestations over what or who constitutes a serial killer. Despite the fact that women killers often qualify for serial status, they are still regularly excluded from serial killer classifications. The debates and discussions regarding female seriality again illustrate the lack of continuity within seriality and the role of gendered expectations in such typologies.

The complex nature of the category serial killer was explored in this section. This category is important since it is the most familiar and most common category of seriality. The creation of new classifications results in new knowledge about a particular social category. In line with Ian Hacking's framework, the creation of new knowledge about the serial killer is primarily developed by experts and leading institutions such as the FBI and academia. This new expertise

about the serial killer appears to involve both primary and secondary attributes. Primary attributes are understood to be traits found across many serial killer classifications while secondary traits involve a host of cultural, social, and academic attributes confined to a small number of classifications. Given that classifications are not naturally given categories but are rather shaped by other important social categories, the category of the serial killer appears to involve important psychological categories. These psychological categories include psychopathy, compulsion, sexuality, and addiction and are understood to include large amounts of historical variability.

The role of sexuality and the rise of feminism were also examined as being influential in our understandings of serial murder. The rise of feminism appears to contribute to an understanding of female killers as being victims of serial murder rather than perpetrators. The apparent exclusion of female killers from serial killer classifications illustrated the complex nature of seriality and the interrelationship between classifications. In essence, the examination of a variety of elements involved in seriality illustrates the larger argument here that seriality is a complex social category that is shaped by a series of other important classifications. Serial murder is interesting for many reasons; it is one of the most influential social categories in the study of seriality. The manifestation of seriality is also found in serial monogamy. This type of serial behaviour is qualitatively different from serial murder, but it also contains some of the same elements which we will now explore.

Seriality and Monogamy

Serial monogamy, the consecutive engagement of one monogamous relationship to another, is a less well known type of serial behaviour. Primarily influenced by the emergence of the sexual liberation movement of the 1960s and further supported by increasing rates of divorce and remarriage, serial monogamy embodies a relationship style employed by both men and women of all ages. Unlike its serial counterparts, this type of serial behaviour has received little academic research or public attention. It does not capture the mind of the public in the way that gruesome acts of violence or fires raging over homes and personal property. It does not hold a city hostage while a murderous psychopath fulfills his violent sexual fantasies.

The previous section on serial murder discussed the complex nature of seriality by highlighting various important social and psychological elements vital to the creation of the serial killer. The category of serial murder plays an extremely important role in shaping our understanding of seriality. Indeed, some of the attributes associated with serial murder appear to manifest themselves in serial monogamy. Unlike serial murder, serial monogamy is a relatively new social category with little or no academic research. Therefore, the majority of the research used in this section to discuss serial monogamy is taken from online blogs and popular culture discussions. A large portion of the material in this section is taken from historical accounts of the changing patterns of monogamy. Given the lack of available literature on serial monogamy, this section presents a more focused and narrow account of serial monogamy primarily paying attention

to the changing social context. This narrow examination of serial monogamy is still able to demonstrate how classifications change over time and are often shaped and created by a myriad of other social categories, institutions, and people. This section first focuses on the emergence and social context of the practice of serial monogamy by discussing its historical roots and changing social patterns. It also highlights important debates and tensions relevant to the emergence of liberal sexual thought. The decline of marriage and the increase in divorce and remarriage is also examined to understand how serial monogamy is perpetuated. Finally, I turn my attention to the creation of the category of serial monogamy by examining definitional problems surrounding serial monogamy and the creation of what Ian Hacking calls experts and knowledge is also explored.

The sexual revolution, social change, and the beginning of serial monogamy

The beginning of serial monogamy cannot be pinpointed down to a specific date or year, but can be discussed within a larger framework of social change and liberation which took place most prominently between 1960 and 1980. Since World War II, social, cultural, political and religious shifts in moral attitudes and views on sexuality and its associated codes of behaviour have been accelerating. While the sexual revolution and its constituents were primarily responsible for the creation of serial monogamy, the conservative period that existed prior to 1960 also played a key role in its creation (Escoffier, 2003).

The Industrial Revolution during the 18th and 19th century and the growth of technology, medicine and health care resulted in new material lifestyles along with new social lifestyles. The increase in technology and health care led to the

creation of better contraceptives being manufactured for women due to the advances in the development and production of rubber. This new advancement allowed the production of condoms to be used by the populace to help women and men prevent pregnancy at a low cost (Setzer, 2005). The period that existed between 1930 and 1950 was fraught with traditional and conformist ideas around sexuality and human sexual behaviour. The invention of the television and its widespread use throughout the 1950s and 1960s introduced the vast majority of people with ideas, thoughts and behaviours not previously know. It provided a medium for people to become aware of and engaged in the new counterculture which was beginning to take shape due its broadcasting by radio, newspaper, television and other media outlets. For example, in 1964 the Beatles arrived in the United States and were introduced on the Ed Sullivan Show. Upon the completion of the program, the Beatles were a huge hit; forty million Americans tuned in to watch the show and began to adopt a more liberal moral perspective. The real change in moral attitudes would take much longer to develop, but the invention of certain media outlets certainly helped to speed this process along. The Pharmacological Revolution's advancement in chemistry, pharmacology, as well as progressive knowledge of biology and human physiology led to the discovery and creation of the first oral contraceptive known as "the pill" (Escoffier, 2003).

Some early commentators believe that the sexual revolution of the 1960s was in fact the second sexual revolution, the first one having taken place during the Victorian era between 1870 and 1920. The second sexual revolution, occurring between 1960 and 1980, was much more sweeping and exerted a larger

degree of change upon society in a broad range of areas ranging from sexuality to health care. Profound shifts and changes occurred within the traditions, customs and attitudes towards women's sexuality, gay liberation and homosexuality as well as freedom of sexual speech for the creation and use of pornography and other obscene sexual material (Escoffier, 2003). Several developments were crucial in the culmination of the sexual revolution, namely, the contribution of the intellectual work of Wilhelm Reich; research on sexual behaviour by Alfred Kinsey; the publication and dissemination of books with erotic content; the incessant battles and social unrest of pornographers, literary writers, singers, songwriters, media producers, and performers; the gay and lesbian liberation movement; the women's movement; and the increasingly dominating cultural atmosphere referred to as the counterculture (Escoffier, 2003; Allyn, 2000).

During the 1960s, most thinking about sexuality and human sexual behaviour was influenced by the Freudian tradition. This tradition focused on "repression and sublimation to control unruly libidinal energies transforming sexual energies into cultural energies" (Escoffier, 2003:1). In due course, Freud believed that sexual repression and sublimation were essential for the survival of modern society (Escoffier, 2003). One of Freud's most brilliant and invigorating protégés, Wilhelm Reich, continued Freud's work with a more radical outlook than his predecessor. Unlike Freud, Reich believed that sexual repression had an extremely detrimental effect on society sometimes leading to authoritarian behaviour such as fascism and capitalist political domination. This type of behaviour was a result of distorted psychological development (Escoffier,

2003). He argued that “modern civilization demanded excessive sexual repression, rendering individuals passive consumers of broader conservative social forces” (Garton, 2004:220). Reich’s views and thinking on sexuality influenced many of the people involved in the sexual revolution. His ideas and beliefs were shared by many. Reich’s perspective on the significance of sexual repression was reinforced by Alfred Kinsey’s intellectual and experimental research.

Kinsey, an entomologist and gall wasp expert, began his research on sexuality in the 1930s. He published *Sexual Behaviour of the Human Male* (1948) and *Sexual Behaviour of the Human Female* (1953) which both received attention from both the scientific and popular communities (Garton, 2004). His findings were very controversial among the general and scientific community. Some religious groups and conservatives criticized his volumes for being a “disgusting prurience [and] an attack on Western Family. [Kinsey was called] a menace to society” (Garton, 2004:203).

Kinsey’s research was complex and multi-faceted; it found widespread ignorance and shame about sex which were promulgated by conservative sexual and moral ideologies. It further argued that the public morality at the time restricted the open and free discussion of sexuality and sexual practices and behaviours which were not intended for procreation (Escoffier, 2003; Garton, 2004). His most controversial findings were a result of his research on homosexuality which found that homosexuality was a much more common occurrence than first thought. In fact, he estimated that 37 percent of the male

population in the United States had experienced at least one homosexual experience leading to orgasm between adolescence and old age (Escoffier, 2003). His research regarding female sexuality was also very controversial. Kinsey's research revealed that women were indeed much more interested in sex for reasons of pure enjoyment rather than for procreation than was first believed (Escoffier, 2003; Garton, 2004). Kinsey's research findings were considered ground breaking, laying down the foundation for further research on sexuality and sexual behaviours. This pioneering research came with extensive criticism not confined to conservatives and religious groups. Sociologists and literary critics, fervent contemporary scientists and sex researchers also condemned Kinsey's work by challenging the scientific integrity of his findings. They decried his psychological theories of sexuality along with his interviews and statistical methodologies claiming Kinsey as a communist and cancelling the source of funding employed for his research on sexuality (Garton, 2004).

Alfred Kinsey is a contentious figure due to his exploration of sexual behaviours and sexual practices not previously examined. The moral relationship with the Church was very sacred at this time; sexuality was viewed as being a sacred act and to be undertaken in hopes of procreating. Kinsey's research on class difference highlighted two distinct patterns of sexual activity. First, working class men were reported to have higher rates of pre-marital sex and homosexual experience than their middle-class counterparts. Kinsey's research found that middle-class men tended to participate more frequently in masturbation and were more likely to be promiscuous after marriage (Garton, 2004). These class

differences created an outpour of response from the public due to its highly discriminatory nature. His research suggested that a large number of illegal sexual practices were commonplace and natural (Garton, 2004). Moreover, his research provided a new medium in which sexuality could be viewed, researched and discussed. It created the beginning of the sexual liberation and was subsequently adopted by sexual libertarian groups pressing for the decriminalization of abnormal sexual behaviours (Garton, 2004). His innovative and revolutionary research changed the way in which sexuality was viewed by exposing stigmatized or immoral behaviours as being natural and innate.

While Kinsey's research was very contentious, his findings transformed the discipline of sex research. Some researchers engaged in experiments to simply reject and refute Kinsey's original findings while others attempted to build upon his research focusing more closely on certain aspects such as the female orgasm. Although many were critical of his research topics and findings, Kinsey's methods and results shaped the way in which sexuality was viewed.

Alfred Kinsey's ground breaking research opened up a space where sexuality and sexual behaviour could be publicly discussed. The years following Kinsey's research found the proliferation of explicit erotic books. Between 1959 and 1966, three books with sexually explicit content were banned, challenged and subsequently overturned. Much of the censorship came from Catholic and Christian censorship groups such as the National Office for Decent Literature and Citizens for Decent Literature and reinforced by law enforcement officials (Allyn, 2000). D.H. Lawrence's *Lady Chatterley's Lover* was released on May 4 1959,

four days later, 164 copies of this book was seized by the Post Office due to its “filthy, offensive and degrading words” (Allyn, 2000:63). Soon thereafter, lawyer Charles Rembar sued the New York City postmaster and won thereby allowing the ban to be lifted and the novel to be distributed (Allyn, 2000).

Henry Miller’s contentious book *Tropic of Cancer* published and subsequently banned in 1934, was an important victory for literary writers of the sexual genre. Miller’s book had explicit erotic content and sexual themes and was banned in the United State; however, copies were smuggled into the United States from Paris. In 1961 Grove Press released copies of this book to readers which ultimately resulted in the arrest of booksellers who carried *Tropic of Cancer* (Allyn, 2000). The issue was settled by the United States Supreme Court in 1973 in what is now called the “Miller Test.”

The Miller Test is a three prong test which includes three parts to determine which material is considered obscene and therefore not protected by the First Amendment. According to this test, a book was obscene if it the average person or community would find that the work would appeal to prurient interest (U.S. Supreme Court, 1971). Second, if the book described or depicted, in a patently offensive way, sexual conduct as defined by state laws, then it would be deemed obscene Finally, if the material lacked literary, artistic, political or scientific value then it would be considered obscene (U.S. Supreme Court, 1971). The work is considered obscene only if all three of the conditions are met. The decision in *Miller v. California* is important because it provided a standard for determining whether a work or material was obscene and allowed to be prohibited

or whether strict bans were inhibiting sexual expression. The Miller Test is still being employed today.

Over the next few years, several other books would find their fate determined by the U.S Supreme Court and other lower provincial courts with regards to their sexual content and obscenity. Many of the books that emerged following the Miller decision were targets of political and religious attacks due to their increasingly sexually explicit contents, rather than attacks by the community. This was in part due to the strengthening economy which provided Americans with a good sense of self and sense of community. Sexual and pornographic work and material did not appear to be as threatening to the social fabric as it was once considered (Allyn, 2000). The impact of mass communication and media advertisements for products also became more sexually permissive. For instance, “in a commercial for Noxema shaving cream, a sultry-voiced woman urged men to take it off, take it all off” (Allyn, 2000:68). The increasing openness of sexually explicit material would soon face its toughest battles yet, the publishing of pornography.

The battles over obscenity and pornography helped create and open a space where sexuality, sexual speech, and sexual behaviours could be permissible and discussed in many ways, shapes and within different forums and mediums. The counterculture of the sexual revolution influenced the intellectual, social, economic and religious developments that would follow including the disintegration of marriage and the increasing rates of divorce and the beginning of serial monogamy.

The end of the 1960s and the early 1970s was a fruitful time for erotica magazines and books. These types of sexual speech were abundant and often protected under the First Amendment Right developed during the Miller case. Adult bookstores and films featuring sexual practices of certain communities were becoming commonplace (Allyn, 2000). Pornographic representations ranged on a continuum from explorations of sexual desire to profound stereotypical variations in sexual positions (Escoffier, 2003). There were soft images of porn depicting beautiful and sexy models posing in lingerie or running along the beach or in the woods. There were also more seductive and dirty images of pornography showing kinky sex taking place in hallways in other inappropriate areas (Escoffier, 2003). The distribution and proliferation of these images allowed a medium where people could discuss pornography and other sexually explicit behaviours where it used to be impossible to do so. With the increasing acceptance of obscenity and pornography came the creation of a Broadway performance filled with sexual overtones, the emergence of “open marriage” or swingers clubs, movies and films with sexual content and nudity, as well as drawings of men and women masturbating and the creation of homemade sex films for quick money (Allyn, 2000). By the end of the 1980s, pornography became normalized and more mainstream finding its way into movies and being depicted as pure entertainment. Similarly, magazines such as Playboy and Penthouse also became conventional and the women posing for pictures were viewed as simply fulfilling their sexual fantasies (Escoffier, 2003).

The increase in sexual liberation and growing acceptance of pornographic and other obscene material assisted the homosexual civil movement to take shape. By the late 1960s, the developing social unrest and counterculture helped mobilize the homosexual culture of the 1950s. The gay culture of the 1950s was filled with stigma, humour and discrimination leading homosexuals to protect themselves (Escoffier, 2003). The 1960s and the gay liberation movement provided homosexuals with a safe environment both politically and emotionally for “coming out.” Stigmatization and negative views of homosexuality took a backseat to the rich culture of easy sex and liberation during the 1970s (Escoffier, 2003). Homosexual could engage in gay sex without commitment and impersonal relationships came to be viewed as accepting and fulfilling rather than depressing or tawdry (Escoffier, 2003). The sexual revolution coupled with the gay liberation movement allowed homosexuals to engage in new and exciting sexual opportunities such as sexual encounters in bathrooms and sex clubs. These new and exciting venues allowed a safe environment for homosexuals to have easy sex without fear of judgement or arrest by law enforcement (Escoffier, 2003).

The growing acceptance and openness to homosexuality resulted in the establishment of commercial sex clubs for both hetero and homo sexual couples. This new social development is remarkable given that 30 years earlier, sexuality as a whole was not discussed within the public sphere but was rather confined to private conversations. Additionally, pornographic images showing homosexuality was even considered illegal in some U.S. States. Therefore, a big change has

taken place. This new sexual liberation also spawned new sexual possibilities and new sexual orientations such as bisexuality, sadomasochism, and trans-sexuality.

The growing acceptance of homosexuality and a tolerance for sexually explicit material and work brought with it social protest and unrest. The intellectual developments of Reich and Kinsey, the political battles over pornography and obscene material and the gay liberation movement formed breeding grounds for social unrest during the 1960s and 1970s (Escoffier, 2003). The cultural and social atmosphere of unrest was termed “counterculture.” It was associated with rock ‘n roll music, increased use of marijuana and other drugs, new sexual liberation exhibited through displays of nudity and sexuality which provided a fruitful atmosphere for radical change of the social fabric (Escoffier, 2003).

Social protest was not only paraded by homosexual communities, it was only prominently engaged in by the women’s movement which grew out of several sources prior to and during the sexual revolution. The end of World War II saw the increase in married women entering the work force in growing numbers. However, the low wages, limited upward mobility and double duty days (dual burden of working both a job and responsibilities in the home) undermined the power and prestige women were actually accumulating (Escoffier, 2003). The women’s movement, in particular Betty Friedan’s book titled *The Feminine Mystique* (1963) and the foundation of the National Organization for Women (NOW) was a response to this critique. Helen Gurley Brown, writer of *Sex and the Single Girl* (1962) attacked another double standard that was taking place

during this time. Specifically, women were required to be virgins before marriage since this type of revelation could affect a women's circle of friends, reputation and destroy her marriage while men were free to engage in promiscuous behaviours of pre-marital sex (Allyn, 2000). Unlike the majority of women at this time, Brown engaged in several sexual encounters prior to her marriage and admitted to her indiscretions in print in *Sex and the Single Girl*. Brown was a fierce and independent woman; her book became a manifesto and sexual adventure for married women. While the book itself was very controversial sparking debate and discussion, Brown's comments were equally contentious. Unashamed about her sexual indiscretions, Brown encouraged women to engage in sex and follow her example. She stated "[s]ex was here a long time before marriage. You inherited proclivity for it. It isn't some random piece of mischief you dreamed up because you're a bad, wicked girl" (Brown, 1962:257).

As hoped, *Sex and the Single Girl* (1962) became an instant best-seller for women all across the United States. The book sold more than 150 000 copies in the first year and was offered a movie deal worth over \$200 000 (Allyn, 2000). Brown's book created new sexual liberation for women both single and married. It provided a medium for women to redefine sex appeal, better understand their bodies and it provided women with makeup and fashion tips, and reinforced the idea that being a sexual woman was nothing to be ashamed of. Most importantly, Brown fought for sexual equality for women; her book marked the beginning of a new era where women would become sexual human beings capable of engaging in a greater range of sexual activities not permitted before this time.

While women were becoming more sexually liberated, many women still viewed marriage as place of male domination. This view was supported by various economic factors taking place at this time. Income inequality during this time favoured men over women despite the fact that women were undertaking the same work due to the labour shortage from the war. Similarly, women had very limited employment opportunities since the return of soldiers from World War II. Nevertheless, the new social and sexual liberation allowed couples to explore new sexual territories and reshape marriage to make it more pleasurable and more intimate. These new sexual explorations provided couples with new ways of relating to one another and to their sexual fantasies through swinging and open marriage (Escoffier, 2003). The emergence of the birth control pill, known simply as the “the pill” in 1960, quickly gave women more sexual freedom. The pill gained popularity very quickly due to its emergence when many Americans were turning to medicine to deal with and solve social and personal problems (Escoffier, 2003).

Although the sexual revolution provided a new found sexual openness for both men and women alike, many unsafe sex practices were taking place during this time. The sexual liberation had negatively affected safe and proper sexual practices resulting in increased sexually transmitted diseases (STD). During the late 1970s, the reports of STD’s being transmitted were growing at an alarming rate particularly within gay male communities where gonorrhoea, syphilis, and Hepatitis B were most commonly transmitted (Escoffier, 2003). In the early 1980s, matters got worse when an epidemic of AIDS among gay males provoked

a major crisis in the gay and straight community (Escoffier, 2003). The epidemic was so dangerous that medical doctors and proponents of safe sex were unsure whether they could stop the epidemic without completely excluding all types of sexual activity (Escoffier, 2003). Eventually, gay activists found ways to engage in safer sex by employing condoms and spreading safe sex methods through the use of public health administrators and activists.

Sexually transmitted disease and AIDS were not the only unfortunate consequences of the sexual revolution. The presentation of more and more sexual possibilities soon had affect on the institution of marriage. The growing idea of sex for pleasure rather than exclusively for pro-creation and the new sexual opportunities and availability of sex, combined with the birth control pill reduced the appeal of a monogamous relationship or marriage (Escoffier, 2003). The new emerging lifestyles of independence and new found sexuality had a dramatic effect on American's views on human relationships, particularly traditional marriage (Freedman, 2007). It is at this time where serial monogamy was beginning to take shape. During the next 30 years, serial monogamy would become dominant in contemporary society replacing the traditional marriage and conventional views of monogamy.

To this point, I have examined the emergence of sexual liberal thought, primarily focusing on the sexual revolution. This important revolution changed how ideas about sex and human sexual behaviour were viewed. The changing social morals surrounding sex influenced how the institution of marriage was viewed. Therefore, a more narrow focus on the effects of serial monogamy on the

sacred institution of marriage will now be explored. This important in order to better understand how serial monogamy became accepted in society.

The decline of marriage, divorce, and serial monogamy

During ancient history, marriage was undertaken to produce reciprocal relationships and procreation as well as join two families together. Therefore, the bond and love shared between two people was not essential (Lombardo & Lombardo, 2008). During the middle ages, divorce rates remained low as marriage was viewed as a contract between two people. However, moving into the eighteenth century, marriage was beginning to change and shift with the cultural values of the time. The enlightenment had a particular effect on the institution of marriage because it highlighted individual freedom and autonomy and conveyed the idea that marriage was in fact a choice not a contract (Lombardo & Lombardo, 2008). Marriage was no longer viewed as an economic arrangement between two families but was now understood as a relationships based on love, romance and companionship between two individuals.

Therefore, marriage came to be viewed as involving the intertwining of two distinct concepts. First, a commitment of love and work between two people would take place. Second, sexual fidelity was inherent within this commitment. Both of these concepts came together to create the ideal of marriage (Freedman, 2007). The ideal of love was separate from the idea of sex. In the marriage, the woman found happiness in the roles she portrayed as both wife and mother. She was portrayed as pure, upright, respectful and morally superior (Lombardo & Lombardo, 2008). Unfortunately, the increased emphasis on love as the reason for

marriage brought with it some unintended consequences. The rates of divorce increased exponentially and would continue to increase well into the twentieth century due to the large number of women entering the work force and gaining both economic power and individual freedom (Lombardo & Lombardo, 2008). By 1920, the modern sexual revolution was in full force creating a new found sexual liberalism that had not previously existed. Sex outside of marriage became more acceptable and sexual attraction became a key defining feature in a potential husband or wife (Lombardo & Lombardo, 2008). With the advent of the Great Depression and the onset of the Second World War, the sexual revolution quickly came to a halt and divorce rates began to decrease.

By the 1950s, marriage stability and the sacred institution of marriage once again became the norm. The husband as breadwinner and the wife as the homemaker became the typical family pattern. Marital love and family life was strongly connected with one's happiness (Lombardo & Lombardo, 2008). Dedication and fidelity to one's spouse was extremely important and considered essential for the viability of the relationship. The onset of the 1960s brought change with increased focus on individuality, freedom and individual rights for everyone. Consequently, women became empowered working full time jobs and following their career aspirations (Lombardo & Lombardo, 2008). During the same time, men were tired of being viewed as the breadwinner and demanded more freedom and began to be uncommitted as a way of demonstrating their individual freedom (Lombardo & Lombardo, 2008).

The sexual revolution of the 1960s brought about shifts in sexual attitudes towards men, women, and homosexuals alike. The individual was no longer confined to sexual activities for procreation but was encouraged to explore sex for pleasure. Sexual activity became a way of self-expression and individualism and all forms of sexuality quickly became accepted (Setzer, 2005). The new possibilities of sexuality were argued by some to be an assault on the respected institution of marriage (Freedman, 2007). Climbing divorce rates and declining birth rates were bolstered by the refusal of many to marry contributing to the decrease in the traditional and sacred institution of marriage (Freedman, 2007). During the 1960s, cultural rebellion against conformity was also beginning to take shape. Individuals rejected socially sanctioned roles and rebelled against conformity expressing feelings of individual freedom (Lombardo & Lombardo, 2008). Social institutions, the church and religious authority were undermined instead focusing on individual and personal choices regarding love, sex, and marriage (Lombardo & Lombardo, 2008). The advent of the pill allowed women more sexual freedom and liberty resulting in the decoupling of sex and love. It has been argued that the 1960s were an era of hedonism, irresponsibility, and rampant immorality resulting in mounting divorce rates, a rise in cohabitation, and the return to serial monogamy (Lombardo & Lombardo, 2008). While serial monogamy appears to have existed during ancient times, there is very little information regarding its nature and emergence. One of the primary reasons why serial monogamy appears to be so prevalent during this time can be attributed to a moral collapse with social rules and norms being ignored.

The 1970s were a time where the sacred institution of marriage was no longer permanent; rather, a disposable society seemed to appear. That is, spouses were disposable through divorce if the relationship was not working. The availability of divorce controlled by the State was very important since the struggle between the Church and the Law/State had been long lasting. The influence and role of the Church was still psychologically important even after the State gained control over divorce. Many people frowned upon divorce for moral reasons and thus refrained from divorcing their spouses. Tensions arose between the Church and the State during the sexual revolution. Marriage and sex for procreation was a sacred institution to Catholicism and Christianity and was not to be taken lightly. In 1968, the Vatican proclaimed all forms of birth control immoral and illicit; however, the increasing sexual liberation and new mortality was pressuring Catholic officials to approve the use of contraception (Allyn, 2000). Therefore, in 1969, Prime Minister Trudeau and his Liberal government legalized all forms of contraception in Canada.

During this time, sex was no longer related to love or marriage, but was engaged in for simple pleasure. Consequently, childbirth out of wedlock climbed dramatically in the 1970s and 1980s along with divorce rates (Toffler, 1971; Fukuyama, 1999). The institution of marriage began to diversify itself taking on different types of marriages. For example, delayed marriages preceded by cohabitation, serial marriages in which individuals will marry, divorce and re-marry again, single-parent households, blended families and step parents (Lombardo & Lombardo, 2008). Some argue that a marriage crisis is occurring,

stating that in 1950 the divorce rate in the United States was 23 per cent, in 1970 33 per cent of marriages ended in divorce while in 1976 the divorce rate was around 50 per cent (Lombardo & Lombardo, 2008). The changing family structures can be attributed to the changes in how marriage was viewed. The definition of marriage and the concept of monogamy have been modified. The notion of marriage and monogamy does not connote “forever,” or “until death do us apart” anymore; rather, these refer to serial monogamy defined as the marriage or monogamous relationship of two individuals at a time (Haley, 2000).

Despite the lack of information pertaining to serial monogamy, it appears to be most prominent during times of chaos or social unrest. For instance, the period of time preceding World War II was a time of disorder and social turmoil where serial monogamy was prominent. Following the end of the War was a time of order and peace, resulting in a return to marital stability and enjoyment. Similarly, the advent of the sexual revolution in the 1960s created a permanent state of disorder, sexual liberation, individuality, freedom and a breaking down of moral codes and ethical behaviours. The 1960s resulted in increased rates of divorce and changing attitudes towards marriage. Cohabitation and the succession of monogamous relationships began to be more prominent resulting in remarriage and the continuation of serial monogamy. In fact, in 2001, 43 per cent of Canadian adults whose first marriage ended in divorce remarried while 75 per cent of Americans remarried during the 1990s (Clark and Crompton, 2006; Coleman, Ganong and Fine, 2000). Some have suggested that high mortality rates in past centuries can produce the same effect as increased rates of divorce,

enabling remarriage and therefore serial monogamy (Griswold, 1983; Goldman, 1984). With increasing divorce and remarriage rates, the regime of serial monogamy is the norm (Petrella, 2005).

The practice of serial monogamy was created among social unrest and the strong influence of the counterculture. The creation of this category of thought and behaviour is akin to the type of environment which gave birth to serial murder. In both instances, changing attitudes, views and morals were taking place. Ironically, serial murder was created following the sexual revolution of the 1960s and the increased focus on crime which appeared rampant during this time. The breakdown of the social fabric appears to be a key defining feature of seriality. Times of uncertainty and insecurity lend themselves well to new categories of thought of behaviour which can help explain the consequences of weak social ties and changing views and opinions. This is exactly what happened during the sexually liberation of the 1960s when sexuality and sexual relationships were changing and divorce practices became more accessible. As a result, serial monogamy has been more prominent (Wallechinsky and Wallace, 1981). Additionally, this type of analysis can also be applied in the case of serial murder where society began to panic over increased crime rates, it was announced that serial killers were responsible for this change. It appears as though seriality is treated as a scapegoat, as someone to blame for the unfavourable changes occurring in society.

The chaotic context in which serial monogamy and serial murder were both created is not the only similarity they share. The idea of a temporary state

can also be identified for both of these behaviours. Serial monogamy and serial murder are by nature temporary since they are behaviours that are continuous; this is exemplified by the term serial meaning sequential, successive, or ongoing thereby suggesting that another act will undoubtedly take place.

Definitional problems in serial monogamy

Similar to serial murder, there is a lack of consensus regarding the definition of serial monogamy. Some suggest that serial monogamy is “one who spends as little time as possible being single, moving from the end of one relationship to the beginning of a new relationship as quickly as possible” (Arvidson, 2005:1). A key defining feature of serial monogamy according to this perspective involves the desire and ability to enter a new relationship with a new individual as quickly as possible thereby abbreviating the period of time where single life would occur (Arvidson, 2005).

Others define serial monogamy as being characterized by a series of long or short term exclusive sexual relationships (Crystal, 2003) while Haley (2000) argues that serial monogamy is “the marriage of one man and one woman at a time [emphasis original] (778). There is also some literature to suggest that serial monogamy is often discussed within the realm of serial polygyny. The first instance of what has now come to be understood as serial monogamy appears to have been explored in an article dating back to 1963 which discusses the social organization of peasant societies, in particular the domestic organization of West Indian marriage (Freilich, 1961). The article states that the word “henogamy” was associated with marriage rules permitting one marriage only during life as

opposed to “monogamy” which by convention meant marriage to only one spouse at a time. Freilich appears to be first to have used the word serial polygyny to denote what has come to be known as serial monogamy (Freilich, 1961; Davenport, 1963).

At first glance, these definitions appear reasonable and acceptable; however, after careful consideration definitional issues become apparent. For example, Arvidson’s (2005) definition of serial monogamy suggests that the individual has difficulties with commitment. While there are of course serial monogamists who could be classified as commitment-phobes, this is seldom the case for the majority of serial monogamists. As a result, this definition is restrictive in that it does not appropriately encapsulate serial monogamy. By this standard, anyone who is in successive monogamous relationships but do not fear commitment, devotion, responsibility and open mindedness for the future of the relationship could not be classified as serial monogamist.

Further, Crystal’s (2003) definition of serial monogamy focuses on the element of sexuality. The focus on sexuality can lead to interpreting continuous sexual encounters as being serial monogamy. Simply because sex is present does not mean that one is a serial monogamist. The relationship must involve only two individuals who participate in a monogamous relationship together. This definition is also restrictive in that sexuality need not be present for serial monogamy to exist. For instance, an individual may engage in several successive monogamous relationships that do not include sexuality and still be a serial monogamist. Similarly, the element of marriage included in Haley’s (2000)

definition of serial monogamy is problematic given the increased rates of divorce and remarriage which strongly contributes to serial monogamy. This definition excludes anyone who undertakes sequential monogamous relationships over the span of their lives that does not include marriage. With climbing divorce rates, this definition eliminates a large subsection of people, especially young people which tend to engage in serial monogamy more frequently (Avidson, 2005).

Particularly problematic is the elusive and undefined number of successive relationships that is required to be considered a serial monogamist. Despite varying definitions, information relating to the precise number of relationships is absent. There is no information to suggest that more than one monogamous relationship in a lifetime is required or if there is a set number of monogamous relationships required to qualify for serial monogamy. The lack of research and information makes it very difficult to appropriately understand and identify serial monogamy as a type of behaviour or category of thought. Additionally, the dearth of information on the particulars of being a serial monogamist hinders cross comparisons between other serial categories such as serial murder and serial arson.

In addition to definitional issues surrounding serial monogamy, there is also difficulties correctly understand what serial monogamy really is and what this may mean for someone classified as a serial monogamist. For instance, there is some literature to suggest that serial monogamy is a pattern of behaviour that one follows throughout their lives (Crystal, 2003). The serial monogamist is not oblivious to the pattern but actively engages in the creation of this type of

behaviour. It is argued that past childhood experiences, bad role models, and poor family structure will influence one's belief in commitment leading him or her to conclude that commitment is not something to actively seek out (Crystal, 2003). The pattern that a serial monogamist will establish is so engrained in their day to day activities that anyone who attempts to change this way of thinking is exerting a futile effort.

Similar to serial murder, some argue that serial monogamy contains an element of psychology to its pattern of behaviour. More specifically, a sense of inevitability is found serial monogamy. The application of this concept to this particular type of behaviour is however, qualitatively different from serial murder or serial arson. Serial monogamy contains an element of certainty due to this behaviour being a societal norm. The mere fact that this behaviour is now considered to be "normal" allows for its continuation in society. Historically, serial monogamy was frowned upon, viewed as an infringement of Catholicism and Judaism. However, in recent years the increasing rates of divorce and pervasiveness of serial monogamy results in serial monogamy being the norm rather than the exception. Certainly, remarriage appears to be a stable phenomena among Canadians of all sex, religious affiliation, and educational levels (Clark & Crompton, 2006) indicating that serial monogamy is not likely to cease anytime soon. For instance, in 2001, 43 per cent of Canadian adults whose marriage ended in divorce remarried. While serial monogamy appears to be the norm among Canadians, surprisingly few have ever heard of the term. Unlike serial murder and

serial arson, serial monogamy is not a popular cultural icon; it is a term used loosely to indicate the succession of monogamous relationships in one's lifetime.

Additionally, the literature suggests that serial monogamy is a psychological problem that can only be solved by dealing with the serial monogamist's state of mind through psychological help such as counselling or cognitive behavioural therapy (Crystal, 2003). The discussion of psychology in relation to serial monogamy highlights the idea that serial monogamy is not a concrete category that can be used by anyone but rather an ideal that is found in one's head and can only be controlled by the person suffering from serial monogamy. It has also been argued that serial monogamy is simply a cop-out, a way for people to give support or excuse their inability to form healthy sustainable relationships (Crystal, 2003). This view labels serial monogamy with a negative connotation; however, some feminist believe this view to be positive because it demonstrates that a woman does not require a man to live her life, that she is not dependent upon anyone but herself.

Finally, some argue that serial monogamy is the popular dating trend of our generation (Arvidson, 2005). They argue that serial monogamy is the best choice among a series of evils such as polyamory and full blown monogamy. The author discusses various options other than serial monogamy such as being a co-dependent that is someone who just can't stand being single and who ends up becoming very fragile, lacking feelings of independence and requiring others to affirm his or her own self-worth (Avidson, 2005). On the other end of the continuum lays commitment-phobes, those who cannot seem to settle down at all

for fear of dependence. Right in the middle of both of these types of relationships or dating style lays the serial monogamist. One that is well equipped with the new tool of breaking up, he or she is very skilful with this weapon and capable of using it with precision and exactness to minimize hurt and pain (Avidson, 2005). Unfortunately, if young adults are to settle down they will have to give up serial monogamy and try and strike a balance between co-dependency and fear of commitment to find ultimate happiness with both security and freedom.

These varying perspectives on serial monogamy are all deserving in their own right. They all perceive and understand serial monogamy in a very particular way and include both strengths and weaknesses in their arguments. Nevertheless, the lack of academic literature on the topic results in meaningless distinctions being made between seemingly different categories but does not help in identifying and understanding the elements of subscription to serial monogamy.

Experts, new types of knowledge, and implications of serial monogamy

The creation of a new category of thought or behaviour generally brings new information, new knowledge not previously known before as well as experts within that specific field or behaviour. Unlike serial murder which brought with its creation a plethora of new kinds of experts, serial monogamy lacks this essential element. There is little information indicating precisely when the category of serial monogamy was created or whether experts or a group of people that specifically studied serial monogamy were created. As a result, there is very little academic research devoted to this topic; much of the information about serial monogamy is available on the internet. The lack of information and experts

suggests that serial monogamy is a colloquial term not usually discussed with academic literature; rather it is used by the general public to denote a particular lifestyle, a personal characteristic, or type of sexual relationship. It might be appealing for a small group of people since it can boast one's sexual appeal making them appear more desirable and independent. While Statistics Canada has yet to include serial monogamy in their demography studies, serial monogamy is appealing to demographers since this category helps to understand changing social patterns and norms.

Serial monogamy does not appear to be a fixed category with its own distinctions and fields of research. Nonetheless, there are several books that discuss serial monogamy but in little detail. Many of the books available on this topic simply define serial monogamy and sometimes attempt to explain why individuals engage in this type of relationship style. Other books will only mention serial monogamy in passing stating that it is a type of monogamy among various options. Some books discussing serial monogamy include *Sex and Sexuality: Sexual Function and Dysfunction; Sociology and Health Care; Why We Love: The Nature and Chemistry of Romantic Love; and Do You Love Me, or Am I Just Paranoid?: The Serial Monogamist's Guide to Love.*

The literature suggests that the study of serial monogamy tends to fall within the study of sexuality and the study of the history of monogamy. This is a likely reason why there does not appear to be an entire literature devoted to serial monogamy like there is for serial murder, serial arson and other serial behaviours such as rape. Unlike the study of serial murder which yielded several general

characteristics as well as motives and profiles, research surrounding serial monogamy has yet to identify general characteristics of those who engage in this type of behaviour. The literature states that young adults and teenagers are more likely to engage in serial monogamy than any other age group but this appears to be the only characteristic discussed in research. It is not known whether males or females are more likely to actively engage in serial monogamy, nor does it provide information relating to how long each monogamous relationship lasts.

The implications of being a serial monogamist are not very severe but can be problematic. Given that serial monogamy is now the norm, prejudice and stigma is no longer a problem. Being a serial monogamist during the 19th century would certainly yield much different results due to the negative reputation one would receive when engaging in pre-marital sex as well as sexual behaviours with a man or woman who was not your spouse. The legalization of the birth control pill coupled with sexual liberation and changing views and opinions about sexuality had extensively diminished the social stigma one would have received for engaging in serial monogamy. Nonetheless, there are a few implications of being a serial monogamist in the 21st century.

Most important of these implications are the health effects of engaging in serial monogamy. Increased sexual behaviour results in more opportunity for the spread of sexually transmitted diseases. Serial monogamists tend to engage in more sexual behaviours with a larger number of partners than an individual who is in the same relationship for an extended period of time. Therefore, serial monogamists may be more at risk for contracting STD's and AIDS. This is not to

say that all serial monogamists are at a higher risk, but rather highlighting that some serial monogamists jump from one relationship to another extremely quickly which could lead to more risky sexual behaviours and disease (Boskey, 2007). Additionally, in 1998, the Public Health Agency of Canada issues an update on oral contraceptives and condom use highlighting that the rate of STD's continues to be well above the average among Canadians between the ages of 15 and 24. Given that adolescents are more likely to engage in serial monogamy, it would follow that those aged between 15 and 24 are more likely to be at risk for STD's. The update also states that when adolescents engage in serial monogamy, they sometimes have an unrealistic perception of risk to STD's (Government of Canada, 1998; Government of Canada, 1995). This is often due to the fact that when partners become more well known to each other, safe sex practices may be to take a back seat since both individuals feel a sense of trust and safety from STD's; serial monogamy contributes to this feeling of safety (Galavotti and Schnell, 1994). Therefore, it is important for serial monogamists to ensure that safe sex practices are still undertaken despite the sense of safety and trust in the relationship. This is especially true for adolescents and young adults that engage in serial monogamy.

In addition to health implications, serial monogamy can also have profound social implications as well. Jumping from relationships to relationship with little time in between for the single life may result in one receiving a bad reputation. Specifically, some people may not want to get involved with an individual who seems to have difficulty commitment to the relationship.

Additionally, a serial monogamist can also be perceived as not taking relationships seriously and have difficulty developing profound emotions and connection to their partners. However, there is some evidence to support the serial monogamist's lifestyle concluding that serial monogamy does provide some sense of stability and exclusively for a period of time. Similarly, research found that serial monogamy has been the most prevailing form of relationship style and is likely to continue to be so (Ben-Zeév, 2008). While the serial monogamist might find his or her self alone, it is sure not to last very long. With serial monogamy appearing on television programs such as *Sex and The City* and *Cherry Bomb*, serial monogamy's positive elements might soon outweigh its drawbacks.

The complex nature of serial monogamy was examined in this section. While the category of serial monogamy is certainly different than serial murder and serial arson, it provides a good example of how classifications are not naturally given but rather shaped by historical constructs and social events. The emergence of serial monogamy is in large part attributed to the sexual revolution of the 1960s when views about human sexual behaviour began to change. The rise in sexual liberation combined with changing morals permitted serial monogamy to flourish. A host of other important social classifications also played an important role in the emergence of the serial monogamist. Certainly, the sacred institution of marriage and the important role of the church provided obstacles for the emergence of serial monogamy as a type of lifestyle. Conversely, the increase in remarriage apparently allowed serial monogamy to become a suitable way of life among people of all ages.

The definitional issues surrounding serial monogamy were also examined. Similar to serial murder, there is a lack of common understanding regarding serial monogamy. Some suggest that serial monogamy is a type of lifestyle while others argue that serial monogamy involves the succession of one relationship to the next. Serial monogamy does not appear to require a set number of relationships or a specific period of time like other serial behaviours. Similar to serial murder, serial monogamy is sometimes understood to include varying elements. Some literature suggests that serial monogamy is a psychological problem while others argue that serial monogamy is a dating trend or a type of sexual behaviour. The interrelationship between serial monogamy and other social elements fits nicely with the larger argument here that seriality is a complex social category that is shaped by varying classifications.

While Ian Hacking's important making up framework suggest that the creation of a new social category usually yields new experts and new knowledge about that category, there is very little new information about serial monogamy. Nevertheless, Hacking's notion of the role of institutions is important for the emergence of serial monogamy. Institutions such as the Church, the State, and social protests groups permitted serial monogamy to develop as a type of social category.

Serial monogamy is interesting for several reasons. First, serial monogamy is a type of seriality that is seldom discussed in academic literature. It is important to examine to appropriately understand how different serial classifications are created, maintained, and perpetuated. It is also important given that we interact

with classifications of serial monogamy on a daily basis. It informs decisions that we make as well as views and opinions that we may hold. It is important to understand and realize that classifications do not exist in a vacuum but are influential in our day to day interactions. In keeping with the theme of serial classifications, we now turn to the final section on serial arson. This section on serial arson is a coda; an additional but necessary discussion of the complex nature of seriality. It is equally important to illustrate how classifications interact with one another in order to shape new social categories.

Seriality and Arson

The Pillow Pyro, that's what they called John Orr, a well respected fire captain and arson investigator for the Glendale Fire Department in Southern California. Originally hoping to be a police officer, Orr failed his entrance exam and joined the Air Force fire suppression unit. Unable to work as a firefighter for very long due to his rebellious tendencies and inability to follow rules, Orr joined the arson investigator unit. Orr was considered one of the best arson investigators and was highly respected in his field until he became the prime suspect in a series of arson cases.

On October 10 1984, in South Pasadena California, a fire broke out at Ole's Home Center. The hardware store was completely destroyed by fire and four people died in the blaze including a two year old child. In January 1987, a California arson investigator convention took place during which time several suspicious fires were set. Luckily, a single unmatched fingerprint was left on a piece of paper as part of a time-delay incendiary device and was recovered at one

of the fires. The fingerprint was identified as John Orr's. Investigators were devastated as well as skeptical of Orr's guilt, but all evidence pointed to him. On July 31 1992, Orr was convicted of three counts of arson and sentenced to three consecutive ten year sentences. What's more, on June 25 1998, Orr was also convicted of four counts of first degree murder and sentenced to life plus twenty years in prison without the possibility of parole. John Orr was a fire captain, arson investigator and serial arsonist.

Serial arson is an example of the further expansion of the category of seriality. It encompasses elements both present and absent in serial murder and serial monogamy. The section on serial monogamy discussed the emergence and rise of sexual liberation as being influential in the emergence of the category of serial monogamy. Like most classifications, serial monogamy appeared to involve historical variability and drew upon other important social categories and movements to establish itself as a type of behaviour. Following this same logic, this final section reinforces the argument that seriality involves an intricate set of relationships among different classifications by closely examining serial arson.

Serial arson is a unique category given its dual role as both a medical and legal classification. This section discusses the creation of the category of serial arson as well as the debates, contestations, and nature of serial arson by exploring themes and attributes important for understanding serial arsonists. Additionally, the emergence of expertise and new knowledge about serial arson is also discussed.

Definitional issues in serial arson

The emergence of the serial killer during the 1980s appears to have a profound effect on the creation of other similar serial categories. Serial arson typologies were adapted from the definition of the serial killer and also involve main and secondary themes important in understanding this new category. Unlike serial murder where main attributes are found across several serial killer classifications, key attributes of serial arson are only discussed by a very small number of academics and researchers; the reasons for this are twofold. First, serial arson is not considered a violent crime but rather a property crime; therefore, serial arson tends to be less well known and does not fascinate the public nearly as much as serial murder. Second, serial arson is mostly defined by the key elements of serial murder given the dearth of academic literature on the topic. For this reason, it is usually taken for granted that serial arson contains many of the same challenges, debates, and discussions found within the serial killer literature.

One of the main challenges and key attributes of serial arson involves how it is defined. The precise nature of serial arson is a contentious issue in academic literature. For instance, Douglas et al. (1994) present three levels of arson: the serial arsonist, spree arsonist, and mass arsonist. In this view, serial arson involves three or more separate firesetting episodes, where victims tend to be selected and gaps between fires are unpredictable. Spree arson involves setting fires to three or more locations with no cooling off period between episodes while mass arsonists set three or more fires at a single location during a limited time period. Notice that these three arson classifications closely resemble

serial, spree, and mass murder. There are however, some noteworthy differences between serial arson and serial murder. First, the requirement of different locations or geographic locations is not necessary for serial arson, only separate fire setting episodes are essential. Therefore, an arsonist could set three fires at the same location at different times and this would be sufficient to be deemed “serial.” Second, research suggests that victims of serial arson appear to be pre-selected indicating a level of pre-mediation while victims of serial killers are usually strangers. Therefore, serial arsonists appear to have a personal connection to their crimes. Third, gaps between murders predictable meaning that at least 72 hours is usually required between killings while gaps between fires are unpredictable indicating that a subsequent fire could happen on the same day. Nevertheless, these semblances between serial murder and serial arson are due to the fact that most serial classifications are based on the FBI’s definition of serial murder. The distinctions between serial, spree and mass arson are important as it permits the FBI to become the leading institution involved in issues of serial crime.

The category of serial arsonist is used by a host of individuals. Serial arson appears to be an investigative tool used by the FBI and arson investigators when conducting inquiries into arson cases. The category of serial arson is also used by the media to profile cases of arson in neighbouring towns and cities. Unlike serial murder, serial arson does not appear to capture the mind of the public. It tends to evoke fear after a large number of fires have been set with no apparent motive. Moreover, serial arsonists appear to receive large amounts of attention from the

media when people are killed in the fires. The category of serial arson is sometimes used by psychologists or psychiatrists working with pathological firesetters or pyromaniacs who are trying to understand the behaviour they have encountered. Given the similarities between pyromania and arson, psychiatrists may find themselves searching for differences between the two. Additionally, once apprehended a repetitive firesetters may be forced to undergo psychiatric evaluation in order to rule out serial arson or pyromania.

Unfortunately, there is little consensus regarding the proper or appropriate definition of serial arson. In their famous crime classification manual, the FBI fails to provide any definition of serial arson. Rather, a serial arsonist is depicted as an individual with a particular modus operandi and a unique signature (Douglas et al., 2006). Conversely, Schlesinger (2000) argues that serial arson is a descriptive term used to depict repetitive acts of firesetting. Both of these definitions are vague enough to include anyone who engages in arson. Frequently, serial arson is also discussed within a larger psychological or medical framework which includes attributes such as pyromania, deliberate firesetting and pathological firesetting. Serial arson is a distinctive case of seriality given its dual role as both a medical and legal category. Effectively, arson appears to exist on a continuum; serial arson being at the extreme end while pyromania is at the other. While the use of a continuum may help visually understand the differences between cases of arson, the actual variations between categories are arbitrary and often overlap.

During the 19th century, a huge body of literature focused on pyromania. During this time, the term “monomanie incendiaire” or pyromania was first coined by Marc in France. The debate regarding whether or not pyromania absolved someone of legal responsibility was widely debated and different countries produced varying opinions (Schlesinger, 2000). During the 1800s in America however, pyromania was not acknowledged. Shortly after the term pyromania was first coined, research on firesetters flourished. In 1872 and 1883, Krafft-Ebing reported that firesetters and pyromaniacs were predominantly servant girls and maids that were depressed, unhappy, and homesick who set fires in hopes of destroying their source of employment and returning home (Schlesinger, 2000). For example, a young woman named Olivia Riner, was accused of setting fire to a baby she cared for. Despite strong evidence that Riner set the fire, she was acquitted since the prosecution could find no apparent motive.

Other researchers such as found that pyromaniacs were individuals who faced significant psychological challenges to which they could not suitably adapt (Schlesinger, 2000). Therefore, firesetting was understood to be a displacement of suicidal and depressive tendencies. Others argued that pyromaniacs were simply fire fetishists or that pyromania had a sexual root which first began with fire dreams and were probably influenced by women’s menstruation cycle (Stekel, 1924). Finally the role of alcohol intoxication in firesetting states that alcohol accompanies firesetting with increasing frequency and intensity (Schlesinger, 2000).

Pyromania is a term that appears to be used differently by a variety of people. There is still confusion about its definition and skepticism as to whether or not pyromania even exists (Schlesinger, 2000). According to the most cited document regarding mental disorders, the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-IV)*, the “essential feature of pyromania is the presence of multiple episodes of deliberate and purposeful firesetting” (DSM-IV, 1994:614-615). Additionally, pyromania involves arousal before the act, a fascination with, interest in, and curiosity about fire, as well as pleasure or gratification after the firesetting (DSM-IV, 1994).

Some researchers suggest that pyromania involves a compulsion to set fires with no apparent motive. The definition of pyromania set forth by the *DSM-IV* is vague and fits the definition of a curious child, rebellious teenager, or serial arsonist. Consequently, it is difficult to understand precisely the difference between pyromaniacs and serial arsonists since there does not appear to be definitive traits that can only be associated with pyromania. It appears that pyromania is the medical counterpart of serial arson. This is also true for other firesetting behaviours such as pathological firesetting.

Pathological firesetting is a medical category that involves firesetting other than that performed for profit or material advantage (Lewis & Yarnell, 1951). There is very little academic research on the topic of pathological firesetting, but it appears to involve setting fires based on stated motives such as revenge, vanity, and jealousy. Given the lack of information regarding serial arson, it is impossible to know whether pathological firesetting is a sub-category of serial arson, or if

serial arson is one example of pathological firesetting. There is a lack of research discussing the roles of motives for serial arson. If serial arsonists do not employ motives for the commission of their crimes, then the difference between pathological firesetting and serial arson is clearer. However, if serial arsonists have motives for their crimes, then the relationship between serial arson and pathological firesetting becomes complicated and unclear.

The dearth of available literature on serial arson, pyromania, and pathological firesetting makes it very difficult to understand all three categories accurately. More specifically, it is challenging to differentiate all three firesetting behaviours since they are extremely similar. It becomes exigent to understand where serial arson fits and how to tell a case of serial arson apart from a case of pyromania. The lack of commonality about serial arson further exemplifies the intricate nature of seriality, the interrelationship between social, legal, and medical categories and illustrates the lack of continuity across all serial categories.

To this point, I have set out that the understanding of serial arson involves both key themes essential to its continuity and also sub-themes which illustrate the complex nature of serial arson. Given that there is little agreement and research as to what constitutes a serial arsonist, pyromania as well as pathological firesetting was explored to aid in our understanding of serial arson and to demonstrate the interrelationship between classifications.

Serial arson and serial murder

Serial criminals often engage in various serial behaviours. Several serial killers engage in firesetting behaviours, particularly at a young age. Some of the most infamous serial killers of modern times were juvenile arsonists. Ottis Toole set vacant houses in his neighborhood on fire when he was only six years old while Carl Panzram caused \$100 000 worth of damage by burning down a building at his reform school when he was twelve years old. Similarly, David Berkowitz, the famous “Son of Sam” who ultimately confessed to more than fourteen hundred acts of arson in New York City, also confessed to pulling several hundred false fire alarms. Berkowitz was so obsessed with firesetting that as a young child that he was nicknamed “pyro” (Schechter, 2003). Firesetting is not the only common attribute of both serial arsonists and serial killers. According to a specialist in the psychology of perversion, Wilhelm Stekel, there is always a sexual instinct involved in serial arson and serial murder. In short, serial murderers who engage in acts of arson do so for the same reason they murder; it turns them on (Stekel, 1924). This argument seems to suggest that serial arson and serial killers engage in criminal behaviour for no apparent motive. In this view, any other similar behaviour could not be classified seriality if a motive for the crime is present.

Serial arson is also similar to serial murder in that it also contains an element of inevitability. Arson’s dual role as both a legal and medical category permits arsonists to be medicalised, treated, and stopped in some cases. Inevitability as it relates to serial arson must be carefully applied because serial

arson is a more complex behaviour due to its history of being a treatable and temporary psychological disorder. Highlighting a case of arson as “serial” indicates that the behaviour will undoubtedly occur again; this can lead to several problems if the crime is an isolated incident of pyromania and not actually a case of serial arson. The literature surrounding serial arson focuses on motives, pyromania and deliberate firesetting, as well as arson typologies highlighting geographic profiling and common characteristics of arsonists. While there is frequently an examination of treatment for pyromania, there is very seldom information about rehabilitation programs or treatment options aimed at eradicating or helping serial arsonists; yet, there is almost certainly a discussion about sexuality, alcoholism, drug addiction, paraphilias and mental health issues.

An additional similar trait between serial murder and serial arson is the role of sexuality. Sexuality within serial arson classification is an additional sub-theme. Unlike serial murder where sexuality appears to play an increasingly important role in how serial killers are understood, there is little or no expert or academic research suggesting sexuality is associated with serial arson. The absence of research on the role of sexuality for serial arsonists is disconcerting given the apparent high prevalence of sexual elements reported in serial murder and serial monogamy. Research suggests that sexuality is primarily associated with pyromania; (Lewis & Yarnell, 1951; Stekel, 1924; Schlesinger & Revitch, 1983). Specifically, Freud’s theory of psychoanalysis is the most cited source for research on sexuality and pyromania. In short, early psychoanalytic explanations of pyromania suggest that firesetting was the result of a repressed sexual drive.

Buildup tension and the impulse to set a fire equated itself with sexual energy and sexual motivation resulting in firesetting behaviour. Recent literature and research however, does not support this assumption (Rice & Harris, 1991). In fact, few people actually report physical signs of sexual arousal such as masturbating at the scene or an erection (Forensic Psychology Practice Ltd, 1999). There is some research to suggest that sexuality may primarily be viewed as a motive for repetitive firesetting behaviour.

Motives and new knowledge about serial arsonists

“Oh, what ecstasy setting fires brings to my body! What power I feel at the thought of fire...Oh, what a pleasure, what a heavenly pleasure! I see the flames and no longer is a fire just a daydream. It is the reality of heaven on earth! I love the excitement of the Power fire gives me...The mental image is greater than sex!

–Joseph Kallinger

The relationship between motivations and firesetting is complex and multi-faceted. In some instances, the type of motive may determine firesetting behaviour while in other instances the type of arson is dependent upon specific typologies and characteristics of the arsonist. Certain theoretical approaches shaped by experts and researchers were developed to better understand arson and outline appropriate interventions. For instance, one theory suggests that arson is committed as a resolution to a problem. This approach proposes that individuals engage in acts of arson as a means of escaping or challenging difficult life circumstances where other means have proved unsuccessful. A secondary approach states that arson is a manifestation of displaced aggression; however, a number of factors suggest that aggression is unlikely to be an appropriate

explanation. First, demographic and criminological factors of arsonists tend to be more similar to property offenders than violent offenders. Second, an offender with displaced aggression would likely exert his aggression in other forms when he did not have opportunities to firesetting; however, this is seldom the case (Forensic Psychology Practice Ltd, 1999). Other approaches highlight that arson may be committed for financial reward, for vandalism, to cover up another crime, for political purposes such as terrorist activities, self-immolation as a political gesture, due to the presence of mental disorder, due to revenge, committed as an attention seeking act, and due to mixed motives such as under the influence of alcohol (Holmes & Holmes, 2002; Geller, 1992).

The FBI employs classifications based on motives as a defining feature for differentiating arsonists. What's more, the FBI has recently proposed a new classificatory system describing six main motive categories and includes behaviour variables. The FBI's new system is used to differentiate types of arsonists including serial arsonists which suggests that experts tend to classify serial arsonists according to motives which is surprising given that serial arsonists are rarely if ever discussed in arson typologies. These motives are not discussed within the serial arson literature; rather, they are characteristic of arsonists in general. Nevertheless, they may help extend our understanding of serial arson by highlighting reasons why arsonists engage in firesetting. It is possible that serial arsonists may engage in repetitive cases of arson for similar reasons.

While arson classifications can be useful, they are not mutually exhaustive or exclusive; rather, there is overlap between categories resulting in difficulty

distinguishing between typologies. The arbitrariness of the application of classificatory systems of arson makes it difficult to understand the essential characteristics of serial arson as a type of category. Unlike serial murder where an abundance of research was made available by new experts after the creation of the category serial killer, there is a little information relating to serial arsonists. Nevertheless, research has yielded some basic characteristics that appear to be common to many serial arsonists. First, most arsonists are white heterosexual single males who have multiple arrests (Holmes & Holmes, 2002). They are often employed in menial labour and have never been married. A large number of serial arsonists grew up with both parents present in the home. Most arsonists will commit their crimes after work in close proximity to their home and will often leave items at the scene such as matches, a gas can or other devices (Holmes & Holmes, 2002). The majority of serial arsonists are not geographically transient and often live with their parents at the time of their crimes.

There is also certain information about arsonists that may aid in predicting specific personality traits of serial arsonists. For instance, 49 per cent of all reported cases of arson are committed by juveniles, and of these, 26 per cent are committed by children between the ages of 10 and 14 (Holmes & Holmes, 2002). About 17 per cent of adult arsonists are between 25 and 34; therefore, serial arson is likely a crime committed by juvenile or adolescent firesetters. The most common motive reported for engaging in arson is revenge, while an almost equal number stated that they engage in acts of arson for excitement (Holmes & Holmes, 2002). Characteristics of pyromaniacs may also prove helpful in

obtaining a more accurate understanding of serial arsonists given their similarities. Pyromaniacs are usually white males between the ages of 16 and 28. Many suffer from psychopathy as well as other psychotic disorders. They are often socially maladjusted and grew up in a broken environment. Many have histories of delinquency, frequent alcohol use as method of escape, and there is little or no regard for human life (Holmes & Holmes, 2002). Unlike serial murder where males and female serial killers appear to be understood differently by experts and the media, research suggest that female serial arsonists adopt the same motives and rationalities as male arsonists (Lewis & Yarnell, 1951). In fact, during the 19th century, firesetting was primarily a crime of the female adolescent; however, recent studies found increasing similarities between male and female serial arsonists. Given that serial arson is usually viewed as a property crime, female serial arsonists are not viewed as being threatening. Serial arson is unique in that it is a category that is not intimately linked to feminism or female liberation like its serial counterparts.

In this section, contemporary understandings of serial arson were examined. Throughout this section, I demonstrate that serial arson involves a complex relationship with other important social categories such as pyromania, arson, and pathological firesetting. Serial arson connects with the larger theme of classification by nature of its variability. This can be seen when discussing the change between young maids engaging in arson and young male adolescents being prime arson suspects. From the emergence of pyromania in the late 1800s to

the creation of pathological firesetting, serial arson was shaped by a series of social categories and has come to shape our understanding of serial behaviour.

Despite the significant attention that has been devoted to arson classifications, the literature fails to provide a clear understanding of serial arson. Much of the discussion about serial arson in this section is based on inferences about arson, pathological firesetting, and pyromania given the dearth of available literature. Some attributes of serial arson are found across other serial categories such as serial murder and serial monogamy; however, serial arson is unique in that it is considered both a legal and medical category.

Classifications involve intricate relationships among a variety of categories, seriality is no exception. While at first glance the context and features of seriality may appear obvious, there is very little agreement as to what constitute seriality. Some key themes and secondary attributes have been identified in section; there is a host of other important categories that are essential for the creation of the serial arsonists. The role of sexuality within serial murder is unknown, there appears to be a stronger association between sexuality and pyromania; nevertheless, this relationship is simply speculative. In this section, the overlap between serial murder and serial arson was also examined.

Without exception, the emergence of serial arson was influenced by three primary aspects of Ian Hacking's framework; specifically, institutions, experts, and knowledge. As Hacking notes, the creation of knowledge about the specific classification will yield characteristics, abilities, and traits. New knowledge about serial arson is limited in scope; nevertheless this section highlighted a number of

characteristics that seem to be representative of serial arsonists. In short, this final section extends the category of the serial to further demonstrate its inherently complex nature.

Conclusion

Systems of classification aid in reducing a complex phenomenon into manageable parts so that it may be better understood. Classifications involve complex relationships between and within categories. The creation of new categories of thought and behaviour involve considerable disagreement. While to an outside observer, the categories of “serial” appear to have one agreed upon definition, however, there are significant debates and issues within serial classifications that limit a broader understanding of serial murder, serial monogamy and serial arson. Past preoccupation with psychological profiling, the increasing role of the media, a lack of agreeable definitions and a focus on serial crime has distracted attention away from the specific workings of serial classification more broadly. It is hoped that this thesis illustrates that seriality is a complex category that involve a host of important attributes, social, legal, and medical categories, institutions, expertise and knowledge. Research on seriality has primarily focused on serial crime such as serial murder and serial rape and to a lesser extent serial arson.

The first section of this thesis focused on the complex nature of the serial killer. The emergence of the serial killer occurred in the 1980s. Since this time, the serial killer has become a popular cultural icon. At first glance, the meanings and understandings of this concept appear obvious; however, the social category

of the serial killer is more complex. Ian Hacking's important framework on social categories discussed the emergence of experts, and new knowledge following the creation of a new social category. In line with Hacking's accounts, the emergence of the serial killer brought with it new experts and new types of knowledge such as characteristics, common patterns, and a new group of people to study the phenomena of serial murder.

This thesis also found that both primary and secondary attributes are involved in the creation of probably all serial killers. Primary attributes are understood to include the number of victims, the relationship between perpetrator and victim, the cooling off period, and the different geographic locations. These primary attributes were found to be consistent across a number of serial killer classifications. Secondary attributes include the modus operandi, the media, sexual components, and psychological elements. Secondary attributes can include social, institutional, and academic traits that are only found within certain serial killer classifications. It is these secondary traits that play a primary role in highlighting the complex nature of serial murder. These secondary attributes are rarely the focus of serial murder discussions; however, they are important since they illustrate the complex interrelationship between social categories. For instance, serial murder involves psychological elements such as addiction, compulsion, and psychopathy. All three psychological categories are also related to each other as well as serial murder. Therefore, in order to understand serial murder is important to examine the interrelationship both within and between social categories.

This section also focused on the rise of feminism and its effect on how serial murder is understood by experts and other classifications. Feminist literature appears to exclude female killer from serial classifications while other researchers and experts include and consider females to be serial killers. The lack of agreed upon definition for serial murder is not only reserved for this type of serial behaviour. The lack of commonality is a theme found across all categories of seriality discussed herein.

The second section of this thesis focused the emergence of serial monogamy. The organization and development of this section was different than serial murder since the primary focus was on the historical context and changing nature of serial monogamy. The sexual revolution and the rise of female sexual liberty appear to be very important for the creation of the serial monogamist. Prior to the 1960s, many women were sexually constrained and forced to keep sexual relations and discussions private. However, the sexual revolution provided women with liberty and independence over their bodies. The important role of the Church and sacred institution of marriage continued to promote traditional marriage and shun divorce and sexual relations outside marriage. It would take years before the emergence of serial monogamy would become accepted. The interplay between social categories such as marriage, the State, sexuality, liberty, independence, and church played an important role in shaping serial monogamy.

While there is no agreed upon definition of serial monogamy, it continues to play an ever increasing role in how marriage, divorce, remarriage, and monogamy are viewed. This section highlighted the various definitions of serial

monogamy as well as other important social categories involve in our understandings of serial monogamy to further illustrate the larger argument here that seriality is a complex social category that involves a host of other important classifications. The social categories that circle around serial classifications are important to consider because they add detail and new information to our understanding of seriality. This is particularly true of the third and final category of serial arson

The third section of this thesis focused on the emergence of serial arson. Despite the fact that serial arson was primarily a coda, it is still important in showcasing the intricate nature of seriality.

Throughout this section I demonstrate that serial arson is a complex serial category that involves several other important social categories such as pyromania and pathological firesetting. There is little consensus in regards to what serial arson entails or whether or not serial arson is a category of thought or behaviour. The descriptions of serial arson, pyromania, and pathological firesetting are so similar that it is difficult to identify a case of serial arson. Pyromania is a social category that emerged prior to serial arson. It dates back to the 1800's and was most often associated with young maids and servants who wanted to end their employment and return home. Since this time, pyromania has become a mental disorder and is found within the Diagnostic Manual for Mental Disorders. Nevertheless, there is little academic consensus regarding whether pyromania is indeed different than serial arson. There is some literature to suggest that pyromania involves some of the same psychological attributes as serial murder

such as compulsion. The lack of clear definition of serial arson and pyromania illustrate the close interrelationship between these two classifications. It is possible that serial arson builds upon pyromania forming a new classification and adopting new attributes. This possibility is even more likely given that pyromania is a medical category that was created in the 19th century while serial arson is a legal category created shortly after pyromania. Classifications are historically contingent and will change and adapt themselves to new categories. Without further information regarding the emergence of serial arson, it is difficult to accurately understand its relationship to pyromania.

A particular aspect of serial arson that is certainly supported by academics and researchers involves two aspects of Ian Hacking's framework, specifically, experts and new knowledge about serial arson. With the creation of the serial arsonist, new experts and knowledge about serial arson was developed. Characteristics, traits, attributes, and patterns about serial arsonists provide law enforcement with an investigative and profiling tool.

Serial arson is an important serial category to explore given its dual role as both a medical and legal category. The lack of available literature combined with the lack of continuity across serial arson highlights the complex and intricate nature of serial classifications. Classificatory systems such as seriality play an important role in our day to day interactions with people, institutions, and places. Our lives are continuously influenced by systems of classifications that surround us. For instances, our desk at work is likely classified by papers that require immediate attention, emails that need to be sent, reports that have been examined,

articles that need to be filed away and so on. Many standards and classifications are usually invisible and taken for granted; they can take several different forms including formal and informal classifications. But we all spend time doing classificatory work during the day.

Classifications are important because they influence our behaviours and they help make sense of the world. They shape our understanding of social events, public legislation, and even mundane tasks such as returning phone calls and emails. More importantly, classifications and social categories are not naturally given but rather shaped by a host of historical, social, and personal events. The emergence of a new social category is not immediate, it will often involve debate and contestations and discussions with professionals or experts in a particular area. As Ian Hacking notes, a framework is involved in the creation of a new classification. Five primary aspects influence the creation of a new category of thought or behaviour; specifically, the people in the various classes, the classification themselves, the institutions, the experts, and new knowledge (Hacking, 2007). It is the combination and interaction of all five elements that helps to produce a new social category. This framework is important as it highlights how classifications do not exist in a vacuum but rather are historically contingent and extremely variable. Social categories are created and governed by people and will fulfill certain institutional mandates and interests.

The examination of classifications in this thesis is important since it details the process of institutional categorization. This thesis shows how social facts and events are created and how they go on to shape our social environments. For

instance, how do people become a serial killer? They fulfil certain factual requirements that have been postulated by institutions, experts, and researchers as being involved in the makeup of a serial killer. The category of serial killer was particularly important to include in this thesis given its familiarity and popularity within popular culture. The term serial killer is often used interchangeably with multiple murder and repeat offender, and its implications are sometimes taken for granted. Knowing and understanding where serial murder came from and what psychological, social, or legal attributes it involves is important because we alter our behaviours according to classifications. For instance, when a serial killer or serial arsonist is discussed on the news, certain assumptions are made about their gender, race, and age. It is likely that we will shape our behaviour according to our beliefs of what constitutes a serial killer. That may involve teaching our children to stay away from certain people, where to live, how to protect ourselves, and what time of the night to venture out. It is important to accurately understand classifications since they shape and influence our behaviours, opinions, and morals.

The category of serial monogamy was equally important to consider since it is becoming commonplace to be a serial monogamist. Akin to serial murder, what we constitute as being serial monogamy will also influence our behaviours. We may hold negative views about serial monogamy and decide to distance ourselves from serial monogamists; conversely, we may feel that serial monogamy is a liberating lifestyle and welcome friendships with individuals with

various relationships styles. Either way, our understanding our social categories and classifications will shape our behaviours and engagements.

In short, this thesis examined three categories of seriality to illustrate the complex nature of serial murder, serial monogamy, and serial arson. Categories of seriality are historically contingent and extremely variable. They will be influenced by new social events, institutions, people, experts, and new knowledge and will sometimes take on a life of their own apart from their initial creation. Some serial categories will become what Paul Starr calls “official classifications” –that is, categories adopted by the state and incorporated into law –while others will remain popular culture constructs such as serial monogamy.

Future research should endeavour to study other serial classifications to examine whether seriality involves other over-arching commonalities such as the one’s discussed in this thesis. Moreover, future research should examine the subjective nature of serial classifications to understand whether the popular culture understandings of seriality are understood in the same way by the people being classified. Additionally, scholarship in this area should also broaden its approach to create a interdisciplinary study of serial classifications. Finally, it’s important to remember that “to classify is human” (Bowker & Star, 1999:1).

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