THE INVISIBLE WHO WILL NOT DISAPPEAR: A DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF SOUTH AFRICAN WRITINGS ON STREET CHILDREN

by

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Street children are present in every metropolitan city around the world. Their presence has provoked varied responses from academics, the media and others. However, despite the proliferation of responses, current solutions are not always commensurate with the resources expended in this area. Are current responses a part of the problem or a part of the solution? Following the precedence established by other researchers and calls for greater reflexivity, this study attempts to provide a critical analysis of selected South African writings on and about street children. Particular focus is accorded to how selected academic and popular writings construct street children. The specific aim is to facilitate an examination of the underlying discourses that inform South African writings on street children. The role that academic and popular writings fulfil in selectively maintaining the status quo over which their authors sometimes voice disapproval is also examined. Wherever possible the origins of such discourses and the powers that maintain them are referred to. The extent to which the discourses evident in writings on South African street children converge with the dominant discourses present in developmental psychology as a whole are reviewed.

The complimentary techniques of transformative inquiry and discourse analysis are at the heart of the methodology in this study. As an analytical tool discourse analysis is used to deepen current understanding of perceptions of street children. Discourse analysis helps to chart the underlying discourses drawn on in texts and shows how writings have influenced, intentionally or otherwise, the perceptions of subjects of research. Transformative enquiry as a significant complimentary, albeit implicit, feature of discourse analysis enables a reflection on the research process itself.

Four main discourses are discussed, each of which is centred around several sub-discourses. The first discourse, "He who pays the piper calls the tune" involves an objectification of street children, conveying negative images of street children. The second discourse, "St. Jude the Patron Saint of Lost Causes" is rooted in the ideas of hopelessness, helplessness, victimology and ubiquitousness. The third discourse, "natured versus nurtured" is located in ideas of biological determinism within which street children are described as bestial, abnormally sexual, inherently racially inferior and unresponsive to initiatives designed to provide shelter for them. The fourth discourse, "Us and them cum us against them" arises from ideas that view street children as inherently different to mainstream children and adults, thereby pitting street children against society at large and representing them as enemies. These four interrelated discourses ultimately converge to produce both enabling and constraining effects that are sometimes contradictory in nature. Discourses intended to render street children visible sometimes ironically make them and their plight invisible. The study is concluded with discussions of methodological limitations, suggestions for future
investigation and the psycho-emotive shifts I experienced during the research process.
DECLARATION

I declare that "The invisible who will not disappear: a discourse analysis of South African writings on street children" is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.
DEDICATION

Dedicated to Mr. and Mrs. Fog,
Who can never be separated;
in their love nor,
in their ability to inspire.
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CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 THE MADMAN WEARING THE EMPEROR'S NEW CLOTHES

The telling of stories or songs of experiences, if you will signals the return of the inquirer as a morally and emotionally engaged knower. Research and thinking are always based on personal concerns. Hidden in our lives are resources for understanding and interpretation.

(Al Zeera, 2001, pp. 27-28)

Growing up in a small town meant that one had a community baker, a community fruit shop, a community doctor, a community mechanic, and in our case a community "mad man". For that was what any homeless person was called. Whether they were mentally ill or not and even whether they were male or female was inconsequential to them acquiring the title, they were just known as the "madman" of their particular street. As in the "crossroads madman" or the "harbour view mad man". Well we had our own churchyard madman or as he was known the Halfway tree parish church mad man. He, like many other homeless people living in a tropical place, was never fully dressed. Clothes were low on the list of priorities for someone barely eking out an existence in eternally hot weather. Slowly over time his barely clad state changed to a nude state on given days. As a child I was constantly fascinated that no one seemed to notice
his shocking state in the churchyard of all places, where to me, his nudity was more incongruous than nudity found in any other possible place.

On my way in to Sunday service, I was allowed to see him and yet not see him even though I was threatened with the possibility of blindness if I so much as cast a glance at the equally common yet more congruous nude tourists on the beach. As I grew older I thought more and more about our half way tree mad man and all that he came to represent. I knew that if the local vicar were nude, be it in the church or especially in the church, we would surely not only notice but also be quick to be of assistance to the "poor man" who must have been suffering in some way to do such a thing. But for the local mad man we didn't presume and alleviate such suffering, instead we just gave him “emperors clothes”¹ and went on our way.

As a teenager in the throws of angst, my childhood puzzlement grew into heartache and distress as I realised that even those who were considered to be devout believers and socially conscious philanthropists ignored the nude “madmen”. This misery of mine grew as I started to see the same phenomenon extend to homeless or poor children bobbing between cars on the street. It was always an unresolved issue for me even until I left my hometown. In the face of all the kindness that I experienced and observed in people living at home, the

¹ “The Emperors New Clothes” is a fairy-tale written by Hans Christian Andersen. In this fable the emperor is conned by a tricky tailor into thinking he is wearing splendid new garb as he parades through the town even though he is naked. Afraid to disagree with the powerful emperor or be seen as odd all his subjects agree on how magnificent his new clothes are until a little child proclaims that the emperor is naked!
only real barometer of their altruism to me always remained the existence of people, and especially children, on the streets living as no human should. I have come to understand that street children, economic and political refugees, and recent immigrants are among the many marginalised draped in emperor’s clothes.

1.2 BACKGROUND: STREET CHILDREN IN EMPEROR’S CLOTHES

The phenomenon of street children represents one of the most serious global challenges (Le Roux & Sylvia-Smith, 1998), alongside the impact of other concerns such as AIDS, the globalisation of social inequalities, environmental degradation and widespread social oppression. The presence of so many street children in the metropolitan cities of the world seems particularly reflective of the often inimical and callous social structures inherent to the modern world; the plight of street children in emperor’s clothes is rarely addressed successfully by social welfare and health agencies. Where street children are the focus of interventions for non-governmental organisations (NGO’s), governmental agencies, social and health services, and socio-medical researchers, there is insufficient consideration of the outcome and impact of such interventions.

Even though the social science response may be among the more significant forms of intervention in the area of street children, there is inadequate examination of social sciences’ specific research contributions. Rizzini’s (1996) work provides precedence for a nuanced study of social science’s contribution.
intended to help alleviate the plight of street children. Rizzini (1996) reviewed Latin American studies on street children with the aim of understanding why the proliferation of social science research in the area has not yielded outcomes commensurate with expended intellectual and material resources.

Rizzini's (1996) study provides implicit credence to the view that applied research on street children carries a moral imperative to contribute toward global reform and promote a specific reflexive approach in the social sciences. Consequently, it may be argued that an effective resolution of the crisis faced by street children provides not only a solution to the crisis itself, but represents an opportunity to reclaim and reform the social welfare and health structures of many societies across the globe; it provides an opportunity to deconstruct the discourses that function to uphold the myth evident in the “Emperors clothes”.

Following Rizzini's implied logic, in the present study I attempt to provide a nuanced deconstruction of selected South African writings on and about street children. I will accord particular attention to how social science and popular literature constructs street children. My analysis is informed by the critical approach which “challenges theories and practices common in psychology that maintains an unjust and unsatisfying status quo and in addition ..... pays particular attention to the welfare of the oppressed and vulnerable” (Fox & Prilleltensky, 1997, p. 3). Ross (1991) is among a group of researchers who demonstrates the utility of the critical approach when she asserts: “It is unlikely
that the street children will simply disappear back from whence they came; their omniscient (sic) presence in the cities is sustained by other social processes at work – poverty, unemployment, violence, homelessness, school disruptions, rapid urbanisation and the resultant distortions of family and community life” (p. 69). Although street children have an apparent omnipresence they are excluded from population censuses and are thereby rendered invisible by authorities who wish to minimise the problem in Africa and everywhere (Cerrans, 1992).

Aptekar (1989) describes this “omnipresent invisibility” as one which exists for street children until puberty when they are suddenly noticed and become accepted as the thugs of tomorrow. If this theory is given credence, then the projected statistics of “tomorrow’s thug” is more than alarming. After all, estimates for the numbers of street children world-wide range from 40 million (Trussell, 1999) to as many as 100 million (Agnelli, 1986 as cited in Le Roux & Sylvia Smith, 1998). It is likely however that rather than there being an actualisation of this developmental theory of progression, there is instead a discursive shift from “omnipresent invisibility” to “thugs of tomorrow” without a reflection in official crime statistics.

Even though there is a wide range in the estimated number of street children world wide, many of the current cited figures originate from the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) 1980’s statistics. UNICEF (1986) was also the source of the three classifications (children at risk, children of the street, and children on
the street) that provided a definition of street children which reverberates through much of the research, with South African research being no exception. Street child research at a global level details the scope of the problem as well as defines it in ways that impact upon research at a local level. Acknowledging this linked impact invokes a keener look at how the phenomenon is studied locally and in this present study the use of discourse analysis is intended to provide a magnifying lens to do just that.

1.3 AIMS

Connolly & Ennew (1996) state that despite the increasing levels of collaboration between fieldworkers, activists and academics working in the field of street children, the applied research methods and approaches tend to produce and reproduce familiar limited images of street children either as victims or heroes. Thus the growing body of research and writings focusing on street children does not seem to advance attempts to address the plight of street children adequately.

Accordingly my intention is to facilitate a shift in focus to include an examination of the underlying discourses that inform both academic and popular myths. Just as I was curious as a child about how the phenomenon of the “emperor’s new clothes” seemed to manifest itself among philanthropic minded people in my hometown; I am now interested in the role that academic and popular writings play in selectively maintaining the very status quo over which their authors voice disapproval.
Dallape (1996) sees the children of the ‘avenues’ of African metropolises as having prophetic and political roles. In the South African context the discourses that drive these prophetic and political properties of the street child, if probed, can provide insight into how research has contributed or not contributed towards demystifying the myths inherent in scientific and popular knowledge about street children. And so in this thesis, following the idea that research, researchers, writers and writings can play either a limiting or enabling role, I aim to:

1. Identify, describe and critique the discourses on street children in selected South African social science and popular writings;
2. Where possible and pertinent refer to the genesis of such discourses and the powers that maintain them; and
3. Examine whether the discourses that frame and inform South African street children writings is located within or outside the dominant discourses present in developmental psychology, and
4. Use the techniques of transformative inquiry alongside discourse analysis to reflect on the cognitive and emotive shifts I experienced during the course of this study.

Transformative inquiry is an alternative methodology that seeks to promote a level of knowing and knowledge production that elevates the researcher and research to a higher level, one of "transformation or
transcendence" (Al Zeera, 2001). This technique will be elaborated on in the interpretative framework section of this thesis (see section 2.7).

1.4 RATIONALE AND MOTIVATION

In addition to calls for a closer analysis of the contextual and socio-political configurations that seem to maintain and reproduce the phenomenon of street children (Cerrans, 1992; Ross 1991), three other considerations serve to inform the rationale of my proposed study.

Since discourses in practice systematically recreate themselves (Foucault, 1972 cited in Terre Blanche and Durrheim, 1999), firstly the aims will uncover and elucidate why and how the problem of street children is perpetuated through discourse, despite a seeming overt will to 'resolve' this problem. Secondly, the intended investigation may provide the opportunity to link discourses on street children to critical theories in developmental psychology. So while I will scrutinise discourses that are inherent in selective South African social science research, the outcome of the study may yield an opportunity to highlight any similarities that exist between discourses underlying street children writings and those that are present in developmental psychology (Burman, 1994).

Thirdly, the results of the study may be used to facilitate a reflective approach to policy formulation and intervention. Discourse analysis research may be
used to inform both critical and traditional research endeavours, its main input being to improve the understanding of the contextual influences that may impact on the interpretation of social psychological methods and findings. Discourse analysis broadens some of the limiting horizons of traditional research by giving due consideration to the complexities of social interaction and context (Potter & Wetherell, 1998). Deconstructing writings on street children, in this sense, can provide researchers and practitioners with a knowledge tool to ensure that even the most presumed precise and clear-cut theories or experimental results, are interpreted and applied critically and appropriately.

1.5 CONTENT/STRUCTURE

I structure this thesis around seven chapters including this present introductory chapter. The chapters are summarised below.

➢ The present Chapter One is a general introduction and background, in which I detail the scope, aims, rationale, motivation, and structure of the study.

➢ In Chapter Two I provide an interpretative framework and present the major theoretical approaches that guide street children research and developmental research in general. I pay particular attention to the critical school of psychology and transformative inquiry within which this study will be grounded.
> **In Chapter Three** I review the relevant literature, presenting a general background and critical discussion of street children writings locally and globally.

> **In Chapter Four** I summarise some of the major dilemmas foregrounded by the deconstruction of developmental psychology according to Burman (1994).

> **In Chapter Five** I outline the methodology. I review discourse analysis and transformative inquiry as methods, and their effectiveness as tools of investigation in this particular study. I also detail my data corpus and document the procedure I adopted for conducting the discourse analysis on local street children writings.

> **In Chapter Six** I report on the results of the discourse analysis and present a critical review of the findings within the context of the interpretative framework that is detailed in chapter two. I also discuss the dilemmas deconstructed by Burman in chapter four, and their implications as they pertain to the discourses dislodged in the report described in chapter six. I then proceed, by way of concluding remarks, to review several possible limitations to the study and discuss implications for further research in the field of street children.

> **In Chapter Seven**, in keeping with the transformational methodology, I reflect on the research process and my own experiences as a researcher in this thesis. In so doing I also discuss and respond to some of the questions raised in chapter one and conclude with a discussion of the possible applications of this thesis.
2.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides a supporting framework for the entire study. Accordingly in the sections below I:

➢ Firstly, present the major theoretical perspectives that guide street child research and developmental research in general. I pay particular attention to the critical school of psychology in which my research is grounded.

➢ Secondly, I review the philosophical basis of transformative Inquiry as a supplementary approach to discourse analysis.

2.1 THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

For the purposes of elucidating an interpretative framework it may be useful to consider the aims and rationale of the proposed study within the context of historical developments pertaining to the broader field of psychology, and more specifically alongside the commentaries of several researchers (Al Zeera, 2001; Aptekar, 1989; Burman, 1994; Cerrans, 1992; Morss, 1996; Ross, 1991) located within the critical school and transformative enquiry approach. Developmental psychology can be categorised broadly according to four general approaches within the discipline. Morss (1996, pp. 3-9) lists them as: (1) The traditional
psychology of development; (2) the social context approach; (3) social construction; and (4) the critical psychology of development.

2.2 TRADITIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

2.2.1 Basic Assumptions

The traditional psychology approach to science is usually termed positivist, naturalist and functionalist. As a positivist approach it follows a set of assumptions on how knowledge must be acquired. Information must be novel or logical and without contradictions, it must be consistent with observable facts, measurement of data must be done using appropriate tools and information and knowledge produced must be replicable. As a naturalist approach it relies heavily on biological explanations and leans toward evolutionary theories. This biological leaning also makes it functionalist, wherein human reactions are thought of as a sort of adaptation to a relatively stable environment. In this approach it is assumed that elementary phenomena are universal and understanding the phenomena in one context allows for reproduction or the understanding of the phenomena in other contexts. The goal of this type of research is to isolate sole causes for particular phenomena (Bhana & Kanjee, 2001; Morss, 1996; Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999).
2.2.2 Methods

The traditionalist approach emphasises experimental and observational methods, using various methods of statistical analysis. In this approach the scientist is regarded as a detached observer testing the truth or falsehood of a formulated hypothesis. Such investigation is modelled on the physical sciences placing preference on controlling variables and measuring outcomes. Experimental and quantitative methods are highly valued and used to establish causal relationships. Random sampling and analysis using statistical techniques are common in this paradigm (Bhana & Kanjee, 2001; Morss, 1996; Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999).

For instance, the majority of research in South Africa which seeks to gain insight into the influence of the environment on children is premised on positivistic principles arising from the traditional approach to psychology (Hooks, Watts, & Cockcroft, 2002). Such research relies heavily on testing for the probability of a particular occurrence and then statistically evaluating whether this probability supports a stated hypothesis. If a particular hypothesis (e.g. expectant mothers' alcohol consumption during pregnancy leads to abnormalities in the growth of the foetus) is statistically supported then this hypothesis is generalised or thought to hold true in similar situations and is actually used to help to create models for prediction. Another example of such a generalised hypothesis in the area of street children research would be that exposure to abusive parents in childhood contributes to aggressive behaviour in adult life.
4.2.3 Limitations

In this approach the physical sciences are sometimes seen as the only model of knowledge generation and humans and human behaviour are reduced to statistical assertions, numbers and data which can be manipulated according to abstract laws or formulas that may not have relevance for people's actual lives. Human experience is not given a place in the research process or findings and as such human subjectivity is factored out of this methodology. So-called researcher neutrality or scientific objectivity is prized at the cost of ignoring the reality that humans, including researchers, are socially constructed. Positivist research tends not to allow for reflection on the research process and is focused merely on methods and outcomes of controlled investigations.

In South Africa, for example, positivistic studies investigating developmental issues, such as early childhood education allows for successful predictability of later achievement. However, some of the variables (e.g. observing children's survival behaviour in crowded and under-resourced rural classrooms and how children master a curriculum) used in predicting success are not quick or cheap to measure and thus limits the usefulness of this type of research in widespread programmes (Hooks, Watts, & Cockcroft, 2002). Hooks, Watts, and Cockcroft (2002) also state that in South African research on childhood there is insufficient critical evaluation of tests which focus on measuring values (e.g. parental involvement) to be able to make valuable predictions. Such positivistic research although helpful also universalises, naturalises and validates terminology and
values. As such it can be argued that positivistic research may not allow for ongoing reflection on the research process, focusing more on outcomes. It is possible therefore that the impact of social factors on studied phenomena is ignored (Bhana & Kanjee, 2001; Morss, 1996; Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999).

2.3 SOCIAL CONTEXT

2.3.1 Basic Assumptions

Following the period of positivist research, the social context approach arose when researchers began to factor in social context into experimentation and theory. According to the social context approach development must be understood within the total environment or context in which it occurs, and therefore, actions cannot be interpreted in isolation and individuals cannot be understood outside of their context or culture. Development is seen as constantly changeable, a process of interaction between environment and individual (Hooks, Watts, & Cockcroft, 2002).

An example of a study based on the social context approach is described by Papalia, Olds and Freedman (1998). In this study, members of the Kpelle tribe in Liberia were asked to sort twenty objects and consistently sorted on the basis of functional categories. According to Western psychologists this type of sorting is associated with low levels of thought. The Kpelle insisted this sorting method was how a 'wise man' would sort the objects. When asked how a fool would do the sorting they then proceeded to sort objects into four neat piles with food in one,
tools in another and so on. This sorting is deemed ‘higher order’ according to Western psychologists (Hooks, Watts, & Cockcroft, 2002). This example shows how culture and caution in adopting or believing in universals can be of relevance to the social context approach. To a contextualist interpreting behaviour outside of context is misleading. For example, in the area of street children research this approach might consider the testing of street children and observation of their behaviour in a main stream classroom setting un-informative. A contextualist would perhaps argue that to be able to truly assess and interpret such behaviour, observation of the children in their natural setting on the streets was necessary.

Many versions of the social context approach are based mainly on the works of Lev Vygotsky. Vygotsky’s major contribution to the field was a substantial set of theoretical claims and empirical studies which subsequently inspired theoretical and research activity. Based on such theories social contextualists assert that social functions are adaptive. Vygotsky’s work was strongly influenced by his Marxist background and the dominant theme of his theory is that cognitive development is inseparable from its cultural context (Hooks, Watts, & Cockcroft, 2002).

2.3.2 Methods

In this approach, methodological techniques of experimental psychology are used to support developmental theories. Quantitative methodology in which causal relationships are established through the use of statistical tests is also a
The hallmark of this approach. Various elements of development are isolated and the relationship between them and the environment are explored. Humans are also likened to information processing machines and so are studied as such (Morss, 1996). In this approach it is believed that the individual is constantly processing information, acting on information which is selectively perceived and attended to; this information is also stored and can be retrieved from memory to be used at later points when needed (Hooks, Watts, & Cockcroft, 2002). The methodological rigour of the traditional approach to psychology is admired and is at the centre of this approach (Bhana & Kanjee, 2001; Morss, 1996; Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999).

2.3.3 Limitations

The social context movement represents an extension of the traditional approach rather than a break-away movement. The underlying assumptions and assumed methodologies of the two approaches are similar. Consequently it falls prey to the same limitations of the traditional approach, upholding the rigidity of quantitative methodology (Morss, 1996).

2.4 SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIVIST MOVEMENT

2.4.1 Basic Assumptions

The social construction movement emerged as a result of the growing rejection of the cognitivist approach inherent in the social context movement. Some social constructivists assume a humanist orientation in which all the unique human
ways and interactions are seen as central to research. Constructivists aim to describe and interpret people's meanings, feelings and experiences. However, there exists an extension of this constructivist position distinguished as constructionism. Constructionism assumes a trans-humanistic position wherein research is intended not only to describe meanings, feelings and experiences, but also seeks to situate how these are produced and reproduced by larger social discourse. For the purposes of this discussion I will use the terms constructivism and constructionism interchangeably.

Language and meaning are the central focus of constructionist research. Language is seen as an interpretation of the social world that constructs reality through a system of meanings and practices. People's thoughts, feelings and experiences are all connected to their social experiences. Social constructionists see storytelling as a universal element of people's social life, although details of this storytelling may vary across cultures and time. Therefore, a cross-cultural approach and historical analysis of human social life are important to social constructionism. This movement focuses on knowledge production not as a process of generalisation, prediction and control, but as a means to interpret and find meaning (Bhana & Kanjee, 2001; Morss, 1996; Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999).

As such this movement has contributed heavily to the South African developmental research in two ways. It provides critique that questions the basic
assumptions underlying theorising and research in development. It also questions the nature of family, mother, child, and adolescent as is mostly spoken about in developmental psychology (Hooks, Watts, & Cockcroft, 2002). The fact that for example, mothers are taken-for-granted as primary care givers of infants is one example of a question that a social constructionist would ask (Hooks, Watts, & Cockcroft, 2002). Perhaps when applied to the area of street children research, constructionists would ask a similar question about the assumption of the role of the traditional Western nuclear family as the primary source of nurturance or sense of belonging to a child as opposed to fellow street children.

2.4.2 Methods

The social constructionists adopt qualitative interpretative methods in their research endeavours. Bhana and Kanjee (2001) state that this qualitative method of research includes three major components: firstly, since researchers are concerned mainly with the process rather than the outcomes, it is more descriptive and emphasises understanding the meaning of data. Secondly, this type of research focuses on the meaning people attach to their lives. Thirdly, the researcher is the analytical instrument and data is generated and processed through human instruments rather than through questionnaires or tests. Methods usually include: discourse analysis, textual analysis, narrative analysis, ethnography, deconstruction, fieldwork, participant observation studies, interviews, studying archival material and field notes (Bhana & Kanjee, 2001; Morss, 1996; Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999).
2.4.3 Limitations

Morss (1996) says that the constructivism movement failed to live up to the promise of its early years as its "stubborn humanism and optimism sometimes becomes a little cloying, with a tendency toward self-centredness that prevents scrutiny of that self within the structures of a larger society" (pp. 3-9). Bhana and Kanjee (2001), state that there is an over-emphasis on the understanding and interpretation of people's lives, and not enough on changing oppressive social conditions. The social constructionist approach does not provide for a generalisation of findings and so there is often no indication of whether research is applicable to other groups outside of the one being studied.

Because this approach leans heavily on the researcher as the instrument of interpretation, findings may well not reflect some form of consensual reality but only the researcher's perception of reality. In many instances where researchers are of a different socio-economic, ethnic and cultural background to the communities under study this can be problematic.

Bhana and Kanjee (2001) also argue that within the assumption that everything is relative and that nothing is absolute, there lies the problem that positive social action can be retarded since no one solution is endorsed as an absolute truth. They go on to state that methods typically used in social constructionist research, alter the behaviour of the group being studied and so it is never really known whether the researcher can record information as it naturally occurs. The social
constructionist reply to such criticism would of course be that the idea of 'naturally occurring' phenomena is itself a social construction.

2.5 THE CRITICAL PSYCHOLOGY OF DEVELOPMENT

2.5.1 Basic Assumptions

Critical psychology, described by Morss (1996) as the fourth phase and perhaps the most current phase of developmental psychology, locates psychology within a larger historical and economic context. Psychology itself is said to be socially created and an adoption of critical analytical methods will make it possible to "see through" the claims and practices of psychology. Many critical psychologists work from a constructionist paradigm within which the researcher is seen as an observer who constructs versions of reality, and research itself is viewed as a way of relating various realities that contain political implications and outcomes.

In doing this, many critical psychologists draw on a post-structuralist mode of recognising difference for its own sake. Post-structuralism emphasises diversity and fragmentation rather than coherence; the multiplicity of possible interpretations of a given situation and the possibility of indeterminacy in analysis are also hallmarks of this approach (Morss, 1996). Scientific viewpoints are therefore seen as alternative interpretations rather than as successive approximations of the truth. Story like elements are seen as an intrinsic part of scientific research and the storyteller and the subject of the story become extremely important to interpreting the story itself (Bhana & Kanjee, 2001; Morss, 1996; Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999).
Critical psychologists tend to go beyond this broadly constructionist orientation in that they emphasise detecting and unmasking beliefs and practices that limit human freedom, justice and democracy in order to enable people and communities to change their lives. Some critical thinkers such as those working from a Foucaultian approach go further, by regarding ideas about justice and democracy as "fantasies of liberation" that need to be unmasked (Terre Blanche personal communication, May 2002). The goal of critical research is to empower individuals through social involvement and dismissing any pretence at neutrality in research. It is not important to achieve "scientific objectivity" but rather to employ adequate methods that can withstand the scrutiny of critical dialogue (Bhana & Kanjee, 2001). Hooks, Watts and Cockcroft (2002) assert that this method of critiquing an academic discipline such as developmental psychology encourages progress, rejuvenation, refreshment, heightened general efficacy and explanatory power across time. The critical psychology approach as applied to development is all the more important as such a field carries a moral imperative because it affects the lives of real people (Hooks, Watts & Cockcroft, 2002).

### 2.5.2 Limitations

Bhana and Kanjee (2001) express concern that this approach can produce research that although committed to emancipation, may not translate into communities wanting to emancipate themselves. In addition, disenfranchised communities, which could insightfully understand and interpret the social,
economic and political realities of their own communities, are sometimes not adequately trained or experienced in such emancipatory forms of research (Bhana & Kanjee, 2001).

2.6 TRANSFORMATIONAL INQUIRY

2.6.1 Introduction

Each of these phases in the approach to developmental psychology can be said to contribute to the evolution of research and knowledge production. Yet, although each of these movements has been born out of the preceding phase, the four movements tend to be viewed as compartmentalised strands with no real connection to their preceding phase; except as a means of rejecting the former's limitations. Al Zeera (2001) notes that traditionally the social sciences (inclusive of all the four phases described above) have tended to seek knowledge based on emphasising one or the other extremes of subjectivity or objectivity, including the internal versus the external. Traditional psychology and the social context approach tend to emphasise objectivity whereas the social construction movement and critical psychology lean heavily in favour of subjectivity. The value of each phase in the evolutionary process is therefore at risk of being lost in this compartmentalisation and emphasis on extremes or polarities: subject versus object, discovered versus constructed, neutral versus applied, restrictive versus emancipatory.
The transformational perspective described in the following section, is an attempt at bridging the gap between the extremities of objectivity and subjectivity and individual transformation and social transformation. The transformational perspective stresses that the workings of the internal world of ideas and ideals are linked to the external world of matter. This is not per se a novel idea, but the modes and means of applying this idea are particularly useful to the current study. In this sense transformative inquiry represents a complimentary extension of the ideas contained in discourse analysis. Transformative enquiry may well be regarded by some as an inherent feature of discourse analysis.

2.6.2 Basic Assumptions

The transformative method of inquiry as described by Al Zeera (2001), is located in the quantum worldview and is based on two major principles of Complimentarity and Uncertainty:

The transformational perspective is holistic and relational, since it emphasises viewing the world from a complementary perspective that accommodates and accepts extremes, as they are a part of reality. An aggressive clash or a peaceful dialogue between extremes opens the channels for flow of energy and transformation. An important point in the process of transformation is that the researcher adopts a holistic paradigm, a paradigm that holds as its basic premise that reality is ideal and relative, subjective and objective, spiritual and material. Holding such an open and wide perspective encourages interaction and relationships between contradictory elements. Transformation gradually leads to
transcendence. That is to say, we are able to go beyond transformation and transcend to higher experiences through reflective research methods.

(Al Zeera, 2001, p. 4)

2.6.2.1 Understanding Transformational Inquiry as Originating from the Theory of Dissipative Structures

The Belgian scientist, Ilya Prigogine won the Nobel Prize for chemistry in 1977 for his theory of dissipative structures. This theory explains nature’s “irreversible processes” – the movement toward higher and higher orders of life. It explains that humans have basically been running uphill in the universe, moving toward increasing complexity and perfection. He mathematically proves that dissipation of energy creates potential for sudden reordering. So, change or the potential for reordering and transformation comes through the dissipation of energy. Although this process is not seen as the diametric opposite to entropy – the tendency of structures to collapse into disorder – it can perhaps be seen as a parallel process. This is to say disorder can be seen as part and parcel of the stressors that can create open systems and the dissipation of energy and therefore eventual reordering or change. Dissipative structures are said to be open systems in which there are stressors and tensions or instability present. Indeed, instability is the key to transformation (Al Zeera, 2001).

Ferguson (1987) finds that this concept of dissipative structure can be applied to human society. Just as in dissipative structures, a society that is open and has great variations and instability leads to more interaction occurring and more of a transfer of energies between people, we are transformed through interaction with
people, the environment, and the situations we encounter, or as researchers, what we study. Given the nature of dissipation, the more open we are in our research methods, the more interaction between the researcher and the participants and the situation being studied. Hence, as more tensions are created by this interaction, the greater the dissipation or transfer of energy between the two. Consequently, as Al Zeera (2001) states transformation is more likely when a system is open and when dissipative structure and ideas, elements, thoughts and feelings flow freely consciously and unconsciously.

"...Transformation is undergirded by the dissipative structures and shifts in kind rather than degree, a difference that makes a difference a difference.....it indicates inclusive change or reconstruction" (Al Zeera, 2001, p. 5).

Ferguson (1987) clarifies this concept of change and transformation by proposing four ways in which humans change when we get new and conflicting information: (1) *Change by exception*, a limited form of change where our old beliefs remain intact but allow for a handful of anomalies; (2) *Incremental change*, where the individual changes bit by bit and is unaware of having changed; (3) *Pendulum change*, wherein a person does not integrate what was right from the old and does not see the overstatements in the new, but shifts radically from one half known to another, rejecting his/her own experience. (4) *Paradigm change* which allows for information and insight to come together to create a new form of structure. The first three changes do not lead to transformation whereas
paradigm change does. Dissipative structures caused by the stressors and tensions of new information create change through both holistic and dialectical thinking and result in paradigm change (Al Zeera, 2001).

2.6.3 Method

Al Zeera (2001) suggests four research methods of transformational inquiry. They are phenomenology, hermeneutics, heuristic research and narrative enquiry.

- In phenomenology, the researcher starts with the perspective that reality is socially constructed. Research involves looking in natural contexts for ways in which individuals and groups make sense of their world. These interpretations are the main point of phenomenological enquiries. This method is defined by a systematic investigation into subjectivity.

- In hermeneutics, which is much older than phenomenology, the focus is on social issues and the collective consciousness. Unlike phenomenology, hermeneutics is concerned with the social rather than the individual meaning of actions. However, like phenomenology, it attempts to describe and study meaningful phenomena in a bona fide manner; hermeneutics is not concerned with the intention of the individual, but rather with how actions can be used to interpret the larger social contexts of meaning within which a particular action is situated.

- Heuristic research is autobiographical in nature and involves self-examination, self dialogue, self-search and self-discovery. The researcher
often is guided into an area of research through a deep personal experience. Moustakas (1990), suggests six stages that a researcher passes through to accomplish heuristic research: (1) identifying the focus of enquiry, (2) self-dialogue, (3) tacit-knowing, (4) intuition, (5) in-dwelling and (6) focusing. He then identifies the phases of heuristic research as: (i) initial engagement, (ii) immersion, (iii) inculcation, (iv) illumination, (v) explication and (vi) creative synthesis.

Narrative enquiry is research that involves rhetoric, narrative and dialogue such as story telling and song. This methodology reflects the fact that "research and thinking are always based on personal concerns....Contact with our own life story is for us a self-discovery, self-dialogue and self-knowledge, and beyond that an entry to our soul and our spirituality" (Al Zeera, 2001, p. 28). In trying to understand phenomena we introspect on our own lives and our souls and self. We reconstruct our personal experiences as we construct our understanding of phenomena.

2.6.4 Modes of Transformative Inquiry and Discourse Analysis

The concept of discourse analysis, as an open ended qualitative method of research and as a tool of critical psychology, seems to court transformation, which is described as an open ended system in which change takes place through interaction. Whereas all the stated modes of transformative inquiry bear some relevance to discourse analysis, heurism and narrative enquiry as forms of transformation are particularly relevant to discourse analysis as used in this
study. This study is primarily grounded in the critical school of psychology that suggests that research results should result in the improvement of the community. Several writers, such as Fox and Prilleltensky (1997) and Rappaport and Stewart (1997), agree that critical psychology must move beyond rhetoric to action and empowerment of the oppressed, upliftment of disadvantaged communities, and change and transformation. Complementing the critical school's focus on the transformation of an external group or individual, transformational inquiry methodologies focus on the transformation or empowerment of the researcher. Researchers and their sites of action are all subject to transformation and change.

2.6.4.1 Complementarity, Uncertainty, Critical Stress and Tension

Prigogine’s work on dissipative structures states that tension, stress, uncertainty, complementarity and difference all play a critical role in creating dissipative energy which in turn creates transformation. This transformation or Interaction between extremes and variations creates higher ordering.

Critical psychology and its handmaiden of discourse analysis are complimentary to transformative inquiry in that they are open structures, and use open methodologies. However these methodologies and perspectives also have the necessary critical stress and tension in that whereas the real motivator and focus of critical psychology is the larger community, heurism and narrative modes of transformative inquiry, are centred in the individual researcher's motivations and
quests for meaning. It is my hope that this study will create sufficient tension between these two methodologies to lead to transformation at the social and personal levels.

It is also my modest hope that this change will incorporate a higher ordering inclusive of the psychoemotive and cognitive shifts I experience and in the work that is produced through a reflexive oriented researcher. Ideally both the objectives of the critical school – that of changing community and the objective of transformation – that of enlightening the researcher, should be met so as to encourage greater reflexivity in how we construct and deconstruct writings and research on street children.

In this chapter I provided a description of a few of the theories that contribute to the conceptualisation of this study. The critical school of psychology, which has been emphasised as the kernel of the theoretical underpinnings of this study also, provides the critical lens for the literature review that now follows.
3.0 INTRODUCTION

Following the description of approaches to research in psychology, in this chapter I review critically relevant literature focusing on definitions, characterisation, causes and functioning of street children.

3.1 DEFINITION

The blanket expression “street children” refers to a phenomenon for which there is no ubiquitous experience. Understanding of the phenomenon changes from nation to nation and from culture to culture; estimates for street children vary across countries; public and media perceptions about street children also differ across various countries; and street children’s perceptions about themselves are heterogeneous. So attempts to universalise the phenomenon of street children result in loose and broad definitions. For example, the United Nations (UN) states that “a street child is any boy or girl who uses the street in the widest sense of the word for habitual abode and/or livelihood, being inadequately supervised or provided for by adults” (International Catholic Children’s Bureau, 1985, p. 58). The United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF, 1984) presents a more nuanced definition which categorises street children in three ways. Firstly there are children at risk – the children of the urban poor from whom the population of street children are drawn. Secondly, there are children on the street - children
who maintain daily or frequent contact with their families but source an income from working on the streets and use it to supplement the family income. Finally there are *children of the street* — children who may have remote family ties but whose major living place is the street. They visit home or family very infrequently if at all. This widely accepted UNICEF (1984) definition which views contact with family as pivotal, does not however define what is meant by "the street".

Throughout the 1990's many other writers forwarded other definitions for street children. Some major examples of this are found in the works of Aptekar (1988b), Cosgrove (1990), Lusk (1992), Martins (1996), and Visano (1990).

Aptekar (1988b) and Visano (1990) both categorise children according to identified stages of street life. Rather than using UNICEF's three categories of street children, they emphasise and chart the full socialisation into street life as a slow process starting with children visiting the streets and eventually spending progressively more time away from family until they are completely absorbed into street life and culture.

Another writer, Cosgrove (1990), categorises street children according to both degree of family involvement and amount of deviant behaviour. Unlike UNICEF, Lusk (1992) defines the phenomenon according to the amount of work or the nature of the work performed by street children. Accordingly Lusk (1992) divides street children into three categories: poor working children who live with their
families, children who are independent street workers, and children who live and work on the street with their families as is prevalent in India. There is also the definition by Martins (1996) that identifies different groups of street children in Brazil, using the dimensions of: family ties, school attendance and occupation on the streets.

Le Roux (1994) adds to the literature on definitions by suggesting that there is a “South African grounded and politically motivated street child category” (pp. 65-71). This category includes victims of the Group Areas Act that was in force until 1990. This Act determined that “African”\(^2\) children were not allowed to live with parents who worked and resided in former residential white areas. As a result many children were sent to live with family or friends in the segregated townships where a lack of adequate parental supervision was a push factor to the streets. In contrast in South Africa both the public and police tend to sometimes incorrectly view street children as members of gangs (Scharf, Powell, & Thomas, 1986; Swart, 1988a as cited by Le Roux, 1998), thereby misrepresenting street children.

\(^2\) In this instance the term African is used to refer to the indigenous South African of African Ancestry. However throughout this study the term black will be used to include all people historically labelled as other-than-white. Use of racial terms in no way implies acceptance of the apartheid generated racial classification system.
3.1.1 Critical Observations

After a careful reading of these definitions it is possible to make four critical observations. Firstly, the literature and studies on street children reflect writings that have been guided by how it defines the problem of street children. All of these definitions therefore have methodological implications and definitions can be a significant source of disagreement instigating confusion around methods and results of research studies (Koller & Hutz, 1996). For instance, when researchers use differing classification schemes and broad definitions that do not describe samplings in detail, it is difficult for those working within the positivist framework to replicate studies or draw comparisons across studies (Hutz & Koller, 1999).

Secondly, South African definitions do not differ much from international definitions, all of which use a system of classification or typology. Perhaps this is due to the positivist influence on research in this field, whereby establishing causal relationships lead to the narrow compartmentalising of street children’s lives, which in reality are more fluid and dynamic depending on contexts, culture and geography.

Thirdly, a critical definition of street children would seem incomplete without including the children's input or their own definition of themselves. Donald, Wallis and Cockburn (1997) note that the term child is demeaning as it infantilizes many people who live on the street. They found that many of the people referred to as
street children are in fact adolescents who prefer to be seen and treated as youth. It was also noted that in Cape Town, South Africa, the street youth refer to themselves as "strollers" and never as street children. Richter insists that:

"Strollers is the name used by street children in Cape Town to describe themselves" (cited in Le Roux, 1994, p. 67).

In the words of a street child:

"A stroller is someone who don't sleep by his house – he sleeps in the street. He don't eat by his house – he eats in the bins. A stroller is someone who thinks he is free to do what his mind says. It's a nice name for us" (Swart's cited in Le Roux, 1994, p. 67)

Fourthly, the literature seems to ignore the general public's definition, which is based on an uncanny public ability to almost instantly identify (often accurately) children who live on the street, or are on the way to being indoctrinated into street life and culture. However the general public's definition of street children is harder to articulate perhaps because it is more overtly normative. The public's definition seems to be informed by a network of discourses, by which it derives perceptions of both the children and themselves. They create norms from which they can see anyone or any group deviate or adhere. The public's street children definition seems best described as "any individual under the age of majority
whose behaviour is predominantly at variance with community norms..." (Cosgrove, 1990, p.192). The community norms referred to feed into and are concurrently fed by dominant discourse. Inherent in this type of normative definition is an element of stereotyping which is usually created through discourse.

3.2 CHARACTERISTICS OF STREET CHILDREN

In the literature reviewed below street children are generally characterised by age, gender and a cluster of other factors also described hereunder.

3.2.1 Age

Street children rarely begin street life before they are five years of age (Gutierrez, 1970). Notably children are not capable of competing for the kinds of work they engage in at such young ages and in fact most parents are loathe to allow children under ten years of age to enter the harsh world of the streets (Gutierrez, 1970). According to Lalor (1999), the majority of street children world-wide are aged between 10 and 14. The South Africa age range is between 11 and 17 years but averaging mainly at 13 years of age. Lalor (1999) also states that a street child “career” is terminated by changing appearance when they move from childhood to adulthood in the eyes of the public. This usually happens at about age 14 or 15 when they loose their appeal to passers-by from whom they beg. Moving into the street and totally matriculating into the street culture happens for
most street children between the ages of 11 and 13. However, the age group that makes up the majority of the street children population changes according to country and culture (Aptekar, 1991). For example, Lalor (1999), states that more than half the total number of street children in Ethiopia are under 12 years old, though in most other low-to-middle income countries children under 16 years old constitute 50 percent of the street children population.

3.2.2 Gender, Race and Ethnicity

Gender is another major defining characteristic of street children globally. Although girls constitute at least 50 percent of the street children population in patrifocal high-income countries such as the United States, street children are really street boys in most countries (Aptekar, 1994). This is also true in South Africa. Worldwide there is a much higher presence of boys than girls among street children. Some figures indicate that boys constitute at least ninety percent of street children in Latin America and seventy five percent in Ethiopia (Lalor, 1999). According to Aptekar (1994), many writers indicate that girls are less visible on the streets because they are recruited into work which hides them, such as working in private homes as domestic help or in bars or back street hotels. According to the same research girls are often also taken off the streets to become prostitutes. However, Aptekar (1994) argues that this tendency is not always supported by global statistics on prostitution. He reasons that girls are needed more in the household to do chores and care for younger siblings and
are thus rarely recruited to the streets. Boys on the other hand are usually socialised to leaving home earlier especially to support the family income.

3.2.3 Prevalence

According to Donald, Wallis and Cockburn (1997), UNICEF (1992) figures put the total street child population of South Africa at 12,500. Le Roux (1994), estimates the South African total to be closer to 9,000. Le Roux (1994) further states that the vast majority of street children are black and that there are virtually no white street children in South Africa. At the time of the Le Roux (1994) study there were however about 10,000 white children in 160 state-registered and subsidised children's homes. The prevalence rates have probably changed over the last decade. However, accurate statistics were not readily available from government departments to confirm this.

Despite the fact that there are wide ranging global estimates for street children, researchers seem to agree that the overwhelming majority of street children reside in Latin America. UNICEF estimates that there are approximately 40 million street children in Latin America representing about 50 percent of the total global street children population (Aptekar, 1991). UNICEF figures also estimate that there are 20 million street children in Asia and 10 million street children in Africa and the Middle East (Aptekar, 1991).
3.2.4 Other Characteristics

Le Roux and Sylvia-Smith (1998) extend the global characterisation of street children to include the following descriptors:

- usually suffering from acute malnutrition which in turn causes them to be stunted in growth and makes them seem younger than their chronological years,
- mature beyond their years in terms of their approach to the world,
- most having unfavourable family histories,
- suspicious of adults due to experiences of abuse at the hands of adults and authority figures such as the police,
- deem freedom as very important,
- live by their wits,
- often use self destructive behaviour as a result of lack of knowledge,
- many use drugs (mostly toxic inhalants such as glue) as a temporary escape from their harsh realities,
- many have replaced family with a companionship system whereby they group together with other street children,
- many attend school irregularly or not at all and the longer they spend on the streets the more likely they are to be involved in criminal behaviour.

3.2.5 Critical Observations

The characterisation of South African street children does not vary much from that of street children world-wide. However, the high incidence of HIV/AIDS in
Southern Africa combined with the risk for exposure to sexual violence may place South African street children at a greater risk for infection than their global counterparts (Swart-Kruger & Richter, 1997).

The characterisation of street children changes according to developmental stages. For instance, begging tends to be terminated among street children once they assume an adult appearance.

On the whole the characterisation of street children in the reviewed literature seems to assume a positivist perspective, focusing primarily on measurable aspects of their lives (e.g. ages). These limited characterisations overlook issues such as the learning styles or motivations of the children. The current characterisation of street children also has a physiological or biological focus which overlooks the sociological factors underlying street life.

3.3 CAUSES OF THE PHENOMENON

Unlike low-to-middle income countries there is a small concentration of visible street children in Europe and the United States. Euro-America does however have large delinquent and violent populations most commonly found in urban slums. Many homeless children in the low-to-middle income countries are from the middle-class unlike their counterparts in high-income countries; North American runaway children are also more likely to be on the streets because of family discord rather than poverty. Nearly 80 percent of American runaways have
been physically or sexually abused, compared to only 20 percent of Latin American street children (Aptekar, 1994).

In general, Aptekar (1994) gives three explanations for the origin of street children: urban poverty, modernisation and aberrant families. He notes that the role of culture in explaining the origins of street children has not been fully explored. Most writings on street children emphasise very direct causal relationships that supposedly push or pull children to the streets. It is difficult to truly account for the phenomenon of street children in a particular culture (Aptekar, 1994). Circumstances that seem to cause the phenomenon in one culture may not cause it in another where similar conditions prevail. Aptekar also notes that one possible common denominator that might explain the cultural conditions for street children is a "non-dictatorial capitalistic country in the developing world that has significant urban centres" (pp.195-224). Anti-colonial national movements also precede the onset of the phenomenon of street children in some areas.

Such decidedly political attributions for street children are also prevalent in South Africa. For example, Swart (1988) attributes the South African street children phenomenon to the country's historical violent political problems. Le Roux (1994) extends this attribution to suggest that often, street children were victimised by older, politically conscious youth who forced them to take part in protest marches. The children then would flee to urban centres to escape this
harassment as well as the expected victimization by the police or army whom they would encounter when participating in civil disobedience. Le Roux and Sylvia Smith (1998), perceive political involvement on the part of the street children somewhat differently as they suggest that black youths in the 1980's left home, apparently voluntarily, to participate in the anti-apartheid struggle and to hide from authorities whom they were resisting. These explanations hint at the complex pull factors that can be associated with living on the streets during the apartheid era.

Ross (1991) adds to this political analysis by stating that the street children problem in South Africa is the outcome of the political system of racial segregation that had been in place since the 1940's. Further to this, Williams (1993), coined the term "educational refugees " to refer to the 3,000 to 5,000 children aged 13 to 18 who in 1986 were seeking uninterrupted education. Many of these children roamed the streets with their belongings trying to find school placement. The large-scale school disruption through out the late 1970's and 1980's in Soweto, a racially segregated township in the south of Johannesburg, and other segregated townships resulted in the swelling of the street children population in South Africa.

In moving away from political attributions, in general it is accurate and easy to say that most street children in low-to-middle income countries originate from poor families but this is not always the reason for children being on the streets.
Aptekar (1994) states that a subtle reason for street children in low-to-middle income countries leaving home, and consisting mostly of boys as opposed to girls, relates to the dynamics that go between stepfathers and male stepchildren in a matrifocal society. This he says is a common situation in East Africa and Latin America. That girls constitute at least 50 percent of the street children population in patrifocal high-income countries may provide credence to Aptekar's (1994) explanation for the causes of the street children phenomenon.

Bernstein and Gray (1991), ascribe the causes of the problem in South Africa to the disintegration of the traditional extended family system, the poor economy and the changing nature of the society. According to Bernstein and Gray (1991) childcare workers reported that attraction to the city and a search for adventure were the most frequent factors propelling poor children to the streets in South Africa. A combination of other factors such as alcohol abuse by parents and a history of unreasonably strict discipline are also cited as common factors for children fleeing to the streets in South Africa (Peacock, 1989).

Le Roux and Silva-Smith (1998) summarise succinctly the causes of the street children phenomenon. They ascribe the dramatic rise in street children to increased societal stress associated with rapid industrialisation and urbanisation, inner city decay, chronic unemployment, economic downturns, drought famine and the breakdown of traditional family structures and values. In addition, family pathology such as abuse, alcoholism or neglect drives children out of the home.
Le Roux and Sylvia-Smith (1998) report that some children run away from home to escape boredom, humiliation and the failure they experience in school. Others are attracted to street action and promises of a better way of life in urban centres.

3.3.1 Critical Observations

Literature that is uncritical in approach and largely descriptive of the social circumstances that relate to the causes of the street children phenomenon is by far the larger body of writings dealing with the causes of the phenomenon. Such writing appeals to decidedly non-political and a-contextual reasons for the street children phenomenon especially when accounting for the presence of street children in high-income countries such as the United States. Yet writings that tend toward a critical approach such as those in South Africa, do forward political reasons for children being on the street. Generally the politics involved in the causation of the street children phenomenon seems under researched. Aptekar (1994) calls for a world-wide study to help understand why some countries are under-represented and others over contribute to the worlds' street child population.

In summary, most explanations of the phenomenon seem to reflect the need to widen the lens of analysis so as to understand the politics, and socio-cultural factors that contribute to the presence of street children in and across the metropolitan centres of the world.
3.4 FUNCTIONING OF STREET CHILDREN

The literature on the functioning of street children also tends to focus on street children’s experiences of violence and resilience. Below I endeavour a critical review of these focus areas.

3.4.1 Violence

Although street children are sometimes reported as perpetrators of violence and aggressive anti-social behaviour, they are more likely to be victims of violence at the hands of the police or general public (Aptekar, 1994; Lalor, 1999; Seitles, 1998). In Latin America writers have recorded instances when death squads, allegedly organised by the police, were murdering street children. For instance, Seitles (1998) describes circumstances of violent victimisation of street children in Columbia, Brazil and Guatemala. In Columbia, in 1994 over 2,190 street children were murdered, translating to an average of 6 children a day. Only 12 of these cases came to trial. In Brazil police death squads systematically killed street children without cause or justification. Similarly, in Guatemala thousands of street children routinely faced beatings, theft and sexual assaults at the hands of National Police and security guards working for the Interior Ministry (Seitles, 1998).

Although the violent victimisation of street children may not be as evident outside of Latin America, children in South Africa for instance do not escape exposure to violence. The extent to which street children are victims may be observed by
public perception of street children's aggression. However, Richter (1988) argues that only about one fifth of South African street children may actually be involved in antisocial behaviour.

Usually street children around the world are subject to extreme hostility and aggression by the general public and so develop an ability to deal with it or perceive it as a natural consequence of their way of life (Trussell, 1999). Lalor’s (1997) work indicates that street children are regularly beaten and injured by adults and other street children. Street girls are subjected mostly to sexual abuse and theft, often at the hands of street boys.

Despite the misconceptions generated by public discourse, according to Aptekar (1994) street children fear violent reactions of the public. Aptekar notes that virtually every Latin American study reports that the greatest fear of street children is not going hungry or missing the security of family but rather police brutality.

3.4.2 Delinquency

A body of social science literature also focuses extensively on the delinquency of street children. Delinquency among street children is evident in criminal activity and drug abusing behaviour. According to Trussell (1999), young boys start criminal activity by committing petty theft but gradually progress to more confrontational crime. Like crime, drug use is existent amongst street children
globally. Drug abuse occurs through excessive misuse of inhalants such as glue, aerosol, varnish and stain remover. Lucchini (1993) claims that levels of addiction are low and many children are able to stop at once. The veracity of such a claim is still to be tested. Aptekar (1994), for instance, points out that reports of rampant drug-dependence and the ensuing poor mental functioning among street children is not always based on empirical data. In the absence of well-documented empirical evidence public and academic discourse may well continue to project negative images of street children. In contrast to these negative images South African researchers, Jansen, Richter and Griesel, (1992) found that only one quarter of street children in Johannesburg at that time sniffed glue; Jansen et al. (1992), found that glue sniffing does not unequivocally cause the cognitive and personality dysfunction that is widely assumed. In addition, the Scharf, Powell and Thomas (1986) study established that only 7 percent of Johannesburg street children were associated with gangs.

3.4.3 Resilience: Illusion or Reality?

According to Aptekar (1994), the stereotyping of street children as delinquent, drug dependent, violent and aggressive arises from the discourse of blaming the victim, which obscures the resilience of street children. Aptekar (1994) found that a third of Latin American street children did quite well, another third did poorly and the other third moved between doing well and quite poorly depending on the demands made of them by authorities and the public. Similarly Richter (1989) showed that many South African street children function adequately, have sound
mental health and perform better than their equally poor counterparts who stay at home. Hickson and Gaydon (1989), report that many of the children who left home for the streets found doing so an empowering act which gave them freedom and control over their own lives.

Recreating a conceptual tension typical of the debates between the positivist and critical approaches, Lalor (1999) disputes Aptekar's view. Lalor questions the sampling of children used in studies to produce the evidence for resilience. He ponders about the extent to which researchers may have biased their sample to include healthy, expressive and well-adjusted children amenable to volunteering their services. Lalor (1997) notes that in his study every single response by street children contained a negative view of street life. Most respondents mentioned lack of education, ill health, and physical and sexual abuse. In his study children did not report responses suggestive of resilience.

Le Roux and Sylvia Smith (1998), like Lalor (1999), also dismiss the suggestion of resilience among street children. They feel that the longer children stay on the streets in South Africa, the greater the likelihood that they will show signs of cognitive or emotional dysfunction and be at risk for contracting AIDS which is spreading at an alarming rate amongst street children locally. Despite the reported sense of empowerment among South African street children, Hickson and Gaydon (1989) suggest that street children are rendered vulnerable and emotionally fragile by their experiences of abuse on the streets and by social
rejection, both of which compound the earlier domestic trauma from which they originally fled.

3.4.4 Critical Observations

Critical observations of street children writings should be motivated by what Rappaport and Stewart (1997, p. 304) describe as the need to "call attention to political, economic human rights and social justice issues in ways that seem to make certain demands ..." not merely note abuses. Descriptions of the high rates of violence, crime and drug abuse show these trends to be more pervasive among children living on the street, than those not living on the street. Thus, whatever the greater truth of life on the streets as outlined by various writers, life off of the street is perceived as more in keeping with the wellbeing of a child. The arguments outlining the resilience of street children does not really inspire any applause on their behalf; for although the children may well be said to be surviving on the street, their way of life is not one that any society will aspire to for the majority of its children. This simple fact leaves doubt as to whether children on the streets can really be said to be thriving.

Overall, the literature on street children locally and globally paints a mixed yet mostly bleak picture of their lives. Although the topic may be covered extensively elsewhere, a striking omission in the social science literature locally is that of reports on the so-called "AIDS orphans" street child population. This situation is
posed to make a major and tragic impact on the street child circumstance and
the HIV/AIDS crisis in South Africa generally.

The literature itself is replete with examples of the stereotyping of street children
and consequently the discourses that drive the debates around the issue of
children on the street. Writers formulate research questions and describe street
children and the issues surrounding them very differently from the categories
used to describe mainstream children. One of the more glaring examples is
found in writings about street children and their labour or sources of food and
income. The information of these categories describing general living conditions
of sources of food and income seems to be assumed about children living at
home and is thus never spoken about or described. The significance of this is
that street children immediately, in the literature, become separated from their
counterparts living at home even though there may well be whole categories of
mainstream children in certain regions who work or do not source food from
home. Such stereotyping assists in street children becoming a whole new
classification of children separate from the mainstream.

Finally, one of the gaps in research as represented in South African writings is
that of comparisons of street children from region to region. There appears to be
a paucity of information about children across regions. Local research looks
either at children in particular locations or makes general comparisons. One
disadvantage of this is that there is not enough conclusive information about the
reasons for the disproportionate numbers in some regions as opposed to others. My attempts to get detailed and accurate information on street children from government institutions that deal with statistics or social welfare met with such dismal failure that it is no surprise that this paucity of published information exists.

These appalling descriptions of street life, gaps in the literature, and lack of resources committed to collecting information on street children, hint at the need to understand the discourses underlying writings on street children. Examining the discourses underlying the theories, tensions and debates within street child writings may provide a clearer understanding of how conflicting views tend to work together to create perceptions that impact the lives of these children. At this juncture it may therefore be instructive to turn our attention, in the next chapter, towards dominant discourses evident in the wider discipline of developmental psychology itself.
CHAPTER FOUR
SCAFFOLDING: CREATING PERMANENCE
BEHIND A TEMPORARY FRAMEWORK

4.0 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I will present the dominant discourses evident in developmental psychology as deconstructed by Burman (1994). Such an examination will enable us to establish whether the discourses that frame and inform South African street children writings is located within or outside the dominant discourses present in developmental psychology (see chapter six).

4.1 BURMAN'S DECONSTRUCTION OF DEVELOPMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY: EXTRAPOLATIONS FOR LOCAL STREET CHILDREN WRITINGS.

Writers such as Burman (1994) have deconstructed dominant discourse in a way that provides a blueprint for how discourse operates within the field of psychology and research. Correlations of Burman's (1994) deconstruction of developmental psychology to the current study can be made, not in a linear "laundry list" fashion, but in a way that will provide an inspirational foundation or a supporting framework. Burman (1994) shows that discourse or dilemmas that affect the study of development are replete within psychology as a whole. It is therefore quite likely that such discourse rears its head in the research and writings of local street children.
Burman's deconstruction of developmental psychology provides a general map for unbundling all the ways in which writings of local street children have been affected by and perpetuate dominant discourse. Burman's deconstruction shows how discourse operates like scaffolding behind which a building of reality is constructed. This building remains firmly in place even when the scaffolding has been removed by the deconstruction of discourse. In this way even flimsy discourse can eventually be perpetuated and solidly entrenched as reality.

However, Burman's (1994) definition of deconstruction to “lay bare, bring under scrutiny the coherent moral-political themes ... and look beyond current frameworks... to take up the broader questions of where themes fit into social practices in which psychology functions” (p. 1), gives a starting point to dismantling the scaffolding and eventually demolishing the building behind it. As Parker (1997, p. 288) phrases it, we can use deconstruction to unravel text and its contradictions to make clear what ideas are being privileged and at what cost. Burman's (1994) writing elucidates how discourse, defined by her as "socially organised frameworks of meaning that define categories and specify domains of what can be said and done" (p. 2), can be unravelled and perhaps changed or destroyed.

4.2 INTRODUCTION TO BURMAN: RATIONALE AND PERSPECTIVE

Burman (1994), discerns links between development and discourse. So, following a critical examination of the relationship between academic research
and social policies and practices, Burman articulates discourses and guiding themes that structure the current dominant forms of developmental psychology across five major areas: (1) research objects and subjects, (2) mothering, (3) normative descriptions/naturalised prescriptions, (4) psychoanalysis, and (5) psychological context. I summarise and give examples of each of these five key areas and associated dilemmas critically below. I simultaneously attempt to extrapolate thematic linkages for the discourse analysis of South African street children literature.

4.3 KEY AREAS ONE AND TWO: RESEARCH OBJECTS/SUBJECTS AND MOTHERING

Burman (1994) argues that developmental psychology has been dominated by a need to produce technologies of measurement that create research objects and research subjects. Such tools of measurement in turn reflect ideology that assumes child and mother as its unit of enquiry. Burman also found that the main focus of developmental research and intervention is in fact not the child but the mother. The adequacy of mothering and therefore, the regulation of and intervention into women's lives is a common and widespread subject for developmental research.

4.3.1 Example: Creating Units of Analysis

In forging research objects and subjects researchers have been guilty of regarding the infant alone as the primary unit of analysis within research
(Burman, 1994). To elucidate her arguments, Burman refers to the example of the well-known "visual cliff" experiments. In this experiment babies were made to crawl on a glass top mounted over a picture simulating a cliff on one side and a safe surface on the other. Their ability to stay on the safe side as opposed to falling over what they the babies may have perceived as a cliff was monitored to provide information on their depth perception abilities. Later studies, however, showed that the mother's facial expressions greatly influenced whether or not babies ventured "over the cliff". Burman makes the point that the whole material and communicative system within which the infant acts is relevant to any enquiry of the child and the child's behaviour. This point speaks to the notion that opening up the focus of research can provide a wealth of information that may even change the direction that the analysis of research takes.

Similarly the literature review of this study shows how street children as "victims" are constructed as the primary "units of analysis". The socio-cultural, economic and political contexts receive marginal attention in the writings. Even though the South African writings tend to extend the analytical lens, it is only opened to sufficiently include and focus on the black family. Black parenting and family life assume causal significance for street children, but these explanations tend to reproduce negative stereotyping about black families.
4.4 KEY AREA THREE: NORMATIVE DESCRIPTIONS/NATURALISED PRESCRIPTIONS

Burman (1994) also highlights how normative descriptions produced by developmental psychology become naturalised prescriptions: Evolutionary and biological theories are assumed as uncontested scientific fact on which to legitimise developmental theory. Such evolutionary theories lead to the classification and stratification of individual groups and populations that serve to produce and maintain class, gender and racial oppression.

4.4.1 Example: Creating Norms

Harris (1987) suggests that research has been preoccupied with charting performance which mirrors the societal value placed on productive aspects of labour. Burman adds to this theory by arguing that definitions of childhood are replete with social and political meanings. The views of Burman (1994) and Harris (1997) support the theory that the lives of South African street children are infact influenced by the political system and legacy of apartheid. Much of the literature charts the performance of the children along various lines such as their functioning on the streets or their functioning in relation to mainstream children. It is also true that many of the norms by which these children are judged in local writings arise out of apartheid driven discourse. Since normative descriptions become naturalised prescriptions, unbundling the influences of research also means understanding or getting insight into the things that over time have become not just influences but are seen as "the norm" or the proper way of doing
things. The street children literature reveals that there is vast research, which create baselines from which to measure street children. These measurements and baselines tend to generate norms, which by definition keep street children on the fringe or within the confines of society only as a deficiency.

4.4.2 Example: Creating Stigmas

The way women were encouraged by the medical profession to change the methods of feeding children is another example of the normative descriptions/normative prescriptions dilemma outlined by Burman (1994). At one point the medical world presented bottle feeding as best and subsequently rejected this practice and started to present breast feeding as best. This example shows how changing demands made by psychology and medicine do not take into account social factors that constrain choices and in turn act to stigmatise further those who fail to measure up to a particular moral imperative (Burman, 1994).

The street children literature has also had changing schools of thought on how the crisis must be resolved and has also had a similar effect in how the children are assessed and measured against various moral imperatives created by researchers wittingly or unwittingly. For instance some literature argues that mainstreaming street children is imperative to their upliftment and yet resilience literature argues that street children won't function optimally in traditional environments. On the whole the South African street children literature shows the
trend of the research process not being particularly reflexive of how it can move from presenting normative descriptions into creating naturalised prescriptions. As a result street children locally are stigmatised because they fail to live up to the moral imperatives created by writers and researchers who whether reasoning for their mainstreaming or for them to be left alone, represent their lives as outside the society and criminal.

4.5 KEY AREA FOUR: PSYCHOLOGICAL CONTEXT

That the child and the family are constructed as primary objects of developmental research obscures the importance of the psychological context they inhabit. This makes possible “victim blaming”. For example, mothers are held responsible for larger social problems as opposed to other explanations such as the effects of poverty. The same is true in local street children literature where focusing on the pathology of the child and the family of the child eclipses explanations that could be located in other social structures.

4.5.1 Example: Creating an Image

Images of childhood are important determinants of how the state interacts with and regulates its citizens. For example child labour was made possible in the eighteenth century when industrialisation made it necessary to project the image of the child as a potential worker. Following this there was a period when the exploitation of child labourers came into focus because of fears of what an unruly citizenry could do as a result of having an independent income. The image of the
child then became projected as that of a helpless dependent who must be schooled. Burman (1994) argues that this was a part of a move to regulate the reproduction of working class resistance through controlling the activities of young people and minds.

Street children literature is replete with examples of the changing images of street children and definitions of street life. No doubt reflecting on how research has contributed to these changing images may lead to historical discourses that made it possible and necessary to project a particular image of the South African street children, especially during the apartheid era. Similar to the controlling strategy of projecting the child as helpless after the industrial era, it can be theorised that projecting the street child as helpless and in need of containment strategically suited the apartheid policy of control and confinement of potentially unruly social elements. The South African street child literature reflects both this image of the street child as helpless victim and also reflects the popularity of the containment approach to the crisis.

The literature also seems to suggest that the current image projected of South African street children is in keeping with the “victim blaming” mode projected on to mothers in developmental psychology. Consistent with this theory is the fact that the street children literature also seems to show that the perception is that these children carry the blame for crime and criminal behaviours that are not
empirically proven. This victim image eclipses or distracts from other psychological and social theories of the context these children inhabit.

4.5.2 Example: Creating Victims, Deficiencies and Gaps in Research

Burman notes that ignoring psychological context in research makes it possible to victim blame. Theories of attachment and maternal deprivation by John Bowlby made popular in the 1950's carried implications that affected decisions about women working or remaining home as child minders. Such research made it possible to encourage women to return home from the workplace and make room in the job market for men returning from war. Conveniently in conjunction with this, research heavily promoted the idea that the quality of motherhood was the most important determinant in a child's wellbeing and future. Countless studies in developmental research focus on the mother's influence in development of skills such as speech or learning generally. Mothers are encouraged by research findings to push education and the creation of learning experiences to the forefront of their childminding chores.

Burman shows that as a result of this research the presence of mothers became an essential feature in the maintenance of social order. This conceptualisation is also found in street children literature, which often casts the absence of maternal care as responsible for children being on the streets. The literature also describes the psychological state of street children according to their relationship with their mothers and family which is usually described as pathological. Related
to this is the fact that good mothering is usually represented by a middle-class lifestyle and anything different is projected as deficient. Street children have little hope of being depicted as anything but grossly deficient when placed in the context of such research.

The issue here is not one of outlining or examining the veracity of such deficiencies but to point out that potential attributes of street children are being missed by researchers as the focus of current research by definition keeps them on the periphery, or within the confines only as a deficiency. Ignoring the psychological context of the children makes it possible to victim blame rather than generate knowledge which taps into the real push and pull factors of street life.

4.5.3 Example: Creating Cultural Imperialism

In summary, Burman makes the point that developmental psychology is tied to the culture that produced it. Historical social and political forces have created western conceptions of childhood and child rearing. The impact on these conceptions in local research, mixed with the impact of local history, politics and social forces is a powerful one to contemplate. Burman goes on to note that Anglo-US psychology extends its influence outside of its own cultural and linguistic domain through the dynamic of imperialism. Developmental psychology therefore functions as a tool of cultural imperialism when reproduced in postcolonial societies.
Local street children literature does mirror trends, research questions and definitions of western countries. The literature review of street children writings shows that the definitions, terminology and many of the approaches of western psychology are adopted in local research. The image of street children is projected in ways that seem to reaffirm their own cultural inferiority and the superiority of the mainstream. Local literature seems to not only have bolstered the hegemony of the apartheid system but current western postcolonial ideology as well. The literature does not explicitly examine or reflect on the role of research as a tool of cultural imperialism of any form and seems to be blind to it.

4.6 KEY AREA FIVE: PSYCHOANALYSIS

Finally, Burman speaks to the relationship between psychoanalysis and psychology. Psychoanalysis is called upon to reveal the repressed themes of fear that are responsible for the need for scientific control and prediction in a field where, according to Burman, issues raised in caring for children reflect ambiguity and ambivalence. Although it is possible that such issues are to be found in the street children literature it is not an area that this study will attempt to highlight.

4.7 CONCLUSION

In the next chapter I proceed to present the methodology for this study so as to create the basis for the report that is outlined in chapter six.
CHAPTER FIVE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURE

5.0 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I outline the methodology used in this study. I present discourse analysis and transformative inquiry as effective methods and tools of investigation for this study.

In Joseph Conrad's (1902) novel "Heart of darkness", the narrator warns readers that the meaning of the tale will unfold and be brought out "only as a glow brings out a haze" (p.1817). Although there is no tightly structured methodology to discourse analysis, there are broad theoretical frameworks from which to draw. The process itself seems at first to evolve "only as a glow brings out a haze". Discourse analysis unfolds and builds upon itself providing interpretations through which a researcher's findings can be explained and researchers, therefore, be held accountable for their conclusions and logic. Once conducted and understood, discourse analysis can throw significant light on the chosen area of investigation.
5.1 DISCOURSE ANALYSIS: DEFINITIONS, TEXTS, VOICES AND SCOPE

5.1.1 Definitions, Criteria and Utility

Discourse analysis is a qualitative, method of enquiry that can assist with understanding and interpreting texts, including texts generated by traditional or quantitative driven research. When used to analyse such texts discourse analysis seeks to explicate, amongst other things, why and how a specific research question is, was or ought to be formulated and why particular kinds of answers to these questions are produced.

My current study draws on the work of Terre Blanche and Durrheim (1999), to define discourse analysis as a methodology whereby certain discourses are identified as being "used to achieve particular effects in specific contexts" (p.154). The term discourse in turn refers to systems of statements "that are taken up in particular speeches and conversations, not the speeches or conversations themselves" (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999, p.156). In the current study, then, the focus is on the discourses that are "taken up in" popular and academic texts about street children.

5.1.2 Scope

Recently there has been debate around the relevance and appropriateness of the use of discourse analysis in South Africa (Durrheim, 2001; Painter & Theron, 2001). After considering issues raised by the debate, such as the applicability of Western thought in a South African context, I attempt to introduce the elements
of transformative inquiry into the methodology of this study. I refer particularly to
the elements of heuristic and narrative-autobiographical inquiry that could provide
a bridge between Western and local contexts.

As detailed in section 2.3, transformational inquiry is proposed as an alternative
research method intended to complement discourse analysis. Although there is
synergy between the modalities of transformation and discourse analysis, at its
heart transformational methodologies are intended specifically as a tools to
transform the researcher, who in turn it is hoped will transform the research
process and knowledge production. Whereas the critical approach seeks to
change the community, transformational methodology charts changes within the
individual researcher. Transformational Inquiry offers tangible means for such
change within the individual researcher and the community in which the
individual interacts; transformational inquiry seeks to be a process not an
endpoint, though both approaches seek community empowerment as an
eventuality. Transformational inquiry is explicit about researcher mindset and
therefore makes bias a part of the research report. The cycle in which change in
a community occurs through empowerment must therefore include the
transformation of the researcher as well.

Whereas research praxis usually emphasises the unidimensionality of the human
being as mind and body, transformative inquiry also emphasises spirituality and
intuition. Attempts to isolate the research process from the researcher's
influences, motivations and intentions do not only result in minimising what positivist call scientific bias, but stymies potential change within the researcher and consequently the knowledge production process. Acknowledging such influences is not enough, celebrating extraneous influences and incorporating them into research methodology invites an "upward flow" of knowledge consistent with Prigogine's postulation (cited in Al Zeera 2001) about movement to higher orders of life and transformation. Attempts to explore discourse through understanding my own influences as a researcher admits to my individual quest as a researcher to be transformed as well as to transform.

5.1.3 Texts

Terre Blanche and Durrheim (1999), suggest that there are three "little tricks" that can be helpful when looking at texts to identify discourse. Firstly, it involves looking for binary opposites. In this method the researcher is alerted to discourse in a text through a study of words that are in effect defined by their opposites. Usually only one side of the opposition is mentioned in the text. For example in this study the life of street children is often described as deficient in opposition to the life of children not on the street. This has several effects, one of which is to marginalise the street child into the periphery of the mainstream.

Secondly, recurrent phrases, terms, or metaphors are also indicators of a particular discourse that is being used to frame the text. In this study a common example is the constant referral to street children as victims, of violence,
apartheid or a neglectful family and social system. One effect of this is to render "abused" street children pathological, beyond assistance or redemption.

Thirdly, consideration of the human subjects referred to in texts is also revealing of the particular discourse underlying texts themselves. The reader and the author of the text are considered subjects and are therefore also indicative of the discourse at work. Discourse analysis therefore accords attention to the discursive perspective of the reader and author. For example, in this study it is found that academic journals used less emotive language when describing the street children phenomenon thus constructing the reader as a dispassionate, rational observer of the phenomenon. However, newspapers were far more graphic and brutal in their descriptions and created an environment for a more emotional response in their readership. However both kinds of writing produced and were produced by the same powerful discourses which tend to support the victimisation or alienation of street children. In the current study I employed all three of these methods: binary opposites, recurrent phrases, terms or metaphors and subjects.

Parker (1992) provides certain criteria for discourse analysis. These criteria include considering everything to be text in which discourse lives. Parker (1992) states that a discourse is about objects, contains subjects, is a system of meanings, can refer to other discourses, reflects on its own way of speaking, is historically located, supports institutions, reproduces power relations and has
ideological effects. These 'criteria' were also used in this study to delineate discourses.

When applied as an analytical research tool, discourse analysis is a reflexive and introspective technique that is specifically used to deepen the thinking around specific areas of research. One example of this can be taken from the work of Duncan (1994), who uses discourse analysis to reveal the racism that has been perpetuated through representations of public violence in South African psychology journals across both apartheid and post-apartheid periods. Another powerful example of the effectiveness of discourse analysis in a South African setting can be seen in the writing of Durrheim (2001) who describes the racialized actions involved in vacationing in South Africa. He uses discourse analysis of a beach setting to trace the transformation of racism in a post-apartheid South Africa. These examples show how discourse analysis can be used as an evaluation and monitoring tool, as it provides the investigator with a way to take an overarching look at research and its effects in a particular area.

When discourse analysis is used to evaluate and monitor trends within a particular field or body of research, it can reveal the hidden perspectives of the researchers and end users of research. This type of analysis charts discourses generated by researchers and shows how research has influenced, intentionally or otherwise, the perceptions of the subjects of research. In this study discourse analysis gives us a way to assess, evaluate and monitor whether research has
been a part of the problem or the solution to the street child phenomenon, and why research findings in this area have not been commensurate to the resources expended.

An examination of the relevant literature (Burman, 1994; Potter & Wetherell 1987; Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999) reveals that it is pertinent to assume that discourse analysis provides both an interpretative framework and a methodology for the purposes of this study. The work of Parker (1992) and Terre Blanche and Durrheim (1999), outlined in the preceding section contribute to the methodology of this thesis. These works provide concrete definitions, criteria and tools for conducting a discourse analysis of South African writings on street children. The following section will integrate these definitions, criteria and tools with a process derived from work of Potter and Wetherell (1987), which outlines a ten step process for conducting a discourse analysis.

5.2 METHOD

Below I summarise the nine-staged methodology I assumed for my study. In my methodology I synthesise transformative methods of inquiry with eight of Potter and Wetherell's (1990, pp. # 160-175) ten stages for performing discourse analysis as well as definitions, criterion and tools of analysis drawn from Terre Blanche and Durrheim (1999) and Parker (1992).
5.2.1 **Stage one: The research questions** – Generally the research questions of a study give priority to discourse, in any form, and ask about its construction in relation to its function. However, according to Al Zeera (2001), inquiry is always based on personal concerns and scrutiny of personal concerns reveal them to be intermingled and interconnected with experiences of society. Following this principle of transformative enquiry I reflected on my own perceptions of street children and although my examination of the selected articles resulted in research questions, these research questions were also greatly influenced by my own experiences with and perceptions of street children.

In the process of selecting the research question I analysed my own formulations of the research question, reflected on the motivations prompting myself to the investigation of street children literature and pondered about the choice of the investigation techniques. This process derives directly from Moustakas’ (1990) heuristic methodology in which one identifies the focus of enquiry, and enters into self-dialogue, tacit-knowing, intuition, in-dwelling and focusing. Using the narrative methodology of transformative inquiry I describe this process in chapter six, at the conclusion of the study. My motivations have influenced the outcome of my study and so describing these motivations in the conclusion seems appropriate.
5.2.2 Stage two: Collection of records and documents — The documents I chose for this study are journal and newspaper articles on local street children which I requested through a library search at the University of South Africa (UNISA) which has the largest academic library in South Africa. The process of a library search entailed discussing my project with the subject librarian who in turn generated a search list on the topic and many other topics related to homelessness and children generally. I looked through these lists and requested articles selected from the list as well as used the results of the search to generate further subject searches.

I also requested reading material on the subject of discourse analysis, deconstruction, developmental psychology and research methodology, which I read as background to designing and conducting the study. I also collected writings on street children from street children programmes, shelters and community projects. I conducted an internet search for information on not only street children, but browsed through many sites related to homelessness and children in general. Stage two was in many ways an overlap of a literature survey and a data collection exercise.

5.2.3 Stage three: Data selection — Unlike traditional research, large data sets are not necessary. In fact, because discourse analysis is labour intensive and dependent on the importance of the research question and value of text, smaller data sets are adequate. So although I read all of the articles I received through
the UNISA library system, I selected only twenty-five journal articles and forty-three newspaper articles to use for analysis.

I randomly selected these journals based on the availability of articles fitting the description (local writings in English on South African street children) generated from the UNISA library search. I wanted to limit the number of articles to be analysed so that I could study them more closely. Yet, I also wanted to use writings that would span as wide a period of time as possible, including both a pre- and post-democratic South Africa. Therefore newspaper and journal articles were selected from the transitional period of approximately five years before and five years after democracy.

5.2.3.1 The data corpus

I selected approximately twenty-five articles published in social science journals from 1989 to 2001, and forty-three newspaper articles from local newspapers printed from 1990 to 2001 for the discourse analysis. I restricted articles to those writings on South African street children.

While it would have been interesting to also include “grey literature” such as NGO newsletters in my sample, it was necessary to keep the sample from being unwieldy. I therefore decided to limit my analysis to journal and newspaper writings which I assumed to be the two most common and powerful sources of discourse to the public at large. I also reasoned that journals had a far-reaching effect because they were influential over stakeholders such as policy makers, street workers, activists and researchers working in the area of street children.


The library search was conducted using the generalised topic of “street children in South Africa”.

I created a table listing the newspaper and journal articles used for the discourse analysis. These are listed according to titles, publication information and authors in **APPENDIX 1**.

5.2.4 *Stage four: Coding* – Once the documents were collected and carefully read, I created manageable groupings of data that were as inclusive as possible.
A body of instances were produced bearing no particular limit. This is to say examples of discourse, even borderline cases or examples of a category of thought, were grouped together. I separated out writings that were to be used as background reading and resource documents for the literature review section of my study. Where necessary I highlighted quotes that were potentially useful. I read through these articles for pertinent information to provide background to the study. I also searched the selected local and international writings for trends and gaps.

I then read through the articles selected for the discourse analysis. Subsequently I highlighted, classified and noted possible quotations for inclusion in my analysis. I noted themes or discourses and "attention grabbing" quotations. I further cross-referenced and coded all the themes of these articles according to their title and the number I had assigned to the article and page. In this way cross-referencing became easy and efficient.

To assist in clarifying and classifying information into a usable and coherent group, I created a table (see APPENDIX 2), representing all the common emerging themes evident to me in the writings and the associated effects of these themes. Together these themes and effects gradually came to represent my view of discourses inherent in selected South African writings on street children.
5.2.5 **Stage five: Analysis** – I reviewed the data itself with the intention of determining and creating the skills necessary for processing and analysis. This is to say I did a preliminary reading trying to glean the effect that the overall body of research was having on me and tried to discern the complex themes and discourses throughout my reading of the text. One constant was that my analysis involved careful reading and re-reading, and examination for details, nuances and abstractions (Parker, 1992; Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999).

I searched for patterns, differences and shared features of information in the articles and noted them down. I then grouped these themes together and re-arranged them to create groupings, themes and sub themes. Following this I formulated hypotheses about the functions and effects of the identified discourses. I then used the three techniques as outlined by Terre Blanche and Durrheim (1999) and probed for linguistic evidence, binary opposites and the various subjects that would give evidence in support of any hypothesis that I generated. I then further refined the table of themes and quotations and effects and categorised them according to blocks of discourses that seemed to feed off of the same perceptions that were both projected and elicited. I searched for commonalities and discrepancies and undertook a constant process of refining and elimination of smaller discourses so as to render the information more manageable and coherent.
Once I generated and grouped all the discourses I set them aside for a period of time so that I could gain some distance as I was feeling overwhelmed by both the emerging discourses and content of the articles. I forwarded my list of discourses to various colleagues who work as methodologists to solicit feedback on the coherence and credibility of the identified discourses. After some time I reread the list and incorporated feedback to produce a revised listing of discourses identifiable in the reviewed literature.

Subsequently, I returned to the material I had requested on research methodology and entered into many discussions with colleagues about both the proposed methodology and the articles I had read on street children. Thereafter I returned to the table of discourses to generate a further revision.

5.2.6 Stage six: Validation – Four major techniques were used to validate findings, these are: coherence, participants’ orientation, new problems and fruitfulness.

1. coherence: whereby discourses were only highlighted and represented in the report where they could be coherently analysed and explained. Accordingly I found and discussed explanations to cover both broader patterns and smaller effects. Where dominant developmental or child discourse seemed to be divergent to discourse found about the street children or perceptions of them, I highlighted these to be seen as the exception that authenticated the analytic scheme presented according to Potter &
Wetherell's (1987) theories on validation. In this way plausible explanations were also presented to account for the special circumstance being highlighted – which was the difference in perceptions or discourses of street children as opposed to children in the main stream or not on the street.

2. **participants' orientation:** For this form of validation I bore in mind Burman’s (1994) deconstructive theories of development as I searched for discourses and explanations of discourses. Burman (as outlined in chapter four) deconstructs the ways in which developmentalists perceive research. Using Burman’s theories I also looked at the orientation of local writers and attempted to identify and deconstruct the discourses evident in their writings. This created a lucid and valid method for identifying discourses. The texts on street children and their orientation were assessed in the form of the discourse they projected.

3. **new problems:** Potter and Wetherell (1990) state that discourse analysis clarifies linguistic resources that make things happen (solves problems) and in turn also create new problems of their own. I found this trend to be true and consistent within this report on discourse analysis of street children. Accordingly my discourse analysis pointed to “new problems” needing attention.

4. **Fruitfulness:** This is the fourth criterion of validity in discourse analysis according to Potter and Wetherell (1990) and refers to “the scope of an analytic scheme to make sense of new kinds of discourse and to generate novel explanations” (p. 171). I assumed that as this report or study is used
this fourth criterion of validity will be met. So I hope that the findings of this
discourse analysis, including the recommendations for future research, will be
helpful in making researchers cognisant of the ways in which selected
research has generated discourse which contributes to the street children
crisis.

In addition, the process of transformative inquiry allowed me to introspect at a
deeper level on the techniques I used as a researcher and my own
involvement with the topic. The insights I arrived at as a researcher will no
doubt also have bearing on my possible future work with both research and
street children.

5.2.7   Stage seven: The report – The discussion chapter, reflective of
stage seven, is not merely a presentation of findings but rather an analysis
that allows the reader to assess my interpretations. Accordingly my report
includes a representative set of examples from the area of interest along with
the "detailed interpretation(s) which link(s) analytic claims to specific parts or
aspects of the extracts" (Potter & Wetherell, 1990, p.172). Where possible I
reported on discourses in groupings that were created out of the common
discourse effects as well as the common modalities of creating the discourse.
I attempted to create a report that had overarching headings or discourses
with smaller contributory discourses represented within each heading. I also
created subheadings categorising the effects of the sub-discourses or the
major discourses. I did this to create a conceptual flow in the report where discourses were not necessarily connected in an obvious or organic way. This format also helped me to keep the information in manageable sections for the reader to absorb from a body of information that is at times complex and large. Where possible and pertinent the effects of established common or dominant discourses (for example discourses cited in Burman's, 1994, work) were correlated to the newly dislodged discourses. I concluded the research report by discussing the limitations of the study and the possibilities for future research.

5.2.8 \textit{Stage eight: Reflexivity} - In addition to the seven stages adapted from Potter and Wetherell (1990), I integrated an eighth stage of reflexivity, as embedded in the transformative methodology. The reflexivity involved me looking inwardly and outwardly. The effect the writings has on the reader is marked whether the reader is: from the general population, policy makers, stake holders, is a researcher, writer or myself as the researcher of the present study. The main power of discourse comes from its effect, its influence on thinking as well as the way it reflects thinking. In addition self-transformation is necessary if a wider transformation is to be possible. Therefore, reflecting on my own process of research from the first moment of thinking about the topic to the conclusion was important to my transformation.
The process of reflexivity as a deliberate introspection tool operated at two levels for me as a researcher. On one level I was almost unconsciously filtering thoughts and feelings about the content of the writings and I was constantly making connections with these thoughts to my own spiritual world and humanity. On another level I was also trying to sift through, in a more clinical and organised way, the effect that this research was having on me professionally and decipher how these thoughts impacted on my study.

On the first level where I was having more of a visceral reaction to the writings and to my conducting research, thoughts flowed more freely but were harder for me to remember and verbalise when discussing with friends or colleagues. These thoughts became the basis for my interpretation of the discourse analysis and seemed to pour out as I was writing. I used these thoughts to fuel my instinct in arranging and interpreting the groupings of discourse.

This second level was much more difficult to sustain and entailed my writing thoughts down to help me process what I was thinking and feeling. These thoughts and feelings felt more stilted and so I kept straying back to the technicalities of my study and the impact the material would have on my ability to complete writing-up my dissertation.
Once I completed writing up my report and started to edit, I attempted to reflect again on the process of research and the results, but the act of editing made me feel detached from the results and I felt too drained to engage in any further reflection. The process of reflexivity has however led me to wonder about changes within myself that remain elusive to description. The extent to which I succeeded in attaining some understanding of the discourses underlying street children writings is reflected in the concluding chapter of this report.

5.3 CONCLUSION

This methodology section represents only the most obvious stages of the research process. Much of discourse analysis requires internal dialogue that can never really be noted or adequately described. Although in this chapter, I attempt to detail the step by step process I undertook in the deconstruction of discourse in selected South African street children literature, it is doubtful that any other researcher can reproduce the internal dialogue that accompanied all the stages of my research process. Yet it is very possible for other researchers conducting a similar analysis to arrive at the same conclusions as I about the discourses evident in South African street children writings. The question then arises “What is the part played by such highly personalised internal dialogue?” The answer for this lies in the second section of the study’s methodology within transformational inquiry. Such internal dialogue
and the silent undocumented methodology charted by the reflexive process should assist in the transformation or change of the researcher.
CHAPTER SIX

REPORT

6.0 INTRODUCTION

According to Agnelli (1986), the closest precedent to the present day life of street children in the low income world is that of the Industrial Revolution in the nineteenth century, when Europe and North America were 'underdeveloped'. Social conditions of the times are captured in novels such as Oliver Twist by Charles Dickens and Les Misérables by Victor Hugo (Agnelli, 1986). However, a reading of the discourse underlying writings on South African street children may be more aptly likened to and brought to life in the fable Lord of the Flies written by William Golding in 1954.

Texts which reflect cast-away children situated in a no man's land outside of "civilisation" forced to fend for themselves by means aptly described both as resilient and repugnant, conjure up multiple images. Images of: gangs being formed, foraging, animal like creatures, living by instinct and situational violence, language and themes which actively and indirectly work together to produce images of "the other" which become the repository of societal ills and mistakes not claimed by society. These are all realities that are stated and implied in South African street child literature. In effect we witness the recreation of a non-fiction version of Golding's novel.
6.1 DISCOURSES IN SOUTH AFRICAN WRITINGS

In this chapter I describe conspicuous themes and sub-themes that show how street children are represented in a decidedly “Goldingesque” manner within selected South African writings. I also attempt, where relevant, throughout my discourse analysis, to highlight binary opposites, language content, phrase repetition, and the presence of certain subjects. I describe some of the commonly used language, prominent themes and effects of these themes that emerge as discourse in South African writings on street children. In so doing I identify and describe four main discourses: (1.) He who pays the piper calls the tune; (2.) St. Jude the patron saint of lost causes; (3.) “Natured” versus “nurtured” and; (4.) Us, and them cum us against them. I also describe the smaller discourses that contribute to the larger four main discourses. I then follow by summarising how the effects of all these discourses coalesce to convey the myth that the street child crisis is unsolvable. In a concluding section I discuss, the relationship between dominant developmental discourse (as outlined in the previous chapter) and discourse within popular street children writing, as well as the limitations of the study and potential areas of future research.

6.2 HE WHO PAYS THE PIPER CALLS THE TUNE

6.2.1 Discourse Summary

This discourse (hereafter referred to as the paid piper discourse) objectifies the street children and creates negative images of them. Seemingly, the street
children's humanity is removed and is replaced by, or reduced to, a mere
"definition" whatever that definition is. Descriptors of street children also depict
these children as no more than contributors to statistics, fodder for research and
consequently almost project street children as mere bait for funding. In short this
discourse represents children as nothing beyond a statistic or a definition by
removing their humanity.

6.2.2 Definitional Dilemma

"Definitional problems complicate the issue and it often appears that more time
and effort have been spent on the numbers game than on any other aspect of
these children's lives, probably because the acquisition of resources for
programmes depends on the size of the problem. Even within academic
research, methods used to count street children are usually not satisfactory, nor
are the techniques used generally made explicit" (Connolly & Ennew, 1996, p.138)

The term street children was generated by NGO's and UNICEF to highlight the
plight of an emerging group of children who were rapidly becoming more visible
on the streets of many cities around the world (Veeran, 1999). As described in
chapter three, the term is sometimes used to describe children on and of the
street or children at risk. However, since its introduction the term has generated
much controversy over its suitability, clarity, operational usefulness and true
meaning. Consider the following excerpts from writings on local street children that speak to the alleged definitional dilemma:

"...most differences in definition are largely semantic..." (Le Roux & Sylvia-Smith, 1998, p. 917)

"...no research study to date has agreed on a particular definition..." (Veeran, 1999, p. 52)

"In estimating the numbers of street children a major problem exists in the formulation of an operational definition." (Donald & Swart-Kruger, 1994, p. 169)

"...street child categorization is applied very loosely and can often lead to serious misunderstandings, resulting in interventions which are highly inappropriate and damaging." (Williams, 1993, p. 832)

"...definitions of street children are necessarily fluid and statistics in relation to their occurrence are notoriously unreliable..." (Donald, Wallis & Cockburn, 1997, p. 138)

"He is yet another statistic – among the more than 300 children living on the streets in Pietermaritzburg." (The Natal Mercury 11 May 1993. P. 9)
Implicit in these extracts is the notion that there is a definitional controversy surrounding street children research and that this controversy is somehow inherently related to the numbers or statistical methods of estimating the street children. This definitional controversy is fuelled by various authors defining street children according to different categories (Aptekar, 1988; Cosgrove, 1990; Lusk, 1992; and Visano, 1990). Yet scrutinising the recurring phrases in the corpus of writings reveals that the definition first generated by UNICEF holds significant influence in creating implicit consensus among writers, belying the fact that any real definitional controversy exists!

This is supported by Veeran (1999) who found that an analysis of several definitions of street children reveals that the "most widespread use of the term comes from UNICEF" (p. 54). Veeran also notes that South Africa adopts a similar age criterion in defining a child as UNICEF. So, inspite of the literature that repeatedly creates the image of challenges to this UNICEF definition, there has not been a shift from the UNICEF definition. In fact, this definition is used by most researchers in its original form or as a standard or starting point for generating other definitions.

As the excerpts above show, the texts project a definitional dilemma although there is consensus around the terms widely used, and this so called controversy is inextricably linked to the statistics and changing numbers of the street children.
Thus, a discourse is created wherein the street children are no longer perceived as just children - they are given an image which reduces them to, or associates them with, potentially spurious statistics. Indeed they are discussed less as people and more as "a definition".

6.2.3 "Numb"ers

An interrelated sub-discourse is connected to statistical projections that swell or shrink dramatically according to how street children are defined. This is brought into focus by the quotations in the section above. In highlighting the existence of a definitional dilemma, the production of fluctuating and even spurious numbers is repeatedly given prominence.

According to Cockburn (1991), UNICEF over a seven or eight year period recorded the global number of street children to be about thirty million, while Ennew (1987), gave a rather more conservative estimate of eight million. Similarly in South Africa where the UNICEF operational definition is adopted, prior to 1990 more than one million children were estimated to be 'on' the streets, but only ten thousand of these one million children were considered to be genuinely 'of' the street (Cockburn, 1991).

These varying estimates may be explained by the opening quotation that implies the existence of a "numbers game" wherein researchers invest great effort in establishing and investigating the scope of the street children problem since the
acquisition of resources is dependent on its size. It may be argued that it is easier for larger more established and well funded or resourced organisations to obtain statistics with greater accuracy and from further afield than smaller agencies and individual researchers. As a consequence, even more resources may be mobilised for organisations that produce such research. These institutions can define the problem in such large proportions that greater resources are devoted toward eradicating it.

In addition, the current established research system rewards organisations that can produce dramatic statistics and prolifically generate research. The cycle is set in place where global organisations, usually located in the West, have funding to generate research, and this research in turn attracts major funding. From this race for funding evolves the discourse where the street children are a caricature of themselves. Street children are perceived mostly in the form of statistics (also as seen in the quotations above) and their image in writings becomes reduced to that of a number or total or estimate. The quotations above show how the very soul of street children, their profile as children in need of help gets lost to an almost holographic projection of numbers, funding, definitions and statistics.
6.2.4 Effects: Sub-discourses

One effect of the definitional debate discourse is that it trivialises the issues highlighted by the debates and leaves one wondering about the authenticity of the debates themselves. If the debates do not facilitate a move away from the original problematic definitions, what functions do they serve? Are they merely providing substance to nourish esoteric academic discussions? Are these debates pseudo-debates, highlighting how street child literature systematically ignores its own findings in favour of predetermined conclusions grounded in middle-class mores and paradoxical policies, as is suggested by Arnon (1997). Perhaps despite the controversy, the original UNICEF definition is far more functional and reflective of the shared position among researchers than many writers would like to admit. When street children become reduced to a definition, a number, or for that matter a definitional dilemma, it de-personifies them and makes it easier to ignore or even manipulate their plight.

The effects of the definitional controversy are interrelated with the effects of the variations in estimates and can be analysed in differing ways. However, the subject or implied reader or “listener” is a useful tool in narrowing down the discourse effects caused by the extreme fluctuation attributed to the changing definitions.

For instance one implication of this fluctuation is that resources that are put into researching statistics as well as resources that will be generated from or be
allotted to the problem will vary because of the statistics. That is to say that larger numbers of children in crisis will attract more attention and larger resources committed to solving the crisis. However, it begs the question what of the reverse situation where smaller numbers are reported and no comprehensive attempts are made to ascertain statistics reflecting the great magnitude of the problem?

In my own research to confirm the numbers of street children in South Africa, according to national totals and provincial totals I realised that there was no governmental agency that could provide this information with any accuracy. Statistics South Africa, the official statistics bureau of the government, responsible for the population census and all population statistics, do not collect statistics on street children at all and were not able to refer me to anyone who could! The only figures I could attain were from the Department of Welfare, which only collects information on street children who were registered with them. Their totals if combined with the South African Police Services, the only other government agency that could provide this information, would actually be a double count. This is so since children registered with the Department of Social Welfare are often referred by the South African Police Services. The latest national street children total as recorded by the government, through the Social Welfare department, is 5291 as of 1998/1999. This figure is approximately half of the national total claimed by Cockburn (1991)! This supports the findings later detailed in this study that the local street children crisis is not given national
priority as the most basic of information is not collected in a systematic way by governmental and non-governmental service agencies.

6.2.5 Effects: Major Discourses

Once the sub-discourses of definitional controversy and "numb"ers are established they feed into the larger discourse effect of the "payer of the piper calling the tune". These sub-discourses worked together to create an environment where prolific research institutions attract funding and in turn are positioned to reinforce prevailing definitions and generate dramatic statistics that fit with such definitions. Smaller research agencies do not have the resources to produce such dramatic, and ostensibly credible numbers.

The potential effect of this is to establish research bodies organisations and NGO's which have seemingly inexhaustive life spans and maximum control over agendas in the field. It also means that the research paradigm and findings of these institutions dominate. The spin-off effects for individuals and smaller institutions which adopt the research agendas and reproduce similar findings to these larger institutions is the same whether they intend it or not. They may also generate funds and become established as specialists of an issue that seems to have an indefinite term as high priority. In the end this may mean that such established specialists and institutions become the ones to set and change agendas or to "call the tune".
Findings by Lazima (1996) support this theory of the payer of the piper calling the tune. In one example, Lazima finds that high-income countries and International institutions influence policy in low-income countries through attaching aid and donorship to adoption of their terminology. Aid donors fund NGO's that adopt their language and research paradigm in attempts to legitimise and globalise their terminology. In turn these donors get money by being able to report sponsorship and assistance to low-income countries. They receive money by showing the most deviant of cases and instances of the street child crisis worldwide which, according to Lazima, contributes to the dominance of a very negative and biased image of street children. The differences among street children have become blurred into one picture of bleakness.

Lazima's insight coupled with that of Aptekar (1994) creates the fundamentals for understanding the discourse at work in local street child writings and the effects of such discourse. Aptekar (1994) found that NGO's were used to normalise and homogenise the dominant class notion of childhood. Street children who did not reflect the attributes of childhood as espoused by the middle-class were seen as an embarrassment to social class systems and therefore a threat to its hegemony. In addition, Aptekar (1994) also echoes Lazima's opinions when he states that:

"The International organisations seeking attention from funding agencies use their publication to make the case for financial allocations. They, too, rely on showing the youngest, most drug dependent, and the most violent....." (p. 93)
201) ... "The press, as well as the international and national organisations that exist to provide for the children, exaggerate their numbers and the degree of their emotional problems and delinquency" (p. 216).

When viewed together these revelations show that NGO's and institutions can be used as agents of hegemonic notions of street children as conceived by high-income countries. Below the link between this revelation and discourse in local street child writings is shown.

Using the technique of searching for recurring themes, phrases and terms as outlined in the research methodology section of this study, yielded great insight into the existence of this phenomenon in South Africa. A scrutiny of the texts submitted to analysis reveals that a disproportionately large number of local writings adopt the official UNICEF terminology and definitions that Lazima evidences as the high-income countries globalising terminology. This means that locally there also is the trend, intentionally or unintentionally, toward the negative imaging of street children.

Examples of the adoption of UNICEF definitions are seen in: Cockburn (1991); Donald, Wallis & Cockburn (1997); Hickson & Gaydon (1989); Le Roux (1992), (1994); Le Roux & Sylvia Smith (1998); Ross (1991); Swart-Kruger & Richter (1997); Veeran (1999); and Williams (1993). All of whom use the UNICEF definitions of street children that have been extensively problematised. These
researchers also are arguably amongst the more noted South African researchers who contribute to knowledge production in the area of street children research locally. Christopher Williams (1993) reaffirms this notion that local researchers accept and use UNICEF terminology and definitions stating that “at the present time the simple distinction “on the street” and “of the street” is generally accepted” (p. 832). These local researchers do not always say they are explicitly working with the UNICEF definition of children ‘on’, ‘of’ the street and at risk. Although their use of the UNICEF definition within their particular studies is not necessarily a negative thing, collectively they produce an effect that they may not intend. The implication is that local research has adopted language that has been intentionally legitimised and globalised by high-income countries and is thus inadvertently or advertently potentially also in the snare of hegemonic agency as outlined by Aptekar (1994) and Lazima (1996).

High-income countries and international agencies “call the tune” and establish a research funding cycle that maintains their dominance and “expertise” in the West. This trend can be said to be supported by writings in South Africa that have embraced their expertise. This does not dislodge the importance of having the accurate statistics that these well-resourced agencies can generate, nor does it belittle the notion that these well-funded institutions prevent haphazard intervention and waste of resources. The how and where of the collection of statistics itself is not noted as a problem here. Although it is not merely the local use of UNICEF terminology that produces dramatic statistics that attract funding,
use of this terminology helps to empower western hegemony locally. The funding cycle that evaluates and rewards organisations that produce dramatic statistics and plays its part in a move toward universal terminology is cautioned as it indirectly, but most potently, promotes hegemonic interest, and in this case, as in many others, the negative imaging of street children.

It is important to note here that because researchers find themselves part of this cycle of promoting hegemonic interest does not necessarily imply that they have malevolent intent. It is more likely that this type of discourse is generated, as is often the case with discourse, out of an unreflexive approach to research and writing. Even where reflexivity exists there are always blind spots, leading to the inadvertent participation in constricting forms of discourse. In other words, this discourse also is merely pointing to the need for constant analytical vigilance and reflexivity. This again paves the way for the use of transformative techniques, which overlap with discourse analysis. Discourse analysis is often used to reveal the political agenda of the hegemonic class and the tools of oppression and misuse of power. The transformative techniques of heuristics and narrative inquiry provide reflexive tools to assist the potential pawns of discourse in sidestepping and subverting such agendas.

Yet another effect of the incongruent numbers and statistics resulting from the definitional dilemma discourse is that it creates an uncertainty of knowledge and delays appropriate interventions. This lowers the credibility and urgency of the
problem in some instances, or where the numbers seem overly dramatic it sensationalises the problem to the point of dismissal. An over dramatisation of the problem may tend to "numb" overwhelmed onlookers. However, while these onlookers are "numbed" by the problem there exists another type of person who becomes involved in the problem despite its abysmal outlook for resolution. Such people are the heroes or martyrs of the street child crisis and the accompanying discourse to their work is described hereunder.

6.3 ST. JUDE – THE PATRON SAINT OF LOST CAUSES

6.3.1 Discourse Summary

The discourse of "St. Jude the Patron Saint of Lost Causes" (hereafter referred to as the St. Jude's discourse) is rooted in the ideas of hopelessness, helplessness, victimology and ubiquitousness. In terms of this discourse street children are perceived as criminals beyond redemption, victims, and a lost omnipresent generation of criminals who are the problems of a post-apartheid society. The ubiquitousness of the street children phenomenon makes the crisis seem overwhelming and therefore impossible to solve. The absence of adequate intervention is implicitly justified. In effect the St. Jude's discourse discourages intervention except by martyrs who can also easily become entrenched as exceptionally skilled specialists "calling the tune". Below I describe the three sub-discourses (hopeless so help"less", forever victims of apartheid, omnipresent) which together cluster around the main discourse encapsulated in "The patron saint of lost causes".
6.3.2 Hopeless so Help"less"

Although ostensibly children leave home and are drawn to the streets for a multiplicity of reasons linked to their survival, researchers and writers who describe their conditions portray them as appalling and contrary to conditions sufficient to healthy wholesome living. This sentiment is documented and summarised in the research of Smit (1993), who found that policy makers thought that street children who have much the same needs as other children were not getting these needs fulfilled. Rather, they were living a precarious existence filled with loneliness, a lack of love, distrust, a poor self image, anxiety and depression and have little hope of fulfilling the needs that they share in common with children not on the streets. One is left with a sense of foreboding about the fate of any child who is subjected to such deficient conditions. The characteristics of street children as described in chapter three leaves no doubt as to the desperate conditions of children living on the streets of South Africa. The descriptions of physical and emotional abuse abound in the literature, with many authors giving the impression that such children have no hope of bouncing back from such a lifestyle. Consider the following excerpts from both newspaper and academic writings as illustrative examples:

....Thousands of children are making their living on the pavements. The number increases daily. They die there, too, as victims of disease, starvation, and clashes over meagre resources. Sexual abuse, child
labour, prostitution for survival, and police harassment are part of their daily reality. (Sunday Tribune, 10 November 1991, p. 15).

Just before sunset, the air chills and the blanket moves a fraction. A broken tackie emerges slowly. The blanket unfolds around an unwanted child, a twilight child, living in barely self-sufficient poverty on the edge of plenty. (The Star, 31 August 1991, p. 2).

"Downward spirals are commonly recognized... thus the boys slip down to a hardened complex criminal career" (Williams, 1993, p. 838).

"They have managed to cope with severe disadvantage and adversity and, in all likelihood will continue to do so” (Donald, Wallis & Cockburn, 1997, p. 139).

The longer the children stay on the streets the harder they become to rehabilitate and to restore to a normal life. They become criminalised .... (The Natal Witness, 23 December 1991, p. 11)

"Because they have a conceptual development which does not fit the expectations of the regular educational curriculum, they should be canalised..." (Van Niekerk, 1990, p. 101).
At the bottom of South Africa's human trash heap, very little comes their way that doesn't have to be stolen, begged for or scavenged. Except, that is, kicks, punches and abuse …... nasty, brutish and short doesn't come close to describing their lives…. (Sunday Tribune, 2 August 1992, p.10).

These excerpts project street children as urchins beyond redemption. The children are visualised as pitiful, woeful, maladapted lost causes who are so far gone that like dyeing creatures, they may invoke pity but not help. In this discourse one can see where repetitive language, metaphors, phrases and texts are used to create a vivid picture of despondency for children on the streets. These descriptions are very intentional and direct. Like descriptions of so many local writers on the street children issue, they convey the idea that children are hopeless, and unsuitable to be reformed or mainstreamed. In the words of one writer “street children are societal evils” (Alexander, 1997, p.17).

Even texts nominally critical of the way street children are marginalized from society, themselves also function to re-inscribe street children as a lost cause:

“It is unlikely the street children will simply disappear back from whence they came…” (Ross, 1991, p. 69).
“In addition, these negative appraisals are predominantly all-embracing, and no concessions are made that bad behaviour may be temporary or situational. Society’s negative opinion of these children, the low expectations of them and the closing of legitimate avenues of opportunity may push them into delinquency, resulting in self-fulfilling prophecy” (Le Roux & Sylvia-Smith, 1998, p. 919).

“This labelling (as deviant) serves to further isolate them from society, intensifying their victimization” (Le Roux & Sylvia-Smith, 1998, p. 919).

6.3.3 Forever Victims of Apartheid

Constant referral to the children as victims of apartheid who are forever trapped in a cycle of a lost life and abuse bolsters the discourse that projects the street children as hopeless and therefore helpless. Donald and Swart-Kruger (1994), Hickson and Gaydon (1989), and Le Roux (1994)\(^3\), are but a few of the researchers who describe the profound negative effects of apartheid society on South African street children:

“In short, their new way of life is an attempt to free themselves from the profound effects that the prevailing apartheid ideology has had on their lives” (Hickson & Gaydon, 1989, p. 86)

\(^3\) Le Roux (1994) has more than one reference for the same year. This was not indicated or differentiated throughout this thesis.
"...they can be seen as the result of social structural and political features of South African society... and the heritage of the Group Areas Act..."

(Donald and Swart-Kruger, 1994, p.173)

"The Group Areas Act... the outcome was that the child was placed in the care of someone else in the so-called black township. Loss of parental control often predisposed the child to a street lifestyle" (Peacock, 1989 as cited by Le Roux, 1994, p. 66).

Ross (1991) states that street children are simply described in literature as victims of the former policy of apartheid (Le Roux, 1994). In the same vein a weekly weekend paper, The Independent, describes street children as “ones left behind in the promise of a new South Africa after the elimination of apartheid” (10 December, 2000, p. 21). Ross (1991), amplifies this thought by saying that “South Africa’s street children are an uncomfortable reminder of this country’s racial legacy: they are yet more of apartheid’s victims” (Ross, 1990, p. 70). Hickson and Gaydon (1989) and Swart (1988) are also among writers who ascribe the high numbers of street children in South Africa to the violent political problems of the apartheid era.

According to Duncan and Rock (1994) (cited in Le Roux & Sylvia-Smith, 1998, p. 897) “the majority of South African children can be considered grossly disadvantaged and as being at high risk for less than optimal development.”
They also suggest that "institutionalised racism – apartheid – may have induced the following: the development of a host of disorders among black children, as well as their caregivers, a marked inability to defer gratification; and an extremely distorted negative sense of self" (p. 897). Le Roux and Sylvia-Smith (1998), drawing on the work of various authors theorise that the several negative social conditions, characteristic of apartheid, blunted black families' ability to provide a nurturing environment for children. The stress and violence together with the turmoil of apartheid times induced deviant behaviour evident among street children. This particular "apartheid victim" discourse also feeds into the later discussed "save the whale, forget the black male" discourse which argues that perceptions of street children coming mainly from pathological black homes reinforces a racist view of black people as either inherently inferior or inferior due to their victim status.

Texts participating in this victim blaming discourse at a first reading seem to suggest that society does introspect on whether or not to take responsibility for social issues. However, by blaming a historical apartheid system these texts imply that in the present there may be no systemic reasons for the street children problem and that future homeless children should therefore be treated as individual problem cases. The discourse is perhaps more reflective of a shift in the ideas about the causes of street children: Whereas in the apartheid era blame was located within systemic and social arrangements, in democratic South Africa there is suggestion that the underlying causes can be better understood in
individualised terms. This trend can be evidenced in the writings of Le Roux & Sylvia-Smith (1998, p. 896) that show that although writers expected a generation of maladjusted children to result from the socio-political climate of South Africa, “social conditions, however, were ignored and psychopathology was attributed to the black youths themselves.”

6.3.4 Omnipresent

Consistent with the “forever victims of apartheid” discourse, street children are also seen as an omnipresent problem of South Africa. “It is unlikely that the street children will simply come back from where they came; their omniscient (sic) presence in the cities is sustained by other social processes at work” (Ross, 1991, p. 69). The street children literature typically represents the street children problem as a ubiquitous one – “the street child phenomenon represents a universal problem with dramatic and unpredictable consequences” (Le Roux, 1994, p. 65). Le Roux further magnifies this thought elsewhere by quoting Taquon (1991) as saying that no country and virtually no city anywhere in the world will escape the street child problem (Le Roux, 1992). Other writers echo this discourse:

“Street children have existed in urban settings around the world for years.... Such children represent a rising social problem and their growing numbers reflect a society in transition...” (Hickson & Gaydon, 1989, p.85).

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4 Le Roux & Sylvia-Smith (1998) have more than one reference for the same year. This was not indicated or differentiated throughout this thesis.
"...There are millions of street children..." (Le Roux, 1994, p. 65).


"As the big cities grow, so the number of street children will increase..." (Le Roux, 1994, p. 65).


"A search of the relevant literature reveals that street children are a worldwide phenomenon." (Le Roux, 1994, p.63).

"...an immense problem that has dramatic and unpredictable consequences..." (Agnelli, 1986 as cited by Le Roux, 1994, p.65).

"Street children are present in almost every country and almost every city in the world." (Le Roux & Sylvia-Smith, 1998, p.891).

6.3.5 Effects: Sub-discourses

One effect of seeing the children as hopeless and therefore help"less", is perhaps to relegate intervention as useless and an abysmal waste of resources. In the view of one writer it is “... impossible to get the street culture genie back into the bottle” (Williams, 1993, p. 838). In the view of other writers, "street children are a burden on society. These children often become the adult layabouts and criminals of the future" (Goliath, 1989 as cited by Le Roux & Sylvia-Smith, 1998, p. 919). Thus another writer explains “Rather than helpless victims, the children are seen as hopeless cases and a threat to the well-being of society” (Creuziger, 1997, p. 349).

In effect, blaming the victim becomes synonymous with criminalising the victim and elicits a criminal justice response rather than a social rehabilitative one.

“The criminalization of street children leads logically to the social denial of human rights that would otherwise be extended to them. This negative conception of human rights denies those who are perceived as non-citizens, living ‘outside’ societal norms or civil laws” (Bernat , 1999, p. 129).

Such criminalisation and associated marginalisation may well be applied to justify ill-treatment of street children. For those who subscribe to this idea, it may seem more logical to just house street children or remove them from sight, rather than creating an environment that could end their street life. Once this dynamic of neglect is established, it seems that society may in a backhanded way be
absolved of responsibility to solve the problem. Societal guilt may be assuaged as long as street children are projected and perceived by the omnipresent discourse as hopeless and therefore helpless.

The imaging of South Africa’s street children as forever victims of apartheid, produces the same effect as the portrayal of street children as hopeless. Mainly, the result is to make it seem that helping street children is an abysmal project and so not helping becomes an appropriate response. This effect sets the tone for other related effects that in turn will create an overarching major discourse.

It can be said that researchers’ portrayal of people as victims of such a pernicious system creates a characterisation of people who are automatically seen as pathological themselves. Duncan (2001) perhaps describes this best when he says: “What is particularly interesting about the discourses constituting this construction (of black people as victims of apartheid), however, is that collectively, they could easily be construed as having constructed blacks as quintessential “victims” – or essentialising them as people with problems” (p. 139).

According to this discourse street children, of whom black children constitute the majority, are seen as a “lost generation” and inherently people of pathology. More to the point, this discourse also implies that since apartheid has been outlawed and society has done what it can and what it ought to by dismantling
the apartheid regime, society should feel justified in blaming the children and not their situation. So in line with the victim blaming logic, a criminal justice response is yet again supported as appropriate. This can lead to the children facing the ill treatment of a self-righteous post-apartheid society, who may bear no guilt or responsibility for such street children and their plight.

Alternatively we may note a demeaning pity, in that within the 'victims of apartheid' logic blacks were damaged by apartheid and are therefore not as human as whites. The inadequate 'humaness' therefore also makes it difficult for blacks to be good parents (as is suggested by Duncan and Rock, 1994), thereby producing damaged children. A vicious cycle of victimisation from which there is no relief is therefore perpetuated.

Not only are these children portrayed as pathological, they are also seen as omnipresent. The description of the street children crisis growing as cities grow defines the problem as one that even high-income, well resourced countries cannot be "rid of". Several effects are derived from this discourse of omnipresence. Ironically the creation of the children's omnipresence may make forgetting about them or ignoring them possible. In this way this discourse also is connected to and bolsters the earlier "numb"bers discourse in that it is derived from the often over dramatised, or at the very least incorrectly documented, numbers of street children and in this instance produces a "numbing effect". To their credit, there are a number of academic texts where the issue is highlighted:

5 Inserted by study author for clarification purposes
“Sensationalistic over-estimations of the numbers of street children in Southern African countries handicapped efforts both to understand the problem and to design responses to cope with the issues” (Cockburn, 1991, p. 12).

“The topic of street children similarly elicits dramatic popular and professional misperceptions, with the children being seen as almost larger than life...” (Swart-Kruger & Richter, 1997, p. 957).

“Community groups and researchers differ widely in their estimates of the numbers of street children .... The politics of numbers can hide or distort the moral issue....” (Le Roux & Sylvia-Smith, 1998, p. 901).

“Overdramatising the increase in the numbers of street children in the past few years in South Africa.... leads as it has done in South America, to a situation where sensationalist overestimation of numbers inhibits efforts to deal with the problem” (South African Outlook, 1992, p. 6).

Since street children have a ubiquitous presence ironically they are tuned out and ignored. South African society cannot bear responsibility for helping children whom even high-income countries are not able to rehabilitate. Intervention seems like an inappropriate response since they are hopeless and exist in overwhelming numbers. The only appropriate response is to be “numbed” to this
problem. Ironically, too, this discourse which tends to universalise the problem contradicts the localising “victims of apartheid” discourse; despite the contradiction they still have the same end effect and undermine attempts to resolve the street children crisis. Finally, the omnipresent discourse could be taken to imply that if the children’s numbers are growing they must in fact be thriving and are not really suffering. Intervention is not necessary for children who are thriving.

6.3.6 Effects: Major Discourses

All of these sub-discourses converge into a larger discourse which imply that street children are vessels of altruism exercised by very special service agencies and providers. Service providers and agencies that work with street children under such austere conditions are by implication special individuals if not martyrs! The repeated focus on the deprivation, depravity, hopelessness of street children and the absence of public concern or support contributes to the effect of projecting street children workers and service providers as martyrs. The level of the street worker’s humanity and altruism is elevated far above that of the general public. Below are examples of both types of writings that support such an effect. Whereas the first set of extracts, focus on the hopelessness and helplessness of street children, the second set focuses on the implied strength and altruism of the service provider.

“They should all be taken to jail...” (The Star, 31 August 1991, p. 7).

“it was pointed out that unless drastic measures are taken immediately, the various social problems associated with the children are likely to increase rapidly” (The Natal Witness, 9 March 1993, p. 3).

“The public image of the street children is that of a bunch of ne’er do wells who have chosen to beg and rob rather than knuckle down to the normal discipline of society. This perception makes it difficult to canvass support for dealing with the problem.” (The Natal Witness, 23 December 1991, p. 11).

“These street children... are among the most vulnerable victims... They face violence, sexual abuse, arbitrary arrest and imprisonment... hunger, cold and significantly, loneliness” (South African Outlook, 1992, p. 6).

“Street children are regarded as nuisances by some and criminals by others” (Le Roux & Sylvia-Smith, 1998, p. 901).
"...the widely held view of street children as delinquents and pests, which is in turn largely responsible for the inhumane treatment meted out to them" (Le Roux & Sylvia-Smith, 1998, p. 904).

"...preyed upon for their sexual services, chased away by police and shopkeepers, and regarded as deviant and undesirable by residents in the community" (Hickson & Gaydon, 1989, p. 89).

These types of depictions of children lead naturally on to depictions of the adults who interact with them as taking on a very difficult task.

"Adults who encountered them usually respond with pity, disapproval, embarrassment or outright hostility.... Their emotional vulnerability is exacerbated... they must risk...constant rejection" (Hickson & Gaydon, 1989, p. 89).

"They are children who, through repeated negative experience, view grown-ups as their enemies and as a threat to survival" (Le Roux, 1994, p. 65).

"These children feel they can no longer trust themselves in the hands of society..." (Le Roux, 1994, p. 65)
"The workers at the present shelter are doing all they can to improve the lives of the children" (The Natal Witness, 23 December 1991, p. 11).

"It has taken months for those in the shelter to learn to trust the workers. It is difficult to get through to them" (The Natal Witness, 23 December 1991, p. 11).

"It is my belief that this child will now have a much better future than would have been the case without intervention" (Sowetan, 28 March 1991, p. 14).

"I am not the type to accept a safe bet. I am responsible for changing these boys from animals into people with dignity" (The Sunday Star, 17 January 1993, p. 17).

"On the other hand, all those spoken to agree that the homes and shelters currently running can deal only with the tip of the iceberg..." (South African Outlook, January 1992, p. 6).

"The task of running any welfare organisation is tough, but in an age where tightening one's economic belt is very much the order of the day, collecting funds is even more demanding" (Pretoria News 9 April 1992, p. 11).
"But unlike most people that despise the street kids, Streetwise aims to give the kids a chance in life" (City Press, 18 June 1992, p. 8).

"According to Swart (1987), the burnout experienced by child care workers is high. McLachlan (1986) confirms stressful conditions faced by child care professionals, who have to deal socially and psychologically scarred children on a daily basis... initial contact is often characterized by defensiveness, suspicion and mistrust" (Le Roux & Sylvia-Smith, 1998, p. 905).

"The children fear authority and have a deep mistrust of the adult world" (Williams, 1988, p. 1).

The overarching effect of this martyr discourse and its contributory discourses (helplessness, forever apartheid victims, omnipresence) is to give the effect of the street child arena being a "business of lost causes". In effect a "business" is created. This business is full time and seemingly unending in much the same way that the research bodies, institutes, NGO's and specialists are established as having inexhaustive life-spans and agendas by the effects of the statistics and definitions discourse (the paid piper discourse) discussed above.
Ironically, like such specialists, despite the perceived futility of their actions, the martyrs become authorised by their exceptional skills to "call the tune" in an area where others are intimidated and alienated from getting involved because of the projected overwhelming nature of the street children setting. Of course, this is not a reflection on the authentic motivations and intentions of these "martyrs" but rather a reflection of the influences of texts in creating contradictory yet instrumental discourse.

6.4 "NATURED" VERSUS "NURTURED"

6.4.1 Discourse Summary

We can discern evidence for the 'natured versus nurtered' discourse within writings that convey ideas of a biological determinism within which street children are described as bestial, abnormally sexual, inherently racially inferior and unresponsive to initiatives designed to provide shelter for them. The depiction of street children as highly sexualised violent beasts, alongside the frequent racist projections which locate street children within pathological black homes creates adverse effects for these children. Street children may be ill treated, denied of human rights and eventually may even become seen as the enemy of "civilised" South African society. Below I describe the sub-discourses (animal farm, shalt not shelter, sex and the city and save the whale forget the black male) that converge to produce this main discourse which I call "natured" versus "nurtured".
6.4.2 Animal Farm

"... I am responsible for changing these boys from animals into people with dignity" (Streetwise Principal, The Sunday Star, 17 January, 1993. p. 17)

This one phrase in many ways encapsulates the sub-discourse of bestiality that punctuates much of the writings on street children. A significant number of the descriptors in writings on street children in South Africa portray images of scavengers living in appalling conditions. Whereas the "St. Jude's discourse" shows street children as hopeless and desperate victims, many other writings use language that describe the children as animal like scavengers. Le Roux (1992) speaks of the children as having "furtive, hunted expressions" (p. 93), summoning images of a cornered or pursed animal. Other examples of extracts that depict an animal like existence and animal like traits in street children (thus the animal farm discourse) include the following:

"...A lone boy outside a bookshop is crying. Not quietly, or privately. His is a haunting maddening howl" (South African outlook, 1992, p. 6).

"Only now a year later, people are responding. It is not easy they are like wild animals" (The Star 31 August 1991, p. 7).
"Where would she like to be?....Anywhere but here she says crawling back into her box" (The Daily News 6 May 1993. P. 2).

"She's 17, her baby is one-year-old. He was born in one of the crates" (The Daily News 6 May 1993. P. 2).

Writings also describe the ways street children earn their income and look after themselves: These range from theft to performing menial tasks in exchange for measly sums, to begging, to living off garbage. For instance a street child is quoted as saying: "you don't put the lid on top "[of the garbage bin] because sometimes the man takes you away with the rubbish" (Williams, 1988, p. 1).

Such language does not only convey the ideas of inhumanity but projects street children as rat-like creatures that dwell purposefully in garbage. Below I provide examples of texts (including ostensibly reflexive and critical texts) which convey ideas of a chosen bestiality among street children.

"...the widely held view of street children as delinquents and pests, which in turn is largely responsible for inhumane treatment meted out to them."

(Le Roux & Sylvia-Smith, 1998, p. 904)

"...has gone so far as to refer to these children as a plague." (Le Roux & Sylvia-Smith, 1998, p. 917)
“Life is a perpetual bitter struggle as they have to scavenge in dustbins.”
(City Press 28 June 1992. P. 8)

“Dehumanised, many youngsters use alcohol...” (Sunday Tribune 10 November 1991. P. 15)

“His new home with an old blanket looks like a kennel. Indeed a dog would probably have a better home.” (Sunday Tribune 10 November 1991. P. 15)

This last quotation conjuring up the image of a dog, ironically, like all the other repeated projections of street children as animal like may produce a “Pavlovian conditioned dog-like” response among readers. Repeated associations between street children and terms such as ‘maddening howl’, ‘wild animals’, ‘pests’ and ‘scavenge’ reinforce the animal farm discourse through suggestion. Eventually, the actual animal descriptors are no longer required to "ring a bell" and create the animal farm discourse. The image of street children as animal-like is conjured up at the mere mention of the word “street children”, and this is so even if one attempts to consider the issue from a perspective sympathetic to the plight of the children and critical of texts that overtly position them as bestial.

Further evidence contributing to the construction of street children as bestial is evident in the descriptions of the children’s' survival skills. In addition to

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commonly being described as hungry and living on and amid garbage, street children are also described as living purely by instinct. Le Roux and Sylvia Smith (1998) suggest that street children live by their wits and survive. Cockburn (1991, p.12) suggests that street children who go to live in shelters actually are in danger of losing the "opportunistic sharpness of the street survivor" or of "blunting their survival skills". Thus physical survival is projected as paramount, taking "precedence over other needs and relationships" (Donald & Swart-Kruger, 1994, p.172). In fact, the texts usually tend to foreground the street children's scavenger-like survival skills, de-centering the entrepreneurial, educational or even labour skills that they also acquire along the way. Consider the following quotations which all refer to the children's "survival", "survival skills" and/or relationship to other humans and the adult world.


"...in attempting to mainstream these children, we may be infantilizing them, blunting their survival skills..." (South African Outlook, January 1992, p.7).

"...Street life has taught him a number of survival tactics" (City Press, 28 June 1992, p.8).
“You can take children out of the street but you can’t take the streets out of the children” (City Press, 28 June 1992, p.8).

“They go straight back to their old ways” (The Daily News, 25 June 1992, p.8).

“Children are sleeping, eating, working and living a life of hell to survive abuse and filthy conditions…” (The Daily News, 25 June 1992, p.8).


“They only concentrate on survival skills to fulfil their immediate needs…” (Van Niekerk, 1990, p. 95).

“… Forced to survive in a predominantly alien adult world…” (Donald, Wallis & Cockburn, 1997, p. 152).

“These are children left to their own devices to survive…” (Le Roux, 1992, p. 87).

“… to simply survive from day to day” (Ross, 1991, p. 69).
"Inevitably, the survival strategies of the street children soon bring them into the conflict with a broad cross-section of urban interests groups..."
(Ross, 1991, p. 69).

Moreover, describing the children's resilience further contributes to this image of the children as scavengers and survivors and as such contributes to painting a picture of them as animal like. Street children are commonly described and hailed as resilient in the literature, for example, Le Roux and Sylvia-Smith (1998) note that many researchers speak of this resilience which is supported by research that holds young people as resilient even under stress. To speak of such resilience in the face of these horrific conditions seems to amplify the description of the children as different somehow to mainstream children. These differences actually also encourage a subtle depiction of street children as animals and non-street children as human. Gigengack (1994) says of this phenomenon that it is essentially a part of hegemonic discourse in which street youth are conceived of in terms of "degeneration and wildness....in the street portrayed as the urban jungle" (p. 384). So when Le Roux (1994) notes that "nowhere in the world do street children enjoy full human rights..." (p. 67). One begins to appreciate the full impact of this discourse which reduces street children to beasts not entitled to human rights. This dehumanisation and denial is encapsulated in the following: "The brazil syndrome is coming to South Africa......where police have allegedly shot and killed street children whom, they
say are regarded by police as pests to be exterminated" (The Sunday Star, 2 August 1992, p. 17).

6.4.3 Shalt not shelter

This sub-discourse which contributes to the portrayal of street children as animals is connected to the idea that street children reject shelter when offered to them. Street children supposedly value their personal freedom over shelter.

Several writers suggest that street children place a high premium on their personal freedom (Donald & Swart-Kruger, 1994; Le Roux & Sylvia-Smith, 1998). Schärf et al. (1986) (cited in Donald & Swart-Kruger, 1994) describe the street children's goal as "freedom from institutions, freedom of movement, freedom to choose activities and daily rhythms and freedom from commitments" (p. 171).

Le Roux and Sylvia-Smith (1998) claim that this high value on freedom is as a consequence of having experienced punitive restrictions and abuse at the hands of authority figures and parents, as well as a result of being severely dominated and victimised by apartheid ideology (Hickson & Gaydon, 1989). Street children resist even the barest of minimal societal authority in their lives on the street and in a way represent a child movement which protests authority. Veeran (1999) characterises street children as being defined by their lack of adult supervision and nomadic lifestyle. When contrasted to the children of the mainstream who
are given their status in the social order by virtue of their "belonging" and relationship to the power structure, the authority of parents and adults, this creates the image of street children as gangs or packs moving around like wild animals rather than humans. Street children have the power to control events that happen in their lives and this requires resistance to even a hint of adult authoritarian control (Donald et al. 1997). This also means that street children are outside of the mainstream and once combined with the language used to describe them as outsiders — "furtive, opportunistic sharpness, wondering, instinctual, animals, hunted, wildness, jungle" - it seems difficult not to make the association between animals and street children.

Also associated with this issue of freedom is the notion of freedom at any cost. "They say they had heard that children's shelters were places where there was no freedom" (The Cape Times, 28 October 1992, p. 12). This notion that the children will covet freedom at any cost is reinforced when juxtaposed with the descriptions of the horrendous life these children experience on the streets.

"Most of the street youth could tell a rape story... survival sex on the other hand, was described as sex engaged in... in exchange for protection, accommodation..." (Swart-Kruger & Richter, 1997, p. 961).
“... sheltered by night in cardboard boxes, dustbins, empty buildings, shop doorways, storm water drains, deserted parks...” (Van Niekerk, 1990, p. 90).

“These children experience abuse from nearly everyone: the community treats them with contempt, they are harassed and arrested by the police... even brutalized…” (Le Roux & Sylvia-Smith, 1998, p. 687).

“The street children are refugees in their own country” (The Star, 31 August 1991, p.7)

“Street children are subjected to physical assault, sexual abuse, harassment from the public, intimidation by gang members and criminals, and arrest by police…” (LeRoux & Sylvia-Smith, 1998, p. 917).

The choice of freedom is accentuated and pathologised when street children are portrayed as rejecting of shelters. One way in which these children resist adult supervision or control is through living on their own and this means not using shelters. Jansen et al. (1992) state that “they usually sleep in doorways, alleyways or open waste ground, although several voluntary organisations have established shelters in the main cities which provide accommodation and protection for these children” (p. 30).
Other examples of writings that reflect the children's rejection and suspicion of shelters can be seen in the following:

"However, getting the kids to the five shelters is difficult as they do not trust anybody" (City Press, 28 June 1992, p. 8).

"... it has taken months for those in the shelter to learn to trust the workers. It is difficult to get through to them" (The Natal Witness, 23 Dec 1991, p. 11).

"It has also been suggested that children who have adjusted to street life are not easily convinced that there is a better alternative..." (LeRoux & Sylvia-Smith, 1998, p. 917).

It can be reasonably argued that one of the essential necessities that humans need and seek for themselves is shelter. So, emphasis on children who decline shelter reinforces the depiction of street children as animals who cannot be caged and are unhappy unless they are living in the 'wilderness' of the street, dealing with the forces of nature. In so far as rejection of shelters is viewed as unreasonable and even aberrant, street children's lives are construed as wild, instinctual and foreign to humans who require shelter, and adult supervision.
6.4.4 Sex and the City

Another sub-discourse that feeds into the major animal discourse evolves from writings which refer to the high, somewhat abnormal, sexuality of the children in the city centres. According to Swart-Kruger and Richter (1997) many studies report that street children become: sexually active earlier than most groups of adolescents, have more sexual partners and may be raped and forced into sexual relationships to ensure survival. Beyond such innocuous references to street children's sexuality, many texts describe street children's sexuality as perverse, exploitative, deviant and abusive and therefore may suggest sexual portrayals more suited to the physical coupling of animals. Some examples of writings that describe this "exploitive, perverse, abusive and deviant" sexual life of street children are:

"The are picked up by wealthy people who promise them money in exchange for being sex slaves" (City Press, 28 June 1992, p. 8).

"...they face violence, sexual abuse..." (South African Outlook, 1992, p. 6).

"...Sizwe has been forced to earn money as a 'chip-chop' by selling himself to paedophiles" (Williams, 1988, p. 1).
"With their basic need not met, street children are compelled to try ... begging, odd-jobbing... prostitution and petty crime to simply survive from day to day" (Ross, 1991, p. 69).

"Aids issues among street children illustrates most vividly the fallacy that sex is an activity that takes place between consenting adults..." (Swart-Kruger & Richter, 1997, p. 957).

"The case histories of these children frequently reveal incidence of physical, sexual and emotional abuse and neglect" (Van Niekerk, 1990, p. 90).

"...they are tainted by drugs, prostitution, crime and other socio-educational problems" (Le Roux, 1992, p. 88).

"Sexually abused street children often turn to prostitution – girls or violence such as rape – boys" (Le Roux, 1992, p. 88).

"... preyed upon for their sexual services..." (Hickson & Gaydon, 1989, p. 89).

"...they feel exploited by almost everyone: the media, the pushers, the sex purchasers..." (Le Roux & Sylvia-Smith, 1998, p. 918).
Williams (1993) suggests that premature sexual activity among street children is an age-old phenomenon that was observed even in Victorian times. To make his point he references Henry Mayshaw which again shows how language is used in the writing of street children to convey negatively images that associates street children with animals:

"Nothing can exceed the extreme animal fondness for the opposite sex which prevails among them... it would appear that the age of puberty, or something closely resembling it, may be attained at a much less numerical amount of years than that at which most writers upon human species have hitherto fixed it " (Mayshaw, 1851, p. 477).

The issue here is not whether the author is supporting that particular point of view or even whether or not it should be or can be proven to have any merit, nor whether this historical perspective can be proven to have any supporters in contemporary times. Instead the point is that the choice of language used by historical and contemporary writers to describe local street children contributes to a depiction of bestiality.

Although the corpus of texts referred to above deals with the sexuality of the street children, there are no examples of writings in which sexuality is described as expressions of love or exploratory relationships common to adolescence. While sadly the sexuality of street children is often exploitative it is hard to
believe that that is the only type of sexuality they experience, thereby reinforcing their helpless victim status evident in the discourse described earlier.

6.4.5 Save the Whale Forget the Black Male

Duncan (1994) suggests that blacks are commonly portrayed as inherently prone to committing acts of violence. Writings about street children in South Africa reinforces this portrayal in many ways and through various stages. Firstly, authors place a great deal of emphasis on statistics to show that the overwhelming majority of street children in South Africa are black males. Ross (1991, p. 70) notes that "If it is self evident why there are no white street children, it is also obvious why there are so many black street children...". She further states that "the vast majority of an estimated 9000 street children in South Africa are black. There are virtually no white street children in South Africa....". Swart (1988) adds to this by saying "street children in Johannesburg are almost exclusively black children...."

The tendency to make reference to the fact that street children are mostly black is so strong, that in one case (Van Niekerk, 1990, sec. 4.2) the author even uses the term black child synonymously with the term street child. Van Niekerk does this by interchangeably describing the situation of a crisis in African homes and Black mothering, with that of the crisis in the background of street children as a whole. He cites black life as an etiological factor of the street child crisis as though black life and street life are one and the same.
Once it is established that the majority of street children are black, the second stage in this portrayal of blacks as inherently violent, progresses naturally from establishing that street children come mainly from pathological homes. Studies and statistics show that street children overwhelmingly come from and are pushed out of homes due to violence, abuse, alcoholism and various pathologies. Cockburn (1990) is one amongst numerous researchers who reports that street children experience high levels of physical and sexual abuse in families of origin. Le Roux (1996) says that children indicated that family violence, parental alcoholism, and abuse were reasons for leaving home. Hickson and Gaydon (1989) note that many street children come from structurally disadvantaged black homes where they have suffered some form of fundamental nuclear family upheaval and some report instances of physical and sexual abuse.

These descriptions of the disadvantage of black homes in South Africa are obviously not untrue. However, the fact that the equivalent homes of white delinquents is not explored or dealt with in any significant detail in by far the majority of writings scrutinised, reinforces the construction and stereotyping of black homes and black people as violent. This characterisation feeds the animal discourse by subtly and dangerously reproducing an image of black people as pathological and problematic in such large numbers that it conjures an image of an inferior race closer to animals than humans. In the absence of both
countervailing writings on the myriad of impoverished disadvantaged black homes that keep their children off the streets, as well as accurate statistics of children of other races who suffer pathological lifestyles and abuse, this discourse of black people being inherently prone to violence gains power.

A keen search of the corpus text revealed that these factors are further reinforced by the fact that although much is said of the victimisation of street children not much is said at the same time about the perpetrators or their punishment. It would seem natural when speaking of mainstream children as victims to also describe their perpetrators and the repercussions for their criminal behaviour. One example of this can be seen by the descriptions and coverage of the recent arrest of Alfred McNeil, the so called ‘santa claus paedophile’ (Damon, 2001, p. 1) for possession of child pornography and alleged paedophilic acts.

For example when reading newspaper descriptions of any child that is abducted or molested in some way it is commonly accompanied by a description of the suspected perpetrator or speaks of the arrest of a suspect. This does not often happen when speaking of street children as victims. As has already been established, instead it is more common in writings, to imply discourse that blames the victim and use denigrating terminology to describe them and their situation. These descriptions and words used in relation to street children are ones that academics would not normally use or would neutralise in some way when referring to mainstream children. Mainstream children are accorded a
differing respect since childhood is often a “politicised concept whereby children are seen as mediums of social reconstruction and as the most suitable, most deserving objects of hope and assistance” (Bellingham, 1983, p. 304). That is to say, children of the mainstream.

Examples of writings, including academic writings, which use shocking language in relation to street children not normally associated with mainstream children come mainly in two forms. In one form street children are stereotyped in such a way that as Veeran (1999) puts it even “using the word 'street' is tantamount to labelling or stereotyping as it conjures up a biased view of an unkempt child” (p. 56). This discourse, like the "numbers" discourse, renders the children as caricatures of themselves where they are no longer even seen - they are a mere stereotype or profile. In the second form the street children themselves are portrayed as symbolic of most social problems or trends. In this instance, just as in the case of the “definitional dilemma” discourse, the children are objectified and their individuality or characterisation as a child is lost. Street children instead become a mere “representation”.

Descriptions which create negative symbols and therefore images of street children can be seen in the extracts below:
"They are the bad conscience of a model of urban development that has collapsed; of an urbanisation process that has shattered traditional structures" (Cerrans, 1992, p. 11).

"...a byproduct of a community that has been exposed to industrialization and urbanisation without the support of a firm service infrastructure" (Le Roux, 1992, p. 91).

"For us the existence of 'street children' indicates moral degradation, the end of our traditional values" (South African Outlook, January 1992, p. 11).

"Street children... represent one of our global family's most serious and urgent and most rapidly growing social challenges" (Le Roux, 1992, p. 92).

"Street children are not merely orphans or drop outs, but the product of deep seated trends and global forces..." (Cerrans, 1992, p. 11).

"Street children represent a rising social problem and their growing number reflects a society in transition and in the throes of rapid social change" (Hickson & Gaydon, 1989, p. 85).

"Street children in South Africa are becoming ... a manifestation of a divided society in turmoil" (Hickson & Gaydon, 1989, p. 88).

"... the presence of street children is an indictment of the way society construes its priorities" (Le Roux & Sylvia-Smith, 1998, p. 922).

"Street children, as the offspring of complex contemporary urban environments, represent one of our more serious global challenges" (Le Roux & Sylvia-Smith, 1998, p. 683).

"On the other hand they can be seen as the result of social, structural and political features of South African society in which poverty and unemployment, educational inadequacies, industrialization, urbanization .... Are all clearly implicated " (Donald & Swart-Kruger, 1994, p. 173).

"...street kids, both as people and as a symbol, may be used to mediate actual and symbolic relations between different social, ethnic, racial and income groups" (Le Roux & Sylvia-Smith, 1998, p.901).

Other descriptions and stereotypes using words that are not usually associated with mainstream children can be seen in the examples below:
"throwaways and runaways, children whom families and communities have failed" (Le Roux, 1992, p. 91).

"...the widely held view of street children as delinquents and pests..." (Le Roux & Sylvia-Smith, 1998, p. 904).


"Street children are a burden on society" (Goliath, 1989 as cited by Le Roux & Sylvia-Smith, 1998, p. 918).

"... we regard them as 'deviants' and 'social junk'..." (Wilson & Arnold, 1986 as cited by Le Roux & Sylvia-Smith, 1998, p. 918).

"... the common belief that they are uneducable and incorrigible..." (Le Roux & Sylvia-Smith, 1998, p. 921).

"They are undisciplined, manipulative, easily turned to the use of cheap and readily available intoxicants..." (Van Niekerk, 1990, p. 91).

"Sipho may still have to sleep in a bin, but with any luck Street-Wise might prevent him being thrown out with the rubbish" (Williams, 1998, p.1).
"But what is being done to stem this flood of unwanted children on to the streets" (The Natal Mercury 11 May 1988. p.7)?

"I would think they were sick if they didn't shout and act like maniacs" (The Sunday Star 12 July 1992. p. 8).

In this sub-discourse we note that race of street children is juxtaposed with aberrant behaviour to imply that black children are inherently bestial in nature.

6.4.6 Effects: Sub-discourses

All of these sub-discourses cluster to depict street children as animals, reinforcing the sense that helping them is useless or a waste of resources. The society continues to be absolved of its guilt and responsibility to these street children, consistent with the effects of the earlier discourses described above.

A newly introduced effect stems from the animal farm discourse. This discourse raises the political ideology of where and how society's role and responsibility toward the masses is enforced. The larger questions surrounding the discourse of a capitalistic way of dealing with welfare issues versus a Marxist way is directly insinuated. However, the discourse seems already decided given that the agenda of establishing the mores and hegemony of high-income, mostly
capitalistic, countries has already been outlined in discourses and sub-themes dislodged above. Aptekar (1994) goes so far as to say that "a common denominator that might explain the cultural condition for street children is a non-dictatorial capitalistic country in the developing world that has significant urban centres" (p. 204).

The "shalt not shelter" discourse which depicts an urgent need to be in the open (even when shelter is provided) helps to sustain an image of the children as animals rather than of the common 'brotherhood of humankind'. Ironically, this discourse portrayed by apparent anti-social, abnormal un-human like behaviour of refusing shelter, nullifies the pathology of describing the apartheid system as a restrictive regime from which these children fled. A containment and criminal approach is constantly referred to in the literature as a viable solution to the street child problem and this is in keeping with what can be seen as a normal response to containing animals who in turn want to be wild. Jones (1997) explains this line of thinking saying that "the moral discourse sets the parameters for what constitutes legitimate action. The depiction of the child as savage and untamed promotes a view of correction" (p. 42). The containment approach is also in keeping with the restrictiveness of the apartheid regime, which then becomes vindicated as it is consistent with the approach of the post apartheid regime.

7 Reminiscent of George Orwell 1946 novel "Animal Farm" in which economic necessity, social and political systems, free market versus communism is satirised. I use the book's title as a pun and its contents
Even though the children are in fact often victims of sexual exploitation as perpetrated by members of mainstream society this does not seem to minimise the effect of this animal discourse. In fact, the reporting of the high incidence of sexual abuse, as in the Cockburn (1991) study, resubmits the children as victims again, though presumably unintentionally. This is so since it gives more leverage to the animal discourse by keeping in the forefront of the reader’s mind that these children are commonly involved in deviant sexual experiences as defined by society at large.

6.4.7 Effects: Major Discourses

In summary, there are several implications for creating the street child image in these terms and all these sub-discourses work together and alongside major discourses to create an image of the street child as animal by virtue of his/her very human nature as well as through nurture. Once these children are consciously or unconsciously visualised as animals, they are seen as not entitled to human rights. Their human rights are not as keenly advocated for or maintained, in many street situations, as those of children not on or of the streets.

Street children seen as animals are ill-treated and are handled angrily rather than with the sympathy befitting of their situations. Justification is given to treating black street children as primitive, barbaric and bestial and further vindicates the superior position of whites and the inferior position of blacks in the social order as

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as instructional to the discourse.

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inferred by hegemonic discourse. This discourse promotes racism. Helping street children who are black seems inappropriate and useless as they are so “far gone” that they are no longer human. Issues such as education and health and other human rights given urgency for children not on the street are not equated with the needs of street children. Allotting such resources for them seems a waste of already strained and limited resources.

Societal guilt at not being able to resolve the situation is minimised as black children are seen as resilient and as doing well and as fully equipped to deal with such circumstances given their animal survival skills. Their situation cannot be remedied and is not therefore equated to the circumstance of a mainstream white child being rendered homeless. Ironically, although writings explicitly want to increase the visibility of street children they actually help to achieve the opposite effect. Perhaps this is because the inherently racist discourse of the street child issue makes it seem reasonable to forget about these children and prioritise social spending in other problem areas that take on the appearance of a more worthy cause suited to a civilised society of which these children are on the periphery. These children in fact become seen as the enemy of society at large, dually visualised as animals which not only attack and threaten members of the society, but correspondingly attack the very characteristics that make the society define itself as one which is benefactor to the weak. A necessary factor in this equation, however, is that the weak must know their place in the order of things and not attempt to break out of the shelters and spaces provided for them. This
is validated by the containment approach which the literature constantly refers to and says is the most popular approach. "The containment approach...appears to be the approach most favoured in South Africa" (Bernstein & Gray, 1991, p. 56).

Once the street children are reduced to an animal status it is not hard to go on to use descriptors of them that are shocking. Words that would not normally be associated with children or humans are used frequently. For example, Le Roux and Sylvia-Smith (1998) quote Wilson and Arnold (1986, p. 7) as saying that society regards these children as "deviants and social junk". Another example is in Cerrans (1992) where the children, are seen as potential "blights on urban civilisation of tomorrow" (p. 12). Although, like most of the quotations cited, the negative terms are used by writers to condemn these terms, they are being quoted nevertheless and these writings end up adding to what becomes the common discourse of street children.

These shocking descriptors work together with the perception of the mostly black male street children, characterised as criminals involved in sexual violence, to produce the effect of the street child being seen as not deserving of assistance. This is contrary to the explicit intention of the text, but still becomes common discourse that promotes the opposite effect. Rather, a discourse develops wherein resources are encouraged toward benefaction of sublime or more innocuous needs (save the whale! – or penguin) rather than towards criminals who are beyond redemption. These criminals have the potential to be agents of
reflection for the worst characteristics of the society from which they are derived. If society claims these children it also means claiming responsibility for creation of their plight. As Silva (1996) puts it: “So when we see a street child today, they will remind us of inequity, greed and callousness of this supposed civilised society. If people call them eyesore, street urchins...what do we call a society that has reduced them to this state” (p. 282). Turning the attention of society to causes that indeed reflect civilised benefaction, such as saving penguins from oil slicks, also reflects back the civilised state of society to itself, charity to un-redeemptive criminals reminds society of its own failures. In fact in the case of one quotation – “...they are a nuisance to society and should be ‘gathered up and cut into dog food’ “ (Hickson & Gaydon, 1989, p. 89) – these street children are even seen as beneath the most lowly of animals, worthy of being only food for animals! The irony therefore, is that even though animals can be seen as worthy causes, these humans are seen as too much like animals to be worthy.

Once it becomes pro forma to see street children as animals or characterise them using extreme nomenclature, it also produces an alienating effect where the children become an outer group or the “other”. This produces an “us and them cum us against them” discourse further described in the following section.
6.5 US AND THEM CUM US AGAINST THEM

6.5.1 Discourse Summary

This final discourse in some ways represents the culmination of all of the previous discourses. Street children are essentially seen as inherently different to mainstream children and adults. These differences become distended into characteristics that actually pit these children against society at large and represent them as enemies. Although the discourse flagrantly shows the street child phenomenon as a crisis, society seems to be blind to the problem and the children themselves create their own invisibility. The effects of this discourse also represents a culmination of the effects of all the discourses – the street child crisis is perceived as in-solvable and that perception seems to be self fulfilling and perpetuating.

6.5.2 Swimming up Mainstream

In representing the street child problem as one of a black child problem in a post apartheid society where racial inequity still exists, an “us and them cum us against them” dynamic is set in place. The notion of the “black peril”\(^8\) and the black or African life as deviant and pathological and a burden to society is reified. The context or the structural issues contributing to the existence of their circumstance is ignored. Street children are particularly seen as running away from black homes where abuse and poverty and extreme forms of dysfunction exist to be investigated.

\(^8\) It is a well documented fact that during the pre-apartheid and apartheid eras the ruling class often attempted to justify their oppression of blacks by claiming that their survival depended on it. Blacks were
Many researchers call attention to this abuse and state that it is healthy and constructive for children to have left such abuse, as they are better off in the streets than in their homes. This research attempts to view the actions of street children more positively and is in line with arguments by some researchers that the children are resilient and hardy and in fact exposed to circumstances that promote cognitive growth (Williams, 1993). Such researchers attempt to advocate strongly for the children’s rights, and even fight for them not to be mainstreamed, which means to be rehabilitated or drawn back into the fold of the general so-called normal society (Cockburn, 1991). However, this discourse helps to alienate the children from a society that generally views the street as a place where children do not belong. Anyone or anything (the black family) that creates life on the street for a child is an enemy of society – us against them.

Ironically, many researchers are advocating that the children not be mainstreamed and are saying the children are resilient. This helps to make the street children crisis seem not so stark and not a high priority for society to resolve or to wrestle with on its conscience. In saying that even the harsh shelterless streets are better than black homes, this style of writing promotes the racist discourse that black people create pathological households and are therefore inferior and incompetent parents. Indeed the implication is if they are unable to raise their child, how can they handle much else?

seen as a threat that could and would annihilate this class and threaten general well being and social stability (Duncan 2001, p. 144).
Opposite to the researchers who advocate against mainstreaming these children, are those who believe that the children must be reunited with their families (from whom they fled!). This research goes hand in hand with research that describes children as forming gangs to create pseudo-families in that it universalises the middleclass western notion of what family is. And as Thormann (1996), notes: “Childhood is a modern invention of early modern Europe, dependant on the evolution of the modern Bourgeois family...the family centred on the child is the primary arrangement of Modern western life, in ideology if not always in fact” (p. 17).

The larger western discourse of family and family values are firstly inflated and secondly can be injected into the research paradigm as applied to the investigation of street children locally, using definitions and attributes that may not necessarily hold the same place or value in this particular context.

6.5.3 None so Blind.....

Despite what the Sunday Tribune (10 November, 1991, p. 15) describes as a time bomb, the situation of the street children never seems to explode. The effect of having society sit on the edge of its seat waiting for a bomb to go off has both dulled or numbed its senses as well as its ability to react and distinguish what the actual emergency is as the bomb never seems to blow up. In looking at this situation it can be said that there is a lot of hype surrounding the problem; a
contrary view is that the time bomb has in fact gone off but the public is hidden both from the explosion and the effects of it. How is this possible? The answer takes the form of two contributory discourses. One is that there is a very real attempt to hide the street child crisis and the other is that society is making the problem invisible even at its most blatant height of manifestation – there are none so blind as those that cannot see.

On the 3rd of May 1992 (p. 5), the City Press newspaper carried an article that outlined how street children were living in graveyards. The reason given for this is that although they are hidden from public view they also are in the centre of the city with public places being easily accessible. In this instance the children are responsible for making themselves invisible, retreating like ghosts into their rightful homes in the cemetery. Though, it can still be argued that the public sees them during the day when they emerge from their ghoulish retreat.

For the most part the ability to disappear in the midst of a crowd seems to be an important skill of street life. One can even say that invisibility becomes a coping mechanism to deal with the harsh realities that life on the street entails. For girls this is even more so as "they are not as evident as boys because they mostly come out at night, taking to prostitution as the only way to survive" (The Daily News, 6 May 1993, p. 2). Being seen in the day only adds to the risks they face in living on the streets.
Street girls also play a role in the invisibility of street boys by helping to keep them out of public view when they are drunk. They also ensure that the boys don't become involved in high-risk behaviour that can draw attention from the police while in this drunken state (Le Roux & Sylvia-Smith, 1998). As much as these children remain visible in the eyes of the law as far as their criminality is concerned, they still remain less visible in terms of their legal and human rights. This type of situational invisibility comes more from societal blindness and from other people hiding these children rather than from the children hiding themselves. Baizerman (1990, p. 4.) states that "...their visibility to adults depends on their place in the everyday life of these adults". This implies quite a power over the lives of these children by the adult world as their very existence is made real or denied by them.

In the past children where rendered invisible or actually denied an existence by apartheid policy. It is argued that the "white blindness of apartheid has been lifted by political changes, making the reality of the homeless in South Africa visible to all" (The Cape Times, 1 April 1993, p. 6.). Yet these children still seem to be portrayed as living a veiled existence wherein they are not counted in censuses or really acknowledged as a part of the society rather than the fringe of it. As Gigengack (1994) puts it: " Being left undefined or even nameless may well mean being invisible to society" (p. 386). This is proven in South Africa where these children are undefined and nameless because, as noted earlier in this
study, they are not counted, and information is not gathered on them in an
organised way by Government departments.

Le Roux (1994) says that “the world often tries to forget them, or ignore them,
and sometimes even denies that they exist” (p. 65). This is done in South Africa
by simply removing them from sight altogether (The Daily News, 25 June 1992,
p.8). It is widely agreed that ignoring the street child problem won’t make it go
away, but because the children are seen as bad for business and tourism they
are just removed physically. This phenomenon is a global one and is explained
by Scheper-Hughes & Hoffman (1994), who states that children who are poor but
live in the rural areas are invisible, while in urban areas they represent a concern
for “soil in the ground is clean – a potential garden: soil under fingernails is filth”
(p. 17). In the end as the Star (31 August 1991, p.8) puts it, “people are blind,
they only see what they want to see, and nobody does anything”.

It can be argued that both discourses - the discourse that attempts to render the
street children invisible and the discourse that blinds the public from the extent of
the crisis – reveal yet another discourse. The discourse wherein writings on
street children are invested in the fact that the children are invisible and that they
are doing something to counteract that.
6.5.4 Effects: Sub-discourses

Once the discourse of the deviance or pathology of the black family is established and depicted as a burden or a cost to the society, it enables justification of the black family and in particular the black mother, (who is usually the single parent of the street child; Le Roux, 1992) as a unit of investigation (subject) for the researcher or journalist. These children are viewed as deficient to the mainstream. Whether writings advocate their incorporation into mainstream or advise against it is unimportant since already an avenue is again created for interfering with or investigating the black home. A created avenue that also allows the black parent/mother to be seen as research subject.

Indeed, writings that constantly advocate that these children not be mainstreamed have the effect of highlighting the fact that these street children are on the outside or are the “other”. This not only inflates the “us and them cum us against them” discourse, it also represents an invitation for curiosity from researchers who tend to gravitate toward exploration of phenomena that are outside of behaviour deemed normal. Children who otherwise may have very unique experiences and characteristics are lumped together as being on the margins of society or outside of the mainstream as “them” or the “other”.

The discourse wherein writings advocate for street children not to be mainstreamed but rather reunited with family, inflate western style family values.
"...rehabilitation and re-socialisation are geared to Western, middle-class notions of child development and efforts at 'mainstreaming' these children may infantilise them..." (Cockburn as cited by Le Roux & Sylvia -Smith, 1998, p. 905). Le Roux (1996) actually describes street life as a culture separating it from mainstream life and believes that children over time find it difficult to reintegrate. "It would appear that the longer children are exposed to street life, the more they are distanced from possible rehabilitation resources and thus become absorbed into street life culture" (p. 428). Le Roux and Sylvia Smith (1998) cites Richter saying that one of the difficulties in helping street children is to find ways of bringing them back into so-called normal society. Further, Williams (1993) states that terms such as 'alienated', 'estranged' and 'marginalised' are common in street child literature.

This perception of the children as outside the mainstream or norm is echoed in Cockburn (1991) who says that "rehabilitation and re-socialisation programmes are geared toward our notion of childhood and what is appropriate in developmental terms" (p. 12). Once this separation between mainstream and the children as outsiders to the Western family style is established the "us and them cum us against them" discourse is also inflated. Street children become perceived as being on the margins of such mainstream concepts; creating gang copycat mock family units which necessarily will be deficient and fall short of the real family concept. A secondary effect of this discourse is that it shuffles responsibility of the street child crisis back unto the families away from the
society that was responsible for creating the context both for the push and pull of the child into the street in the first place.

6.5.5 Effects: Major Discourses

These smaller discourses serve to set the stage to justify the need to establish the street children as society's enemies who should be justifiably excluded not only from the mainstream but from society's sight altogether. Essentially what the commentary of these writings is creating is a circumstance whereby the visibility/invisibility factor is dependent on the very discourse that surrounds street children. The street child discourse as a whole impacts the social and political will to resolve the problem. The problem becomes resolved by merely removing the children from the public eye. It would seem that street workers and policy makers are undermined in their will and efforts to resolve the problem.

Even articles and research, which are seemingly well intended, reverberate the discourse through language that debilitates this will. In addition, the children themselves become targets of the hegemony of the dominant culture when they are visible, yet their invisibility is also dictated by this same hegemony. In South Africa this dominant culture is not only predominantly white, but also includes large sectors of the population who have adopted the racist attitude - White is superior, Black inferior. The children are relegated to a deviant subculture on the outside of the dominant main culture (Hickson & Gaydon, 1989).
It can be argued that one of the factors that keeps the plight of the street child mired in an irresolvable mode is the very discourse that defines it so. It may even be suggested that the way that street children are depicted contributes to their problems, as definitions often have political purposes. The major discourse of invisibility seems to have the overall major effect of realising the political will or lack thereof to solve the street child problem in South Africa. Indeed just as in the "animal farm" discourse where these children are seen to survive in ways that place them outside of human nature, street children are seen as surviving in an "us against them" manner that puts them outside of human rights.

6.6 CONCLUSION

The objective of this study was to deconstruct the discourses on street children in selected South African social science literature and the newspaper media. Another aim of the study was to refer to the genesis of such discourses and the powers that maintain them, while examining whether the discourses that frame and inform street child research in South Africa is located within or outside the dominant discourses present in developmental psychology. This conclusion will summarise the major findings of the present study and probe the significance of these findings, including the limitations of the study and the implications for future research.
6.6.1 Summary of Research Findings

The study explored four main discourses inherent in the writings on local street children. These discourses were labelled: He who pays the piper calls the tune, St. Jude the patron saint of lost causes, “Natured versus nurtured” and Us and them cum us against them. Within these broad discourse there were sub-categories of discourse, or in action, contributory discourses that fed the larger discourses. The effects of language and of statistics were specifically investigated and were found to create the effect of onlookers to the problem feeling overwhelmed or numbed by its enormity as well as baffled into inaction by the discrepancies in numbers. The children were described overtly and by insinuation as animals that were some times referred to as resilient yet still beyond hope and redemption. Either way, this animal depiction had the effect of making street children “the other” which was a seminal reason for the alienation and disenfranchisement of these children. At the worst end of the spectrum, their human rights were not projected as inviolate, given that they were not seen as citizens or even human, and at the best end of the spectrum they were merely seen as different and unequal to children not of the street. The perception of these children as animals was magnified by showing them as insisting on not utilising state provided shelters and having an unwavering insistence on freedom which necessitates them living in open spaces and without the comforts normally sought out by humans.
The exposure of the children to violence and sexual abuse, draws both the sympathy and the repugnance of the general public. Either way this is still a contributory factor to their remaining on the periphery of society, being cast as an enemy to society and also being seen as unworthy of assistance. Finally, because the visibility of the street children is disturbing and their display of a lifestyle contrary to the hegemonic expectations of children, they are demonised and literally pushed into invisibility (although not overtly since all the examined texts ostensibly expressed an opposite desire). When perceived as a reflection on society's value of humanity, street children force society to see its own ugliness and therefore society would rather ignore the crisis in favour of other charities that mirrors itself as "civilised".

In the section below I attempt to show the level of convergence between discourses on street children and dominant discourses evident in developmental psychology as a whole.

6.6.2 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DOMINANT DEVELOPMENTAL DISCOURSE AND DISCOURSE WITHIN POPULAR STREET CHILDREN WRITING

One of the findings of this study is that dominant discourse influences yet concomitantly is maintained by smaller discourse. It can therefore be argued that Burman's deconstruction of developmental psychology (chapter four), and consequently dominant discourse, is very easily related to the discourse
deconstructed in this study. The summary of Burman’s deconstruction outlined in chapter four bear some similarity to the deconstruction of this study. Some of the more obvious areas where these similarities exist are:

➢ The justification and subsequent closing in on the mother and the black family as a subject of research and as a conduit for explanations about social phenomena (especially negative explanations), perhaps to the exclusion of other areas of context that could throw more light on explorations.

➢ Street child discourses showed that it was evident that societal values were held up (discussions on mainstreaming street children) as norms and much of the research tended to chart performance that mirrored these societal values (e.g. attitudes to labour, the impact of apartheid).

➢ Discourses evident also showed that the research process is not sufficiently reflexive of how it can move from presenting normative descriptions into creating naturalised prescriptions; and as such create changing demands on society to fulfil needs as determined by hegemony. Those failing to live within a particular moral imperative become stigmatised. Street children were represented as outcasts of the society and even enemies of the society. Norms were created that by definition keep street children on the fringe of society or only within its confines as a deficiency.

➢ The street child research did not seem to take into account how it contributes to changing images of childhood. This was partially revealed through the fact that even though the definition of the street child was upheld as problematic it was still commonly used in research.
South African street child discourse most assuredly made victim blaming possible especially through the stereotyping of the children as hopeless and forever victims of apartheid without sufficient proportionate honing in on the political context.

As far as the study could discern, the discourses represented as negatively as they do on the perceptions of street children, does not seem to suggest that research is sufficiently reflexive of its role as a tool of cultural imperialism.

It can be inferred that the above similarities intimate that discourse tends to reveal how we as a society are concerned by how we are affected by the street children crisis and not how the children themselves are affected. In conclusion, the discourse embedded within local writings on street children project what Hutz and Koller (1999) state is the reality that street children differ from other children in how they understand, approach and or react. Bemak (1996) emphasises this difference to the mainstream by suggesting that the researcher is in most cases dependent on the children for cultural interpretation whether they utilise such interpretations or not. Bemak also notes that because of this dependency on the street children for cultural interpretation street children research itself is as much an object of study as the work with the street children.

If Bemak is correct in asserting that street children research should be an object of study, then Burman’s deconstruction along with this report can be seen as
assisting in expanding the knowledge base of the process of studying street children.

6.6.3 Limitations of the Study

As mentioned in the methodological section, one of the limitations (but perhaps also one of the strengths,) of this study came from the mixing of the samples for analysis. Because newspaper articles are by nature emotive in style, and are sensationalist with the expressed intent of making the reader a voyeur, or interested party in the topic being written about, the discourses being expressed were more obvious and powerful, more forthright. Academic articles with the style of “scientific objectivity” mostly were more muted in their expression and as a vehicle of discourse therefore, more implicit, subtle and less direct (though not necessarily less powerful). It would have been worthwhile to analyse these writings separately for this reason so that no one form would overshadow or colour the discourses particularly evident in the other form. It is possible that the study could not pick up on discourses that were particular to one form as opposed to the other. In mitigation of this point of limitation, was the fact that newspaper texts allowed for the relatively easy identification of discursive trends which could then be seen to operate, in more subtle form, in academic texts. In the conclusion of this study, discourses were found that all seemed to work toward one major effect. Therefore, this limitation comes more from the perspective of assessing a nuanced interpretation of the magnitude and form of discourse inherent in the two different mediums.
A second limitation to this study stems from the fact that the street child situation in South Africa and globally is an emotionally charged issue. Consideration had to be given to the fact that it is inhumane to think that any solution other than a total resolution of the issue is acceptable. Reviewing research on the issue through such a lens projects an unfortunate disadvantage or feeling of inadequacy about whatever the efforts of the street worker are. Bearing this in mind the question has to be asked as to whether or not the ensuing discourses that seem to render the crisis irresolvable evolve out of an overly harsh judgement or view of such inadequacy? An extension of this limitation dovetails from the fact that I could not resolve my own feelings toward the authors themselves. It was hard to ignore the obvious dedication and sincere commitment and sacrifice with which many of the authors approached their research. To review their works and then draw out discourses that were counteractive to the presumed intentions of the authors was difficult. I tried to avoid allowing my unresolved feelings to affect or censor my findings but it is possible that I could have misinterpreted or even missed any discourses that would reflect negatively on authors that were seemingly well intended or committed. Conversely, I may at times have been to eager to expose presumed malign forces operating below the surface of apparently benign texts.

A further limitation of the study came from the fact that the academic articles were from a very small sample of authors that could be interpreted as
inadequate. Most of the articles were authored or co-authored by one cadre of local researchers and can be said to be representative of only one school of researchers – in particular those that fit the criterion for publication in the journals from which articles were sourced. However, the validity of the analysis is fairly high given that the same discourses evident in these researcher's writings seem to be substantiated by writings from other international authors and from the newspapers. Explanations of the analysis held true at the general level as well as at the micro level. However, it may have added to the texture of the analysis had articles been drawn from a larger pool of researchers.

6.6.4 Concluding Remarks and Indications for Future Research

South African street children are seen as lost causes who therefore do not warrant or justify assistance, in the face of a myriad of other needy causes that more reflect and bolster the image of society as "civilised" e.g. saving the penguins on the west coast. For, as Baizerman (1996) puts it, "in this climate, youth are no longer a metaphor for hope but have become a screen upon which to project communal fear, as well as the source of a vocabulary of examples of allegedly failed policies" (p. 157). This is not the type of image that societies seek for themselves.

For those that do help these children, this very hopelessness creates for them the seeming "business of philanthropy" without an end in sight. These philanthropists become specialists who advertently and inadvertently create
research paradigms and agendas that keep the phenomenon alive and therefore their business alive. What becomes lost is what Lugalla and Mbwambo (1999) call the difference between street children as a 'problem' and the 'problems' of street children. For whereas street children may be involved in criminal activity they are not criminals per se. This “business of philanthropy” leads to the complex question of whether or not we have become satisfied with locating the reasons for the perpetuation of these problems of street children simply within the genesis of the street child crisis (such as poverty or a faulty social system) or within the ineffectiveness of street child crisis solutions generated?

When one speaks to eradicate the origins of the problem it is easy to get mired in the roots of the in/effectiveness of the solutions. Discourse seems to dictate that research aimed at the eradication of the problem at its genesis has become sacrificed at the altar of activities and research geared toward streamlining the system of coping with the children once they are already on the streets.

In terms of designing approaches to deal with street children, the age old debate on how to allocate public funds is considered in ways which create and sustain the discourse which in turn dictates that these children should not be factored into the very debate! Lazima (1996) describes this reality by saying: "Amidst all the action and discourse on street children and their rehabilitation, the street children's own voice is missing. Adults need to listen to the street children and involve them actively if an actor-based point of view and participatory reform is to be sought" (p. 193).
Instead of assistance these children are seen as needing to be hidden from the public eye. For instance this is a standard practice in tourist regions where they are “seen” as a blight which is bad for business and must be cleared away. Indeed a whole complex of factors render these children invisible to those who see them only as eyesores when they do cast a glance at them. Their omnipresence, and society’s will to do so, renders them invisible. Although discourse renders them particularly pitiful, the same discourse also makes resolution of the crisis elusive. Empirical evidence shows that the reality of the street child is not consistent with the negative images portrayed of them in professional articles and the media. However their very presence challenges bourgeois society that governs in the expectation that children should intrude as little as possible on the adult world, generating calls that street children should disappear from view (Arnon, 1997).

Given this influence of discourse, would appear that to resolve this crisis one of the key factors that needs to be realised is a shift in discourse. This begs a series of questions for future research such as - What is a discourse shift? What is required to shift discourse? How does a shift happen? Is the effect of a discourse shift the same as a paradigm shift? Finally it also raises the question of which comes first a shift in discourse or societal action against problems? It was not the aim of this study to answer any of these questions or even to seek them out. Still, unbundling these questions does contribute to and speak to one of the stated aims of the study which was to deconstruct the discourses on street children; and
where possible and pertinent to refer to the genesis of such discourses and the powers that maintain them.

In relation to the above queries we can take note of Fox and Prilleltensky (1997, p. 307) who say of critical psychology that as a project it seeks to name the questions rather than to provide the answers. This study is grounded in critical psychology and in its concluding remarks keeps with this tradition of naming the questions as opposed to solely stating unequivocal findings. In effect these questions can become the basis for future research both in the area of street child research, as well as in the area of research methodology of discourse analysis.

Related to the power of discourse was the finding that particular authors were quoted quite frequently and even in fact the same quotes of these authors were used in studies that differed even in research objectives or topics. At some point repeated phrases and sentiments of a small cadre of researchers found their way into newspapers as well as journals written even more than a decade after they were voiced. This gave the appearance that particular discourses were the same in unrelated studies over the passage of time. This perhaps speaks to the notion that discourse can be given life and be kept alive through relatively small numbers of writings if given popularity and credence. One future suggestion for research in this area would include tracking particular sentiments and phrases of popular writings to see how they are used and to what end their words are used.
Such a study could also reveal how few authors or writings are required to influence discourse.

Another question that arises for further exploration is whether it is possible for an author or researcher to be well intended yet write in such a way that maligning agendas can be realised as the outcome of research. This is so given the fact that as the investigator of this study I found it hard to resolve the issue that this study may represent writers on local street children as racist or heartless although in many instances I do not at all believe this to be the case. Should this inspire an inherent disclaimer for all discourse analysis?

Potter and Wetherell (1990) name "participant orientation" as an element of validity for discourse analysis, but what of the participant intent? Is it sufficient to not attribute intent in the analysis as well as the effect of their words? In this study one conclusion reached is that discourse analysis shows that the power of the words come not necessarily from the authors' intent, but from how the current day to day political agenda as embodied, for example, in the animal farm and paid piper discourse and ideology consumes and digests words to feed and reproduce itself. It is the leading ideology that seems to carry weight, not merely the authors' intent as authors are often unwitting and unconscious mediums of discourse. Writers intentions may often coincide with the dominant political ideology but it is not necessary to the promotion of the political ideology. Perhaps
it is for this reason that discourse analysis is said to be concerned with how
discourse speaks through texts and not in discovering authors' true meanings.

Ideology writes in between the lines of the text. The establishing of the
researcher's intent or subjectivity is peripheral to establishing how their work is
utilised and even manipulated by political agendas. This discourse analysis for
example established that the far reaching effect of the apartheid ideology was to
render the black male street child a hopeless victim forever abysmally trapped in
that ideological definition that renders them useless and an enemy to progress
(the forever apartheid victims discourse). This leads one to ask not just what the
discourse is, but how it relates to the political agenda and how it can change it.
The political agenda seems to pave the way. In this study it may be concluded
that the political will to change the street child crisis is not existent or in the
direction of resolution and this is getting played out in all areas of street child
research and reporting. Hence we can see why the expenditure in time and
research in the area of street children has not yielded results commensurate to
that expenditure.

In addition, the criterion of "participant orientation", like all the other Potter and
Wetherrell (1990) criteria used in this study was helpful as an organisational tool
for conducting the discourse analysis. However, in my future research I would
more view such criteria as a launching point than a strict procedure used both as
a methodology and as a measuring post for my study itself.
In reviewing the writings of newspapers in particular, several articles were actually story-like or read like novels. The effect of portraying a particular discourse in this way was very potent. This can be seen to point to the direction of one area for future research which is: how literature can be utilised as an effective vehicle for the field of psychology to explicate discourse as well as convey it. This study made reference to several novels (Heart of Darkness, Oliver Twist, Les Miserables, The Emperor’s New Clothes, Animal Farm and Lord of the Flies) which were useful examples on how authors often bring out reflections of how a society works and how humankind influences it and is influenced by it. Authors seem to actually be more forthcoming about discourse and seem to be unrestrained by the effect of their work and so seem more blatant about psychological effects than psychologists themselves.

Finally, it has been shown that our images of street children vastly conflict with how we think children ought to be (Aptekar 1990). As a result, the potential research question arises as to whether in destroying that image (of how we think children ought to be), street children also potentially threaten the destruction of the discipline of developmental psychology as we have thus far perceived it. According to Lalor (1999), very little is actually known about the developmental consequence of street life. We can ask ourselves as cadre of researchers who up until now have mainly researched only the more visible aspects of street life, (such as where they come from, how they eat, their work and peer groups) why
this is so. We can also hope that the answer is not in any way linked to the impact of this potential threat of the destruction of or unravelling of preconceived notions of the discipline.

Once we reflect on this issue we can also reflect on and perhaps take collective responsibility for helping to create the negative perception of street children that has helped to make the resolution of this crisis seem out of reach. This conclusion can represent an end to this study or signal the beginning of a transformation within the area of research on street children. The beginning of a transformation that will in future create an environment whereby writings on street children will reflect more positively on the children as well as the success of the solutions generated. This end/beginning research method is contemplated in the concluding chapter.
CHAPTER SEVEN

THE END OR THE BEGINNING?
CONCLUDING REMARKS

7.0 INTRODUCTION

At the start of this study I indicated through personal narrative, the motivation I had for investigating this particular topic. Telling my own story was the beginning of the process of raising issues and questions for which I was seeking not just scientific answers but reconciliation. In using the critical approach I knew that I could potentially unearth trenchant questions, while in using the transformational approach I found that perhaps I could like Al Zeera (2001) "...reach the stage of reconciliation in myself and hope that it would happen in the society too" (p. 22).

It is appropriate that at the conclusion of chapter six I return to the beginning of this study to answer the research questions regarding why the proliferation of research has not yielded solutions commensurate to the resources expended in this area of street children. Having done so I completed a major part of the intellectual exploration of this study. In this chapter I can now concentrate on returning to my own roots and childhood to explain the phenomenon of "the emperor's new clothes" as it applies to particular social crises. I can answer the personal question I had as to why otherwise philanthropic people in my hometown seemed to ignore certain social crises in favour of devoting time to
others. Besides answering this question in this section, I will also reflect on the process and outcome of this study to introspect on how and if, any personal change has occurred for me during this research. This closing chapter is dedicated purely to exploring the transformational outcomes of this study.

7.1 HEURISM: BUT ENOUGH ABOUT ME... SO WHAT DO YOU THINK THIS RESEARCH SAYS ABOUT ME?

When I decided that I needed to finish my master's thesis for professional reasons as well as for reasons of closure there was no doubt in my mind that I wanted two things. One is that I wanted to do "something that would mean something" and the other was that as a parent myself I wanted to speak about and somehow figure out the phenomenon of "the emperor's new clothes" phenomenon as it applied to street children. I could have become involved in a more tangible hands-on project that would mean immediately getting food, clothing and shelter to those in need. Instead, I really had a deep urge to attempt to figure out a solution to the problem that would last beyond my own existence or involvement in the wants of the needy.

On getting exposed to the concept of discourse analysis I knew instantly that this was the right means by which to figure out the phenomenon and perhaps make that contribution that I so desired. On reading about transformative inquiry I also knew that it was the other tool I could use to acknowledge the level of my research that would otherwise go uncharted, the level or aspect of my research
that would perhaps speak to the change that I wanted to take place in myself and in anyone reading my study.

Once I started the research I knew that my past experiences were not only motivators to start the research but they also coloured all the discourses I was dislodging. Whether this was because they really exist or because I believe them to exist was something that I have to at least document as a possible influence in the process of this research. Perhaps if one does not base one's knowledge in such awareness then learning does not go beyond academics toward meaningful action and transformation. In this study heurism, for me, felt like an uncomfortable process of talking about one's self and then on top of that using the research process as another means to speak about oneself yet again. However, it is precisely this process that shows how much one is actively involved in research and becomes a part of the process. Moustakas (1990) refers to heurism saying it is "the process of internal search through which one discovers the nature and meaning of experiences and develops methods and procedures for further investigation and analysis" (Al Zeera, 2001, p. 25).

Although it would seem easy enough to document my thoughts, it was not easy for me to do so in a research paper for two reasons. One was because it somehow seemed enormously self-centred and inappropriate to use a social crisis as a means to vent. And, the second reason is that it was hard to write about my personal experience in a thesis that was to be examined by others. In
either case to vent or to be vet via personal thought did not seem compatible with academic writing on which I was being graded. However the realisation that this process of heurism is critical to transformation and that my personal feelings are inextricable enmeshed within the study anyway, makes it seem all the more important to be forthright about it. In revealing my conscious level of subjectivity I give clues to my unconscious level of subjectivity.

There were other reasons why it was important for me to document my own feelings and changes due to the research process. One was because in many ways it was important for me as the investigator to realise that this role also carried the responsibility of author and architect/re-constructor of the discourse or tale embedded in the language. This was a difficult role to play as much of my training was about teaching me to consciously attempt to filter out my own reflections, feelings, discourses and opinions in the pursuit of the ever elusive "scientific objectivity". In some ways this was oppositional to the process of discourse analysis where one's own thoughts or "take" on an issue becomes some of the very data which is inspected and accepted or rejected as a possible discourse to be analysed.

However, ironically, in consciously and unconsciously checking my own objectivity as per my training, I became more aware of my unavoidable subjectivity. This then inadvertently lead me to examine discourse more deeply and truly assess my thoughts and instincts, honing them to look for nuances in
language and patterns and themes that eventually were the foundations of some of the discourses revealed in the final report.

Once I completed the report, even though I was confident of the process I was still feeling anxious about the conclusions I had drawn and the impact my subjectivity would have. Ironically on the day that I finished writing up the report I came across an article on street children in The Citizen (January 29, 2002) entitled "Street kids stick to squalor". This article by Carol Hills describes how local authorities were battling to get street children to leave the horrific conditions of an abandoned building, described as "not fit for humans" (p.7), to go and live in places of safety currently only eighty percent full. The article described the street children as a family-like gang with a leader, living amongst filth, faeces and blood. It also described the authorities as deeply concerned and committed in the face of the low probability that they could change the children's minds. This particular article embodied practically every discourse outlined in my report and seemed almost to summarise discourses inherent in South African street child writings. However, it also made me think that because of the subjectivity of discourse analysis researchers can feel insecure about their findings. Reflexivity then, can enable a researcher to feel confident in their findings.

Another influence on the investigation was embedded in how I viewed the authors of the writings themselves. No doubt many of the authors are very committed to the issue of resolving the street child crisis. Given that the report
seems to point to discourse that undermines resolution of the crisis, does this study undermine researchers and authors who actually are very dedicated in their works, very passionate and have put in many emotional and sacrificial hours to actually solving the problem of street children in South Africa? This was a dilemma. Seeing their passion and dedication made it hard for me to not factor it in when assessing the discourse embedded in their work. However, this study is not intended as a tribute or as a critique to such players in the street child crisis and should not be taken as such either way. This point may be reiterated in the “limitations of the study” but in this section it is being stated as a part of the process or reflexivity methodological step of this discourse analysis. The final point to be noted here is that I was also painfully aware of how discourses similar to those I claim to detect in these author’s writings may be playing through my own “text”.

7.2 REFLEXIVITY

Background research and the literature review for this study lead to a tour of the various types of writings from which street child discourse emerge. There was no “off-time” in research, as I found that as investigator all my activities were fodder for the study. Film, street talk, newspapers, the internet, the electronic media and any activity that was a part of the dailiness of life, reflected images embedded with street child discourse.
As Donald and Swart-Kruger (1994) state, the street child issue is generating more and more attention in South Africa and “much of this is being voiced through the media” (p. 169). Most of the information on street children that I happened upon easily was through daily contact with the media. In reading and re-reading pieces for analysis I also easily noticed that whereas my reaction to academic publications was fairly clinical and intellectual, my reaction to media reports especially the newspaper articles, was an emotional one in which a face was put to the issues.

The newspaper language was more powerful and emotive though not always as factual as academic articles. I began to feel an enormous responsibility to my research each time I finished reading a newspaper article. My thoughts drifted away from analysis to the actuality of the living conditions of the children. On reflection, this perhaps means that the most powerful re-enforcer and vehicle of street child discourse is the media, and in particular, the written media. Despite my earlier arguments to the contrary, they do help to bring the lives of the children into some kind of helpful public visibility.

The pertinence of the effect of language on my emotions seems great from a methodological standpoint. These effects should be given due consideration for the selection and documentation or corpus of writings used in future research. If the weight of discourse and how it is transferred to the observer is more powerful through certain media then perhaps media or writing sources should be

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researched separately, i.e. newspapers as opposed to academic journals. At the very least this factor should be noted in deciding how to select writings and deciding on the quantity of selections. For instance the discourse of three newspaper samples would more efficiently be discerned and impact the reader than would the discourse within twenty academic articles reveal itself. Although this is a methodological consideration this point has relevance here as it speaks to the fact that I only fully appreciated this fact on reflecting on the process of my own research.

Beyond this impact, the process of discourse analysis has also brought me from the conclusion of the study full circle back to the origin of the research—my childhood (from the end to the beginning). Understanding the power of discourse makes it obvious why in part, the adults in my hometown made the choices they did around how and in what ways they attempted to resolve social crises. This study shows how in many ways political will and agenda can play more of a part in the decisions of individuals than they even realise. Many philanthropists are recruited ideologically into social reform set by and through discourse and prescribed to by socio-politics, history and culture. Perhaps without knowing it the philanthropists of my home-town were very much influenced in their perception and choice or mode of philanthropy by the powers that were in existence at the time. The discourses they were exposed to helped to make certain social phenomena (like the "madmen") invisible and others of higher priority to be resolved.
This study showed how societies like to be benefactors to causes that reflect back on its 'civility' and actually deflect responsibility for the causes of pathology away from the society to the individual. A "madman" living in a subhuman way certainly would not reflect kindly on his society. I can only speculate that hegemonic thinking in my hometown colluded with discourse to keep "madmen" as blamed victims.

Starting my own process of research in my childhood also reveals the importance of integrating the unfettered thinking of a child into the reflexivity of an adult. This is one way to break through the hold that discourse has on our thinking. As researchers, returning to the child in us allows us like the child in the "emperor's new clothes" to spot and proclaim the obvious which is denied by the majority. The obvious which is denied for numerous reasons all related to the dominant discourse, powers and authorities that dictate not just what people can say but even what they see; be it a naked emperor in a parade or a "mad man" or the "invisible who won't disappear". The closure of this study depends on creating a cycle of returning to its beginnings to answer questions posed there and also for me as the researcher to constantly create new beginnings from using endings/conclusions to generate new thinking and questions. It is with this in my mind that I conclude in the final section below, by suggesting new beginnings in research, generated through applications of the study findings.
7.3 THE APPLICATION

According to Potter and Wetherell (1990), findings of discourse analysis are generally difficult to apply. Potter and Wetherell find that there is a temptation to produce work that eventually falls into the realm of having no practical use outside of furthering careers or amassing research. It is hoped that this study will uphold application of findings as an integral part of the knowledge production process.

One model of application is to popularise the information, giving it away as freely as possible and thus educating an audience (Potter & Wetherell, 1990). In the case of the present study providing findings as a resource and mode of reflection to researchers in the area of street child research will be the major mode of application. This may be achieved through dissemination of findings through publications and conference or workshop presentations.

This dissemination can produce one future line of research not mentioned in chapter five where such suggestions were made. After distributing this study amongst major stakeholders including researchers, policy makers and street workers in this field, it is possible to try to trace the reactions to and impact, if any, of this study. This evaluation and monitoring could start through the collection of initial feedback about the study and then returning at a later point to see if the document was of any utility amongst researchers and practitioners in particular. Perhaps, this process will ensure that indeed this end is really the
beginning not only of more research, but also of new solutions and a new outlook about and for street children. In keeping with transformational enquiry this potential future research is an appropriate beginning to end with, and also provides a conclusion to the investigation that begins the possibility of change.
REFERENCES:


Baizerman, M. (1990). If "Out of sight, out of mind", then "In sight and in mind"? *The Child Care Worker, 8*, 4-5.


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APPENDICES
APPENDIX 1

ARTICLES AND AUTHORS USED IN THE DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

Although the articles and writings used to inform this discourse analysis were quite extensive, below is a list of the articles that were quoted or used very specifically in the writing of the report. They were chosen because they gave specific instances of themes or discourse that underpinned most of the writings read by the researcher. The voice of these articles served as a microcosm for the discourses inherent in writings on South African Street Children.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NEWSPAPERS</th>
<th>AUTHORS</th>
<th>ARTICLES</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bennett, Janette</td>
<td>Durban’s Time Bomb</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Carter Chiara</td>
<td>Living with the Dead</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Derry, Debbie</td>
<td>Tough Life for PE Street Kids</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Fraser, Janis</td>
<td>Children of the Street Children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mitchell, Elvis</td>
<td>Compelling account of kids enduring the cruelties of life on Hillbrow’s streets</td>
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**APPENDIX 2**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AUTHORS</th>
<th>ARTICLES</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cockburn, A.</td>
<td>Street Children: An Overview of the Extent, Causes, Characteristics and Dynamics of the Problem. The Child Care Worker. V. 9 No. 1 1991 p. 12-13</td>
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<tr>
<td>AUTHORS contd.</td>
<td>ARTICLES contd.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ross, Catherine</td>
<td>The Street Children Survival Strategies. Indicator, South Africa. V. 8 No. 4 1991 p. 69-72</td>
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<tr>
<td>Van Niekerk, P. A.</td>
<td>An Educational Perspective on Street Children. Journal of Pedagogy. V. 11 No. 2 1990 p. 90-103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Williams, C.</td>
<td>Who are “Street Children?” A Hierarchy of Street Use and Appropriate Responses. Child Abuse and Neglect. V 17 No. 6 1993 p 831-841</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## THEMES AND EFFECTS OBSERVED IN SOUTH AFRICAN STREET CHILDREN WRITINGS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THEMES</th>
<th>EFFECTS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Resilience, survival, hardy, street life can be a positive experience and can even promote cognitive growth.</td>
<td>➢ Absolves society of responsibility to solve the problem.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>➢ Assuages societal guilt by making the problem seem not so stark and that the children are actually coping or are even doing well.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Children are better off on the streets than at home. Going to the streets is not a pathological move but a smart and healthy move. Street children are better off than their counterparts that remain at home.</td>
<td>➢ Absolves society of responsibility to solve the problem.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>➢ Assuages societal guilt by making the problem seem not so stark and that the children are actually doing well.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>➢ This also reinforces the notion that black people (of whom street children are a majority) are incompetent and inferior as parents. If one can't manage one's child it also reflects on one's other abilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>➢ Justifies the black home as a unit of investigation, or black people as the subject of research.</td>
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<tr>
<td>THEMES contd.</td>
<td>EFFECTS contd.</td>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td><strong>3.</strong> Hopelessness, children can not be reformed or mainstreamed. Children are criminals beyond redemption.</td>
<td>➢ It makes not helping the kids seem an appropriate response as it would seem a useless or abysmal project. &lt;br&gt;➢ It also justifies anger at them and not at their situation – victim blaming and a criminal justice response not a social rehabilitative one. This also justifies ill treatment of them. &lt;br&gt;➢ Absolves society of responsibility to solve the problem &lt;br&gt;➢ Assuages societal guilt since the children are hopeless one can't do anything anyway.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4.</strong> Children are forever apartheid victims, trapped in a cycle of a lost life and abuse.</td>
<td>➢ It makes not helping the kids seem an appropriate response as it would seem a useless or abysmal project. &lt;br&gt;➢ Since apartheid has been outlawed it justifies anger at them and not at their situation – victim blaming and a criminal justice response not a social rehabilitative one. This also justifies ill treatment of them. &lt;br&gt;➢ Absolves society of responsibility to solve the problem as society has already outlawed apartheid (and done what it can and what it ought). &lt;br&gt;➢ Assuages societal guilt because they have already “solved the problem of apartheid” and so the children themselves are responsible for their situation and getting out of it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THEMES contd.</td>
<td>EFFECTS contd.</td>
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<td>5. The children are vessels of altruism. There are countless references made to volunteers or street workers described with martyristic characteristics, working under austere conditions with long hours. Many become burnt out and are seen as benefactors working against all odds.</td>
<td>➢ The martyristic altruism reflects back on the kids as being beyond redemption or as a Herculean challenge, and as hopeless throwaways and this ironically causes the contradictory effects of; ➢ making not helping the kids seem an appropriate response as it would seem a useless or abysmal project. ➢ It also justifies anger at them and not at their situation – victim blaming and a criminal justice response not a social rehabilitative one. This also justifies ill treatment of them. ➢ Absolves society of responsibility to solve the problem since martyrs cant help how can “ordinary people” help. ➢ Assuages societal guilt by making it seem as though the people who have the specialised skills (martyrs) to help are the ones who are required and they are already helping the children tirelessly.</td>
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<td>THEMES contd.</td>
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| **6. Children are omnipresent. So much so that even developed countries and not only developing countries have street children they can’t be “rid of”. They are common place and as cities grow so do their numbers!** | ➢ This creation of the impression of omnipresence makes ignoring them or forgetting about them possible since they are so common place they are tuned out. Again it also causes the effects of;  
➢ It makes not helping the kids seem an appropriate response as it would seem a useless or abysmal project. After all if developed countries cant be “rid of” them how can South Africa be “rid of” them?  
➢ People feel overwhelmed at their numbers and the easiest response is to be angry with them and not at their situation – victim blaming and a criminal justice response not a social rehabilitative one. This also in turn justifies ill treatment of them.  
➢ Their numbers are overwhelming and if even developed countries cant solve the problem then surely South African society is absolved of its responsibility to solve the problem  
➢ Assuages societal guilt by making the problem seem not so stark and that the children are actually doing well after-all If their numbers are so great and they are thriving and growing then they must not be suffering. |
| **7. The descriptors of the children have an element of immediacy, desperation, act now or else??? A time bomb about to go off.** | ➢ This has dulled or numbed society’s ability to react or distinguish what the actual emergency is as the time bomb never seems to explode despite all of the warnings. So now they can be dismissed, there is too much hype surrounding the problem. |
8. Street children described as scavengers living in appalling conditions. They are shelter-less, hungry and often living amid and on garbage and purely by instinct. The descriptors used are of pitiful, dignity-less survivors whose physical needs take precedence. However, these street survival skills are also praised while being seen as opposite to the rational. Instead they are seen more as instinctual animal like traits needed for jungle like survival.

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<td>Street children unconsciously and consciously represented and visualised as animal and therefore, the effect is that they are not consciously seen as entitled to human rights. It would seem appropriate that their human rights are not as keenly advocated for and maintained as those of children not on or of the streets. Again the following effects are also elicited;</td>
<td>It makes not helping the kids seem an appropriate response as it would seem a useless or abysmal project.</td>
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<td>It also justifies anger at them, (when they show anti-social behaviour) and not at their situation – victim blaming and a criminal justice response not a social rehabilitative one. This also justifies ill treatment of them.</td>
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<td>Absolves society of responsibility to solve the problem(society does not equate children’s rights for street children with the urgency for the rights of children not on the street).</td>
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<td>Assuages societal guilt by making the problem seem not so stark and that the children are actually doing well. i.e. they are well equipped as animals to deal with such circumstances and cant reasonable be compared to the circumstance of mainstream children being homeless on the streets.</td>
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| 9. Shocking descriptors constantly used. Descriptors that would never normally be associated with children or humans. e.g. "social junk", "blight". These are terms academics would normally not use or would neutralise. | ➢ Naturalises, normalises seeing kids or foreign objects or animals not entitled to human rights. Again the following effects are also elicited;  
➢ It makes not helping the kids seem an appropriate response as it would seem a useless or abysmal project (to waste resources and effort on "throwaways").  
➢ It also justifies anger at them and not at their situation – victim blaming and a criminal justice response not a social rehabilitative one. This also justifies ill treatment of them. (they are after all in opposition with societal values and norms)  
➢ Absolves society of responsibility to solve the problem – society not responsible for outcasts not seen as belonging to the society  
➢ Assuages societal guilt by making the problem seem not so stark and that the children are actually doing well (again such children are in a place and circumstance befitting of their make up and so there is no problem to correct, everything is as it should be, they are in their rightful place). |
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<td>10. There are constant references to the children and high sexuality/sexual activity/sexual exploitation. There is much description of and research about these children and sexual abuse by others and of each other.</td>
<td>➤ This directly feeds into an &quot;animal discourse&quot; and also a racist discourse. Since the majority of street children are black males the notion of the &quot;black peril&quot; also is evoked. Stereotypes of black animal-like sexuality are re-affirmed. Black males involved in sexual violence are not deserving of assistance.</td>
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<td>11. A constant theme is about the importance of freedom to street children. They sleep outside even though shelters are provided for them they must be on their own living 'wild', they can't be in a setting for children or normal to children. They must live unstructured lives, with a freedom of rhythm and movement. They have broken away from a restrictive (historically apartheid) society. The notion that the containment approach is favoured locally is often mentioned.</td>
<td>➤ This also feeds into the &quot;animal discourse&quot;. Animals are not happy to be caged they must live outside in the wild it is instinctual even when shelter is provided. This apparent anti-social, abnormal un-human like behaviour, nullifies the pathology of apartheid as a restrictive regime. It was a normal response to contain animals and in turn it is normal for animals to want to be in the wild.</td>
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<td><strong>12.</strong> Street children constantly described as being outside of society, different to the mainstream even by those who strongly advocate their rights. For example researchers who describe their state as resilient and who fight for them not to be mainstreamed as they are different to the mainstream in what has become intrinsic ways. They are set apart as the other and are sometimes described as deviant, separate, as a sub or outer group, rejects of the society (justifiably or unjustifiably). In fact, even though the street child experience is unique and different from country to country and from culture to culture they are all lumped together as having a blanket experience in one way, in that they are on the margins of whatever society they are in.</td>
<td>“us and them” discourse or dynamic strongly set-up. And really becomes an “us against them” discourse. They are created as the “other” which justifies treating them as the enemy and absolves society of both a conscience toward them and responsibility toward them. They are treated with the disdain due to one’s enemy.</td>
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<td><strong>13.</strong> Research decries trying to mainstream street children and give them middle class values.</td>
<td>Further creates “us and them cum us against them” discourse with all the effects to follow. (see 12 above)</td>
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<td><strong>14.</strong> Repetition of statistics of majority of street children in South Africa being black and male. In some instances the term street child is even used synonymously or interchangeable with the term ‘black child’.</td>
<td>in a post apartheid society that still has racial inequity this further creates the “us and them cum us against them” discourse and all the accompanying effects. It also reifies the notion of the “black peril” and that of black or African life being deviant or pathological and a burden or even a threat to society. It justifies researching the problem with the black family and black male as a unit of investigation (subject) instead of the context that creates or contributes to the street child problem in the first place.</td>
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<td>15. Street children running away from abusive homes and</td>
<td>➢ As in number 14 above</td>
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<td>from poverty and violence and disadvantage generally.</td>
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<td>16. Street children must be re-united with their families (from</td>
<td>➢ Universalises the middle class notion of what family is. Shuffles responsibility of street child problem back on to the family that couldn't cope in the first instance, and away from the society that helped to create the problem.</td>
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<td>whom they fled) and street children tend to form family like units (gangs)</td>
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<td>when they are on the street even though these families are deficient.</td>
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<td>17. There are constant references to the definition of a street child, and</td>
<td>➢ Creates a false debate or discourse of contention when in fact most seem to agree on the definition since the same definitions are commonly used.</td>
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<td>the problematising of the definition. However, the same definitions are</td>
<td>➢ Depending on how street children are defined their numbers shrink to 8 million globally or swell to 30 million globally. This would directly impact on resources allotted to street children.</td>
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<td>frequently used even after they are problematised.</td>
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<td>18. Incongruent numbers and statistics</td>
<td>➢ Uncertainty lowers credibility and urgency of the problem or can also sensationalise it to the point of dismissal of the problem as being over dramatised. Can also numb overwhelmed onlookers.</td>
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<td>19. Constant references to street children as victims but no additional</td>
<td>➢ This helps to feed into the notion of helplessness and unworthiness of human rights and “otherliness” (us and them cum us against them), since justice would be sought and spoken about for mainstream children in the same forum as talking about their victimisation</td>
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<td>information on the perpetrators. Basic information such as who are they and</td>
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<td>what are the repercussions for their criminal behaviour not covered in the</td>
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<td>same research.</td>
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<td>20. References to “white blindness of apartheid”. Children living in grave yards, drainpipes or in invisible cities in the middle of society. Street girls invisible except at night or seen in the capacity of keeping drunk males invisible to police. Behaviour that elicits public fear makes children highly visible. Children not hidden from public scrutiny or from the eyes of the law as far as illegal acts or criminal actions but invisible to the law as far as legal civil human rights are concerned. The public only sees what they want to see. They are blind to suffering but see keenly the anti-social behaviour of the children.</td>
<td>Visibility/invisibility factor dependent on the discourse that surrounds street children. This impacts the social and political will to resolve the problem. The problem becomes resolved by merely removing the kids from the public eye. Street workers and policy makers are undermined in their will and efforts to resolve the problem. Even articles and research that are seemingly well intended reverberate the discourse through language that debilitates this will.</td>
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