CHAPTER 6
DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

Two narrative inquiries guided this study:

1. What role do imagoes play in the motivation of a person who commits serial murder?
2. What role do imagoes play in the development of the offending behaviour?

The results of the study, Jacques' and Simon's case studies and the analysis of imagoes within them, were presented in Chapter 5. In order to gain a more complete understanding of the role played by imagoes, this chapter will now compare the answers each of the narratives provided to the above two narrative inquiries. These questions will be discussed in turn, and the answers each case study provides will be compared with one another and with previous theory. Although not an aim of this study, this process allows us to assess the extent to which the concept of imago can be applied to offender profiling. This will be followed by an exploration and comparison of the structure and presentation of Jacques and Simon's narratives, along with a discussion of the implications of this. Comparisons will be made between this study's findings, previous narrative research, and what could be expected on the basis of established narrative theory. This chapter will close with explicit comparisons between this study's findings and what previous narrative research suggested I would find the characteristics of the imagoes / narrative of a person who commits serial murder to be. Considerations of evaluation and validation will be touched on throughout this chapter, but will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 7.

6.1. COMPARISON IN ROLES OF SIMON AND JACQUES' IMAGOES

6.1.1 What role do imagoes play in the motivation of a person who commits serial murder?

This study considered the reasons they gave for having committed the offences, their motives. The case studies revealed a number of similarities:

– Both saw motives arising at different times in their narrative, and once they arise they did not disappear again.

– Both saw these motives vary in strength and develop at different stages of the narrative, with different motives become more dominant at different times.

– All the motives in both narratives are either embodied in, or arise as the result of interaction between, their imagoes.

It thus appears that in both narratives, imagoes played a significant role in their motives for offending. In both case studies there were two aspects to this role: (a) the role of imagoes in creating and embodying motives specifically for offending, (b) the interaction between imagoes in creating or strengthening motive.

As already discussed, both Jacques' and Simon's initial motive for murder (the motive which would later become embodied in their dominant offending imago) arose in childhood as a result of interaction between imagoes associated with others, particularly their parents / family. Their narratives showed different variations of this theme. In Simon's case this motive arose as a result of unacknowledged negative aspects of the imago associated with his idealised family. By contrast Jacques' motive arose due to interactions between the imagoes associated with his parents and how this influenced his emergent imago of self. Notwithstanding this difference, the interaction between their imagoes created their motive for offending, which became embodied in their 'offending imagoes'. In Simon's case his desire to reclaim the communion of his idealised family lead to the Vengeful Suitor's violent reaction to rejection (particularly when in dialogue with the Rejecting Woman). In Jacques', his offending behaviours arose as reaction against the Controlling Mother imago, with the emotional distance and lack of understanding created in his childhood providing the starting point for his offence's continued evolution as embodied in the Adventurous

Thief, Searching Burglar, and Habitual Rapist. In both cases, the offending imagoes could have emerged as a coping mechanism for the non-offending imagoes.

Beyond these points, the narratives show slightly different patterns. In Simon's, his motives for offending were then strengthened in subsequent interactions between imagoes associated with his self (the Vengeful Suitor) and those associated with others (the Rejecting Woman). Jacques' motives for offending, in contrast, developed further in isolation from motives associated with others. Thus in Jacques' case, the interaction between imagoes was less important in creating motives as his narrative unfolded. Furthermore, Jacques' narrative displayed a wider variety of motives than Simon's did, six versus four, and in Simon's case the two motives established earliest persist most strongly and were a relatively stable influence throughout the narrative (refer to Tables 7 and 8 for details). The motives in Simon's narrative also contained similar thematic concerns, being concerned with interactions with others (e.g. reclaiming communion, overcoming rejection, and maintaining dominance). Jacques' narrative showed a different pattern, with a more varied and dynamic range of motives, most of which were focused on Jacques' self (e.g. fun, material again, and experience). This suggests that the participants showed fundamentally different motivational orientations, with Jacques being focused on his self, and Simon being focused on others. This could have implications both for our understanding of serial murder and offender profiling.

Overall the presence of multiple motives, and the imagoes' role with reference to these, encourages a more complex and dynamic understanding of the motive of the person who commits serial murder. This understanding also suggests that motive overlaps with developmental factors. This has a number of implications for the applicability of the aetiological theories, motivational models and typologies proposed for serial murder (e.g. Burgess, *et al.*, 1986; Hickey, 2002; Holmes & DeBurger, 1988; Ressler *et al.*, 1986). Similarly, these findings affect our understanding of the imago and its role in the development of offending behaviour (as discussed by Athens, 1997; Parkinson, 1999; and Schultz, 2005). These implications will be discussed more in the next section, and in section 7.1.

6.1.2 What role do imagoes play in the development of the offending behaviour?

Both Simon and Jacques' narratives suggest that imagoes play a significant role in the development of offending behaviour in a person who commits serial murder. Simon links his offending behaviours to his key imagoes and the interaction between them. His offending behaviour is repeatedly linked back to motives established and developed by his imagoes, with imagoes also being alluded to in the events that led to his committing murder. Jacques conceives of his offending as a process of evolution from handbag thefts, to walk-in burglaries, to rape, to murder and his narrative makes the importance of this process in causing his murders explicit. His narrative links all aspects of this evolution to offending imagoes, and repeatedly emphasises its importance.

Both emphasise the importance of imagoes in the development of their offending, but there are slight variations between the narrative understanding of Jacques and Simon. Simon emphasises the motives he had for his offending; while Jacques emphasised his offending as a process of development. This could be explained by the greater variation in Jacques's motives, with Simon's motives remaining more stable. Alternatively this could be due to the differing conceptions the participants have of their own offending career, that is, their different perception of and emphases on a similar developmental path. While the various similarities between their narratives support this proposal, it cannot be said unequivocally that this is the case. Whether this difference reflects fundamentally different developmental paths or different emphases on similar pathways, it may cast light on the reasons for one of the notable variations seen in the literature on serial murder; with some authors emphasising aetiologies and single fundamental cause (e.g. Norris, 1990; Pistorius, 1996; Schlesinger, 2004) while others emphasise the process of development, and motivational models, more (e.g. Burgess *et al.,* 1986; Hickey, 2002).

Comparing their narratives, there are two similarities between their conceptions of the role played by imagoes in the development of their offending. Both Jacques and Simon emphasise imagoes' role in:

1. Creating and encouraging a separation between the imagoes involved in offending and those that are not.
2. Setting the behavioural template for their offences.

In both narratives, the separation between 'offending' and 'non-offending' imagoes (1) encouraged the development of offending by allowing the development of the offending imagoes without control from the rest of the narrative. This similarity between the narratives was manifestly differently in each one. In Jacques' case, this separation simply allowed the behaviours associated with his offending to develop with minimal interference or control from the rest of the narrative. His more insular narrative reflects this, particularly the manner in which the interactions between his offending and non-offending imagoes lessen as his offending gets more severe. In Simon's narrative this separation encouraged the association of negative emotions with offending imagoes (rather than non-offending imagoes) and so strengthens the behaviours associated with the offending imagoes and minimises Simon's regret for them. In both narratives this process led to non-offending imagoes being either made less influential to the narrative or weakened.

In both narratives, the behavioural template for their offences (2) is set as a result of the imagoes' various other roles in the narrative. This is demonstrated in the congruence between the characteristics of their offences and the characteristics of their imagoes and the motives embodied in them. Further evidence for the existence of a behavioural template is supplied in the similarities between the various offences committed by each participant. In setting this behavioural template in their narrative, both Simon and Jacques are supplied with a clearer plan for offending, and a simplified set of behavioural choices to be made when doing so. Both case studies supply similar evidence of the importance of the behavioural template provided by their imagoes, by demonstrating the loss of coherence in crime scene behaviour and the participants' narratives that appears to result from imagoes either not providing justification for an offence, or having conflicted motives. For example, Simon's narration of his rapes and Jacques' narrative of his first murder appear less coherent

and clear than the narratives of offences which their imagoes justify more clearly. Similarly, neither Simon's murder of Zondi Tana or Jacques' murder of Judith Schoeman were justified by their imagoes (with Jacques in particular showing strong conflict within his dominant imago's motives). In both cases their offence behaviours departed from the established template, and in both cases the participants appeared to associate stronger negative emotions with these offences. While it should be remembered that the behavioural template linked to their imagoes does not explain all their behaviours during the offences (which is particularly true of Simon); the relationship between imagoes, moral justification, and an offenders' narrative of his crimes seems noteworthy. This does not appear to have been explored deeply in the previous literature, and will be discussed more later.

These findings lend support to previous research which posited a link between the characteristics of offenders' imagoes and those of their offences (Athens, 1997; Parkinson, 1999; Schultz, 2005). Given its aim this study gives greater support to Schultz's (2005) finding similarities between that offender's specific offence behaviours and specific, single, imagoes; as opposed to Athen's (1997) and Parkinson's (1999) finding similarities between categories of imagoes and categories of offence behaviours. Schultz's (2005) study of child molesters found that the themes in their narrative represent the roles they perceive themselves as playing, which in turn shape their offending. This is very consistent with the findings in this study, with one variation: Schultz (2005) presupposed that the individual has a single imago, associated with their self, with various contradictory aspects. This study confirmed that this conception lacks explanatory power. Not only could imagoes be complex and multifaceted, as seen in Jacques and Simon's dominant offending imagoes, but a person could have a number of imagoes in their narrative, associated both with their self and with others, all of which could play a contributory role to offending. This conception could explain in detail how offending may emerge as a result of a clash between imagoes, as proposed by McAdams (1993), or as a result of certain imagoes failing to adapt to changing circumstance, which Schultz's (2005) conception would struggle to do. This will discussed more in section 7.1.1, particularly in relation to how this tallies with narrative theory's proposition that multiple imagoes can exist in a individual's narrative of self, with each imago representing a facet of the

individual's conceptions of the relationship between themselves and others (Athens, 1997; McAdams, 1988, 1993; Parkinson, 1999).

Beyond these similarities between their imagoes, Jacques and Simon show the following differences in the roles played by their imagoes in the developmental narrative of their offending. Firstly, Jacques' imagoes established the means by which his offence behaviours develop. They did this by encouraging the process of experimentation in his offending associated with his dominant offending imago(es). In contrast, Simon's imagoes encourage further offences by encouraging the interaction between two specific imagoes associated with offending (the Rejecting Woman and Vengeful Suitor), which justified his violence. Simon's imagoes further supported this process by encouraging the interpretation of life events in ways that create negative emotions and thus strengthen offending imagoes.

These similarities and differences are summarised in Table 11. The reasons for the differences and similarities cannot be fully explained on the basis of these findings. As with the differing emphases in motive, it is not clear whether these similarities and differences are due to the nuances of expression of the individual participants, or reflect fundamental differences in developmental path. However, what is clear is that imagoes supply the supporting rationale for the development of Jacques' and Simon's offending by giving them moral support for their actions and simplifying their behavioural choices. In doing so, they also demonstrate the interrelationship between motive and development in the narratives of those who commit serial murder.

Table 11: *Similarities and differences between the role of imagoes in the development of offending behaviours in Jacques and Simon*

Simon Mandlenkosi	Jacques Eksteen
Similarities	
– Create and encourage a separation between the imagoes involved in offending and those that are not. – Set the behavioural template for their offences.	
Differences	
– Encourage the interaction between imagoes associated with offending – Encourage the interpretation of life events in ways that create negative emotions	– The means by which his offence behaviours develop.

The role played by the participant's imagoes in both the motivation and development of serial murder, taken alongside the finding that motivation was constantly developing, calls into question the implicit division between motive and development in some of the more aetiologically oriented conceptions of serial murder (e.g. Norris, 1990) and tends to support the 'motivational model' conception of serial murder (e.g. Burgess *et al*., 1986; Hickey, 2002). It also adds to our understanding by allowing greater insight into how the interaction between motivation and development may aid the progression towards more serious offending. This will be discussed more in section 7.1.1.

6.2 COMPARISON BETWEEN THE STRUCTURES OF JACQUES' AND SIMON'S NARRATIVES

Considerations of narrative structure are not the main aim of research, but the structure of the narratives presented in the case studies need to be considered because they form the framework within which the content of the narrative (in this case, the imagoes) should be considered. This section will therefore briefly consider the similarities and differences in the structure of Jacques' and Simon's narratives. The structure of a narrative refers to elements of the narrative such as sequencing of events, the complexity and coherence of the narrative as whole, and progression in the narrative's plot. Structure can also include comments on the key influences in the creation of the narrative (Bruner, 1991; Lieblich *et al*., 1998). The format of the narratives over time will also be briefly considered using Gergen and Gergen's (1988) proposed criteria.

6.2.1 Sequencing of events in the narratives

The two case studies present different structures of narrative, each taking a different approach to sequencing events within it. The creation of Simon's narrative in interview was driven by my questions, and generally characterised by my having to ask a number of follow-up questions. This resulted in the narrative being presented in a more fragmented form, which was added to by Simon's seeming reluctance or inability to articulate causality. That is, Simon would willingly narrate events, but when asked to discuss what caused the events he appeared less able or less willing. Events were thus not readily presented in a causal chain of events and Simon's attitudes and motives were not immediately discernible. This may have been exacerbated by his reluctance to express negative emotions or perceptions, or associate them with certain imagoes. These factors meant a clear chronology and sequence of events was not immediately apparent in Simon's narrative, with the full chronology only becoming apparent upon analysis. By contrast, Jacques readily presented a detailed narrative in interview, with a clear chronology of events and far less prompting needed by the researcher. Unlike Simon, Jacques would speak extensively about the events of this life, describing events in precise and detailed terms and making causal linkages between the various parts of his narrative. However

the clarity of Jacques' narrative was limited by the difficulty he experienced when discussing motivations and emotions.

6.2.2. Coherence and cohesiveness of the narratives

This sequencing of events affects the coherence and cohesiveness of the narratives presented. Bruner (1991) defines a well constructed narrative as one with an ongoing plot and a clearly defined objective with a series of events progressing towards it. These events should be related by sequence and causality (Bruner, 1991). Using these criteria, it is clear that Jacques presented a better constructed narrative than Simon. Both narratives are however sufficiently cohesive to be coherent with both having ongoing plots, progressed by causally-related events. Similarly, the narratives showed similar levels of complexity, presenting a number of different characters and narrating a large number of events.

Thus the key structural difference between the narratives of Jacques and Simon appeared to be that of sequencing the events, with Jacques making causal links more readily than Simon. The most obvious hypothesis that can be given for the differences in the sequencing of events in the respective narratives is cultural and linguistic. For Simon, he was not being interviewed in his first language. Furthermore, the linguistic traditions of his culture may not share Western preoccupations with linear plotting and clear causality, preferring instead the more 'circular' traditions of oral storytelling (Kvale, 1996). Someone of Simon's culture may also have found the experience of an interview setting more unusual and alien. This would make his responses briefer and his narrative thus more fragmented. In contrast, Jacques was interviewed in his first language (Afrikaans), and as a former police officer would be familiar both with interviews and the need for a clear sequence of events, linked by causality. Being situated in the same, predominantly European, culture as me may also have contributed to his narrative being structured in a more readily understandable way. The role played by culture in the structure of the narratives was not one that this study considered, or one which I investigated in the literature. It has thus only been considered as it arose here. The implications of this factor will be discussed in the critique and recommendations in Chapter 7.

However Jacques' and Simon's characteristic responses in interview mitigate against the above hypothesis that their cultural norms influenced the structure of their narratives. During the interviews it appeared that both participants found it difficult to reflect on and express their emotions. While Simon avoids reflecting on negative emotions and so compromises expressions of causality; Jacques struggles to articulate emotions and so explain his motives clearly. The presence of this shared difficulty introduces the possibility that the differences in sequencing of events within the narratives are caused as much by the different participant's responses to the same underlying emotional difficulty as they are by cultural or linguistic factors.

This possibility, that a shared difficulty with emotional expression is expressed differently by each participant, is further supported by the differing tones of their narratives. Simon, although more reticent than Jacques, narrates his story in a tone that is congruent with the story's contents (e.g. when narrating an emotionally unpleasant event, his tone evidences distress). Jacques' tone, on the other hand, is predominantly one of indifference, and was distinctly unaffected by emotional content to the extent that his tone was occasionally incongruent with the content of the narrative (e.g. Jacques sounding slightly amused by the victim's teeth striking him in the face when he shot her). It is less easy to explain the differences in tone using cultural or linguistic factors, since Jacques shares the cultural paradigm within which the interview process and the researcher are situated. Again the hypothesis that difficulties in emotional expression create the differences observed seems to have more explanatory power.

6.2.3 Progression of the narratives over time

Considering the format of their narratives over time using Gergen and Gergen's (1988) criteria demonstrates further similarities between the participants. 'Progression' refers to the development of the plot over time (Gergen & Gergen, 1988; Lieblich *et al.*, 1998) and both participants clearly expressed "narratives of decline…a regressive narrative [where] there is a course of deterioration or decline" (Lieblich *et al*., 1998, p.89). Jacques and Simon present life stories that becoming progressively worse for the protagonist, becoming more marked by conflict and failure. The emphases of this decline differ, however, with both participants employing different versions of "condemnation scripts" (Maruna, 2004, p.73) to justify their offending.

Maruna (2004) found that offenders holding a condemnation script justified their continued offending by narrating themselves as powerless victims of an inhospitable environment. In Simon's case, his condemnation script emphasises the role played by the inhospitable environment in his offending, particularly specific hostile others. These negative circumstances are inflicted upon him, and are almost entirely beyond his control. For example, the church rejects his application to become a pastor without a legitimate reason, and women reject him without any justification. In contrast, Jacques' condemnation scripts centres on his being controlled and ultimately undone by influences which his life did not equip him to understand, and he was thus powerless to control. That is, Jacques states that since he was not able to understand emotions or discuss them with others, he did not realise that his offending was wrong, and so control it. While this is a more subtle, implied condemnation script than Simon's it serves the same purpose: to emphasise the participant's helplessness to control his offending. On the basis of previous research results (Labuschagne, 2001; Laubscher & Klinger, 1997; McAdams, 1993) it was suggested that condemnation scripts would be found in South Africans who have committed serial murder. These study's findings have shown this is indeed the case. This will be further discussed with reference to imagoes.

The differing emphases of Simon and Jacques' condemnation scripts also demonstrate the different key influences they site in the creation of their narratives. Jacques'

narrative places less emphasis on the role played by significant others in his narrative, particularly in the development of his offending. His narrative appears insular, developing in isolation from others and the social environment. In contrast Simon's narrative places more emphasis, both explicitly and implicitly, on the role played by significant others and external events in the creation of his narrative. When compared with Jacques' narrative Simon's narrative appears more open to, and influenced by, the others and the social environment. This will be discussed in more detail when their imagoes are discussed.

6.2.4 Summary of narrative structures

To summarise, both participants presented coherent and meaningful narratives. Both narratives evidenced the difficulty experienced by the participants in reflecting on and articulating emotions. This difficulty around emotions appears to be expressed differently in each narrative: affecting the chronology and coherence of Simon's narrative, and the tone of Jacques'. The differences in chronology and tone between the narratives can be better explained by this shared emotional difficulty than they can by cultural differences between the participants. Both Jacques and Simon's narratives were also 'regressive' in nature, and made use of condemnation scripts, although their narratives had different emphasises in the respective condemnation scripts.

6.3 DISCUSSION OF THE FEATURES OF SIMON AND JACQUES' IMAGOES AND THE LITERATURE

In this section the features of the imagoes presented in Jacques' and Simon's narratives are discussed and compared with one another, and with the features which previous literature proposes for the imagoes of those who commit serial murder (Athens, 1997; Parkinson, 1999; Maruna, 2004; McAdams, 1993; Schultz, 2005). This comparison will highlight similarities and differences between these case studies and previous literature and will help discern where this study adds to our understanding of the imagoes and narratives of those who commit serial murder. This section focuses on the arrangement and structure of the imagoes, rather than the roles they play in the narratives (which has already been discussed in section 6.1). This section is thus specifically concerned with a general discussion of the imagoes and placing them in the context of the narrative. Features such as the number, structure, and dominance of the imagoes will be compared here. Who they are associated with, the relationships between them, whether they are predominantly positive or negative, agentic or communal, and their similarity to a prototypical imago (McAdams, 1988) will also be considered. This contextualises comparisons between the answers supplied to the narrative inquiry into the roles played by the imagoes. The development of imagoes and interactions between them will be discussed in broad terms here, adding context to the discussion of section 6.1.

6.3.1 Number of imagoes

Both Jacques and Simon display multiple imagoes, seven and six respectively. This suggests that the hypothesis made on the basis of Parkinson's (1999) narrative research – that people who perpetrate murder would have one or two imagoes – is not accurate. This study suggests that persons who commit serial murder may have a variety of imagoes which, as shall be shown, can be associated with themselves or with other people. As discussed previously, evidence suggests that multiple and / or complex imagoes reduce stress (Linville, 1985; McAdams, 1988; Watkins, 1986). This, narrative researchers suggest, will lead to people with multiple imagoes being less likely to offend. This study suggests this not is the case.

6.3.2 Imagoes' development, associations and interactions

Parkinson's (1999) research further suggested that the imagoes of those who commit serial murder would either be poorly developed or highly inflexible. While she does not explicit define precisely what 'poorly developed' or 'inflexible' means, Parkinson (1999) states that these features would result in offenders having a narrower choice of behaviours when problem solving, which she found increased the likelihood of offending. This study supplies an ambivalent response to this. Both Jacques and Simon displayed notable development in their narratives. Both narratives show that various imagoes arise at different times in the narrative, and vary in their characteristics and influence over the participant's behaviours as the narrative unfolds. This would refute Parkinson's (1999) contention that these imagoes are poorly developed.

However when the development of each imago is considered separately a more varied picture of development emerges: the most development occurred in the imagoes associated with the participant's selves, particularly those associated with their offending. These imagoes associated with the participants' selves also tended to be the most dominant in the narrative. These 'offending imagoes' of self showed significant change as their narratives progressed from childhood to adulthood, being associated with various and changing behaviours and motives. Jacques and Simon showed slightly different developments in this regard, with Jacques' offending imagoes of self (the Lonely Boy, Adventurous Thief, Searching Burglar, and Habitual Rapist) show a greater variation in motive and behaviour than Simon's (the Lonely Child and Vengeful Suitor). The description of the development of these offending imagoes of self in this study is more nuanced than that provided in previous narrative research using the concept of imago, where development is either not considered to the same degree (McAdams, 1988) or only described in general terms (Athens, 1997).

In contrast with the imagoes of self, imagoes associated with other people are either short lived, as seen in Jacques's more insular narrative, or subsumed into imago(es) associated with his self, as in Simon's case. Development in imagoes associated with others was limited to their becoming either more or less influential (e.g. Simon's Rejecting Woman imago growing more influential; or Jacques Controlling Mother

imago becoming less so), but no changes in the imagoes' characteristics or the behaviours associated with them were seen. Thus this study found that the degree and complexity of an imagoes' development depends on whether it is associated with the participants' self or with another person. The possibility that this is an artefact of the study's design will be considered in chapter 7.

The development of Jacques's and Simon's dominant 'offending' imago of self is worth discussing in more depth. Particularly, seeing (a) how these imagoes arise, (b) the increasingly complex motivations of these imagoes and (c) how they change as the participants enter adulthood, gives a more nuanced perspective than that offered by previous literature.

In relation to (a), the 'offending imagoes' of self arose from similar 'lonely' childhood imagoes. In both case studies their childhood imagoes of self were characterised by loneliness and isolation. These lonely childhood imagoes arose due to interaction between imagoes associated with others, or due to unresolved aspects of the imagoes associated with others. These childhood imagoes of self later developed into, or contributed to the development of, the dominant offending imago of self. These offending imagoes could be seen as coping mechanism for the non-offending and 'lonely' childhood imagoes. This finding lends to support to McAdams' (1993) suggestion that the tone of a person's narrative of childhood sets the tone for their life narrative, and Athen's (1997) and Schultz's (2005) contentions that changes in offender's imagoes are driven by interpersonal interaction. This study's finding that dominant offending imagoes arise due to interpersonal interaction in childhood, and are characterised by loneliness and interpersonal isolation, appears to be novel in the literature of narrative psychology.

In both narratives the dominant offending imago became increasingly complex as it developed (see (b) above). This complexity was mainly associated with the developing motives of this imago. Each development in this imago saw it add to the already established motives. Thus rather than complete changes in motive, the imagoes saw a layering of multiple and interacting motives. This is particularly notable in Jacques' narrative. This lends support to Schultz's (2005) conception of the offender's 'mythic persona' as increasingly complex, however this study describes the

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process in greater detail and allies it to a more inclusive understanding of the character and interactions of the imago. This increasingly complex motivation occurred alongside the process mentioned in (c).

In relation to (c), how these dominant imagoes of self change in adulthood, this study found that they became increasingly inflexible, isolated and engrained in behaviour. In both narratives this occurred after adolescence. This was more notable in Jacques's narrative. In both narratives this process meant that the offending imagoes become increasingly dominant in the narrative and resistant to influence from imagoes associated with others. This suggests amendments to both Parkinson's (1999) and Athen's (1997) findings: the dominant imago of offenders are influenced more by interpersonal interaction in youth, and become increasingly inflexible as the offenders' age. In adulthood the imagoes seems very similar to the few, rigid imagoes proposed by Parkinson (1999) and, as she noted in her sample of men who committed murder, Jacques and Simon indeed committed offences against persons who represented their personal concerns.

In this study the process of increasing inflexibility, insularity and dominance was facilitated by separating 'offending' from 'non-offending' imagoes of self. In this way, Jacques and Simon's non-offending imagoes of self (the Passive Man and Good Family Man respectively) facilitate the development and progression of their offences. This was discussed in more detail in section 6.1. This seems to be a novel theoretical insight which may allow for a better tailoring of possibly therapeutic interventions. It also casts some doubt on McAdam's (1993) finding that dialogue between the multiple self-concepts is necessarily healthy. This study is more ambiguous, given that interaction between imagoes in youth gave rise to Jacques' and Simon's dominant offending imago, and interaction between imagoes of self and those associated with others facilitated offending in adulthood.

CHAPTER 7
CONCLUSIONS, CRITIQUE AND RECOMMENDATIONS

As has been mentioned in the aims of the study (4.1) it was anticipated that this study's exposition would increase our understanding of the motivation and development of those who commit serial murder in South Africa, in a way that could support offender profiling. This will be considered and discussed. Section 7.1 will discuss the contributions this study makes to the literature around narrative theory, serial murder, and offender profiling. Section 7.2 will briefly discuss the implications this study has for narrative research methodology, then assess the extent to which this study meets the criteria for evaluation and validation set out in Chapter 4 (although where relevant this will be mentioned throughout this chapter) The resultant critiques of the study will then be presented in section 7.3. Finally, recommendations for future research to enhance the understanding to serial murder in South Africa, especially from a narrative perspective, will be given in section 7.4.

7.1 CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE LITERATURE

The main contribution this study makes to the literature is its seemingly being the first that conducts a detailed investigation of serial murder from the perspective of narrative psychology. In particular, it contributes by assessing the role of the narrative concept of imago in the motivation and development of those who commit serial murder. Beyond the novel theoretical contribution this makes, and although this is was not the main aim of this study, these findings will assist in demonstrating the usefulness of the narrative concept of imago to offender profiling, especially in the South African context. As mentioned, the intertwined narratives of serial murder and offender profiling meant that an approach such as narrative psychology, focusing on the offender's interpersonal strategies (Youngs, 2004), may be particularly useful. The potential utility of this study was even more important in light of the need for research into serial murder in South Africa that is useful in criminal investigations. This section will briefly discuss the contributions this research makes to narrative theory and the concept of the imago, the theory of serial murder, and the theory and methods of offender profiling. Given the aims of this study, the first two issues will be given greater emphasis.

7.1.1 Narrative theory and the concept of the imago

The results of this study have a number of implications for research in narrative psychology as a whole, and the theoretical concept of the imago in particular. These will be discussed separately, although in practice it is likely that these categories will overlap. This discussion will particularly refer to the application of narrative psychology to the study of crime.

7.1.1.1 Implications for narrative theory

This study confirmed that a number of narrative theory's fundamental conceptions are applicable in people who commit serial murder in South Africa. It confirms that narrative is relevant in investigating the formation and structuring of the self (Crossley, 2000) in South African serial murderers, as well as how they organised their reality into meaningful wholes (Ricoeur, 1988). Their narratives are explicitly contextual, that is, are shaped by the environment and interpersonal interaction (Maruna, 2004).

With particular reference to the application of narrative theory to those who commit crime, this study confirmed that narrative descriptions allow the researcher to study offending behaviour as experienced by the offender him or herself (Rhodes, 1999), in South Africa. Furthermore, as found in offenders elsewhere, this study confirms that South African offenders have dynamic and constantly evolving self-narratives which allow us to understand their personality, offences, and motives for offending in greater detail (Canter 1994, 2004; Maruna 2001, 2004; Skrapec, 2001). The potential importance of condemnatory scripts in South African offenders' narratives was affirmed (Maruna, 2004). The particular relevance of the narrative in supplying justifications for continued offending (Sykes & Matza, 1957; Maruna, 2004) was also confirmed in this South African sample, and will be discussed further in section 7.2.1.

By affirming the usefulness of the concept of imago in understanding serial murder, this study also helps affirm the usefulness of neutralization theory and social learning narratives of cause (Bandura, 1973; Sykes & Matza, 1957). This study clarifies the link between social influence and individual justifications for offending. Specifically,

it describes more precisely the role of individual justifications for offending, and how these are incorporated into the cognitions of someone who commits serial murder, a gap in motivational models of serial murder (Burgess *et al*., 1986; Hickey, 2002).

This study's finding that the participants' childhoods are important in establishing the basis for the subsequent development of their offending behaviour is notable. This importance had two features. Firstly, their childhood conception of self arose as a result of interaction between, and with, others. Secondly, these participants' child self was characterised as being lonely and isolated and this gave rise to motives that contributed to their offending. As mentioned, these findings chime with diverse enquiries into criminality from a narrative perspective (Athens, 1997; McAdams, 1993; Schultz, 2005). Both these aspects establish links between narrative theory and other branches of psychological enquiry, such as developmental psychology and psychoanalysis. However it should be remembered that unlike, for example, psychoanalytical inquiry, this study re-affirmed the importance of narrative theory's emphasis on the continuing development of the persons' self-concept. As shown, while the motives created in Jacques / Simon's lonely conception of themselves as a youth persist, they are not solely responsible for motivating their offences.

7.1.1.2 Implications for the concept of the imago

This study generated a number of observations around the narrative concept of the imago. These will be discussed with particular reference to the applicability of this concept to the study of crime.

a) Defining the concept of the imago

The imago has been described both as a representation of others (Athens, 1997) and as an idealised perception of the self (Schultz, 2005). As discussed, these positions are not contradictory, since both share the same basic position: that the imago is a fundamentally interpersonal construct shaped by, and influencing how, the individual interacts with others. Thus this study defined an imago as a personified mode of interpersonal interaction.

This study casts further light on this conceptual ambiguity, finding that an imago can either be associated with the self, or with other people. Jacques and Simon displayed imagoes of self and imagoes associated with other people (particularly those in parental roles). It was furthermore shown that an imago associated with another can become associated, even if incompletely, with an imago of self. Thus while this ambiguity in the theoretical concept of the imago remains, it has been clarified and more clearly defined.

Beyond initial definitions, McAdams (1993) proposed eight principles of the imago:

1. The self is composed of personified and idealised internalised images, or imagoes, that are laden with affect.
2. The origins of a particular imago lie in the internalisation of loved (and hated) 'objects' in the person's world.
3. A person's most significant personal relationships are profoundly affected by his or her imagoes.
4. Imagoes are often arranged in the self as dialectical opposites.
5. The synthesis of opposing imagoes is a hallmark of the mature self.
6. Imagoes are superordinate schema for organising and evaluating information about the self.
7. Imagoes specify recurrent behavioural plans.
8. Imagoes give cognitive form to personal goals, fears, and desires.

This study confirmed all of these principles, with three exceptions. Firstly, in relation to the second point, this study did not confirm McAdams' implication that these 'objects' are persons external to the offender's self. This will be discussed more below. Secondly, referring to the fourth point, this study did not find that imagoes are often arranged in the self as dialectical opposites. Rather, they were arranged according to the participant's individual conceptions of his self and others. Finally, and in relation to the fifth point, given the focus of this study it could not confirm whether synthesis of these opposites in the self was equated with greater maturity in the sample.

McAdams (1988) also proposed seven features for identifying an ideal or prototypical imago in interview data. These were: an origin myth; a significant other; associated

personality traits; associated wishes, aspirations, goals, occupational or personal strivings; associated behaviours; consistency with their philosophy of life; and an anti imago. As could be expected on the basis of the above findings, this study tended to support these points as an adequate means for identifying imagoes in South African offenders, with the exception of the last. The only caveat to this is the fact that, in this study, the number of these prototypical features displayed by a specific imago did not correlate clearly with its influence in the narrative or on other imagoes. For example, influential imagoes in Jacques' childhood, the Distant Father and Controlling Mother, displayed few of these proposed features. Thus it is possible that the features McAdams (1988) proposes may primarily describe how detailed the description of an imago is, or its persistence in the narrative.

b) Developing the concept of the imago

This study also contributed to the development of the concept of the imago. Previous theory had tended to imply that a person could either have multiple simple imagoes, or have a single, multifaceted, complex one (Athens, 1997; McAdams, 1988, 1993; Parkinson, 1999; Schultz, 2005). This study showed that an individual may possess *both* simple and complex imagoes. With reference to offenders, in contrast to Schultz's (2005) findings and aspects of Parkinson's (1999), the study showed that offenders can possess a large number of imagoes. To this it added the novel theoretical insight that the dominant imago associated with the offenders' self tends to be the most complex, and develop the most throughout the narrative. This study also described the process by which these imagoes developed throughout the offenders' life narrative in greater detail than previous studies, which tended either to describe this development in very broad terms (Athens, 1997) or regarded the imago as a concept 'fixed' at the time at which the offender committed their crimes (Parkinson, 1999; Schultz, 2005). As discussed previously, previous evidence that multiple and / or complex imagoes reducing stress (Linville, 1985; McAdams, 1988; Watkins, 1986) and thus may lessen the likelihood of offending was not found to be accurate in this study. Rather, this study emphasised that the interaction between imagoes is more important than numbers or the complexity of any individual one.

c) The role of agency and communion in the imagoes of offenders

Building on this understanding, this study casts light on the role played by 'agency' and 'communion' in the imagoes of those who offend. As discussed, these concepts ask how focused on achievement / dominance or interpersonal interaction (McAdams, 1993) a certain imago is. This study did not find that the participants' imagoes were exclusively one or the other; nor that a person with imagoes that were low in both communion and agency would be more likely to commit violent crime, as hypothesised on the basis of previous research (Laubscher & Klinger, 1997; Maruna, 2004; McAdams, 1993). This study rather re-emphasised the importance of interactions between imagoes showing different characteristics. For example it showed the importance of interactions between agentic imagoes and communal imagoes (e.g. between Simon's Vengeful Suitor and the Good Family Man) and between agentic imagoes and those low in both agency and communion (e.g. between the Searching Burglar and the Passive Man). As discussed, as the narrative progressed these interactions usually became less frequent, with less influence on the dominant, agentic, imago of self.

Finally, this study observed a correlation between the participant's imagoes and their narration of the offences. This unexpected finding will be discussed in the recommendations section, below.

7.1.2 The theory of serial murder

By finding that those who commit serial murder have multiple motives and by analysing their imagoes' role in relation to these, this study encourages a more dynamic understanding of their motives, highlighting that motive and development are inextricably linked, and overlap. The separation I made in my literature review of serial murder between motive (or 'reasons for offending') and development, which was reflected in the narrative inquiry, is shown to be artificial and not to reflect the phenomenon of serial murder accurately.

7.1.2.1 The suitability of certain theories to the study of serial murder

This study has a number of implications for the theory of serial murder. Firstly, it highlights shortcomings of any explanation that cites cause or motive in a single event, disorder, or time span of life. Thus it confirms Carlisle's (1993) comments that medical narratives of cause (Jeffers, 1993; Money, 1990; Norris, 1990), particularly organic and biogenic causes, appear to have less explanatory power. This also suggests that psychiatric labels (as advocated by Schlesinger, 2004, for example) may also not be adequate to understand the developmental complexity of serial murder. This may also have implications for the use of certain theoretical perspectives in the study of serial murder. For example, looking at Jacques' and Simon's narratives, a rigid psychodynamic analysis focusing only on the offender's childhood may correctly highlight the importance of childhood interactions, but would miss the fact that the maladaptive patterns established in childhood imagoes are added to throughout development. While this study did not aim to assess the suitability of psychological theories other than narrative to the study of serial murder, this was an unexpected finding.

7.1.2.2 Support for motivational models of serial murder

Unsurprisingly, given the theoretical orientation of this study, the results support social narratives of cause, posited by authors such as Burgess *et al.*, (1986) and Hickey (2002). This translates into support for the motivational models of serial murder that draw on this narratives' awareness of social and environmental influences on development.

Of the two major motivational models, this study supports Hickey's (2002) 'trauma-control model of the serial murderer' more than Burgess *et al.*'s, (1986) 'motivational model of serial sexual homicide'. This is because Hickey's (2002) model is less dependent on psychodynamic assumptions than Burgess *et al.*'s (1986), describing how the fantasies of a person who commits serial murder may change. It is thus better able to explain this study's findings around the dynamism of motive. This study can add further detail to Hickey's (2002) model by describing exactly how these motives

change and develop due to the interaction between the person's imagoes, and how these changes can reflect development and offence behaviours.

This study's more detailed qualitative contribution can improve the dominant motivational models in a number of ways. This study demonstrated that the more specific definition of an 'imago' is more useful in understanding the motives and development of a serial murderer than the vague definition of 'fantasy' used by the motivational models. While there were variations between Jacques and Simon, this study, unlike either motivational model, also describes the mechanism by which the social environment can effect an individual (by its being internalised as an imago associated with another person), and so begins to overcome the historical assumption that serial murder is necessarily only caused by dysfunction in the offender's psyche. As discussed in section 7.1.1, this also provides support for social learning narratives of cause, and neutralisation theory (Sykes & Matza, 1957).

Finally, this study is concerned with the whole of the offender's life story: from birth to incarceration. This is unlike both Hickey's (2002) and Burgess *et al*.'s (1986) models, which seem focused almost solely on an analysis of the offender's childhood. By treating the offender's development as an ongoing process, this study overcomes these models' inability to explain how offence behaviours may develop and change (Hodgskiss, 2001; Wentink, 2001) or what the offender's development in adulthood may consist of. These models' lack of explanatory power in relation to development reflects a failing in personality trait theories (Canter, 1994; Maruna, 2001). Therefore this study's approach seems to have the developmental focus and dynamism to analyse criminal behaviour more satisfactorily.

7.1.2.3 Limited support for typologies of serial murder

Turning to the various methods used to classify serial murder, this study shows limited to support for either of the most the most widely cited typologies of serial murder: Ressler, Burgess and Douglas's (1993) organised-disorganised classification, or Holmes and DeBurger's (1988) four-fold differentiation between Visionary, Mission, Hedonistic, and Power / control types of serial murderer. Neither Jacques nor Simon clearly shows the proposed offence or personality characteristics of either the

organised or disorganised serial murder (Ressler, Burgess & Douglas, 1993). Similarly, while both participants in this study show similarities to the 'Hedonist' / 'Power' categories in Holmes and DeBurger's (1988) model, they cross and combine categories as they develop. Thus not only do the characteristics proposed in each typology not match, neither shows how motives may develop or how offence behaviours can be the result of a life-long process of development. These observations concur with previous criticisms that these typologies are too rigid and static to adequately account for the dynamism of offender's behaviour (Canter, 2004; Hodge, 2000; Maruna, 2004). This study does however raise the possibility that the lack of correspondence between the characteristics proposed by the typologies and observed in this study may be due to cultural differences between South African and UK / North American offenders. This has been alluded to in previous research (e.g. Hickey, 2002; Hodgskiss, 2004) but this study supplies further evidence of what these cultural differences could consist of.

7.1.2.4 Qualified support for thematic models of serial murder

Hodge's (2000) thematic model of serial murderers is given qualified support by these findings, with Jacques potentially treating his victims as 'objects'; while Simon shows elements of treating his victims both as a 'vehicle' for his emotions and as a 'person' in their own right. This study can also show in more detail how an offender may show elements of various themes in their offences (e.g. how Simon's simultaneous 'vehicle' and 'person' focus may be due to the characteristics of the Rejecting Woman imago). This study also supports the contention made by various authors using this thematic approach that serial murderers display more thematically distinct offence behaviours as their series continues (Hodgskiss, 2001; Salfati & Bateman, 2005; Wentink, 2001). It is not clear whether the support this study offers for the thematic perspective may partly be a function of thematic models' greater flexibility and their sharing this study's focus on the interpersonal styles of the offenders. This study also demonstrates the inadequacy of elements of previous South African research into serial murder from the thematic perspective. That is, in my previous research (Hodgskiss, 2001) I appear to have assumed that the characteristics of their offences reflect the offenders' motives. This assumption underpins the model I proposed. This

study has shown that this static understanding of motive is insufficient, and that offence characteristics may not reflect motives in such a simplistic manner.

7.1.2.5 Implications for serial murder in South Africa

Apart from the above, how does this study add to the understanding of serial murder in South Africa? Firstly, it confirms previous research findings (Hickey, 2002; Hodgskiss, 2001) around the importance of external influences and interpersonal interaction in the development of South African serial murder. Furthermore this study proposes the imago as the potential mechanism by which these social and environmental factors come to influence the development of offending. Secondly, this study offers a confirmation of two of the three fundamental and universally accepted findings around serial murder: that serial murder is dynamic, and that this dynamism is underpinned by the meaning structures of the offender. This study also offers some support for the third of these findings (that structured variations exist between different serial murderers offence behaviours and motivations) but given that it did not aim to create a classification system of serial murder, this support is limited.

7.1.2.6 Suggestions of a synthesis between the narratives around serial murder

Using the developmental and life-long perspective offered by narrative, this study ultimately suggests that a synthesis is possible between many of the opposing narratives present in the theory of serial murder: such as the implied separation between aetiology and development; or between various models and typologies. That is, based on Jacques' and Simon's narratives it appears that a number of these conflicting findings may be the result of different researchers focusing on different periods of the offenders' lives, and so finding differing elements to be the most salient. This suggests the possibility that the various competing narratives of serial murder are not mutually exclusive understandings. It suggests that serial murder is a multi-faceted phenomenon, the understanding of which will be fundamentally influenced by the unique individual narrative of the person who committed serial murder, and the narrative supplied by the researcher looking at him / her. This begs the question as to whether, ultimately, more research into serial murder will yield

significantly novel or useful results. This will be addressed in the closing section of this chapter.

7.1.3 The theory and methods of offender profiling

Given the entwined narratives of serial murder and offender profiling, this study used the latter to help provide a theoretical focus. That is, given that an interpersonal and narrative understanding was seen to be useful in generating inferences in offender profiling, it could also be useful to generate new understandings of serial murder. These new understandings could then potentially be applied to offender profiling. This study did not aim to empirically assess the usefulness of the various methodologies proposed for profiling an unknown offender on the basis of their crime seen behaviour. Nor did this study take proving imagoes' utility to offender profiling as a primary aim. Bearing that in mind, this study's findings have a number of implications for offender profiling.

7.1.3.1 The challenges posed to offender profiling by a narrative understanding

First among these is that a narrative understanding, and the narrative concept of the imago in particular, is shown to have potential utility in linking the characteristics of the offences with those of the offender. However this usefulness is lessened by the following factors. This study found that the distinction between 'pre-offence' and 'during offence' narratives / imagoes is not clear-cut. That is, there does not appear to be a sudden change in the narrative which immediately leads to the murders. Rather, this is a more gradual progression. For example, in this study it is notable that the participants' first serious offences (murder in Jacques' case, rape in Simon's) are not entirely consistent, either in characteristics or in relationships to imagoes, with the murders that make up the bulk of the series. This poses a challenge to any methodologies proposed for offender profiling, particularly as it relates to linking cases together. This challenge is added to by this study's findings that the characteristics of both Jacques and Simon's offences change as their series progresses and this change is mirrored in their imagoes (including their motivation for offending). This finding echoes previous literature (e.g. Canter, 1994; Maruna, 2001) with states that a dynamic theoretical framework is needed to create an adequate

account of criminal behaviour. This study suggests that this could equally be applied to methods of offender profiling, in that they would have to be sufficiently dynamic to accommodate changes in both offence and offender characteristics. Any studies aiming to support offender profiling would have to take account of this. For example, in assessing how an offender's characteristics are reflected in their offences it would not be suitable to simply compare the offender's motives before the series with the offences he went on to commit, as the motives may have changed in the meanwhile.

7.1.3.2 The value of a narrative understanding to offender profiling

Notwithstanding the above, the fact that Simon and Jacques's imagoes have been shown to affect their offences, and are thematically consistent with them, suggests that in South Africa case linkage on the basis of imagoes is possible. As discussed, South African research suggests that the content of South African serial murderers' imagoes may bear a relationship to the characteristics of the offence (Hodgskiss, Pistorius & Welman, 2004; Pistorius, 1996). This study was the first to specifically analyse the correlation between imago content, the relationships between imagoes, and offence behaviours. It demonstrated that there are indications of certain imagoes in offence behaviours, and reiterated that the complexity of crimes such as serial murder means there can never be a simplistic correlation between imago and crime, and therefore, imagoes cannot supply a simplistic template for offender profiling. This is shown, for example, in the seemingly fundamentally different motivational orientations between the participants, with Jacques focusing on his self and Simon focusing on others. Perhaps even more pertinently, based on personal experience I feel that the method for analysing the offender's narratives in this study would not be suitable for a 'live' investigation, not only because this study relied on the offender being available to interview, but also because the analytical methodology would be too detailed and time intensive to be used in an ongoing enquiry.

There is however one finding that, if expanded on, could be particularly useful to investigations. This is the abovementioned finding that offence characteristics appear less organised and coherent when the participant's narrative / imagoes were. This could potentially be useful in a 'live' investigation, where a seeming loss of coherence and focus in offences could help identify those that are not given supported by the

offender's imagoes, or show that the offender's imagoes are in crisis. Similarly when an offender is being interviewed, a loss of coherence in their narrative may highlight topics that the interviewer could exploit to gain a confession or, if in a therapeutic context, use to encourage change in the person's maladaptive narratives. However a more systematic comparison between the characteristics of their narratives / imagoes and their offence characteristics is needed to assess whether this pattern is sufficiently reliable.

7.2 METHODOLOGY AND EVALUATION

This section reviews the narrative inquiry undertaken to assess what this study adds to narrative research's methodologies, and to what extent this study meets the criteria for evaluation set in Chapter 4.

7.2.1 Implications for narrative research methodology

This study shows narrative is suitable to study the phenomenon of serial murder and the subjective experience of those who commit it. The research of serial murder can thus be added to Lieblich *et al*.'s (1998) list of areas for which narrative psychology can be useful. Where theorists such as Canter (1994), Hodge (2000) and Youngs (2004) have advocated an interpersonal narrative perspective as a guiding metaphor, this study shows that narrative can also supply the necessary methodology.

Beyond this confirmation, and bearing in mind that this study has all the typical characteristics of narrative psychological research (as proposed by Lieblich *et al*., 1998 and outlined in Chapter 3), what does this study add to the theory and methods of narrative research? This study affirms that a middle point between the 'postmodern' and 'historical' perspectives on narrative is not only possible but can lead to greater theoretical insight. That is, the study shows that personal subjective narratives are fundamental to an individual's story but still bear some relation to external objective events (Lieblich *et al*., 1998). This study adds to this 'middle point' perspective by demonstrating the ways in which the narrative concept of imago can become the mechanism by which external objective events come it influence a person's subjective narrative, and vice versa. Given that this study was not positioned

on either extreme of the continuum Lieblich *et al*. (1998) drew between holistic versus categorical and content versus form approaches to narrative research, by producing clear findings this study demonstrates that it is possible to adopt such a position without falling prey to the risks fragmented data (Hollway and Jefferson, 2000) or findings that ignore the deeper levels of meaning in the interviews (Wengraf, 2001). The threats to validity inherent in the approach taken by the study will be discussed further in the following section.

Turning to research methods, this study appears to confirm that the analytical and interpretive processes advocated in grounded theory (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Glaser & Strauss, 1967) are suitable for research in narrative psychology. It appears to confirm that the methods of grounded theory are consistent with the theoretical orientation of narrative psychology and can create meaningful and valid insights. Issues in the evaluation of these research findings will be discussed more in the following section.

Beyond the above findings this study does not suggest a 'better' or 'preferred' method for conducting narrative research, nor does it give unequivocal evidence for a path that could be followed through the heterogeneity of research methods associated with narrative psychology (Lieblich *et al*., 1998). However given the postmodern orientation of this study this is neither a shortcoming in the study, nor an aim it had. Suggested directions for future narrative research will be given in the evaluation, critique, and recommendations for this study.

7.2.2 Evaluation of the research

The postmodern orientation of the study means that rather than requiring that valid research findings be those that correspond with objective reality, it treats validation as an issue of choosing between competing interpretations. This study agrees with Rolfe's (2006) finding that the same judgement criteria cannot be used across qualitative methodologies, with each method deserving its own judgement criteria. So this section will assess how well this study meets its own validation criteria, as laid out in Chapter 4.

This study adopted quality of craftsmanship (Kvale, 1996) as its primary source of validation. This required that validation is built into the research process, with the researcher taking action to attain validity (Morse, *et al.*, 2002). This approach to validity is inherent in grounded theory (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Glaser & Strauss, 1967) which provides the analytical methodology for this work. Thus this study adopted Corbin and Strauss' (2008) criteria of 'credibility' and 'applicability' to evaluate the quality of its craftsmanship. These criteria incorporate those proffered for the evaluation of narrative research by Lieblich *et al*. (1998).

7.2.2.1 Evaluation of 'credibility', 'width' and 'coherence'

'Credibility' incorporates Lieblich *et al*.'s (1998) criteria of 'width' and 'coherence'. Width requires that the reader is supplied with sufficient data to judge the validity of the study's findings, and place them in context (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Lieblich *et al*., 1998). This study meets the requirements laid out by these authors by supplying evidence of how the data was gathered (in this study, chiefly the interviews), the extensiveness of the supporting evidence for the conclusions (in the interview transcriptions), presenting a clear analytical process (described in detail in the narrative inquiry) which supported the interpretations made (as demonstrated in the case studies, and the cross-referencing to the interview transcriptions). This detail should meet the requirements that the reader be able to contextualise the findings.

Coherent research requires the study's findings fit together, that the narrative is well constructed, and fits with existing theory (Bruner, 1991; Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Lieblich *et al*., 1998). This study appears to meet most of the more detailed requirements for coherent research described by Corbin and Strauss (2008). This study shows 'logic' and 'depth', in that the ideas presented in the case study can be said to flow logically, methodological decisions are sufficiently clear for the reader to decide their appropriateness, and there is sufficient descriptive detail and richness to the findings to make them have an impact on the reader. These requirements could be seen to be met by those measures presented under width, amongst others. Similarly the requirement that the study demonstrates 'variation', that is, it illustrates the complexity of the phenomenon being studied, is shown for example in the discussion of the differences between Jacques and Simon's motives and development, or aspects

of their offences that cannot sufficiently be explained with reference to their imagoes. Demonstrating this variation may however have compromised other aspects of the validation criteria.

While I can make a subjective assessment of the extent to which my study meets the requirements for credibility, coherence and width set in Chapter 4, it could be argued that only the reader of the research can accurately make these evaluations. This potential limitation in the evaluation criteria applies to other measures of validity used here, and is a critique of this study.

7.2.2.2 Evaluation of 'applicability', 'insightfulness' and 'parsimony'

The criterion of 'applicability' (Corbin & Strauss, 2008) incorporates Lieblich *et al.*'s (1998) criteria of 'insightfulness' and 'parsimony' in evaluating qualitative research. Drawing its rationale from the intertwined narratives of serial murder and offender profiling, while adopting a theoretical stance that accommodates this and the dynamism of serial murder, this study's findings meet the requirement of that applicable research be suited to the area from which they are derived. This study further meets the requirements of parsimony and insightfulness by creating findings that are readily understandable and capable of providing fresh theoretical insights into the phenomenon being studied (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). The last mentioned is, as Kvale (1996) suggests, a further indicator of validity as quality of craftsmanship. This study could also be said to meet the additional criteria of 'originality' (Charmaz, 2006), which is allied to 'parsimony'. This criterion requires that the findings are presented in a creative or innovative manner, and is met here, since no previous studies have attempted to analyse imagoes in such depth, alongside the narratives of other provided by other data sources.

There are however limitations to this. While this study generated theoretical insights, it is not clear whether these would answer Corbin and Strauss's (2008) requirement that they are sufficient to bring about change in situations. Similarly, while the study's results were presented in an understandable format, they length of the case studies and the supporting evidence of the transcripts could hardly be described as parsimonious. This could be considered an inevitable function of grounded theory's requirements

that the evidence base and analytical method be made manifest, and a criticism of qualitative research generally, but the length of this study would limit its applicability in an investigative setting. This would in turn limit the extent to which these findings can meet the requirement that applicable and valid research resonates with the experience of the professionals for whom the results are intended (Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

Notwithstanding the above limitation the comparisons already made between this study's findings and the previous literature do suggest there is a level of 'fit' and resonance between them. This strengthens this study's claim to validity in applicability. Furthermore the narrative understanding this study proposes contributes to previous theoretical understandings by suggesting ways in which they can be synthesised. This will be discussing in this chapter's closing section.

7.2.2.3 Evaluation of other aspects of validation in grounded theory

As discussed in Chapter 4, grounded theory suggests a number of additional criteria helpful in evaluating this study's 'quality of craftsmanship'. These will be discussed here. Corbin and Strauss (2008) suggest that research should be evaluated according to how sensitive it was to the participants and to the data. This study's focus on the imago meant the requirement that the researcher let the analysis drive the research, not only impose pre-determined concepts and questions on the data (Corbin & Strauss, 2008), could not be fully met. This was exacerbated by factors in the administration of the semi-structured interview: the IMAGO interview format often encouraged a rigid focus on certain topics, offence characteristics were perhaps discussed in more detail than needed, and my questioning style consequently could sound interrogatory and insensitive. This may have limited the narratives that the participants recreated in the interview context.

These shortcomings may however have been mitigated by this study's subsequent openness to the meanings inherent in the participant's narratives, and my allowing these to drive the analysis. This is shown by the presence of findings I did not anticipate or which contradicted the terms of the narrative inquiry, for example, showing the artifice of my dividing motivation and development. Through my

attempts to evidence my analytical process and acknowledge my role in creating the meaning in this study, as well as the shortcomings of the study, I believe I have also met Hall and Callery's (2001) requirement that the qualitative researcher needs to be able to evidence self-awareness, as a condition of their producing valuable qualitative research.

7.2.2.4 Summary of validation

The above discussion demonstrates that, overall, this study appears to have met Corbin and Strauss's (2008) criteria of 'credibility' and 'applicability'. The study appears to have yielded credible findings, demonstrating both width and coherence (Lieblich *et al*., 1998). The applicability (Corbin & Strauss, 2008) of the findings is less strong. This is due to slight limits in the 'insightfulness' and 'parsimony' (Lieblich *et al*., 1998) of the study. These limitations are not however sufficient to undermine the overall quality of the craftsmanship, and thus validity, of the study (Kvale, 1996). Perhaps the most telling challenge to the validity of this study is the inflexibility of the interview technique. The implications of this and the other limitations identified will now be discussed.

7.3 CRITIQUE

The shortcomings of this study will be discussed with reference to the ways in which it did not meet its own evaluation criteria, or how it may have better met its aims within a qualitative and postmodern context. Thus the research will be critiqued on its own terms and debates between the relative validity and utility of competing theoretical stances and epistemologies, which could obscure the merits or otherwise of this study, will be avoided.

7.3.1 Critique of definitions used

Two definitions fundamental to this study, 'serial murderer', and the narrative concept of the 'imago', could be subject to critique. Both these terms, 'serial murderer' in particular, are subject to a number of competing and contradictory definitions.

7.3.1.1 Critique of definition of serial murderer in the study

This study aimed to avoid relying on a specific explanatory framework and system of classification to define serial murder, and so avoid some of the conceptual confusion. This study adapted Geberth's (1996), Egger's (1990), and the Federal Bureau of Investigation's (2005) definitions to define serial murder as two or more separate acts of murder; occurring at different times in different events; and committed by an individual acting alone or with another. It was consistent with the aim of the study and provided a working definition which can then be elaborated on. However the findings of this study may suggest that by adopting observed characteristics as defining criteria, the study has exacerbated the conceptual confusion (Del Fabbro, 2006). That is, Simon and Jacques show differing patterns in the characteristics of, and interactions, between their imagoes. They therefore differ in terms of their motivation and development, which means this study's definition of serial murder may be categorising them together incorrectly. This critique suggests that a definition focusing more on developmental factors, rather than their behaviour at the end of the criminal career or how many offences within a certain legal category that they committed, would be more illuminating. For example studying offenders who commit acquisitive crime before progressing to sexual crimes, or asking how domestic violence offenders come to commit increasingly violent offences, may be more revealing.

7.3.1.2 Critique of definition of imago in the study

The definition of 'imago' used could also be subject to critique. This study defined an imago as a personified representation of an individual's unique modes of interpersonal interaction. This definition synthesises the two seemingly contradictory definitions of imagoes: as an idealised conception of self (McAdams, 1988) and as a personification of others (Athens, 1997). The findings revealed two potential problems with the study's definition. Firstly the imago could be seen as such a pervasive element of a narrative that it is becomes difficult to identify any element of the narrative which is *not* considered part of an imago. However this critique would apply to any research that makes use on the concept of the imago, or similar concepts in narrative research such as mythic character (Laubscher & Klinger, 1997; McAdams, 1993), self-concept

(Parkinson, 1999, Schultz, 2005) and phantom other (Athens, 1997). McAdams (1988) acknowledged in his research that the concept of imago, encompassing a large part of self-narrative in a diffuse manner, is difficult to define. Furthermore, this study demonstrated that adopting the concept of the imago supplied a conceptual focus to the analysis of a narrative which would otherwise be lacking.

A second and more specific problem with the definition of the imago as used in this study is that it could mask the possibility that there are different types of imago: those associated with the participant's self and those associated with others, and that these may play different roles in determining motivation and development. This suggestion would be supported by this study's findings, in that Jacques and Simon attributed different functions to imagoes associated with their selves and those associated with others at different times in their life. By synthesising the two contradictory conceptions of imago, this study may have limited the theoretical insight it created (although whether an imago was associated with self or with others was considered in the analysis). Thus in future research I would propose an imago is defined *either* as an 'imago of the self' *or* an 'imago associated with another'.

7.3.2 Critiques of the construction of the narratives

Criticisms of my interview style and the use of the IMAGO Autobiographical Questionnaire have been discussed already. This section will focus on the limitations imposed on this study's findings by the use of an interview-based method and the analytical process employed.

This study found that imagoes associated with the participant's self were more complex, and developed more, than those associated with other people. This could be a function of the interview situation and how narratives are constructed in that setting. With its focus on the individual and their perceptions in creating their narrative the interview could underplay the significance of others' roles, or their perceptions of others. This could perhaps be seen as a generic risk of any interview research, especially that which adopts this study's phenomenological approach. This risk could be lessened by an interview process which contains more specific prompts to discuss other people and their roles.

The construction of the participant's narratives may also have been affected by the delay between when they committed their crimes and when the interview was held. This delay could mean that the narratives created in this study were less a discussion of what led them to offend (Sykes & Matza, 1957) and merely rationalisations offered by them after the crime (Hindelang, 1970). This is possible because the constant review and re-creation of imagoes means that a time lapse may equate to a change in the imagoes that led to the offences. On the other hand, this time lapse may have given the participants time to reflect and so offer a more considered narrative of their offences. This possibility is supported by this study's finding that both Jacques and Simon expressed development in their motives and behaviours across their lifespan, throughout their series of offences, and after their incarceration. They also discussed offences in which their behaviour was not justified by their imagoes. We could presume these features would not be seen if they merely sought to justify their behaviour. This suggests that a time delay between offence and interview does not fatally undermine the study's findings and has implications for future research.

Finally, the analysis of the interview material could be subject to critique. A single segment of interview material may contain reference to a number of different imagoes which made it difficult to separate various imagoes from one another. This could have meant that my perceptions of the participant, interview, or phenomenon being studied would inordinately affect the imagoes observed and meaning created. This is added to by the possibility that this study's content-oriented methodology neglected certain meanings in the narrative (such as the effect of the structure of the imagoes, or form of the narrative, on the participant's offending). See 7.3.4 for a further discussion of this, and measures that could have lessened the impact.

7.3.3 Critiques on the basis of culture

The roles played by culture in the creation of narratives were not considered when designing and implementing this study. That is, while the study acknowledged that there would likely be differences in the narratives of South African and foreign offenders, it did not consider how culture may impact on the narratives of this sample of South Africans.

The effects of culture on this study are two-fold. Firstly, as discussed, the key structural difference between Jacques' and Simon's narratives could be explained by the fact that they come from different cultures with different linguistic and narrative norms. By not considering this in its sampling procedures, this study opens itself to the critique that the differences observed in their narratives are less a cause / consequence of different developmental paths and more a cultural artefact. Secondly, this study did not consider the potential effect of my culture being different from that of the participants and, in both cases, my not sharing their first language (although only Simon was not interviewed in his first language). This could mean that I was not aware of nuances and meanings in their narratives that someone from the same culture as them would have been.

In my opinion this critique does not mean that the study's findings should be dismissed as the product of cross-cultural variation and misunderstanding. Similarities were found between Jacques and Simon's imagoes, and their imagoes assisted notably in explaining their development and offence behaviours. Neither finding could be explained if culture obstructed all understanding. Furthermore the challenge posed by culture is one which faces much interview research in South Africa, and there is no suggestion in the literature that this challenge has rendered interview research s in the development of offending behaviours in Jacques and Simon ……………………... 394

7.3.4 Critique of evaluation criteria that aim to be more valid.

This study did not aim to test resonance, or validity, of findings with practitioners or participants. This meant that I was required to make a subjective assessment of the extent to which my study met the evaluation criteria I set. Validation thus depended on my own assessment of the quality of craftsmanship of the study, when it could be argued that only the reader of the research can accurately make these evaluations. This potential limitation in the evaluation criteria applies to other measures of validity used here and is a critique of this study. I should possibly have built in validation with the participant, or checked interpretations formally with a co-researcher. The former would be less possible given the time delay between the administration of the interviews in 2000 and their transcription and analysis in 2008 and 2009. The latter

could have partially been met in the supervisory process for this thesis and in my presentation of the transcripts. It remains however a shortcoming that could be avoided in future research, placing greater emphasis on communicative validity (Kvale, 1996). For example, at least three researchers could study the material and arrive at consensual agreement. The adoption of formal checking of interpretations and validation with a co-researcher could also have avoided the possibility that my perceptions of the participant, interview, or phenomenon being studied would inordinately affect the imagoes observed and meaning created in the analysis as discussed in Section 7.3.2.

7.3.5 Critique of applicability to offender profiling

The findings of this study are not directly applicable to offender profiling because the behavioural template that can be linked to their imagoes is not able to explain all their behaviours during the offences. Similarly the narrative methodology followed here would not, I suggest, be suitable for use in an investigative setting. This is because one would need interview data from the offender (which ones does not routinely have in an investigation), the analytical process employed here would be too detailed for use in 'live' investigation, and the length of the completed case study would be difficult to present to an investigative team in an engaging manner. Furthermore, the narrative analysis of serial murder is still an emerging field and so findings would less likely be allowed as legal evidence. This lack of direct applicability could be considered a limitation of this study. However it should be remembered that this study did not aim to be applicable to offender profiling, rather adopting an orientation that would generate insight useful to it. The adoption of this orientation was in recognition of the entwined narratives of serial murder and offender profiling in psychological research. As shall be shown in the following sections, there are elements of this study that may, with further research, come to assist practitioners.

7.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

This study's narrative inquiry demonstrated that imagoes play a significant role in the motives for, and development of, offending in those who commit serial murder. With reference to motive: the imago creates and embodies motives specifically for offending, with interactions between imagoes creating or strengthening motive. These motives are then embodied in dominant offending imagoes associated with the participant's self. Imagoes contribute to the development of offending behaviour by setting a behavioural template for offences, as well as by encouraging a separation between imagoes involved in offending and those that are not. Notwithstanding this there are a number of differences between the two case studies, for example, in the extent to which imagoes develop in interaction with others, and the roles played by their imagoes in the developmental narrative of their offending. The reasons for the differences and similarities cannot be fully explained. This section will propose work to fill these gaps in understanding, progress the theoretical insights proposed by this study, and to overcome the critiques the study is subject to.

7.4.1 Improvements in research methodology

Before more specific recommendations on directions for future research are given, it is necessary to highlight methodological improvements that I recommend for incorporation in future research into narrative. These improvements will overcome many of the problems with validation in this study, and can thus be considered relevant to all the sections below.

Future research should adopt more formal checking of interpretations and validation with a co-researcher, or with the participant themselves. Similarly, a greater awareness of what information practitioners may find useful should also be build into the research. This future research would thus be better able to answer Corbin and Strauss's (2008) requirement that its findings be sufficient to bring about change in situations. Should this research be interview-based, and specifically from the perspective of narrative psychology, I would recommend that it not use the IMAGO Autobiographical Questionnaire. While this may result in some chronological

structure being lost it could result in an interview that is more sensitive to the emerging narrative and concerns of the participant.

7.4.2 Research into the role of narratives in offending

Narrative research is divided as to the role of an offender's narrative in their offending. Some feel that these narratives 'precede' the offending behaviour and so make it possible (Sykes & Matza, 1957) while others suggest they are merely rationalisations offered by the offender after the crime (Hindelang, 1970). Both perspectives may be valid (Hirschi, 1969) in that when an individual commits an offence their retrospective justification for committing an offence act may facilitate and even encourage further offending (Maruna, 2004), and this study adds to this understanding. By demonstrating that imagoes vary across the participant's life course, and this variation is consistent with the characteristics of their offences (as determined with reference to archival material, which the participants could not adjust to justify their actions) this study favours Sykes and Matza's (1957) explanation, as well as suggesting that Maruna's (2004) proposal may be very valuable in explaining the development of offending. The methodological critiques that can be levelled at this study and the very small sample size mean however that this finding cannot be generalised to all South African serial murderers, let alone all offenders. It is recommended that future research look to test whether this study's finding on the role of the narrative is accurate.

This study also demonstrated that both participants evidenced difficulty in reflecting on and articulating emotions. This difficulty was expressed differently in each narrative, but it may suggest other productive avenues for future research: assessing whether those who commit serial murder routinely experience difficulty in reflecting on or articulating their emotions (a possibility also raised by Labuschagne, 2001), and researching the effects of these difficulties on the creation of their narrative of self. This study did not consider the therapeutic possibilities of a narrative understanding, but such research could also support this endeavour.

7.4.3 Research into the concept and role of the imago

This study suggests a number of research avenues that could be explored in relation to the narrative concept of imago. In relation to McAdam's (1988) proposed seven features for identifying an ideal or prototypical imago in interview data, this study hypothesised that these proposed features may not help in determining how influential or otherwise an imago was. Rather McAdams' (1988) seven features primarily describe how detailed the description of an imago is, or how persistent it was in the narrative. More research on the concept of imago and how it is defined will be required to test this hypothesis, and propose an alternative definition or measure of the imago. Such research could also address the shortcoming in the definition of imago used in the study, and the possibility that there could be different types of imago: those associated with the participant's self, and those associated with others. This research would help clarify this conceptual ambiguity in narrative research using the imago, and help determine if these different 'types' may play different roles in determining motivation and development of offending.

Future research could also consider the correlations observed in this study between the participant's imagoes and their narration of the offences. In particular, it found that their narrative of their offences became less coherent and well structured when their imagoes either did not provide justification for an offence, or had conflicted motives. I am not aware of research that directly addresses the interaction between an offender's justifications for offending, their conceptions of self and others, and their narration of their crimes. Notwithstanding that my lack of awareness is likely due to this interaction being an unexpected finding; the potential therapeutic and investigative applications make it worthy of further investigation. Such research could also encourage, in offender profiling, better case linkage through the use of the concept of the imago.

As mentioned in the introduction to this section, this study cannot state why there are differences in the roles played by Jacques and Simon imagoes. Further research is needed to test the possible explanations for this. Do these differences reflect fundamentally different developmental paths or different motivational orientations? Or are they merely different emphases on similar pathways? If the latter, this would

suggest not only that there are commonalities in development between people of different cultures who commit serial murder, but also that an individual's nuances of expression need to be researched further to determine the extent to which it effects our understandings of their developmental narrative. This research could also help synthesise the various competing narratives of serial murder by demonstrating why some research finds aetiologies and single fundamental causes more important (e.g. Norris, 1990; Pistorius, 1996; Schlesinger, 2004) while others emphasise the process of development, and motivational models, more (e.g. Burgess *et al*., 1986; Hickey, 2002).

In addressing the above issues future research could also consider a novel insight of this study: that non-offending imagoes of self can facilitate the development and progression of offences by their interaction in youth giving rise to the dominant offending imago (often as a coping mechanism) and later by their enforcing their separateness from offending imagoes. This future research focusing in more detail on the interaction between imagoes, both offending and non-offending, could also support better therapeutic interventions. The possibility of therapeutic interventions with people who commit serial murders is frequently dismissed (e.g. Pistorius, 2002) but this study suggests that this may be worthy of further investigation.

7.4.4 Research into the role of culture in narratives and offending

This study demonstrated that cultural factors may be relevant in the construction of narratives and in the development of offending, even though culture was not considered when designing and implementing this study. Thus more research is needed to assess the extent of cultural effects. This research could make systematic cross-cultural comparisons between the individual's narratives, and between the narratives of South Africans from different cultural groups who commit serial murder. This research could use either a random sample of offenders, or a purposive sample of offenders who display particular developmental and behavioural patterns in their offending, to yield greater insight. Such a cross-cultural study could also make a valuable contribution in delineating more clearly what the culturally-determined differences are between South African serial murderers and those from elsewhere in the world.

7.4.5 The future of the study of serial murder

Serial murder has attracted an inordinate amount of research and media interest (Hodge, 2000; Holmes & Holmes, 1998). Both locally and abroad it has been researched from a diverse range of theoretical perspectives by practitioners from a range of fields (e.g. Arndt, *et al.*, 2004, Burgess *et al.*, 1986 ; Canter, 1994; Canter *et al.*, 2004; Canter & Wentink, 2004; Federal Bureau of Investigations, 2005; Francis *et al.*, 2004; Hickey, 2002; Hodge, 2000; Hodgskiss, 2001; Holmes & DeBurger, 1988; Labuschagne, 2001; Pakhomou, 2004; Ressler *et al.,* 1988; Salfati & Bateman, 2005; Silva, Leong & Ferrari, 2004). Despite this there does not appear to be any closure, any suggestion that saturation has been reached, or any acknowledgement of what theoretical perspectives have allowed greater insight. This study's findings suggest the possibility that the various competing narratives of serial murder are not mutually exclusive understandings. This leads to the question of whether more research into serial murder will yield significantly novel or useful results. This emphasises an unacknowledged narrative in the study of serial murder: 'where now'? This study proposes an answer.

This study found that motive needs to be considered as dynamic, and inextricably linked to development. By highlighting the importance of a developmental perspective and the inadequacy of static typologies or theoretical perspectives that site cause as being a single event of period of life, this study suggests that the category of 'serial murderer' is not adequate. While this is not a novel observation, this study does show that classifying an offender by the end result of their offending (e.g. committing three murders and so being labelled a 'serial murderer') may be less pertinent than the developmental pathway that they followed to arrive there. Thus investigating the developmental pathways of people who go on to commit serial murder may yield the most helpful new insights. This has already been proposed as a more insightful and useful way of looking at criminal behaviour than traditional approaches Francis, *et al.*, 2004; Wright, *et al.,* 2008).

Such developmental research could also explore this study's findings that offence characteristics may not reflect motives in a simplistic manner, in greater depth. This would have greater applicability in the investigation and offender profiling of those

who commit serial murder. The developmental perspective also raises the possibility of therapeutic interventions with persons who may be becoming increasingly involved in offending, or even therapeutic interventions with those who have committed serial murder. The possibility of therapy for serial murderers has been dismissed previously but if, as this study suggests, the category of 'serial murderers' is inadequate and becoming a 'serial murderer' is a matter of development rather than predestination, then no person need be dismissed as beyond recovery or redemption.