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A psychoanalytic attachment theory perspective of the defenses used in relationships by teenage girls in a children's home

By

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A research project submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts
COMMUNITY-BASED COUNSELLING PSYCHOLOGY

In the

FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND

"I declare that this research report is my own, unaided work. It has not been submitted before for any other degree or examination at this or any other university"

Signature:_____ Date:_____

Acknowledgements

Firstly, I would like to acknowledge my research supervisor, Dr. Katherine Bain, who has been a valued mentor to me. I would like to thank Dr. Bain for her invaluable contribution to this report, for sharing her professional insight and wisdom, and for her dedication which has stretched beyond her duties. Most of all, I would like to express my appreciation for the way that she has both challenged and encouraged me throughout the duration of this research. She has been a profound influence on the psychologist that I am becoming.

I must acknowledge my committed husband, who patiently supported me through a challenging year, which also happened to be our first year of marriage. I would like to honour him for the pillar of strength that he has been to me. I would not have been able to accomplish the things that I have without the *holding environment* that he has so faithfully provided for me.

Lastly, I would like to acknowledge the MACC class of 2010, for being the people who understood.

Dedication

This work is dedicated to the girls who shared their stories with me.

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Abstract

This study set out to explore the use and manifestation of the defense mechanisms of teenage girls living in a children's home. This was done using data which was collected and analysed by thematic content analysis in a previous study. A qualitative approach to this endeavour entailed one-on-one, in-depth interviews with eight teenage girls who had been living in the care of a children's home for at least six months and caregivers were interviewed regarding each of the girls. Interviews were taped, and transcribed. Three narrative analyses were conducted on the set of transcripts; once from the perspective of Klein's theory, once from Winnicott's theory and once from an attachment theory perspective. The Kleinian results suggested evidence of splitting, projection and introjection, denial, idealisation, envy and projective identification. The Winnicottian results indicated the development of a rigid false self to protect the true self from vulnerability through the use of distorting reality through projective and introjective mechanisms, compliance, self destructive tendencies, and unregulated aggression. The attachment theory results indicated defenses which resembled either a dismissive or preoccupied state of mind. The integration of these analyses suggested that despite certain divergences, the different theoretical accounts each seem to offer a valuable perspective on similar phenomenon.

Chapter 1

Introduction, Research aims, Research rationale, Literature review & Research questions

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This research aimed to explore the defense mechanisms engaged in by teenage girls living in a children's home. Based on literature around children growing up in children homes, as well as a previous study conducted on the relationship experiences of the sample used in this study, the expectation was formed that they engage in defensive ways of coping in order to manage their relationships. This expectation was also based on the theoretical contributions made by Klein, Winnicott and attachment theory. A qualitative study has been conducted with a sample of teenage girls who have been living in the children's home for at least 6 months and gave willing consent to participate. In addition, caregivers at the home who interact with the girls and chose to participate were part of the sample. Data was collected by means of one-on-one, in-depth interviews with each participant. Interviews were taped and transcribed and transcripts were analyzed using narrative analysis. It was the hope that by approaching this exploration from various theoretical angles, a theoretically developed understanding could be used to gain a deeper understanding of the use of defense mechanisms in this group.

This understanding may influence the management of caregiver relationships with the girls in this home, as well as others from a similar context. It might also influence interventions designed to target this and similar populations. This study also contributes to the seemingly limited amount of South African research done around institutionalised adolescents. Furthermore, the theoretical integration of this study makes a contribution to ways of understanding the developing literature around psychoanalytic attachment theory by the elucidation of the defenses used by insecurely attached individuals from an object relations perspective.

1.2 RESEARCH AIMS

The aim of this research is to explore the defense mechanisms engaged in by institutionalised teenage girls within their relationships. Based on research as outlined in the literature review and the preliminary analysis as conducted in Richards (2009), there is the expectation that there are certain defenses used by these girls in order to cope with their relationship experiences. The

aims of this research are to identify the defenses used and to explore the manner in which they manifest within the girls' relationships.

1.3 RESEARCH RATIONALE

From the research outlined in the literature review, it is evident that adolescents who have grown up in children's homes face a number of challenges that can impact their interpersonal relationships, often making these difficult to negotiate. McCann et al. (1996) found a prevalence of psychiatric disorders in a sample of institutionalised adolescents in a study comparing them with a sample who were living in their natural homes. Other comparative research has found greater emotional and behavioural problems within institutionalised adolescents (Erol, Simsek & Munir, 2009). Rutter, Quinton and Hill (1990) found that adults who were raised in group homes were at greater risk than those who were not for the development of personality disorders. Identity development in adolescents has also been found to be negatively impacted in those who are in group foster care (Kools, 1997). Lawson (2009) also observed that the risk factors of abuse and neglect which have been found to be associated with individuals living in children's homes to lead to psychological difficulties, behavioural problems and difficulties within their interpersonal relationships. As it will be illustrated in the literature review, most of the research that has been conducted in the area of adolescents living in children's homes has been approached quantitatively and has taken a relatively broad focus (McCan et al., 1996; Erol et al., 2009; Rutter et al., 1990; Kools, 1997; Lawson, 2009).

It is the focus of this research to identify the defense mechanisms which institutionalised teenage girls use within their relationships and the ways in which these manifest. By addressing this aim qualitatively, it is the hope that the insights gained from exploring the defense mechanisms engaged in by participants will provide a deeper understanding of these defense mechanisms and how they manifest within this particular population. This may indirectly serve to allow for more sensitive and effective interventions with institutionalised adolescents. Furthermore, insights gained on the manifestation of the defenses may help clinicians to prevent the repetition of maladaptive patterns within the therapeutic relationship. By better understanding these, therapists would be less likely to collude with projections from clients.

Much of the existing South African literature around institutionalised adolescents seems to take a focus on orphanhood as a result of HIV/AIDS and the associated experiences (Cluver & Gardner, 2007), but there has not been much research done on South African teenager's defensive structures from a psychodynamic perspective. Most of the research done from a psychodynamic perspective is not South African (Porcerelli et al.,1998; Tuulio-Henriksson et al., 1997). It is therefore the endeavour of this research to offer a psychodynamic contribution with regards to the understanding of the internal processes of institutionalised adolescents within a South African context.

Psychoanalytic attachment theory is a new theoretical field that has much to offer to the understanding of human relationships. By conducting this study from a theoretical framework that considers attachment theory as well as the psychoanalytic theoretical contributions of Klein and Winnicott, this research hopes to contribute to the growing body of knowledge around psychoanalytic attachment theory. This particular study hopes to make a contribution to this body of literature, particularly in the area of elucidating defenses used by insecurely attached individuals from an object relations perspective. While there have been contributions in this area (Shaver & Mikulincer, 2002; Lyons-Ruth, 2003; Fishler, Sperling & Carr, 1990; Fonagy, 1981; Sandler, 1995), there is still much work to be done to build on the understanding of how these theories can be used to complement each other. Furthermore, South African contextual contributions are lacking in this area.

1.4 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

1.4.1 Object Relations Theory

Interactions with others have an effect on one's internal world (Hamilton, 1988). Relationships with others are therefore internal as well as external and the exploration of this notion has led to the growing body of knowledge that is known as object relations theory. During early infancy, individuals have not yet gained the capacity to separate themselves from their environment and from this undifferentiated state. Through a process of separation, people start to form an understanding of who they are in relation to other people, and in particular, their primary caregivers (Hamilton, 1988). This process continues throughout life and into adulthood as

individuals take aspects of their significant relationships and make them a part of themselves (Hamilton, 1988).

While the process of understanding the identity of the self in relation to others is considered to be part of mentally healthy development, it can become unhealthy when the process of internalizing and externalizing become repetitive or extreme (Hamilton, 1988). For example, a specific internalized relationship with one person may be re-enacted by an individual with every person with whom they engage. Individuals may isolate themselves from others, avoiding interpersonal relationships, or alternatively, they may allow themselves to be too vulnerable to internalization of relationship aspects, negatively impacting their ability to establish a stable self-identity (Hamilton, 1988). Object relations theory therefore offers the psychodynamic approach a set of ideas for the exploration of interpersonal and intrapsychic functioning that focuses on the self and objects.

Patterns of internalizing and externalizing start in early development and while they can be altered through experience, they have often been found to persist throughout life. Due to the influence that the nature of early internalization and externalization has on later relationships, attachment theory is consistent with object relations theory, as it offers an account of the patterns which can be found to exist within an individual's relationship experiences. Attachment theory also refers to the process of mentalizing, terming it the onset of a "theory of mind" (Fonagy, Target & Gerery, 2001). This is the transformation from the nonmentalistic way of thinking with which infants start out with to the capacity to mentalize. This process is mediated by secure attachment as internalization of representations of one's mental states is promoted by their caregivers' sensitive reflection and ultimately enables one to regulate and control their emotions (Fonagy et al., 2001).

Object relations theory presents the notion that people live in the simultaneous experience of both an external and internal world (Greenberg & Mitchell, 1983). It involves the relationships that exist between real people in one's external world and the internal images of one's relations with those people as well as the significance that such internalizations have on psychic functioning (Greenberg & Mitchell, 1983). Within one's relationships, he or she is therefore relating to the other on two different levels at once: the actual other and the internal other.

According to Object relations theory, there are certain characteristics that make up the notion of what is meant by the word 'object' (Greenberg & Mitchell, 1983). Firstly, object refers to both real people in the external world, as well as the mental representations of those real people. These internally established images that one creates are also known as "illusory others", "introjects", "personifications" and "constituents of a representational world" (Greenberg & Mitchell, 1983). The word 'object' also implies the notion of tangibility (Greenberg & Mitchell, 1983). One's relationships with objects have experiential reality for that person even if physical existence is not true of that object. Lastly, objects, although enduring, are not static (Greenberg & Mitchell, 1983). They can be manipulated and reshaped, split in two or destroyed, repaired or modified by means of intrapsychic operations. It is the reported experience by individuals of such operations that can indicate the defenses in which they engage in order to cope with their internal experiences of the objects to which they relate.

The notion of defense mechanisms was first introduced by Freud as unconscious structures which individuals set in place with the aim of protecting themselves against emotions, ideas and drives which threaten to cause pain for them (Valliant, 1992). These forbidden unconscious drives which try to emerge into consciousness are defended against by the ego in order to protect oneself against instinctual forces which are experienced as threatening (Sadock & Sadock, 2007). In this way, the ego finds a way to satisfy both the id and superego (Levitt, 1967). While defenses are often considered as the foundations of psychopathology, they are also protective mechanisms which allow an individual to cope in the face of psychological conflict and emotional distress and therefore hold the potential to serve ego development (Valliant, 1992). Defenses can therefore be understood as both pathological as well as adaptive. This study will try to identify the defenses that each participant engages intrapsychically within their relationships by analyzing the narratives that they provide and explore them in terms of the ways in which they manifest themselves.

Object relations theory holds that an individual's relationships with important others and the exchanges which take place within these relationships leave an impact that set the reactions to be played out, as well as the perceptions to be held in relation to other external objects (Greenberg & Mitchell, 1983). Therefore, one's account of their experience is moulded by

patterns of relationships with external objects that have created a “template of the other” which becomes internalized (Greenberg & Mitchell, 1983, p.11). This internalization prepares one for what can be expected from people in the external world. It also becomes part of one’s experience of their self identity and is drawn on in times of stress, serving as a source of internal security (Greenberg & Mitchell, 1983). The relationship between one’s experience of their external and internal worlds can range between a fluid and interconnected state and a state of rigid separation (Greenberg & Mitchell, 1983).

A number of psychodynamic theorists have been pioneers of object relations theory, including Klein and Winnicott. Attachment theory, developed by Bowlby, has also contributed to the understanding of early object relationships. Bowlby (1958, as cited in Fonagy & Target, 2003) emphasized a child’s psychological need to feel that they are close to their mother (or primary caregiver), and includes the responsiveness and accessibility, which Bowlby (1969) collectively calls “availability” (p. 201). The degree to which a caregiver is available is measured by the child’s “confident expectation gained from tolerably accurately represented experience over a significant time period, that the attachment figure will be available” (Fonagy & Target, 2003, p.234). If availability is felt, it allows for the development of an individual’s concept of others as dependable and supportive as well as the self-concept of being worthy of attention and care (Zeanah, Mammen & Lieberman, 1993). However, if this sense of availability is lacking, negative expectations of relationships are formed. These concepts, which become internalized to play a central role in one’s evaluation of the self and others, set the prototype for relationships to come and are known as “internal working models” (Zeanah et al., 1993). Attachment research has shown that internal working models have been shown to play a significant role in determining the nature of relationships in adolescence and adulthood (Harden, 2004). Attachment theory can therefore be aligned with the claims made by object relationships theorists and research done from an attachment theory perspective appears to offer support to object relations theory.

This research will consider the contributions made by each of the above mentioned psychodynamic theorists, drawing on certain aspects of each of their theories in order to explain and understand the defenses identified within the girls’ relationship experiences. Each of them has taken a slightly different approach in their conceptualization of defenses.

1.4.2 Klein's approach to understanding defenses

Klein considered defenses to be mechanisms which are erected against feelings of anxiety which arise in response to aggression, as opposed to instinctual drives (Segal, 1973). Through these defenses, a complex internal world is formed.

While she acknowledged the impact of the environment on development, Klein was more interested in the goings on in the phantasy world. More than the actual status of relationships, it is the internal representations of these relationships that influence the development of the self (Lemma, 2003). Subjective experience of reality was emphasised by Klein, as opposed to actual events and objects (Lemma, 2003). This refers to the key concept of her theory; the notion of unconscious phantasy, which Klein describes as "the mental representation of an experience or need" (Lemma, 2003, p.31). Unconscious phantasies are subjective interpretations of the external world, and therefore impact one's experience of it. These originate in early experiences and are what make up one's internal world.

1.4.2.1 Projection and Introjection

Real objects in an infant's world are subjectively perceived by the infant to hold either good or bad intentions toward the infant (Lemma, 2003). This means that the unconscious images which have been internalized of others are either good or bad (Feist & Feist, 1998); one object cannot have both good and bad aspects. The infant's interpreted experiences of objects are taken into the infant to be part of their internal world. Klein's account for the creation of the internal world can be understood through the unconscious phantasies of projection and introjection. Introjection is the taking of something into the self (Lemma, 2003). Projection is the expulsion of loving and hating impulses of the self into the external world (Lemma, 2003). In this way, aspects of the self are split off from the self and perceived to exist in the external world. These aspects are often unwanted as they are representative of the innate aggressive drive of the infant. This process of externalising relieves pressure from the internal world and thus prevents internal conflict (Lemma, 2003). This happens because infants have an innate predisposition to reduce the anxiety that emerges when there is internal conflict (Feist & Feist, 1998). There is a

complex interaction between the processes of introjection and projection. The aspects of the external world which become introjected to form part of the self have already been subjectively perceived through the lens of projections of the self (Lemma, 2003). Meissner (1988) summarizes the reciprocal relationship between introjection and projection, stating "what is internalized through introjections is a function of an interaction between the real qualities of the object and qualities attributed to it which derive from the subject's internal world. This attribution is projection." (p. 30).

According to Klein, internal objects make up the internal world. These are interpretations of actual people that have been altered by the processes of projection and introjection. Objects are often internalised as part objects (Lemma, 2003). The objects that fill the self can be thought of as good or bad objects. When an individual is felt to be filled with good objects, they will feel taken care of, safe and supported and good about the self. However, if internal objects that fill the self are internalised as bad, the individual might experience feelings of suspicion or that of being deprived, neglected, accused, criticised and unsupported (Lemma, 2003). Therefore, in the process of relating to others, people will always feel as though they are being treated by the other in a certain way. This is dependent on the unconscious phantasies that are developed in early life, as these are what organize the psyche and establish the phantasy of the other, colouring the way that future interactions with others will be interpreted (Lemma, 2003).

1.4.2.2 Paranoid schizoid and depressive positions and defenses

Klein conceptualised development according to two positions; the paranoid schizoid position and the depressive position. These positions typify the way that an individual relates to objects in the world (Lemma, 2003). There are a different set of anxieties and defences associated with each of the positions. In dealing with these anxieties, the ego engages in different mechanisms of defense that serve to protect the ego (Klein, 1946). Neither of the positions are ever fully resolved, but rather, there continues to be a dynamic relationship between the two, and people will alternate between them (Lemma, 2003). At certain times, an individual may regress to the paranoid schizoid position and experience paranoid anxieties. However, the depressive features should generally dominate the paranoid ones, thereby allowing for love to overcome feelings of hate for healthy object relating (Lemma, 2003).

The paranoid schizoid position is the initial state of infants who do not have the capacity to deal with complex emotional experience (Lemma, 2003). During infancy, all experience is managed according to a black and white dichotomy as they are attributed to whether good objects or bad objects (Lemma, 2003). This means that even when there is an absence of immediate meeting of needs, the infant will experience this frustration as the active attack of a bad object, while if the needs are met, the presence of a good object is experienced (Lemma, 2003). The good or bad experience that is internalised is either that of pleasure or that of anger or terror. The opposite experiences that can be evoked are the basis of the splitting of objects. The same object (such as the mother or the breast) can be experienced as satisfying or as actively depriving, thus splitting the object in two (Lemma, 2003). Klein saw this as a healthy way of relating during the first few months of life, as the immature ego lacks more sophisticated means of protecting itself from destructive aggressive impulses (Lemma, 2003). During the paranoid schizoid position, the infant utilizes various psychic defense mechanisms that serve to protect the weak and undeveloped ego from the threat of destructive impulses (Feist & Feist, 1998). By splitting the object in two, the ego is also split in two due to the complex relationship between the processes of introjection and projection. Ego splitting allows for the infant to split off his or her own destructive impulses and project them into the world, causing the world to be perceived as persecuting (Lemma, 2003). Therefore, splitting can be positive, keeping good and bad objects separate from one another, and can even be useful at times later in life, provided it is not too extreme or rigid (Feist & Feist, 1998). When splitting becomes too rigid, destructive impulses will be repressed, and ego integration is inhibited (Feist & Feist, 1998).

Closely associated with splitting is the defense of idealization (Klein, 1946). This is where the good aspects of the good object are exaggerated in order to defend against bad, persecutory objects. This tendency stems from instinctual desires for unlimited gratification and creates the sense of an “inexhaustible and always bountiful breast [or object] – an ideal breast [or object]” (Klein, 1946, p. 182). Idealisation is adaptive unless it becomes too excessive. This might happen in the case of persecutory fear that becomes too strong, resulting in the ego becoming over-dependent on the internal object (the self feels as though it is only a shell to house the good as opposed to actually being good) (Klein, 1946). This lack of assimilation causes the ego to lack a sense of life and value in its own right and therefore impedes ego development and has a

negative impact on object relations. The ego will therefore tend toward further splits as it tries to identify with the idealised object while splitting off in an attempt to deal with persecutory anxiety which can result in what Klein called a state of disintegration (Klein, 1946).

Denial is another defense which emerges with splitting (Klein, 1946). Not only does the infant try to keep the bad object separate from the good object, but the very existence of the bad object can be denied. This leads to the denial of psychic reality which is made possible by the initial feelings of omnipotence that infants have (Klein, 1946).

Introjection is also used to protect the ego. Usually, the aspects that the infant will take in are good objects (Feist & Feist, 1998). For instance, by introjecting the good object of the mother, her presence can be constantly felt, and the infant will feel safe and supported by this presence (Feist & Feist, 1998). Sometimes, however, the objects which are perceived as threatening to the self are also introjected. By introjecting bad objects in this way, the infant attempts to gain control over them. Once introjected, these bad objects become internal persecutors and may cause the infant to experience fear (Feist & Feist, 1998).

Projection is also used as a defense mechanism according to Klein. The getting rid of or expulsion of impulses and feelings into another object serves to protect the ego by perceiving them to exist outside of the self, as then bad impulses cannot harm them (Feist & Feist, 1998). This is the phantasy that one's own feelings and impulses exist within someone else. Good impulses can also be projected in this way. For instance, by projecting one's own feelings of love on to another, they can feel loved by the other (Feist & Feist, 1998). The projection of loving parts of the self into other objects is an essential feature in the development of the capacity for good object relations and integration of the ego (Klein, 1946). This defense can become maladaptive if it is too excessive, resulting in the feeling of good parts of the self to have been lost and the other object (for instance, the mother) is the ego ideal, while the individual's ego is left weak (Klein, 1946). This is negative because it may lead one to become over-dependent on the external representation of the self's own good parts (Klein, 1946). Alternatively, it could also result in the loss of the ability to love since the object that is loved is felt to be loved as a representative of the self (Klein, 1946).

The complex relationship between introjection and projection which has already been outlined allows for a fourth defense mechanism to be used. Klein called this projective identification (Feist & Feist, 1998). This is when an individual splits off an aspect of the self and projects it into an external object. This object then becomes perceived to be controlled by and identified with the split off aspect of the self (Segal, 1973, as cited in Sandler, 1988). By splitting off good aspects and projecting them into others, the individual seeks to avoid separation from the object, or to keep the good aspect safe from any internalized badness (Segal, 1973, as cited in Sandler, 1988). By splitting off bad aspects of the self and projecting these into an external object, the individual makes an attempt to get rid of the bad at the same time as trying to destroy the external object or gain some level of control over a perceived source of danger. Therefore, Klein introduced the term projective identification as projection that is "derived from the infant's impulse to harm or to control the mother, he feels her to be a persecutor" (Klein, 1946, P. 102). The protective function served by this defense is to allow one to gain some psychological distance from unwanted aspects of the self (Ogden, 1982) and to avoid feelings of loss, anger and envy, but if the process is not successfully managed, this defense perpetuates a sense of persecutory anxiety (Joseph, 1988). Ogden (1982) outlines three steps which are involved in projective identification. The first of these is the unconscious phantasy of splitting off and projecting aspects of the self into another person (the external object) and the omnipotent belief that the projected aspect can take that person over from within. Motivation behind this projection has already been discussed above. The next step involves the interpersonal interactions between the subject (the projector) and the object (the person who is the recipient of the projection). Interactions between the two exert pressure on the recipient to think, feel and behave in a way that conforms to the projection. This pressure is real, but the interaction between the two people is vital for this step to play out (Ogden, 1982). Lastly, the recipient of the projection processes the aspect that has been projected into them. The recipient will manage the feelings in a different way to the way in which the projector does because his or her experience of the feelings is not identical to that of the projector due to their different personalities (Ogden, 1982). This processing of feelings produces a different set of feelings – a processed version of the original projection (Little, 1966, as cited in Ogden, 1982). The subject reintrojects these feelings as a part of the self, which if they have been processed in a positive way, are perceived by the subject to be more tolerable and offer him or her a chance to learn new ways of managing unwanted aspects of the self (Ogden, 1982). However, this process can

also happen in a maladaptive way that results in unpleasant and painful interpersonal interactions. In adulthood, this mechanism may have a profound influence on interpersonal relationships.

The nursing phase of an infant's life was considered as a crucial time by Klein. It is during this time when the infant experiences being taken care of or of being neglected, setting the prototype for relationships to come (Feist & Feist, 1998). The paranoid schizoid position is characterised by the fear of the bad object retaliating and causing harm to the infant, and thus causing paranoid anxieties to emerge (Lemma, 2003). Aggression is therefore at the core of this position. A particular form of primitive aggression which Klein highlighted is envy, which could be a result of inconsistent parenting (Lemma, 2003). This is harmful to the infant because aggression in this case is not split off and directed toward bad objects, but rather towards the good object, causing premature depressive anxiety to arise (Lemma, 2003).

While the paranoid schizoid position is marked by splitting, during the second six months of life the depressive position should be attained, where the ability to see the loved and hated object as one and the same is reached (Feist & Feist, 1998). This is the move from part object relating to whole object relating and also allows for objects to be seen as separate from the self. The realization that aggressive feelings had been directed toward the bad object which is now recognized as also being the good object evokes feelings of sadness and guilt (Lemma, 2003). It is important that the individual has managed to work through the paranoid schizoid position; otherwise working through the depressive position will be hindered. If persecutory anxieties during the paranoid schizoid position were too strong, a fixation in this position may result and become the basis for psychoses later on (Klein, 1946). Ambivalence and guilt are the key experiences during the depressive position and motivate the infant to want to repair the object which they feel that they have damaged. Thus, the capacity for empathy also comes with the attainment of the depressive position, which is important for future interpersonal relationships (Feist & Feist, 1998). Klein called the concern which emerges for the other depressive anxiety (Lemma, 2003). Working through this position is the major developmental challenge, according to Klein, as in spite of the presence of aggressive phantasies, the individual must learn that love is constant (Lemma, 2003). In some cases the depressive position is not resolved. This might result in difficulty with trusting others, morbid mourning for losses and the onset of various

psychic disorders (Feist & Feist, 1998). Just like the projection of good and loving impulses on to external objects will lead to the introjection of good and loving objects, when internal hostile and destructive instincts are projected onto an object, the object is perceived as a bad, threatening object, which will in turn cause the internalization of that object to be bad and threatening (Meissner, 1988). If early interactions have been with a good and loving object, aggressive impulses are felt by the infant to be less threatening because the external object absorbs some of this aggression that serves to neutralize it in a way. This develops the infant's capacity to tolerate his or her own aggressive instincts (Meissner, 1988) as the infant's environment is supportive with a mother who can tolerate and contain the infant's projections (Joseph, 1988). If the external object is not loving and is instead hostile and rejecting, the projected aggressive impulses may lead to more intense internal aggression, leading to the increase of persecutory anxiety (Meissner, 1988).

Functioning from the depressive position is a more mature way of relating, and therefore the defenses used in this position are more sophisticated. The nature of anxiety experienced in the depressive position has been explained to e depressive anxiety which results from the guilt that emerges in the realization that the loved and hated object is one and the same. Guilt can be understood as aggression turned inward (Gomez, 1997). The natural response to this anxiety and guilt is to make reparation. As the depressive position is reached, the capacity for reparation is also reached. Reparation is used to lower anxiety in a similar way to that of defenses, however, it "cannot be properly called a mechanism of defence, since it is not based on denial of the problem, characteristic of defences, but on the recognition of a problem and a new way of dealing with it...According to Klein, reparative impulses play a large part in good human relationships and are also the basis of all sublimation" (Young, 2000). Should reparation be unsuccessful due to the perception that the damage done to the good object is too extensive to repair, one might either regress to paranoid-schizoid position of functioning, or the use of the manic defense (Watts, 2002). This is the denial that any damage has been done to the good object, thus lowering anxiety brought on by guilt. Alternatively, the manic defense might serve to devalue the good of the good object, denying that good objects are important (Burch, 1988) which minimizes the sense of loss which results from the phantasy of destroying the good object. The manic defense may entail hyperactive behaviour (or mania) in an effort to replace the lost good object.

Because early object relating sets the prototype for relationships to come, Klein's theory of object relations will be an interesting viewpoint from which to understand the behaviour of the teenage girls in a children's home who participate in this study, as it may provide insight into the kinds of interpersonal experiences these girls have later in their lives.

1.4.3 Winnicott's approach to understanding defenses

Winnicott's (1965) account of defenses was that they have the function of protecting the true self from vulnerability. The true self feels vulnerable when needs are impinged upon, or go unmet in some way, resulting in the need to defend the self. This is accomplished by the function of the false self, which is to comply with external rules and demands in a way that is necessary for the maintaining of relationships. It can be functional if a balance is maintained between compliance with society and being true to the true self. However, if the false self is too rigid and does not allow for any vulnerability (a high degree of split between the true and false self) defenses may be too rigid, and therefore maladaptive. In order to gain a better understanding of how this happens, it is useful to consider Winnicott's theory of early development.

1.4.3.1 Early Development

Winnicott claimed that during early infancy, individuals have not yet gained the capacity to separate themselves from their environment and are considered to be in an undifferentiated state (Winnicott, 1945). The environment that must be provided in order for healthy development to occur is the good-enough environment, which is facilitated by a good-enough mother (Winnicott, 1949). According to Winnicott, a good-enough mother is a mother whose attunement to her baby adapts appropriately according to the different stages of infancy. In her facilitation of a good-enough environment, it is important that a mother is unobtrusive in such a way that her own needs and otherness do not detract from the focus on the needs of the baby (Winnicott, 1956). Her attunement to the baby's needs is facilitated by primary maternal preoccupation. This is the phenomenon whereby a mother withdraws from other activities in her life to focus on her baby, and adapts her entire existence and behaviour to the needs and

desires expressed by her baby (Winnicott, 1956). The mother's self-experience is closely related to the state of her baby. She is therefore able to stay close to the infant so that she can identify with the baby's bodily and emotional needs and respond appropriately. Primary maternal preoccupation also serves to facilitate the defensive state of subjective omnipotence, which Winnicott called primary narcissism (Winnicott, 1960). In its initial state, the infant's sense of subjectivity and oneness with the mother allows for a sense of all-powerfulness which is reinforced by the primary maternal preoccupation, resulting in the infant's needs being met in a moment of illusion (the perception that a need for something is what creates that things presence) (Winnicott, 1960). This protects the infant from the anxieties which would threaten the still immature ego. During this time, the mother's function is to encompass three important aspects: holding, handling and object-presenting (or realization) (Fonagy, 2001).

"The word 'holding' as used by Winnicott, is strongly evocative of images of a mother tenderly and firmly cradling her infant in her arms, and, when he is in distress, tightly holding him against her chest" (Ogden, 2004, pp.1349-1350). This illustrates the psychological and physical state of maternal holding that essentially facilitates emotional growth, according to Winnicott (1960). This is a state in which the baby is protected (without knowing that they are protected). The baby is held by the mother literally and figuratively in such a way that she provides cohesion to sensori-motor elements in the baby's world, and continuity to mental states (Winnicott, 1960) which provides a sense of integration to the infant. The holding environment is where the infant can learn to integrate aggression and love, and tolerate this ambivalence (Winnicott, 1984). It also serves to protect the baby from mental experiences which might be experienced as unbearable during the process of integration. The mother holds in mind the mental state of the infant.

The handling function of the environment provided by a good-enough mother serves for the important developmental process of personalization to occur (Fonagy, 2001). This is the integration of bodily and mental states and is also known as psyche-soma (the psyche dwelling in the soma), indicating the imaginative elaboration of somatic parts and feelings which gives rise to the feeling of inner reality (Winnicott, 1949). It's important that in order for this to be adaptive, the mother must provide a sense of coherence to the baby by her sensitivity and response to the baby's moods in such a way that she is experienced as acting out their meaning

in the world (Winnicott, 1956). By being attuned to the baby's emotional states and holding these for him or her, she can respond to them in a way that provides the baby a sense of congruence between emotional and physical states, protecting him from environmental impingements (Winnicott, 1949). In essence, the handling function gives the baby a sense of feeling real.

Together with integration, personalization facilitates realization, which is the emergence of an inner reality, and later on, the understanding of time, space and other properties of reality (Winnicott, 1971). The mother's unconscious identification of her baby's absolute dependence on her leads her to be present and available, resulting in her attunement to her baby's needs and how to go about meeting them. Realization can be understood as the collision of needs and reality (Winnicott, 1945), or the mother's function of "making real the infant's creative impulse" (Winnicott, 1965, p.19). It is important for the mother to fill this role in order to facilitate the infant's capacity for relating to objects. If this function is distorted in some way, the child will not feel real and their sense of relating to the outside world of objects will be compromised (Winnicott, 1945).

Winnicott speaks about optimal maternal failure as the mother's gradual receding when she is not needed (Winnicott, 1971). The good-enough mother "starts off with an almost complete adaptation to her infant's needs, and as time proceeds, she adapts less and less completely, gradually, according to the infant's growing ability to deal with her failure" (Winnicott, 1953). By appropriately adapting to where the baby is in this process, the mother creates an optimal environment for the baby to develop as a separate being who is eventually capable of mature object relations (the move from dependence to independence). That is, she manages this process of separation in a way that is tolerable for the baby so as that he or she does not become overwhelmed by the environment. As the baby gets older, at times of the expression of needs, the mother gradually allows for her baby to experience as much frustration as he or she can handle, before meeting this need. The frustration experienced helps to facilitate the move from the state of subjective omnipotence. Thus, she slowly moves away from the state of maternal preoccupation and provides an environment in which the infant can learn through experience to tolerate the frustration of needs and instinctual tensions for increasing amounts of time at a rate that the infant's ego can handle (Winnicott refers to this as a form of weaning)

(Winnicott, 1971). This is an important process for the baby to develop the capacity to cope. Winnicott acknowledges that the mother will inevitably fail at times and this is an important motivator for the growth of the infant. These times introduce the mother's realness because this introduces the notion of the mother's separateness from the infant and therefore challenges the baby and motivates the negotiation of the transition from the mother-infant unit. In this way, good-enough mothering paves the way for ego autonomy as well as the realization of an objective reality (Winnicott, 1960).

During this time, another developmental achievement is the capacity to be aware of one's own hate. The ability to realize the existence of this feeling alongside that of love indicates ambivalence, and the tolerance of this ambivalence indicates integration, ego development and object relations (Winnicott, 1960). If this ambivalence cannot be tolerated due to a lack of good-enough mothering, then integration will not occur and aggression may develop in a self destructive or antisocial way. Winnicott (1984) considered this kind of development in his theory of the antisocial tendency, which will be explained later in this chapter.

1.4.3.2 The True and False Self

Winnicott used the term self to refer to the ego as well as the self as an object in the world. He spoke about an inherent desire to develop a sense of self, which is the sense of feeling real, and the natural occurrence of this if there are no impingements from the environment (Winnicott, 1965). This desire can be hidden or falsified if things go wrong (Winnicott, 1960). The ego, Winnicott claims, has an inherent potential to experience continuity of being (Winnicott, 1956). If this is not interfered with, the infant is allowed to develop a sense of creativity and uniqueness through the creative gesture or impulses out of which the self is built. Continuity is facilitated by three factors. These are a sense of safety in the infant's inner world, the ability for limited concern for external events and the generation of spontaneous creative gestures (Winnicott, 1971). These are provided by the nature of the mother's presence allowing for relatedness as and remaining unobtrusive, so as not to interrupt the experience of continuity that facilitates the emergence of the true self. If good-enough mothering is lacking, this will result in the distortion of ego development and interfere with the healthy emergence of the true self. A consistent and secure relationship with the mother leads to the development of

resilience, and thus, the capacity to deal with life crises (the internalisation of the mother's holding function, so that the child no longer depends on her for this) (Winnicott, 1960).

Developmental achievement, according to Winnicott, is to live from the true self (Gargiulo, 1998). This is the instinctive core of the personality and refers to the capacity to recognize and enact the spontaneous need for self exploration. Healthy development results in the emergence of this. This is rooted in the "aggregation of sensori-motor aliveness which is assumed to characterize the newborn's mental world" (Winnicott, 1965a as cited in Fonagy & Target, 2003, p. 141). At birth, the self does not yet exist, but through the process of transition, the infant learns to experience his or her own feelings and perceptions as being distinct from those of others and the true self emerges. This emergence of the true self happens naturally when the child is given a basis of being (Winnicott, 1971). The basis of being is provided by good enough mothering which facilitates the holding environment. The non-judgmental responsiveness of the mother during early development must serve to strengthen the infant's weak ego. From this, the infant learns that it is acceptable to have needs and will not resort to defending against the vulnerability of the true self by hiding it (Gargiulo, 1998). It is necessary for repeated and consistent success of the mother's optimal responsiveness to facilitate the spontaneous expressions of the infant (expressions of the true self) (Winnicott, 1960).

There is a continuum that exists between the true self and the false self. It is never the case that the true self is totally exposed. It is always hidden, at least in part (Winnicott, 1960). The false self is the aspect of the self that maintains politeness and social codes. It complies with external rules and anticipates the demands of others in a way that is necessary for the maintaining of relationships. It can be functional if the person feels like they can be compliant in society, while still being true to the true self. Winnicott conceptualizes this as the adaptive function of the false self (Winnicott, 1960). However, if the false self is too rigid and does not allow for any vulnerability (a high degree of split between the true and false self) pathology may result. This is when, even when crucial needs emerge, these are forced to be compromised, and the true self is not allowed to override the false, compliant self (Winnicott, 1960). When this is the case, it means that the false self has become rigid in response to overwhelming vulnerability felt by exposure of the true self. The function of the false self is to defend against threat and protect the vulnerable true self (Gargiulo, 1998). This is often done unconsciously and even the self can

mistake the false self for the true self (Winnicott, 1960). When the false self becomes too rigid and separated from the true self, the person will usually lack a sense of authenticity of feeling and not really being alive due to the absence of genuine links between mental states and actions (Gargiulo, 1998). Happiness may be felt to not exist. The false self also lacks spontaneity and originality (which are the usual means of expression in the true self (Gargiulo, 1998). New ways for self expression will therefore need to be explored, which may result in what represents pathological behaviour or maladaptive defenses (Winnicott, 1960).

1.4.3.3 The development of defensive mechanisms

Children develop from a state of absolute dependence, go through a phase of relative dependence and should end up in the resolution of development, which is called towards independence (independence is never absolute, because the child is never in complete isolation and relationships with others remain important) (Winnicott, 1960). Winnicott understood psychopathology within a framework of dependency phases (Summers, 1994). In order to understand the origins of mechanisms of defense according to Winnicott, it is useful to see how they are linked to the developmental phases moving toward independence. Winnicott outlined the origins of defense that are situated in absolute and relative dependence, but considered those which develop in the stage of towards independence as being oedipal, and therefore addressed by classic psychoanalytic theory (Summers, 1994). Winnicott's focus is mainly on pre-oedipal processes. If environmental failure is experienced due to a lack of good-enough mothering (which has already been described above), the individual adapts to the environment through the use of certain defense mechanisms. These are discussed below in relation to the phase of development at which they originate.

1.4.3.3.1 <u>Absolute dependence</u>

During the phase of absolute dependence, the experience of needs being unmet is called 'privation' by Winnicott, and the infant cannot experience "going on being" (Summers, 1994, p.157). During this initial phase, infants are considered to be in a state of primary narcissism (Winnicott, 1960). This means that self is not experienced as separate from mother and the infant has a sense of being all powerful as the mother's attunement to and meeting of needs are

interpreted as a creation of his or her own wishes. This illusion is functional during the stage of total dependence when the ego is still immature, defending against anxieties that threaten it. However, if the mother fails to show appropriate empathy, the baby may be forced to submit omnipotent fantasies to accept reality in a way that their ego is not ready for yet, developing a "premature awareness of self-object differentiation" (Summers, 1994, p.157). This premature awareness interrupts the process of integration, personalization and realization, which have been highlighted as important developmental tasks, and also gives rise to annihilation anxiety, which is the intense fear of falling apart (Summers, 1994). This explains the need for defenses.

At this point, the infant only has access to omnipotent fantasies, and therefore defensive functioning does not allow for the gradual resignation of omnipotent fantasies. Rather, these become rigid, so that the individual withdraws into their internal world, not allowing for the intrusion of reality, but always interpreting it through omnipotence, resulting in distorted perceptions of reality (Summers, 1994). When states of tension are experienced, annihilation anxiety is evoked and "frustration and disappointment tend to be denied and 'magically' relieved, fixating the personality at the level of magical thought" (Summers, 1994, p. 158). This can be manifested in states of depersonalization and derealization (Winnicott, 1962). Depersonalization is when people lack a sense of feeling real or feeling that their experiences are their own (Summers, 1994). Derealization is the sense of being unsure of whether the self and reality are really connected (Summers, 1994). These are symptoms of the omnipotent defense which essentially creates a disconnect from and distortion of reality. It is characteristic of those who defend in this way to lack the awareness of others as separate (Summers, 1994). Winnicott did not agree with Klein's notion of paranoid schizoid functioning. However, he did align his theory with Klein's depressive position (Winnicott, 1954). He called this the 'stage of concern' (Gomez, 1997). Winnicott, like Klein emphasises the importance of the need to integrate good and bad feelings towards the mother, as the ability for whole object relating is reached (Gomez, 1997). Whole object relating is reached through the good enough mother's holding the infant so that love and hate impulses can be integrated (Winnicott, 1954). Once this stage is reached, the individual also has the ability to start to take responsibility for their own contributions to relationships. This developmental achievement marks the infant's move from a state of primary narcissism (Winnicott, 1954). If a stable and continuous caring environment has not been part of early experiences, then this ability is compromised, and the person will not

realise that the loved and hated object are one and the same, and so the capacity for concern is not gained (Gomez, 1997). Winnicott called these people pre-ruth and explained their inability to feel guilty for hurting others, these people can “rage, insult, threaten, and even become physically violent without guilt” (Summers, 1994, p.160). They may be seen as cold-hearted.

A less harmful defense to annihilation anxiety in response to early impingements is ego distortion in terms of true and false self functioning (Winnicott, 1960). This is usually when impingements are not as severe, and therefore some level of integration has been allowed for. The defense in this case is compliance, whereby the baby tries to make their environment predictable (Summers, 1994). If the mother fails to be good-enough and recognize and respond to her baby’s needs and creative gestures at an optimum level, she might instead, continuously substitute her own gestures and the infant will comply with these in a way that goes against the true self (Winnicott, 1971). Compliance is when the child learns to just go through the motions of relationships but the false self is set up to hide the true self and the true self does not engage (Winnicott, 1960). There is thus incongruence between the mental and physical states of the infant, as the compliant self is adapted with external requirements instead of his or her own needs (Gomez, 1997). In the case of repeated compliance, the false self emerges as too rigid. This is because the failure of the mother in this way can be experienced as traumatic, as it poses a break in the experience of continuity at the stage of absolute dependency (Winnicott, 1960). This is experienced as a threat to the infant’s true self, and thus the false self needs to become defensive in a way that serves to take care of and protect the self where the mother has failed to by her failure to provide meaning to the infant’s reactions through her own gestures. Patterns of relationships of people who defend like this may indicate attempts to recreate the experience of compliant relating in an effort to defend against the unthinkable anxiety of disintegration of the self (Winnicott, 1945). Therefore the false self acts as both a defense against the experience of maternal failure, as well as an effort to try and establish a way of relating to objects. This way of relating is where the pattern lies, and has also been referred to as the freezing of the failure situation (Winnicott, 1954). Relationships in this case may be experienced as unsatisfying, and the person may experience feelings of “boredom, restlessness and emptiness” (Summer, 1994, p. 166), reflecting their lack of connection to inner experience. In the case of compliant defenses in personality structures, there has been some development of a self, however, it is

nascent because impingement has obstructed development to some degree, and is therefore buried (Summers, 1994).

1.4.3.3.2 Relative dependence

Development is the move toward internalising the mother's functions so that the individual can perform these for him or herself (Winnicott, 1954). In the phase of relative dependence, the baby has experienced some degree of internalisation. Impingements at this stage are therefore referred to as the experiences of deprivation (Summers, 1994). This means that the loss experienced here is of something that was experienced to some degree before. Mothering has therefore been good-enough until the point of relative dependence but then fails to continue in this way (Summers, 1994). Failures may have temporary impact in the case of a "minor deprivation in a generally reliable setting" (Gomez, 1997, p.97). However, if this minor experience is not corrected, or if it is not minor, but a repeated experience of the child, defenses can become a continuous way of life, which can develop to different levels of severity (Gomez, 1997). Winnicott defines deprivation as "the loss of good experience at a stage when the baby or child is able to perceive the loss as coming from the outside – usually the parents. It is a loss which continues for longer than the child can manage, until his faith in his parents and in the world is broken" (Gomez, 1997, p. 96).

Defensive functioning in response to deprivation can be seen as a sign of hope that one's environment might serve to reverse any damages done. It can be understood at a protest against the deprivation experienced, in an (often unconscious) attempt to reclaim a good experience (Gomez, 1997). This acting-out may also manifest in delinquent behaviours, when deprivation becomes too overwhelming and destructive acts are engaged in, in an attempt to externalise the intolerable internal state, in the hope that this will be externalised and contained by others (Gomez, 1997).

A possible reaction is stealing, which Winnicott (1956) understood as an attempt to regain the lost experience of a good enough mother. This may also be sought after through physical gratification, such as food and drug addictions, alcohol use and sexual promiscuity (Summers, 1994). Deprivation may also result in the lack of the capacity to be alone due to failed

internalisation of the other which results in failure to “maintain a sense of the other without physical presence” (Summers, 1994, p.168). In this case, people might feel lonely and desperate for physical contact with others in order to re-establish some sense of inner reality. Destructive urges can also be viewed similarly. In order to attain a sense of feeling real, an individual may seek out opportunities for aggressive outlets (Summers, 1994). During aggressive expression, a sense of reality is felt, but it only lasts for as long as the aggressiveness. This may be manifested in the form of self-destructive behaviours, or another example of this is the antisocial tendency (Winnicott, 1984), which presents as unregulated aggression and physical action in an effort to attain a sense of self experience. The true self is therefore expressed in aggressive ways. Underlying this may be "… a need to collect impingements from external reality so that the living-time of the individual can be filled by reactions to these impingements" (Winnicott, 1960, p.150).

1.4.4 **An attachment theory approach to understanding defenses**

Attachment theory provides a theory of development throughout the lifespan of an individual, beginning in infancy (Howe, Brandon, Hinings & Schofield, 1999). Bowlby (1958, in Fonagy & Target, 2003), who introduced attachment theory made the claim that babies are born with a predisposition to social interaction. While this predisposition is initially exhibited physically, in terms of efforts to maintain close spatial proximity to the mother, this develops into the psychological need for emotional closeness to a mother (or primary attachment figure). This need entails more than just physical closeness, and requires the responsiveness and accessibility, which Bowlby (1969) collectively called “availability” (p. 201) of the mother. The mother’s availability is assessed and learnt by the child, from which develop a certain expectation that the child comes to have. If the mother is assessed to have a reliable level of availability, the “confident expectation gained from tolerably accurately represented experience over a significant time period, that the attachment figure will be available” (Fonagy & Target, 2003, p.234) is set in place. This style of care giving is crucial for the development of an individual’s concept of others as dependable and supportive. It also is the basis of feeling that they themselves are deserving of attention and care (Zeanah et al., 1993). However, if the level of availability experienced is inadequate, the child will form negative expectations of their relationship with their primary caregiver, which becomes generalized to other relationships

(Shaffer, 1996). In the case of repeated loss and separation from attachment figures, unresolved distress may result (Howe, et al., 1999).

The individual's collective evaluation of environmental signals leads to an attachment system, which is what regulates emotional experience (Fonagy, Target & Gergery, 2001). The capacity to regulate emotional reactions is not an inborn capacity. This is developed as the primary caregiver understands and responds to the infant's emotional state. Secure attachment is the result of a caregiver being able to fulfil this role successfully, which is done by consistently re-establishing equilibrium in the case of emotional arousal in an infant, thereby preventing disorganization beyond the infant's ability to cope (Fonagy et al., 2001). Through the sensitive reflection of the caregiver, the process of internalizing mental states is aided in the child, transforming their nonmentalistic way of thinking into the ability to mentalize (Fonagy et al., 2001). This ability is what is used for regulating and controlling emotions when difficult circumstances present in life.

It is not always the case that caregivers have successfully aided the process of gaining the ability for emotional regulation. When caregivers have failed to restore emotional equilibrium by stabilizing arousal, infants have been allowed to become over-aroused (Fonagy et al., 2001). In these cases, infants may learn to over-regulate their own affect and to avoid distressing situations. Alternatively, affect becomes under-regulated and the expression of emotional distress is heightened (Fonagy et al., 2001). These adaptations in response to environmental failures are what characterize insecure attachment styles.

Unlike securely attached individuals, insecurely attached people have not come to anticipate the availability of attachment figures (Main et al., 1985). The expectations of others and feelings relating to oneself are a result of "internal working models" (Zeanah et al., 1993) and consist of memories and internal representations (Zeanah & Anderson, 1987, in Zeanah et al., 1993). They are structured by attention and perceptual processes, affect, memory evocation and behavioural responses which become patterns established in early in relationships (Main et al., 1985) and have been said to be in place by the time children reach age one (Bowlby, 1969).

The internal working models which play an integral role in one's evaluation of the self and others set the prototype for relationships and inform a pattern which generally persists throughout an individual's life (Collins & Read, 1994). Attachment schemas that are formed in early development are activated in later relationships, leading individuals to seek or avoid proximity to others and impacting the quality of their interpersonal relationships (Cozolino, 2006). The unconscious routes of formation of internal working models generally means that they are resistant to change (Crittenden, 1990, in Fonagy & Target, 2003), however, the notion of neural plasticity allows for some degree of modification in response to new experiences (Siegel, 2001).

The persistence of early attachment styles has been confirmed in longitudinal research studies where those individuals who were assessed as infants with the Strange Situation Procedure then underwent assessment, using the Adult Attachment Interview (AAI) during their adolescent or adult years (George, et al., 1985, in Fonagy & Target, 2003). The AAI is structured to draw out narrative histories from their early relationships, as well as what their subjective experiences of any illness, punishment, separation and loss, maltreatment and abuse might be (Fonagy & Target, 2003). These narratives serve to classify people into one of the four attachment style categories (Main & Goldwyn, 1994, in Fonagy & Target, 2003). Ainsworth (1963, in Fonagy & Target, 2003) developed the Strange Situation Procedure (SSP) to assess attachment styles in children. Based on the strange situation and the behaviour in which children engaged during the study, children were classified into one of three styles. The first is a secure classification and the second two are insecure organizations: ambivalent and avoidant. Main and Solomon (1986, in Fonagy & Target, 2003) introduced a fourth classification which they called disorganized. Although it is believed that these styles persist into adulthood, Main (2000, in Shilkret, 2005), who developed the AAI, introduced the terms autonomous, preoccupied, dismissive, and unresolved to correspond with the original classifications introduced by Ainsworth in the SSP. The proximal goal of attachment is to feel secure (Hazan & Shaver, 1994) and attachment styles can be seen as ways of promoting this sense.

Bowlby used the term 'defensive exclusion' to refer to the way that people attempt to defend themselves from thoughts and feelings which might evoke an unbearable level of anxiety (Bretherton & Munholland, 1999). Internal working models can be seen as structures which

have characteristic patterns of defensive functioning in the case of insecurely attached individuals (Shaver & Mikilincer, 2002). Hoffman (2006) argues that attachment may be a significant factor in the development of defenses. He suggests that primitive defenses become ingrained during early development in response to attachment figures' failure to be a source of comfort and protection. There are different ways in which attachment systems become organised in order to adapt to these early experiences. This is discussed below in terms of the different classifications which come to be.

1.4.4.1 Secure/autonomous attachment

In the case of the secure/autonomous attachment group, there has not been such a pressing need to develop defenses, as these people have developed the confident expectation that others will be available to offer emotional support to them when it is needed, based on the early ingrained anticipation that caregivers would be available to them (Main, Kaplan & Cassidy, 1985). These people feel free to express their value of attachment relationships. Their state of mind is reported to be coherent and consistent (Hesse & Main, 1999). These individuals are also able to use their caregivers as a secure base from which to explore their environment as well as their internal worlds (Main et al., 1985). However, even for those who are securely attached, there are certain tendencies toward insecure styles which may be evoked at times. It is the insecure styles which are the focus of this study, as these can be seen as aligned with defensive functioning.

1.4.4.2 Preoccupied attachment

In cases where parents may have paid more attention to their own needs than to those of the infant (Hesse, 1996), preoccupied attachment styles may develop. Early primary caregivers may have ignored the infant, or alternatively been overly interfering with the infant's autonomous activities, discouraging engagement in these (Hesse & Main, 1999). This results in the experience of inconsistent parenting.

Weinberger (1998) highlighted that a salient concern of preoccupied individuals is their own worthiness in relationships, which can be understood as forming part of the way they see

themselves in their internal working models as unworthy and unlovable (Lapsley & Edgerton, 2002). Preoccupied attachment styles are found to be associated with low self esteem (Collins & Read, 1990, in Hazan & Shaver, 1994).This may result in the desperate need to attach to others in order to bolster their vulnerable sense of self (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991, in Weinberger, 1998) by gaining the acceptance of others (Lapsley & Edgerton, 2002). This points to the strong dependency need that these individuals have (Lapsley & Edgerton, 2002). Dependency needs may manifest in clinginess. In order to feel a sense of security, those who have preoccupied attachment styles are reported to feel that they have to invest immense amounts of mental and behavioural energy to maintain a sense of closeness to attachment figures (Hazan & Shaver, 1994). This can result in an enmeshed sense of self with the attachment figure.

Feelings of anger and distress are intensified and their exploratory activity is minimized. This behaviour is a result of a preoccupation with the responsiveness of others, which may also lead to the engagement in defensive processes which are hypervigilant (Shaver and Mikulincer, 2002). They also become jealous easily and are prone to feeling a sense of loneliness (Hazan & Shaver, 1994).

In their narratives, preoccupied attachment may be evidenced in often long-winded sentences (Hesse, 1996) which often tend to be grammatically entangled or filled with vague usages (such as “dadada” or “and that”) (Hesse & Main, 1999).

1.4.4.3 *Dismissive attachment*

The notion of avoidance may be understood as a response to an attachment figure who has not been available when needed (Fraley, Davis & Shaver, 1998). Early caregivers could have been rejecting or insensitive (Isabella & Belsky, 1991, in Fraley et al., 1998), and therefore, avoidant attachment styles are developed in an attempt to avoid further rejection (Cassidy & Kobak, 1988). During infancy, avoidant attachment styles can be seen as defensive efforts to ignore or avoid thoughts of an absent attachment figure (Fraley, et al., 1998). However, intrusions are subsequently experienced, as the unconscious feelings of longing and despair may rise at certain intervals. The attempts to suppress thoughts and feelings related to attachment are therefore only partially successful for brief periods. Cramer (1987, in Fraley, et al., 1998) argued that

defenses mature over time and therefore these strategies may eventually successfully lead to emotional dettachment, which is observed in adults as the devaluing of emotional attachment and striving for self-reliance (Bartholomew, 1990, in Fraley, et al., 1998). This means that while avoidance in infancy differs somewhat from the corresponding category of dismissing in adults. While infants who avoid attempt to conceal their expression of attachment-related distress, adults seem to not experience this distress.

Kelly and Kahn (1994, in Fraley, et al., 1998) suggest that increased suppression of thoughts and feelings leads to an eventual decrease in the accessibility of those thoughts and feelings. The response (or lack of response) of caregivers results in feelings of abandonment, and these are defended against until the individual has managed to successfully disengage from certain components of the attachment system (Fraley, et al., 1998). Their defensive suppression therefore is responsible for decreasing the activation of attachment behaviours. Fraley and colleagues (1998) describe some mechanisms which maintain this state of detachment. By keeping attachment related knowledge structures isolated from the structures which represent significant self aspects, attachment-related anxiety can be more easily avoided. Secondly, people who are dismissively attached tend to shape their social environments in such a way that anxiety and rejection can be avoided. This means that these people will not rely on others more than they rely on themselves and also tend to avoid intimacy, making it easier to prevent activation of the attachment system. This is also done by distracting themselves with thoughts which are unrelated to attachment (Kelly and Kahn, 1994, in Fraley et al., 1998).

The striving for self reliance which is observed in the dismissive attachment style is not the same as the independence which is characteristic of the secure/autonomous group who still have the sense that others will be emotionally supportive and available if needed (Fraley, et al., 1998). Rather, dismissive people's independence is understood as a result of not wanting to rely on others due to the belief that others cannot be relied on for support, which has become part of their internal working model as a result of experiences of rejection and a lack of physical affection (Hazan & Shaver, 1994). Dismissively attached individuals tend to defend against insecurity by avoiding intimate social contact (Hazan & Shaver, 1994). Avoidant behaviour may be a defensive effort to hide true feelings of vulnerability and their emotional detachment may

lead to dismissive individuals being described by others as introverted, cold, or emotionally inexpressive (Fraley, et al., 1998).

Those who dismiss the value of attachments tend to deny memories of early relationships (Fonagy et al., 2000) and usually tend to minimize the significance of attachment relationships in their lives (Ammaniti, van Ijzendoorn, Speranza & Tambelli, 2000). They may use idealization or devaluing to distance themselves from attachment figures (Ammaniti et al., 2002). For instance, when speaking about parents, they may describe a parent in highly positive terms, but this description is often unsupported with specific memories, or is even sometimes contradicted in other parts of their narrative (Hesse, 1996). They also tend to inappropriately normalize circumstances or details of attachment history (Hesse & Main, 1999) and their narratives come across as superficially elaborative and lack a sense of coherence (Hesse, 1996).

1.4.4.4 Unresolved attachment

A strong correlation between child-maltreatment and disorganized attachment styles has been found (Hesse & Main, 2000). It is hypothesized that this type of organization is built up in cases where the attachment figure is feared by the infant, and therefore, the child's primary source of safety is experienced as frightening (Hesse & Main, 2000), as opposed to the source of comfort which a sensitively responsive caregiver would provide. In the case of disorganized attachment styles, the mother or primary caregiver is experience as being unpredictably responsive, and therefore, the individual has not been able to develop a strategy for coping with imposing parental or caregiver behaviours (Hesse & Main, 2000), as have preoccupied and dismissive individuals (even though in their cases, strategies are conditional). These individuals have also been noted as "the cannot classify category" (Hesse, 1996).

People who have unresolved attachment styles may tend to display elements which suggest both preoccupied and dismissive organizations, but they do not consistently align with either of these (Hesse & Main, 1999). They have also been found to engage in aggressive behaviours and dissociation (Carlson, 1998, in Hesse & Main, 2000). Unresolved individuals show disorganization in their narratives by means of semantic or syntactic confusion when reporting trauma during childhood or recent loss (Fonagy & Target, 2003). Their narratives also may

appear incoherent in terms of lapses of reasoning and contain inexplicably long silences and they may exhibit a fear of breakdown (Hesse, 1996).

1.4.5 Points of contact and convergence between theoretical approaches

Fonagy (2001) highlights some points of contact between attachment theory and psychoanalytic theory. Early relationships are found by both psychoanalysis and attachment theory to be implicated as having significant bearing on ego development (Fonagy, 2001). Klein (1935, as cited in Fonagy, 2001) emphasised the importance of the first year of life as having significant impact on personality development while Winnicott stresses the importance of primary maternal preoccupation during infancy (Fonagy, 2001). This is consistent with Bowlby's (1969) claim that internal working models are set in place by the age of one year.

Both object relations theory and attachment theory recognize that a crucial part of development is adaptation to the external world by the organization of internal structures and both theories place emphasis on the quality of caregiving recieved during early development as having substantial influence on this process (Fonagy, 2001). The expectations that are formed out of these early experiences have the power to distort social experience. Psychoanalytic theorists recognize this as the ego's creation of defenses while attachment theorists understand these coping mechanisms as behaviours which fall into the different classifications of insecure attachment (Fonagy, 2001). Fonagy (1997a, as cited in Fonagy, 2001) aligned the transgenerational notion of attachment classifications with the "internalization of the caregiver's defenses mobilized by the infant's distress" (p.159). Attachment theory concpetualises patterns of attachment as being passed down from one generation to the next. Psychoanalytic theory also recognises this phenomenon as a function of the infant internalizing the defences engaged in by his or her caregiver in response to the infants distress.

Maternal sensitivity and mirroring are considered by both theoretical perspectives as having significant bearing on the quality of object relationships (Fonagy, 2001). While attachment theory conceptualizes this sensitivity as the characteristics of the mother (or primary caregiver) such as their availability and ability to mirror the affective states of the infant, the psychoanalytic theories focus more on the impact on self-development that emerges from

caregiver sensitivity (Fonagy, 2001). For example, Klein (Bion, 1967, as cited in Fonagy, 2001) identifies sensitivity as the caregiver's ability to absorb the infant's psychological experience in a way that has been processed for them, allowing the infant to internalise their projections once transformed. Winnicott (1956, as cited in Fonagy, 2001) also considers the notion of maternal sensitivity, stating the role of the mother as reflecting the emotional state of her baby as having importance in the emergence of the the infant's self-representation.

Relationship formation is an underlying motivation within both attachment theory as well as psychoanalysis (Fonagy, 2001). This is obvious in the centrality of the infant-caregiver relationship in attachment as emphasised by attachment theory. Winnicott also emphasises that mother-infant relationship and refers to the predisposition of the need for relationships as 'ego-relatedness' (Fonagy, 2001).

Both theories also view relationships as being the context of cognitive development (Fonagy, 2001). Bowlby (1980) also emphasized cognitive components relating to attachment and hypothesized that attachment patterns are linked to an individual's access to their memories, thoughts and emotive content. Thus, difficulties arising from insecure attachment, according to Bowlby (1980), may manifest both emotionally as well as cognitively. These hypotheses have been confirmed by recent studies (Siegel, 2001). The capacity for affect regulation is understood by attachment theory to be acquired within the context of the infant-caregiver relationship which offers a secure base to the infant (Fonagy et al., 2001). Winnicott emphasises the importance of the sense of safety, gradual exposure to external events and the opportunity for spontaneous creative gestures to be felt within the holding environment provided by the mother-child relationship (Fonagy, 2001).

These are just some of the points of convergence which can be noted between psychoanalysis and attachment theory to support the notion that the two schools of thought can be reconciled.

There are also aspects of attachment and psychoanalytic theory which cannot be reconciled. Much of psychoanalytic theory has conceptualised the notion of attachment as a secondary notion of the primary caregiver fulfilling a role of provision in terms of food and safety, but Bowlby (1958, as cited in Fonagy & Target, 2003) introduced a challenge to this simplistic notion,

and added the idea of a predisposition of infants toward social interaction that goes beyond the notion of physical closeness and develops into the psychological need to feel that they are close to their mother (or primary caregiver) which requires for responsiveness and accessibility, which Bowlby (1969) collectively calls "availability" (p. 201) of the mother. There are also discrepancies between Klein and Winnicott's approaches to object relations theory. Friedman (1988, as cited in Fonagy & Target, 2003) made the distinction between hard object relations theorists (where Klein would be classified) and soft object relations theorists (such as Winnicott). While Klein would focus on issues of hate, anger and destruction and dwell on obstacles, illness and confrontation, Winnicott looks at issues of love, innocence, growth needs and fulfilment and the progressive unfolding of object relations. Strenger (1989, as cited in Fonagy & Target, 2003) makes a similar distinction, saying that Klein takes a classic view of object relations and Winnicott a romantic one. The classic view considers the essence of a human being as the striving toward autonomy and the primacy of reasoning. Klein saw people as inherently limited but partially able to overcome their inherent flaws. Psychopathology for Klein is therefore deeply rooted within individuals. Winnicott, on the other hand, adopted the romantic view, valuing authenticity and spontaneity above the notions of logic and reason. Winnicott saw people as intrinsically good, but acknowledged that they are vulnerable to injury by circumstance. Pathology, for Winnicott, is more of a manifestation of a hope that one's environment might serve to reverse any damages done. In terms of the origins of defenses, Klein held that these originate during very early development, during the oral phase (in the first year of life) (Klein, 1946). At this point, defenses engaged in are primitive types such as introjection, projection, splitting and denial (Klein, 1946). For Winnicott, it is in the transitional space of the infant where defenses are first engaged in response to the anxiety provoking experience of separation as referred to by Hamilton (1988). The transitional phenomena during this period are considered by Winnicott to be defenses which can function as both adaptive as well as the grounds for pathology (Jacobs, 1995). In relation to attachment theory, it appears to be within the internal working models where the patterns of defense mechanisms are found, as this is the concept that encompasses one's expectations and patterns of relationships (Zeanah et al., 1993). Despite these theoretical divergences, it is thought by an emerging group of theorists that object relations and attachment theories are compatible (Goodman, 2004). Hence, this study will acknowledge the points of divergence and contact between these theories and situate itself in the emerging field of psychoanalytic attachment theory. The points of

divergence are considered valuable in this study, as they speak to how they different approaches cover essential elements of personality development which the others neglect.

While object relations theory offers insight into understanding people's internal worlds, attachment theory supplements this understanding by accounting for the external environmental contributions to personality development (Goodman, 2004). Bowlby's theory of attachment was initiated in response to what he felt was a lack of attention of the affectional bond between an infant and their primary caregiver (Fonagy, 2001). The human predisposition and need to form and maintain emotional attachments, according to this theory, is much determined by the external factor of the responsiveness of the mother (Fonagy, 2001). Object relations theorists; on the other hand have traditionally been more focussed on the internal attributes of persons. Klein emphasised the role of instinctual tensions and drives and how these played out in intrapsychic development, but did not focus much on the relational aspect of development (Segal, 1973). While Winnicott's work falls within the scope of object relations theory, his focus was not only on internal processes, but also emphasised the influence of the primary caregiver (Winnicott, 1965). Goodman (2004) suggests that while the emphasis of object relations theory and attachment theory differs, these might be used in order to enhance the understandings of these accounts of development.

Upon analysis of the data, specific aspects of attachment theory as well as the aspects of psychoanalytic accounts of Klein and Winnicott will be focussed upon. The decision regarding which particular aspects will be used will be based on the themes which emerge from the analysis. It is important to note that the aim of this study is not to comment on the participant's entire sets of object relations, as this often takes a long therapuetic relatoinship or analysis to discover, but rather to merely comment on the presence of certain defensive functions for which evidence emerges within the narratives.

1.5 LITERATURE REVIEW

With reference to personality development, Harden (2004) claims that the family is probably the most important environmental influence on an individual, and that one is particularly vulnerable to such influence during early development. Family structures during this period have significant

bearing on the patterns of relationships to be formulated (Haurin, 1992) and thus will play an important role in the internalizations of objects. Haurin (1992) also emphasized the significant benefit of living with two parents and the direct negative impact on the psychological well-being that disruption in the family has. Restlessness, disobedience and attention seeking behaviours have also been found to be repercussions of early family structure disruptions (Berrick et al., 1997).

These claims are consistent with Bowlby's (1951, as cited in Zeanah et al., 1993) attachment theory as he stressed maternal care as a vital factor for mental health. Harden's (2004) emphasis on family stability as an "environment in which care giving practices provide children with the consistent, nurturing care they need to thrive" (p.32) also supports these claims. The experience of stability is present for children who have had constant, consistent and connected caregivers (Harden, 2004). Family stability has also shown more favourable results for future peer relationships (Harden, 2004) while Berrick et al. (1997) found that the environment provided in children's homes has led to less close friends as well as underdeveloped social support networks during adolescence.

The researcher of this study conducted a previous study with institutionalised adolescent girls from an attachment theory perspective and patterns were found to exist within and across the girls' relationship experiences (Richards, 2009). These patterns included loss, rejection and abandonment. Results also showed evidence of the girls utilizing certain defensive operations within their relationships, as well as the minimizing of their relationships and their own emotions. Relationship experiences of the girls were marked by a sense of distrust and hypervigilance. It is the aim of this current study to explore these defensive operations in more depth.

Further negative impact of disturbances in early relationships that have been found include greater levels of hostility and lower levels of ego resilience (Kobak & Sceery, 1988), affect regulation difficulties and lower levels of self-esteem, emotional wellness, compliancy and positive affect (Fonagy & Target, 2003). Other research suggests a link between psychopathology and early relationship disturbances such as anxiety (Hazan & Shaver, 1994) and depression as a result of feelings of worthlessness and negative thinking patterns (Allen, Moore,

Kuperminic & Bell, 1998). The link that research has found between early relationship disturbances and the presence of moodiness, poorer peer relations and aggression (Weinfield et al., 1999, as cited in Fonagy & Target, 2003) supports the notion of relationship patterns as outlined by Object relations theory (Greenberg & Mitchell, 1983) and attachment theory (Zeanah et al., 1993). Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990, as cited in Allen et al., 1998) theorize that alienation as well as the devaluing of social relationships and societal norms can be explained by such patterns.

A study conducted by McCann et al. (1996) looked at the prevalence of psychiatric disorders in young people living in group care homes in comparison with other adolescents who lived with their biological families. Institutionalised adolescents were found to be particularly vulnerable to psychological disturbances, commonly presenting with conduct disorder, overanxious disorder, depressive disorder and unspecified functional psychosis. Another comparative study conducted in Turkey found institutionalised adolescents to have significantly greater emotional and behavioural problems than those living in natural homes (Erol et al., 2009). These were found to be linked to fatalistic beliefs, the lack of a supportive caregiving environment and poor problem solving abilities.

Research conducted by Rutter et al. (1990) on adults who were raised in group homes suggests disrupted early upbringing has set them at risk for the development of personality disorders as a result of the adverse experiences that these individuals have faced. These experiences associated with disrupted early parenting were found to include multiple child-parent separations, repeated short-term admissions into foster care, persistent family discord and admission into long term institutional care. These experiences have been found to negatively impact secure attachment in child-caregiver relationships and seem to be reinforced by the institutional setting which lacks in continuity and personal caregiving (Rutter et al., 1990). Research has shown that these factors are associated with psychiatric risk (Hodges and Tizard, 1989, as cited in Rutter et al., 1990). Rutter et al. (1990) suggest that this ongoing psychiatric risk is due to the fact that the environments of these individuals continues to be disadvantageous, even after they have been removed from their biological families for whatever protective reasons there might have been.

The environment experienced within children's homes as well as the circumstances that are associated with the occurrence of group foster care may provide some explanation of the difficulties that institutionalised adolescents encounter. Caregiving is often inconsistent due to staff turnover and the quality of caregiving is decreased by the lower levels of attention that institutionalised children are afforded as caregivers are often responsible for more children than they are able to individually stimulate and nurture (Harden, 2004). Shaffer (1996) pointed out that while children's homes are often successful in meeting physical needs of the children, they lack sufficient emotional attention.

Kools (1997) found the context of group foster care to have significant negative impact on the process of identity development in adolescents due to the institutional structure of excessive restrictiveness and lack of individual consideration and respect, as well as the general focus on pathology and deviance experienced by the adolescents. Also contributing to this was the diminished status of the "foster child" which institutionalised adolescents learnt was not a status to be proud of as it was perceived by others as abnormal, bad and damaged as well as the assumption of delinquency and psychological impairment. These perceptions of others experienced by adolescents in the home were often found to be reinforced by the assumptions of caregivers that the adolescents were inferior to them (Kools, 1997). Kools (1997) also found that people's stereotypical views of children in foster care had a strong influence on the way in which they treated these children. Teasing and ridiculing from others was found to be a common experience of children in foster care, which was found to be particularly challenging for adolescents who find themselves at an age where conformity and sameness with one's peers is of such value (Kools, 1997).

The experiences associated with living in a children's home were found by Kools (1997) to lead to the devaluing of the self, which manifested by means of depersonalization and stigmatization. Depersonalization is the devaluing of one's own personal identity due to the kind of interpersonal treatment experienced and the lack of individual consideration and respect received (Kools, 1997). The depersonalizing nature of the institutional structure was found to take away from individuality of adolescents as personal attributes were replaced with categorical assumptions of "the foster child status" (Kools, 1997). Stigmatization refers to the devaluing of the self by others whereby the biased assumptions and according treatment of

adolescents living in children's homes was found to lead to social shame and feelings of inferiority (Kools, 1997). This stigmatization is often internalized as the self definition of these adolescents as they align their self concept with the expectations of others. This self concept of being bad, damaged and rejected often leads to low self esteem, shame and self-loathing. This also has a negative impact on the interpersonal relationships of these individuals, as they engage in social isolation. By avoiding closeness to others, they minimize the risk of confronting their diminished status (Kools, 1997). This results in poor accomplishment of developing and maintaining satisfying interpersonal relationships which is linked to feelings of loneliness and exclusion.

It is often the case that, by the time institutionalized children have reached adolescence, multiple moves have been experienced and therefore these children have experienced cumulative effects of instability which would result in severity of the associated repercussions. Further emotional distress in these individuals could also be explained as a result of the fact that they have often come to be under foster or state care due to damaging circumstances (Harden, 2004). Neglect and abuse have been found as risk factors for significant psychological symptoms such as anxiety, depression, somatic complaints, suicide, impulsivity, hyperactivity, interpersonal problems, intrusive thoughts, hyper arousal and dissociation (Lawson, 2009). Previous conditions of care for children who have come to live in children's homes may have been inadequate or neglectful, traumatic due to the witnessing of domestic violence, substance abuse and/or mental illness in the family or abusive. Impoverished living conditions which may have been present for some would also have aggravated these risk factors (Harden, 2004) since it has been found that low socio-economic status and a lack of education are linked with hostile parenting styles (Cui et al., 2002).

1.6 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

a) What are the particular defenses used by teenage girls living in a children's home?
b) How do these defenses manifest within the girls relationships?

Chapter 2

Methods

The methodology of this research involves a reanalysis of data which was gathered during interviews done and transcribed for a previous study done by Richards (2009) entitled 'An exploration of the relationship experiences of institutionalised teenage girls: an attachment theory perspective' for an honours research report by J. Paterson (previously J.Richards). The data gathered in the above mentioned study was exceptionally rich and due to the limited scope of an honours research study, the focus of the analysis was on finding patterns within the relationship experiences of teenage girls living in a children's home. Due to this broad focus, much of the data could not be thoroughly analysed and discussed. This led to the decision to utilize the existing data gathered from the original interviews with the girls in an endeavour to conduct a more in-depth analysis and write up the data from a different and more complex theoretical perspective by the same researcher. The original ethical consent granted allowed for the retention of the data for two to six years depending on publication, for purposes of further research use. The ethical clearance certificate number granted for the previous research has been included below as well as the clearance number for this study. This section will give a brief outline of the procedures which were carried out for the previous study, but predominantly focus on the details of the current analysis.

2.1 PARTICIPANTS

The participants in the study were eight adolescent girls from a children's home in the South of Johannesburg, as well as a caregiver at the home for each of the girls. The adolescent girls were between the ages of 14 and 19 and they had been living under the care of the home for a minimum period of 6 months as a result of being removed from their biological families. The caregivers who participated were either living at and or working at the home.

2.2 SAMPLING PROCEDURE

The sampling used in this study was of a purposive nature, as it was based on the criteria required for exploration within their particular circumstances. After permission for access to the children's home was granted by the director of the home (see Appendix A), the teenage girls in the home were addressed together as a group and an invitation was extended to the group of girls to take part in the study. Those who volunteered gave their names to the researcher who

arranged a time with the director of the home for interviews to be conducted. These took place individually at the home in a private room.

Before each interview, participants were provided with an information sheet (see Appendix B) and the director of the organization received a guardian information sheet (see Appendix G). The relevant consent forms (see Appendix C) or assent forms accompanied by guardian consent forms (see Appendices E and F) were signed by individuals who were willing to participate. With permission from each participant, interviews were taped (see Appendix D).

After each girl was interviewed, she was asked who her house mother was (the caregiver who is primarily responsible for that particular girl and has spent a significant amount of time interacting with her). The house mothers were then approached and invited to participate. Volunteers were provided with an information sheet (see Appendix H) and consent forms were signed (see Appendix I). Interviews were, with permission, taped (see Appendix D).

2.3 RESEARCH DESIGN

This study took a qualitative approach to research, thus serving the aim of the study which was to identify the defenses present in the narratives of teenage girls discussing their relationship experiences. By approaching this study qualitatively, understanding was gained of the girls' subjective experiences (McLoed, 2001). The detailed and descriptive accounts collected from the girls offer strength to this qualitative study (McLoed, 2001). Such aims would be poorly satisfied by quantification and measurement (Terre Blanche & Kelly, 1999). The quantitative approach is "ill-equipped to develop an understanding of subjective experience, meaning and intersubjective interaction" (Fossey et al., 2002, p.718).

This study attempts to "describe and interpret people's feelings and experiences in human terms" (Terre Blanche & Kelly, 1999, p.123), thus falling into the interpretive paradigm of qualitative research which holds that subjective experience is a valid source of information (Terre Blanche & Kelly, 1999) and recognizes that the subjective viewpoints of individuals are part of reality (Larkin, Watts & Clifton, 2006).

The context in which research takes place is an important aspect to which the qualitative approach pays close attention. Without consideration of this filter of subjective experience in which meaning is immersed, understandings gained would be compromised (Terre Blanche & Kelly, 1999) and meaning cannot be fully grasped (Fossey et al., 2002). South African contextual issues such as the socio-economic status and family structure of the families that the girls have been removed from, as well as the general atmosphere and the resources available to the children's home at which they live will all play a role in their subjective experiences.

The duration of each interview was dependent on the particular participant and how much information they wished to convey, and were on average 25 minutes long. The open-ended questions that made up the interview served the exploratory nature of the research and also allowed for the use of a narrative analysis in this study. The interview schedules (see Appendices J and K) were open ended questions around the relationship experiences of the girls and their thoughts and feelings associated with their experiences. They were asked to discuss the nature of their relationships and to reflect on how they experienced exchanges within their relationships. The interview schedules were designed by the researcher based on the aims of the previous study and relevant ideas which emerged from the literature review of this previous study which aimed to explore the relationship experiences of teenage girls living in a children's home (Richards, 2009). This broad aim allowed for rich and detailed accounts of the girls experiences, from which further analyses can be made regarding the particular defense mechanisms that the girls engage in within their relationships.

Importantly, the data collection methods were suitable to the research question (Fossey et al., 2002). By using open-ended question in interviews, the participants' accounts of their experiences were elicited which were rich and expressive. The flexible nature of the interviews also allowed for the interviewer to encourage the participants in the study to clarify meanings portrayed in their accounts (McLoed, 2001). This also strengthens the credibility of the data analysis which was carried out (Kvale, 1996). Through conversation, understanding was developed within this natural form of interaction with the girls as it allowed for the "opportunity to get to know people quite intimately, so that we [could] understand how they think and feel" (Terre Blanche & Kelly, 1999, p.128). The nature of the initial interviews which were conducted

was found to be suitable for a narrative analysis due to their open-ended and exploratory nature (Cartwright, 2004).

After the interviews were completed during the months of June and July, 2009, they were transcribed by the researcher. In 2010, for the current study, a narrative analysis was conducted with the transcripts.

2.4 DATA ANALYSIS

The method of data analysis that was used in this study was a narrative analysis. This approach, when used in conjunction with psychoanalytic theory, allows for the exploration of identifications and object relations (Cartwright, 2004) and is thus an appropriate manner with regards to the aims of the research, which was to identify and explore the defensive structures within the participants. The narrative approach is derived from the phenomenological theoretical perspective which holds that self representations can only defined in relation to other people (Crossley, 2007); an idea which appears to be consistent with object relations theory. Cartwright (2004) says that the narrative approach to analysis "strives to explore intrapsychic processes and unconscious meaning associated with situations, phenomena or behavioural acts" (p.210). Analyzing interview transcripts from a narrative perspective endeavoured to gain understanding of the unconscious meanings which underlie behaviour, psychological processes and life situations. Cartwright (2004) also identifies the narrative approach as being appropriate for the emphasis of "the development of new theoretical insights in psychoanalysis" (p. 217), thus aligning with the aspect of the rationale for this study that is to contribute to the growing body of knowledge of psychoanalytic attachment theory. Crossley (2007) points out that a narrative analysis is not an easy task as meaning is not transparent within interview transcripts and analysis therefore calls for the need to interpret and engage with the text.

There are three main steps that follow on from one another to guide a narrative analysis (Cartwright, 2004), which were carried out in this analysis. Morse (1994 as cited in Cartwright, 2004) highlighted that certain cognitive processes need to be engaged in within the implementation of each of the steps. These are the processes of comprehending, synthesizing,

theorizing and recontextualizing. These processes were attended to during the analysis. The researcher tried to gain a deeper understanding of the participants by looking holistically at the interview content, linking observations and evidence presented within the interview content to theoretical understanding, while keeping in mind the context from which the participants came.

The first step of analysis was attending to feeling states and corresponding thoughts or perceptions to those feelings (Cartwright, 2004). Tapings of the transcribed interviews were listened to by the researcher, while paying close attention to her own emotional impressions and feeling states during the interview. In this way, the transference-countertransference interaction was used to form analytic impressions, based on the overall sense that the researcher had of that girl. Because the nature of research interview only allowed for these impressions to be brief, these were not be used as independent evidence, but rather as contributing to the bigger picture that is supplemented by other sources of evidence. Impressions were compared with the evidence suggesting the object relations within the transcribed interview texts (Cartwright, 2004).

The second step was to search for core narratives (Cartwright, 2004). By seeking out story lines within the interview, scenes that were relevant to the research aims were isolated. While other methods of qualitative analysis may prescribe the task of summarizing interview content to highlight only important aspects, the narrative analysis emphasizes the importance of the interview text to be "engaged in within its totality, allowing all aspects of the interview to influence the analysis of the flow of associative material" (p.228). Therefore, repetitions, coughing, digressions, pauses, tone and other aspects of the interview that may seem meaningless were considered and reflected on when conducting this narrative analysis. As Crossley (2007) suggested, the transcripts of interviews were read five or six times in order for the analyst to become familiar with the data and get the gist of what the emerging themes might be. In searching for core narratives, each time the data was read, new questions were formulated within the analyst's mind, so that each time the text was returned to for repeated reading , the analyst was more informed (Cartwright, 2004).

The third and final step, according to Cartwright (2004) was to explore the identifications of object relations; however, it was beyond the scope of this research to provide a full account of

these. Therefore, only aspects of the participants' object relation worlds were explored, focusing specifically on their defensive structures. It is an assumption of the narrative approach to analysis that narratives are metaphors for aspects of the interviewee's internal world. Meaning is therefore more important than the factual happenings or events that are recounted within narratives. Crossley (2007) claimed that there is an "inextricable connection between linguistic structures and concepts of self" (p.132). Spence (1987 as cited in Cartwright, 2004) referred to narratives as reflections of the way in which the self works and has internalized events. The interest of analysis lies within the way individuals have located themselves in relation to objects and it is by focusing the analysis in this way that defensive organizations were accounted for (Cartwright, 2004).

Frosh, Phoenix and Pattman (2003) illustrate how defenses can be picked up on within a narrative analysis. They hold the belief that psychoanalytic concepts offer value in exploring and explaining the ways that people have positioned themselves, and this is how object relations could be commented on. By theorizing with the notion of the "defended subject", the defenses that participants engage in were believed to demonstrate themselves within the interview context (Frosh et al., 2003, p. 41). This concept was originally introduced by Hollway and Jefferson (2000, as cited in Rohleder, 2007) in alignment with a Kleinian theory perspective. The reports given by the participants about their experiences do not only communicate the content, but also give some indication of the unconscious defenses that are part of internal worlds. The defended subject defends against subjects which pose as a threat to the self, tending toward discourses which provide a sense of affirmation to their identity (Rohleder, 2007). By attuning to the emotion with which participants recounted experiences, the researcher attempted to pick up on significant affect and defensive narratives, which were identified and interpreted through the lens of different theoretical perspectives.

In order to understand defense mechanisms from the three different perspectives being used in this study, the data was first read from a Kleinian perspective. This means that the researcher searched for evidence within the narratives of the participants for examples of defenses such as splitting, idealisation, and projection (Segal, 1973). Next, the data was relooked at, but from a Winnicottian perspective. In doing this, participant's narratives were examined for evidence of false self functioning and examples within their relationship experiences where the false self

may be perceived as overly rigid so as to protect the true self's vulnerability (Winnicott, 1965). Lastly, the narratives were considered from an attachment theory perspective, looking for evidence of insecure attachment styles. The different analyses were then combined in a discussion commenting on how defenses appear to manifest within internal working models associated with insecure attachment.

As for the transcripts of the caregiver interviews, these were read while bearing in mind that these are not the actual perceptions of the girls and can therefore were not interpreted in the same way. They do not offer insight into the internal worlds of the girls. However, in some cases, these did offer an interesting point of comparison. The insights gained from these interviews were used for contributing to the second research question which looked at the ways in which defenses manifest, as some caregiver accounts illustrated examples of how dynamics play out in the behaviour of the girls. This data was therefore used to offer collateral in terms of the caregivers' experiences of participating girls. However, it is important to remember that the caregiver's own object relations would have played a role in influencing their views, and their accounts may also be reflections of the elements of transference that play out between the girls and themselves as the caregivers.

2.5 REFLEXIVITY

The interpretive paradigm also holds that all understanding is filtered by interpretation and that the meaning and nature of what is real is immersed in one's subjective interpretations (Larkin et al., 2006). The researcher's role in this study was to act as the "primary instrument for both collecting and analysing the data" (Terre Blanche & Kelly, 1999, p.126). For this reason, it is an important acknowledgment to make that one's access to the experience of others is very complex and biased and that is inevitable that the researcher has some degree of researcher bias (Larkin et al., 2006). Smith and Osborn (2003, as cited in Larkin et al., 2006) point out that the contextual background of the researcher, such as culture, gender and personal beliefs, plays a significant role in their interpretations. To account for this, a self-reflexivity section has been included in the analysis. Cartwright (2004) emphasizes the need for reflexivity particularly at step two of the analysis. Reflexive thoughts of the researcher include an exploration of personal motivations and perceptions around this study in order to account for any influence the

researcher may have had in conducting interviews, as well as biased interpretations which may be have been made in the analysis. Another important function of reflexivity, as Waddell (2002) emphasizes, is the involvement of the analyst in the therapeutic context, claiming that the reflection on one's own responses can be "an indispensable part of the working method" (p.xix). By reflecting in the same way, countertransference within the research interview context was used similarly for understanding the underlying processes within the participant's narratives.

Because the researcher has had previous experience in counselling girls from similar backgrounds to the girls participating in this study, her previous experiences and understanding of girls living in homes would be implicated in her understanding of the information offered during the girls' and their caregivers' interviews.

A difficulty experienced by the researcher during the process of interviewing the girls was the desire to offer counselling or comfort to the girls when they expressed emotional distress. This desire was in response to the empathy felt by the researcher toward the girls. The experience of listening to the girls' stories was upsetting at times, particularly when it seemed that the circumstances were unlikely to change, due to the way that the children's home appeared to perpetuate the defensive structures established within the girls.

Linked to this emotional response, was the sense that's some of the girls may have seen the researcher as somebody in a position to help, due to their perception that the researcher came from a background where she may have had access to advantages that the girls may have felt that they have not. For example, after Samantha's interview, one of the girls asked the researcher to buy her a cell phone. This request placed the researcher in an awkward position in response to the possible expectation that the researcher should offer her help after allowing the researcher to interview her and disclosing troubling content. This aspect of interacting with the girls was difficult for the researcher to negotiate, and left the researcher with a sense that the girls may have felt that they had shared their stories with someone who is in a position to do something that will help them, but did not do so. This may have left some of the girls feeling rejected in some way by the researcher, especially in light of the difficult emotions which these girls have been found to have, that may have been evoked by this.

Other girls who were not experienced as wanting to be helped or comforted by the researcher may have been interacting with the researcher in a certain way due to the perceived differences between them and the researcher. They may have seen the researcher's difference in terms of background as being reason why the researcher may not understand them. This may have made the girls feel cautious during their interview, in order to avoid feeling judged in any way. The girls may have had some anxiety about being seen in a negative light, thus leading them to tend toward minimizing negative aspects of their experiences.

The ways in which the girls perceived the researcher may have had some impact on their interviews. This was held in mind in terms of possible impacts on results. The ways in which the girls related to the researcher were an important consideration for the analysis, and these were used for drawing hypotheses in terms of their object relations.

Another emotional response of the researcher was a feeling of disappointment in the caregivers' lack of ability to provide an environment that served the girls better in terms of playing the role as a secure base from which the girls could explore. This was evidenced in the way that some of the girls spoke about their relationships with caregivers as being untrustworthy, as well as the ways in which the caregivers spoke about the girls, which suggested a lack of insight in terms of the girls' emotional well-being. Some caregivers also seemed to view their relationships with the girls as a duty instead of displaying warm feelings towards them.

Another factor which could be perceived as impacting on the data analysis was the interactions of the girls outside of the interview process which the researcher witnessed in visiting the home during weeks of data collection. These were held in mind during the analysis, as the endeavour was to gain as holistic a view as possible of the girls.

2.6 GENERALIZABILITY OF THE STUDY

The aim of qualitative research is often not to generate truths that are universally applicable, but rather to gain meaningful insights into the experiences of the particular participants under study (McLoed, 2001). This research did not aim to make broad claims pertaining to the

defensive behaviour engaged in by institutionalised adolescent girls, but rather to gain a better and more in-depth understanding of the defenses, how they are used, their effectiveness and the underlying reasons for which these are used. The insights gained may inform interventions aimed at adolescent girls living in homes.

2.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The research proposal was sent for ethical clearance to the Human Research Ethics Committee and the following ethical clearance certificate number was granted: H100 633. Appendices A to K which were used in the original study are attached to this report.

A previous research proposal was submitted to the Human Research Ethics Committee and the following ethical clearance certificate number was granted: H0 90516. This study used the same data transcripts, but an alternative analysis was carried out, incorporating new theoretical perspectives.

The ethical considerations that were made included the voluntary participation as well the right to refrain from answering any particular question without any negative consequence for the participants' decision to do so. Consent and assent forms were explained and it was a requirement of participation for these to be signed prior to commencement of interviews and taping. Confidentiality was ensured to all participants and tape recordings were only accessible to the researcher, while transcripts which contained no identifying information were only accessible to the researcher and research supervisor. No information linking to identities of the girls ate in this research report. Tape recordings and transcripts have been and will continue to be locked away, and these will be destroyed after the appropriate amount of time has passed. Voluntary withdrawal was explained to participants, as well as that there would have been no negative consequences for this. There were also no direct benefits for participation in this study. Any psychological risk posed was prepared for by providing a brief post-interview debriefing and if participants felt distressed by the interview, these individuals were provided with a referral to various counselling resources at no cost to themselves. Participants were made to be aware of how the research findings would be reported and it has been explained to them that will have

access to a one page summary of the results upon request, while the director of the organisation will be provided with a more detailed account of findings.

Chapter 3

Results

3.1 KLEINIAN ANALYSIS

3.1.1 Evidence of paranoid schizoid functioning and depressive functioning

Much of what was observed in the girls' ways of coping could be aligned with paranoid schizoid mechanisms of defense, suggesting that they function from this position much of the time in managing their relationships. However, there are also instances that suggest that they are functioning from the depressive position. The defenses which characterise the depressive position are similar to those of the paranoid schizoid position; however, they are far less intense (Young, 2000). Defensive ways of relating can be thought of along a continuum. For the most part of this section, comments made on defense mechanisms suggest paranoid schizoid functioning. However in cases where defenses are less rigid, comments are made suggesting some evidence of functioning that is closer to the depressive position.

3.1.1.1 Splitting

Most of the girls showed evidence of splitting in the way that they described their relationships with others in the home. It is a normal way of being to have certain dislikes and preferences and it is not maladaptive for there to be certain relationships in one's life where one may feel a dislike toward another, while placing higher value on certain other relationships. What distinguishes some of the observations in these interviews from this normal way of functioning is the intensity of the girls' dislikes and preferences. The recurring emphasis on this intensity suggests that the girls engage in splitting as a means of defense.

Hannah classified her perceptions of others in the home according to being either fine or bad, saying *"they are fine but some of them irritate",* suggesting that she engages in splitting in her experiences of others. For her, the split seems to be according to the ages of the children. She seems to see the older ones as persecuting and untrustworthy, but indicates that she feels safer with the younger girls. Her splitting defense manifests quite concretely. It can be observed in Samantha's interview how she splits in her perceptions of others when she said *"Some of them I like, some of them I don't. Sometimes they are teasing me – then I don't like them"*, suggesting that those who she perceives to be persecutory toward her, teasing her, are seen as bad objects

and she doesn't like them. When asked what kinds of feelings she has when she is being teased, she responded *"Then I think I must go out [of] this home. Then I will never see those children again",* showing how she wishes to cut off and get rid of the bad. Leandra explained *"Sometimes with one person it's bad and then with the others it's normal".* Caitlin referred to the children in the home, saying *"they are not my family, so I don't love them"* and spoke about her interactions with them as either fighting with them or having them stay out of your business, suggesting that she doesn't perceive any intermediate ground between these. The way that Caitlin described an incident with Veronica also showed how she has splits in her reactions to people and how she perceives them to either be completely on her side or otherwise an enemy. She interpreted a comment made by Veronica as Veronica speaking negatively about her, saying *"... if they say bad stuff about me. Like that squint thing just did".* She does not leave room for any grey areas in this as she does not seem to show the capacity to hold both the good and bad aspects of Veronica in her mind at once. She lacks the capacity to think about other possibilities in terms of Veronica's motivations. Caitlin also indicated how when aggressive feelings surface, she struggles to remember the good aspects of her relationships with others. It appears that when experiencing anger or aggressive feelings, Caitlin splits so that even the people who she considers to be her friends become all bad: *"Say now we get into a fight. You know how usually when it's your friends you are calmer with friends than when you are fighting with a stranger? With me, my friend becomes a stranger when I'm angry and I can just go mad. I don't care who you are, how old you are… uh-uh"*. She went on to elaborate how that person becomes perceived as all bad to her, saying *"I want them out. Completely out*", showing how people can quickly become devalued.

Splits were also evident in the way that the girls spoke about the difference between relationships within the home and those outside of the home. A few times in Caitlin's interview, it can be seen how she thinks about the home as being all bad and how she splits off her destructive impulses on to the home. She described the home to be like a jail: *"They [people outside the home] are different. I prefer living out there [than] in here. It's like a jail in here, honestly. It's just an irritation in my life and I really want to get out of here, you don't understand".* She also explained how she needs to be extra defensive inside the home, compared with how she can be when she is outside: *"[outside the home] it's different, because then if someone irritates me, I tell them and ask why and then we can sort it out. In the home, I*

just don't care. Out there, someone might do something by mistake [and] you'll say 'its fine' and you'll think twice before deciding 'I'm going to hit this person'". Similarly, Melissa said *"I'm a completely different person when I'm with friends in the outside world. Or, I don't want to say I'm completely different because then it's like I'm two faced and I'm not"*, showing how she relates differently toward the two separate groups. When asked about what her relationships were like outside of the home, Leandra replied *"Totally different… people outside here are totally different",* but also went on to show how splitting happens outside the home when she added *"Some people are mean, some people are nice"*. Samantha also showed splitting in her perceptions of those inside the home and those outside, describing those who are not in the home as *"different, because they are not teasing me".*

A way in which Leandra displayed splitting was when she described her previous foster mother who used to abuse her and her brother as *"evil, evil, evil"*, but then later spoke about how she always tells her brother about how this woman did everything for them: *"I say to my brother, 'let's go see her', and he's like 'no, no', but then I say [that] we should just go thank her, you know, 'cos she did a lot for us. She put us in school and everything".* This is an example of how both good and bad splits can be embodied within the same person. She seems to be able to access only either the good or the bad at one time. She cannot hold both the good and bad aspects of her previous foster mother in mind at once and this was demonstrated in the different ways in which she spoke about the woman at different stages in her interview. Samantha also demonstrated the lack of a capacity to hold in mind both the good and bad aspects of Leandra at once in her description of how she reacts to Leandra when she becomes upset with Leandra:

> Like she makes jokes then I get upset 'cos I'm not used to that and I'm taking it very seriously and then I say I'm upset so then she says she's not serious and she's just playing then we had a fight then we didn't talk for that week, then she said she's not serious, so then… I was just quiet then I asked why did she say that, then she said she was just joking so then I just walked away and didn't talk to her.

This is an example of how the way these girls function in terms of likes and dislikes is intensified Samantha's initial feelings in response to Leandra in this example were experienced by

Samantha as overwhelming. Her anger toward Leandra is so intense that she needs to take some time before she can access and bring to mind the good parts of Leandra again. In the interaction described above, Samantha experienced Leandra as rejecting. Usually, she perceives Leandra to be protecting and she idealises Leandra, but when Leandra does something to upset her, she cuts her off in the same way that she does others who hurt her. She refuses to talk to her and walks away. However, after some time, she is able to access the good parts of Leandra and hold these in mind again. The way in which she spoke about her relationship with Leandra, as well as observations of her interactions in the home suggest that Samantha's relationship with Leandra feels more safe for her than other relationships. For this reason, she may be able to function on the paranoid-schizoid/depressive position continuum in a way that is closer to depressive functioning than in her other relationships.

Another split was observed in Melissa and Veronica's interviews. They seemed to split between men and women, attributing the bad to women and the good to men. Melissa stated *"On the outside I can solve things much easier, because most of my friends are guys. Because you know girls hold on to things forever and ever and ever. Guys just beat each other up and then they are friends again. I like that. Girls are so bitchy"*. Veronica expressed similar feelings:

> Outside, most of the people I interact with are guys; most of my friends are guys. I don't interact with that many girls. I try to avoid girls... Girls are nasty hey. They have foul mouths and they're always putting you down. Like if you wear something stupid, a guy will say "please don't wear that, you look ridiculous". But with girls they will tell you that you look fine so that you will be the laughing stock or whatever. So I think I just prefer guys, cos they are honest. Like if you do something with girls, they will just say "oh it's ok" but then go to the other girls and say "oh, so and so did this". It's not cool.

The ways that the girls spoke about themselves also suggested that they have splits in their self-representations. Caitlin described herself saying *"there's two parts of me. I'm like this hard rock and this person who's always smiling".* She also spoke about how she has *"cut the bad things out of [her] life so far".* She said *"if something bad happens, I get my revenge and then it's over. I cut it out and it's gone. It's like this blank spot and then I erase it out… I erase it out and it feels better and I feel good",* which indicated how she splits off bad aspects of her life.

3.1.1.2 Projection and introjection

In describing their relationships with others, most of the girls shared the assumptions that they have formed about how others will treat them. It would be reasonable to understand these attributions as being linked to the set of object relations that the girls have come to form as a result of early disruptive relationships. These attributions are understood by Klein's theory as projections. Evidence of paranoid anxiety, which characterises the paranoid schizoid position, can be found in most of the interviews with the girls. Most of them verbalised having difficulty in trusting others, while others indicated this in other ways. For all of them, it could be seen that trust was not a familiar aspect of relationships.

This lack of trust translates into very cautious and defensive ways of interacting with others. Melissa described her feelings toward newcomers in the home.

> No, with them I'm just very cautious. Like what to say and not to say. You have to be very tactical in this place. You have to know what to say and what not to say. You can get yourself into big trouble. I'm just more wary of them when it comes to conversations and stuff. I keep it very general. I don't go into any actual details on anything I feel very strongly about.

This shows how Melissa has some paranoid anxiety about how others will treat her and whether or not they might harm her. This interpretation is supported by her statement: *"a lot of the homeys don't know me for who I am. They just know me for the Melissa that I project onto them. I just can't be open in this place. I feel a lot more free and open when I'm with my friends outside. They understand me better. Everybody here just thinks I'm a weirdo".* She therefore needs to defend against the anxiety that is raised by thinking of others as having harmful thoughts toward her in order to protect herself. This defense was utilised in her interview when she was asked *"Why do you say they think you are a weirdo?"* to which she replied *"No, I'm not a weirdo. I'm just strange to them".* Here, Melissa interpreted the question as persecutory, suggesting that she is a "weirdo", and she became defensive in response to this, when the question was actually not suggesting that at all. However, Melissa's account of her relationships

outside the home indicates that she does not feel the need to be so defensive outside the home. This suggests that she functions in a more integrated way, closer to the depressive position in some of her relationships. It is those relationships in the home that feel particularly unsafe for her and thus, her defenses are more rigid in this context. Melissa also spoke about the need to be on her guard in the home: *"This side, you have to be on your own mission almost. Because say now you trust somebody and you talk to them about something, they'll go and say that you should talk to somebody of authority about it, and it was something you trusted them to keep. But that's how you get yourself into trouble cos they don't",* showing the lack of trust she has in others. These examples of caution and lack of trust highlight Melissa's sensitivity to others. However, it can be seen how she projects her vulnerability into others, where she said *"In here, they are too touchy. They get agitated way too quickly".* Sarah also indicated some sensitivity, but projects this sensitivity into others, emphasising how she is not the victim in conflict: *"They don't shout at me"*. She described the conflict in the home in which she is involved as starting with others being victimised, but does not like to think of herself as being the one who is being targeted. She explains the kind of scenario's where she would have a fight with someone as *"Like maybe someone is teasing another person. So I tell them to stop it, then they start yelling at me".* This statement also contradicts what Sarah said earlier about not being the one that others shout at, suggesting how she defends against feeling targeted by others. Samantha also expressed her caution around others intentions. She described her relationships at school saying *"I only came to the school a few months ago so I don't know them yet. I'm not used to them. I have to get used to them and know them very well, then we will be trusting each other"*. For Samantha, others need to prove that their intentions are not harmful toward her before she feels safe with them, however, it does not seem that she has reached this level in any of her relationships because she is paranoid about how they might hurt her. Gillian also expressed the need to be cautious about new relationships, saying *"I'm still trying to get used to this home. It's the first year",* after she said that the people in the home that she is close to still don't know her: *"I think they know, but they don't know the real me".* Even in those relationships where she feels closest to people, there is a need to hold back and protect.

Caitlin spoke about how she has made the determined decision to not trust her house mother. She fears that she will be talked about and also that anything that she shares might be used against her: *"Like my house mother. I don't trust her; I told her that, she's not trustworthy at all. I*

said to her 'I can't talk to you because you're not trustworthy at all. I know whatever I say to you is going to be around the whole home tomorrow, and that's why.' So she says, "I hope you can learn to trust me again'. I'm like, 'I'm not going to learn to trust you'. There's no reason for me to trust her again". Veronica also displayed some paranoid anxiety in the way she thinks about other's intentions. She spoke about how she advises others to not take notice of the house mothers when there is conflict in their relationships with them. She explained *"I just say to them [the girls in the home] that they must just don't worry about it. Don't let them annoy you because that's what they want"*, indicating how she assumes the house mothers have harmful intentions. Samantha also indicated how she projects harmful intentions into others: *"They tease me. They are always trying to get me down and stuff like that".* What she said about the feelings which become evoked in these interactions suggested how these become projected onto others: *"[when they tease me] I feel like outside even, nobody cares about me and stuff like that"*. Here, Samantha expressed how the feelings of rejection and persecution that come up for her when people in the home tease her make her feel like everybody (even those people who are outside of the home) will treat her in a similar way and she perceives them as also having harmful intentions toward her and not caring about her wellbeing.

Caitlin spoke about how often people fight with her, suggesting a sense of being victimised and perceiving others as being out to harm her. When asked about what kinds of things upset her, she said *"When they [others in the home] talk about me. If like, I say hello and then they are so rude and negative, then I get irritated and I fight with them".* This unconscious phantasy that Caitlin has of people being bad goes so far that Caitlin feels that she can't even trust the thoughts that people have about her and so many simple interactions are even coloured with her assumptions of being persecuted by others. She also spoke about people being untrustworthy, saying *"There's lots of people you can't trust in this world. So if someone tells you something, you don't believe them. Never believe somebody because they just lie". Later, she used this lack of trust to explain why she protects herself by not allowing herself to get to close to people: "that's why we don't get too close to each other, whatever they [people] say".* It may feel safer for Caitlin to already assume that people can't be trusted and that they will let her down, because then she avoids getting hurt and feel more in control. She even links this to earlier hurt that she felt from her father who would make promises to her and let her down: *"Well, when I was younger it was a problem because I used to, like, my dad would forget, he*

actually still forgets me all the time, and um, I'm so over that whole fact, you know". She claimed to be over the fact that her father and others let her down, but it is evident that this still causes her to feel hurt and rejected. Her response is to take control of these feelings by projecting untrustworthiness into others. Hannah explained why she could not tell certain things about herself to other people, saying that *"They talk too much and expose everything".* The sense of being exposed seemed to also be linked to a fear of attack from others. Sarah described a similar feeling, saying *"Because maybe you can tell them [other people] something and then they can go tell other cottages and then there is a big situation".* Veronica explained how telling people things about oneself will lead to getting hurt: *"When you live with somebody you can't tell them everything because when you fight with them then they will be like 'oh, but you did this and this and this' to make themselves look better then you"*. They project their aggression and harmful intentions into others, assuming that if they make themselves vulnerable in any way, they will be putting themselves in danger of being exposed or hurt by those they make themselves vulnerable to.

Hannah's interview indicated that she projects a sense that others are not going to love and take care of her needs, for example, when asked about why she won't share more of herself with others, she responded *"I don't like talking to them… they won't listen"* and when asked to talk about a time where she had tried to talk to others and they had not listened to her, she indicated that she had not ever tried, saying *"Nope, I just know".* By holding this expectation of others, Hannah may be able to maintain a sense of predictability in her world.

When Caitlin feels hurt or criticised, she responds angrily, and speaks about wanting to get others back. She stated *"I will get that person. Revenge is sweet and I always want revenge"*. This need for revenge could be the result of the projection into others that they are the cause of her pain, and therefore, they should suffer. Caitlin's fantasies of rejection reflect a desire to shift her feelings of hurt and vulnerability into the other as well as the desire to identify with the perceived attacker or aggressor, as opposed to being the one who is being attacked or raged against. She went on to speak about how she likes to *"break people emotionally".* As well as a response to her angry feelings, this might also be a projection of her emotional vulnerability into the others that she would like to break.

The aggressive impulses experienced by the girls are often projected into others, which tends to manifest in rageful outbursts at others in reaction to things that others might say or do to evoke a sense of anger in them. They are reactive in their interactions and their aggressive impulses appear to be quite close to the surface, and could emerge uncontrollably within their interactions. For example, when asked how she dealt with her irritated feelings toward others, Hannah replied that she would *"scream at them"*. This is an example of paranoid schizoid functioning, because it suggests that she lacks the capacity for a more sophisticated way of managing her aggression, and instead she attacks others by whom she feels attacked. Similarly, Sarah shared that her reaction to others yelling at her is to feel angry and she said *"I yell back at them"*, also indicating some reactive behaviour. When describing her actions in a fight with someone, Gillian said *"Sometimes I'm sad. Or angry. I bang the door or I completely do nothing and just go to my room. Or I just ignore them"*. This response suggests how overwhelming Gillian's aggressive feelings become when in conflict with others, and she struggles to contain them. Caitlin and Leandra both spoke about engaging physical violence when they feel angry. Leandra spoke about how when she is mad at one of the boys who often seems to upset her, she feels like *"punching his face". "If I don't do that, I can cry"*, she added. This also shows how she copes with feeling attacked or persecuted by responding in an aggressive manner that might threaten others instead. Indicating how close to the surface and unmanageable her aggression is, Caitlin said *"I've got a very bad temper and I'll lose it with anybody very quickly and I don't care who they are".* Her comment also indicated her projection of not being trustworthy onto others when she reported, *"I don't trust people. I don't know why, I just don't trust people"* and then straight away started speaking about the lack of control she feels over her own aggressive impulses: *"Sometimes I get these feelings like I think I'm mad sometimes. Because like, if I walk down the stairs behind someone, I just feel like strangling the person".*

When speaking about the way she interacts outside of the home, Melissa said that she is much louder than when interacting inside of the home: *"You'll find that outside I'm not very quiet. I'm a noisy person. I try to be. But not in this place. You can't be. I like to just blend in".* When this statement is considered in relation to an early comment made about one of the new girls in the home, it can be seen how Melissa projects her wanting to be noticed into the other girl:

> Some of them just used to irritate me. Like the new ones when they came here. Like the new ones when they came here, like Samantha, she's new, and Jane, she's... (sigh). They just used to irritate me. Maybe it's because Jane is so loud. She's just so forward. And I don't know, she's just like rough, you know. I don't know how to explain it. And it used to irritate me. But after a while I learned to understand that that's just how she was and I've just got to deal with it. Because I used to think she was just putting it on, you know, to fit in or something. But no, not really anymore.

Veronica also seemed to project her own need to be noticed into others. At one point in her interview, Veronica denied the need to be valued, saying, *"I'm too busy to worry about stupid things. So I really don't care, if somebody doesn't like me or whatever, who am I? You're entitled to your own opinion, so you can like me or not like me, I'm still going to live and I'm still going to be the same person".* However, earlier on in her interview, she described the pressure of living up to expectations and being an example: *"In the beginning it was ok when I was small. Now I'm like the oldest, so it's always like they expect more from me and then if I do something wrong, it's like 'you're supposed to be an example' ...It's hard, like you feel a bit pressurised, you know".* Veronica said that she doesn't need attention, but the message that she really does want recognition seemed to come through when looking at her interview as a whole. She appeared to project this need into others when she was speaking about other girls starting fights with her because of their *"petty"* issues, saying *"I actually didn't care because I knew they weren't speaking the truth and they were being stupid and were just looking for attention, so then they bring up all their own nonsense and then they expect everybody to be 'oh sorry', it's pathetic".* In this statement, she may have been expressing how she felt that this aspect of herself to be unacceptable and undesirable.

3.1.1.3 Denial

Caitlin's quote about cutting the bad out of her life which has been discussed in relation to splitting is an example of denial. Once she has split off these bad aspects, she says that *"it's gone… I erase it out"*. This suggests that she engages is the mechanism of denial so that she can feel safe from this harmful bad.

Hannah's interview suggested that she denies her bad feelings in the way she speaks about difficult relationships as being *"normal"* and when asked to elaborate on this, she replied *"I can't explain".* Only when probed further did she eventually say *"they're fine, but some of them irritate"*, suggesting that she struggles to engage with her more difficult emotions. Melissa also denied the intensity of feeling rejected by others and lacking trust in others, when talking about how they don't take her seriously: *"They don't take you seriously ever. Like if I was annoyed at something, I would raise the issue with the group and they will just say 'ah, you are taking it too seriously. You know, no homey that you interview will say they trust someone else just about. You can't. Not in a home anyway. It's not that bad".* By ending off with *"it's not that bad",* she was defending against the difficult feelings which started to arise as she was speaking about this. Her positive wrap up in this example suggests denial, but could also be seen as her way of trying to integrate the good and bad aspects of the home. This may indicate some suggestion of depressive functioning, in the way that she acknowledges negative aspects, but tries to also think about the "not that bad" parts. A little further into the interview, Melissa again dismissed the way that people hurt her as a normal way of being in the home: *"Sometimes there's something they say or do that's not funny, but they will think it's funny... But I don't have a problem with anybody in the home. It's just a homey thing".* When talking about how others in the home thinks she is a weirdo, Melissa also denied the feelings that this evokes in her as well as the need for good in her relationships with others. When asked how it makes her feel, she replied *"Nothing much hey. I don't care. I live by... I don't care what the world thinks. I wasn't put in here to win a popularity contest. I don't mind".*

Caitlin also disconnects from her emotions in a similar way, denying the extent of her aggression when describing a situations where she is fighting with others, saying *"If somebody yells at me, then I get angry, so I start yelling back at them and I don't know what I would do to that person".* This might suggest that it is difficult for her to even think about how she might react in a situation where her aggression becomes too overwhelming for her. Gillian also denied any aggressive impulses to a certain extent. She became uncomfortable at the thought of reacting in a physically violent manner when she feels angry. When asked how she behaves when she is feeling angry, she responded *"We shout"* and then she added in a whisper, *"I don't do physical abuse".* The way that she whispered this comment about physical displays of aggression suggest the intense anxiety that arises even at the thought of aggressive impulses.

Caitlin denied her need for a good object, saying *"I don't trust people and I won't be able to tell people everything about my life and things like that. That's nonsense, since when can you be so clear with somebody about everything in your life? Never. And I don't think I can be around the same person for a long time. They bore me".*

Melissa also spoke in a way that minimised the effect that the difficult issues that she is exposed to within the home have on her, denying any negative impact that these have on her. When speaking about her response to feeling irritated by others, she said *"But usually, I'd just ignore it, I don't stress myself with other people's problems".* She dismissed the effect that the conflict on the home has on her too, saying *"Well, this is going to sound very mean, but I actually don't care. It doesn't involve me, so if it doesn't involve me, why must I worry. I find it hilarious actually, to watch them fight"*. Veronica also denied the presence of conflict in her current relationships, saying *"nope"* when asked about whether there is any conflict in her relationships with others in the home, even though a number of the other girls mentioned her name when describing fights with others. She explained *"I just try and not be in conflict, because it's boring"*. She did admit to having conflict in the past, but dismissed this as being around *"petty things".* When asked to reflect on her feelings around the fights that had been, Veronica said *"I really don't care".* Samantha expressed how she cuts off and denies her hurt feelings when others fight with her. When describing her feelings toward a boy in the home who teases her: *"I ignore him. I don't talk to him. I don't even greet them, I will just look at them like they just normal. I don't know them".* Sarah also indicated the wish to cut off from and deny conflict when she described her feelings after she has had a fight with someone: *"I felt like the fight didn't start",* expressing her wish that it just never happened.

3.1.1.4 Idealisation

Caitlin shows evidence of an idealised unconscious phantasy of her sister. She speaks about her sister saying *"The only person I care about is my sister. That's the only person I love. That's the only person I live for".* The good in her sister has been exaggerated, so that her sister is seen as the only good in her life. This idealisation could be said to be rigid as Caitlin went on to add *"If anything happens to her, my life is over".* This sense of her sister's potential death being the end

of her life suggests that Caitlin has become over-dependent on the internalised object of her sister and she has not really assimilated this into her self-representation. This statement suggests that her sense of self is enmeshed with her sister. She does not seem to have internalised good aspects that give her a sense of value in her own right. She spoke of herself in a negative light, saying *"I know who I am which is not a very nice person"* and *"I'm very heartless"*.

Leandra seemed to really idealise her mother. She spoke about how others might be in the home because their parents don't love them, but she is there because of financial reasons: *"We are all in here for different reasons. Sometimes it's not because your parents don't love you. Sometimes it's because they are an alcoholic, so it doesn't mean they don't love you. They still love you; they just have their own problems. Others, they don't have money, you know. So they think it's better for you to be here... for instance, my mother doesn't have money to look after me and my brother".* This suggests that she defends against feelings of rejection by idealising her mother and interpreting her mother's decision to not take care of her as a loving one, because Leandra would be better off at the home. Her sensitivity around this is evident in the way she becomes very easily worked up when others talk about her mother in a negative way. She hinted toward this sensitivity at one point when speaking about how others tease and suggest that her mother doesn't love her, where she said *"Sometimes I take it and think that maybe my mother doesn't, you know. So it hurts me, but I don't show it. I don't let people see what hurts me".*

Idealising the home in some way seemed to be a defensive mechanism for Leandra. Samantha struggled to accept the reality of her situation of living in the home, saying *"I can't believe I'm in the home... I don't know I just can't believe that I'm in this home. I just can't believe it".* She said that when she has those thoughts, she speaks to Leandra: *"Then she says that this is the best home. Because here at least they give you food and they don't punish".* By highlighting all the good aspects of the home, it seems easier for the girls to accept their reality.

3.1.1.5 Envy

An interaction where Violet defended and stood up for herself against Caitlin was observed prior to an interview with Caitlin. Caitlin brought this incident up in her interview when speaking about people fighting with her. She reported: *"Like if I ask them something and then they answer me in a cocky version. You know I hate it when peoples are cocky with me so I get irritated about it, then I will try to figure out why they are saying that, you know… if somebody talks behind my back or if somebody looks at me funny, if they say bad stuff about me, like that squint thing [Veronica] just said now".* While Veronica was defending herself, Caitlin perceived this to be an attack on her. At the same time, she may have envied Veronica's ability to defend herself (and attack Caitlin) like this and instead of being the victim, Caitlin would rather be the attacker. This links to her statement mentioned earlier about wanting to get revenge on others.

3.1.1.6 Projective identification

Some of the girls were observed to engage in projective identification when it comes to feelings of aggression as well as vulnerability.

Leandra spoke about people being afraid of her and having certain expectations of her. Early in her interview, she said that she is trying not to be such a hard person: *"I'm trying to change and not be this cruel person",* but within the interview, it emerges that she is actually quite sensitive to rejection and is hurt easily. Her defense against this is to interact aggressively with others, so that they are the vulnerable ones and she is not. By doing this, she splits off her vulnerability and projects it into others, while she prefers to be seen as and think of herself as the attacker. Examples of this are in the story she told about a girl at school who she pushed down the stairs and hurt badly:

> The head girl was like "bitch, tuck in your shirt" so I said "you don't have to be so ugly" and she was like "well tuck in your shirt, bitch" so I said "if you say that word again then I'm going to kill you" so she's this big girl, but I went like I was going for her then I saw she got a fright so then I thought I'm not going to waste my time on her. Then they followed me home and the next morning they were still looking for a fight but I was trying to ignore them, I

> tried so hard but it's hard for me to ignore someone. Then eventually at the stairs at school, she said something about my mom, so then I kicked her friend downstairs and then we had this big fight and then when she looked at me I saw that her eyes were big, you know – blue. So then I wanted to apologise cos then she didn't come to school for like two weeks. Then when she came you could still see the lines and I was like "I'm sorry" and she was like "whatever" so I just said "well I don't need you to forgive me".

Although this is an example of projective identification that indicates paranoid schizoid functioning, there is also some evidence of feeling guilty in this part of Leandra's narrative. This is suggestive of some degree of depressive functioning. Another example was where Leandra's peers at school were encouraging her to have a physical fight with a girl who she was upset with. She describes feeling quite satisfied with the way that this particular girl was vulnerable to her and she had a sense of control over this girl. This is also evidence of projective identification, but some evidence of concern for others may also be noted:

> This other girl, she lost my ring right? So then everyone was expecting me to hit her, cos of the head girl thingy. Then everyone was just saying "Yoh, you fight like a man", but then this girl was coming with stories about my ring and everyone was like "hit her, hit her". But I just asked her nicely for my ring, then everyone was like "wow this is a new person" and "you scaredy cat" then I was like "no I'm not scared, I just don't want to fight". Eventually she brought my ring... It actually made me feel good cos I felt like I disappointed them. I don't want to be that person. I don't want to be my old self, who just gets mad and throws a tantrum for everything but it just felt so nice you know, being nice to that girl when everyone is going on. They were even pushing me in her. And then she was like "please don't hit me", and I'm like, "who said I was going to hit you?" and then she was like "no, you look like you're really mad" and I'm like "well I'm not" and then she's like "please, I'm begging you" and eventually she was irritating me, you know, and I just walked away and was just like "bring my ring back".

Another instance where Leandra engages in projective identification is in her relationship with Samantha, who she describes as having a low self esteem. It may be her own low self esteem that Leandra is projecting into Samantha.

> It's like she wants to be me. She does my hairstyles. She dresses the way I dress. She says things I say. She tries to walk like me. The way I act with other people, that's the way she acts. She swears the way I swear. She's always by me and always asking me how's my life and how am I doing... Sometimes I like it that she wants to know what's going on in my life, you know, like she's interested in me. But sometimes the part where she wants to be me, I'm thinking ok, maybe it's a good thing, but then I'm thinking I would like her to be her own self, there's one thing: she's got a low, low, low self esteem. But if you say to me, "I hate your pants", then I will say "ok, that's your problem" but if you say that to her, she will cry. So that's what separates us. She's got a low self esteem. But then I'm trying to help her, but I don't know how to help her to be herself. Because she bought the same top as me at Mr Price, and then I asked her why did she buy the same top as me and she said "because you know we are friends". She's funny. But I just want her to be her, not like me.

While Leandra's projection of her low self esteem into Samantha may be protective for her, it can also be seen how indicates a capacity for concern in the way that she speaks about Samantha. This may also be evidence of some element of depressive functioning.

The way that Samantha colludes with this allows Leandra to feel better about herself by seeing herself as stronger that Samantha and by trying to help her. Samantha also discussed Leandra, which supports this way of understanding the dynamics of their relationship.

> Leandra, she's an open person. If she wants to say something, she'll be honest with me. Ya, that's what I like, and she always takes my side… when they tease me, she will say "leave her, she didn't do anything to you guys, so just leave her" or if she hears someone saying something about me or if they want to fight me, then she will tell them to stop lying about me, or stop gossiping when I'm not in the mood for them... [then] I feel like someone's sticking up for me, ya. I feel better.

This suggests how Samantha feels victimised and wants to be taken care of, which facilitates the dynamic of Leandra fulfilling this role. Leandra responds to this because she identifies with

Samantha's vulnerability and takes care of Samantha. Samantha feels cared for by Leandra and wants to be like her, and so she copies the things that Leandra does. This perpetuates the cycle of interaction between these two girls.

Hannah seems to defend from owning her angry feelings. Her interactions with others are in such a way that she portrays herself as very robust and she is often quite cheeky to the others in the home and does not seem to be vulnerable. These observations were made during times that the researcher spent at the home as well as the interactions with Hannah around setting up an interview time. The way she spoke about other children in the home. This defensive way of interacting (by not explicitly conveying a sense of anger, but having a general attitude of cheekiness in her demeanour which makes her appear to not be vulnerable or to be attacking) projects her anger into others and results in her being bullied by them, which she spoke about in her interview. This can be observed in the following extract:

What else do they sometimes do that makes you not like them?

When the big ones ask you for money

Do you give them money when they ask?

(nods)

Why do you give them money?

Cos… I don't know

And if you don't?

Then they do nothing

Do you ever get cross with the big ones?

Yes

When do you get cross with them?

Sometimes they hit you hard

How do you feel when they hit you?

Angry

And what do you do?

Hit them back

Do they hit you often?

No

Is it every week or every day or once a month?

Every day

What are you thinking when they are hitting you?

That they are bullying me.

3.2 WINNICOTTIAN ANALYSIS

3.2.1 Contextual expectations

It is an important consideration when analysing the interviews done with the girls to keep in mind the contexts from which they are coming. It is not an unreasonable hypothesis that they have lacked good-enough mothering at some phase of their development. This hypothesis can be drawn by acknowledging their current residence in a children's home.

Usually, children that are placed in children's homes have come to be in this situation due to being removed from damaging circumstances (Harden, 2004). Inadequate care, neglect, exposure to domestic violence, substance abuse or mental illness often characterise the environments from which children in group homes have come. It is also not uncommon for children who are in homes to have a history of maltreatment or physical or sexual abuse. These are all risk factors for negative impacts on early relationships and pose significant threat to the experience of good-enough mothering and an adequate holding environment conducive to healthy development. In addition to these risk factors, impoverished living conditions are also commonly associated and have been found to exacerbate negative experiences (Harden, 2004).

Some of the caregivers provided some information around the girls' histories that presents some evidence to suggest a lack of good-enough mothering and adequate holding environment during early development. Sarah, Gillian and Hannah's caregivers reported that they had been in the home for just under a year at the time, but that they had all come from another home which it was believed that they had been at since babies. Little information was known about Sarah and Hannah's biological families, but in Gillian's case, her mother seemed to remain in contact. Gillian's housemother reported: "*She has a mother. She's young. She's beautiful. She went on holiday with her mom. And her mom also comes to visit, bought her some clothes... I don't know*

[why she doesn't stay with her mom], because her mom is working. But she visits. But she's young. She's very young". Veronica's caregiver explained the circumstances which resulted in Veronica's living in the home: *"They (her and her sister) were taken from her mom because of alcohol abuse".* Melissa's caregiver shared that before Melissa came to the home, she stayed with her mother, but it seems that her mother may have struggled at times to provide a good enough environment for Melissa. Melissa's caregiver reported "*When her brother was a baby, her father walked out on them. Then what happened was her mother had a battle with drugs. Not Mandrax and stuff like that but prescription drugs, so that's why she was brought here".* It seems Samantha had made a few moves before coming to the home. Her caregiver said *"She was at her foster care home. She was in another home but not for long then they took her out again then she went to the foster parents but now she is here since this year".* She also suspected that Samantha's mother had a mental illness: *"her mother is mentally disturbed - I don't know what is wrong with her".* Leandra's caregiver was unsure of why Leandra no longer stays with her mother. Leandra believed that her mother did not have the financial means to keep Leandra in her care. Caitlin's parents were divorced when she was young and subsequently her mother passed away. Her caregiver explained this, saying: *"Before [Caitlin's mother died] with the mother and the father there was a problem and they split up and then when the mother died the father got remarried and now he's got other children with her, the new wife that's not so new".*

3.2.2 Relationships

When Winnicott (1960) referred to "two possible lines of development" (p.145), where either the mother's adaption is good enough or is not good enough, it is expected that in the cases of the girls, the latter seems to apply. While the analysis of the narratives does not and could not provide a full account of the girls' object relations, indications of certain types of defensive functioning were present. As has been explained, defenses are essentially rigid false self functioning, and "through this false self the infant builds up a false set of relationships" (Winnicott, 1960, p.146). The difficulty connecting with others and forming meaningful relationships was evident in some of the girl's narratives.

When speaking about their relationships, many of the girls' narratives indicated a sense of dissatisfaction with their connections to others, as though something is missing from them. They seem to lack real connections with others, which can be understood in the context of lack of functioning from the true self and expressing this in a way that allows for a feeling of real connections with others.

Melissa described her relationships with most of the people in the home, saying "*[they] are just there. It's just hello-goodbye stuff",* and even when speaking about those in the home that she feels closest to, Melissa said *"They're my friends. I wouldn't say that I could trust them with my life. But they're good friends of mine",* suggesting that even though she has some better relationships than others, theses are still lacking to a certain extent. Veronica described her relationships with others in the home as *"Nothing important",* and reflected on the way she felt towards the other girls in the home saying *"I don't mind them. I just keep to myself and I don't mind. They're ok. We're all ok. But they are younger and a bit immature but we get our days"*, indicating how she keeps her distance from others because she feels like she can't relate to what she perceives to be emotional immaturity. However, this might actually just be due to her perceiving others as being vulnerable, and she can't relate to that because she is so defended from her own vulnerability as she is disconnected from her true self. Hannah spoke about her relationships with others in a detached manner, responding to the question about how she feels toward her peers saying *"I feel normal"*. Similarly, Gillian said *"I feel ok. Just normal".* Caitlin described her relationships with others in the home saying *"They are just there... I live with them. They are not my family so I don't love them. That's all I can say".* This reveals that Caitlin does not feel connected to the others in the home in any way. When asked about how she felt toward the others in the home, Leandra replied:

> With some it's like just normal. It's not good or bad. Sometimes with one person it's bad and then with the others it's just normal. You know, we talk, sometimes we don't talk. But when we are together, you know we have a lot of fun. I don't go out much with the others, like to the park and stuff. I get along well though.

Leandra's description of her relationship with the others in the home seems to suggest that her connections with others in the home are often quite superficial. When asked how she gets on

with the others in the home, she said, *"We like each other. But not as in like-like – in like I really like you as a friend. It's just, we like you 'cause we're staying with you".* In both of Leandra's comments, there is a sense that the others in the home are just 'there', but not really having any meaningful connections to them. Her relationships with others in the home are not seen as offering any real fulfilment to her. Leandra seemed to identify that her patterns of relating to others make it difficult to connect with others in a real way. She spoke about not wanting to be her *"old self"*, saying *"I just think it would be better. My relationships would be easier for me, you know".*

Leandra also doubted the realness of her connections with others in her relationships outside of the home. She explained: *"You know, I've got friends everywhere, but they all know my situation that I'm short-tempered. So sometimes I think: are they my friends 'cause they are scared I'm going to punch their face or something? Or are they my friends because they want to be my friends?".* Leandra's question suggests that she doubts that her true self would be accepted in relationships. She questions the motives of others to be her friend, and lacks a sense of them really knowing and liking who she really is.

Caitlin expressed her belief that there is no such thing as a close and satisfying interpersonal relationship. She stated:

> I didn't come into the world with a friend so… (*laughs). No, I'm just joking. Like best friends… it's just nonsense you know… like fashion. It just comes in and out, in and out. Best friends is like a name brand. How many people have like ten thousand best friends and it's like "oh that's my best friend, that's my best friend". But anyway some people do have best friends that they are close to and things like that. But I just don't believe in that because I don't trust anyone. That's my problem. I don't trust people and I won't be able to tell people everything about my life and things like that. That's nonsense. Since when can you be so clear with somebody about everything in your life? Never. And I don't think I can be around the same person for a very long time. They bore me (*laughs) just joking. I'm just saying I don't believe in it and it's just about the trust thing. I don't trust people. I don't know why, I just don't trust people.

From this quote, it can be seen that Caitlin links her lack of feeling a sense of fulfilment and satisfaction in her relationships with her caution around trusting others. She seems to keep her distance from others because she does not feel that she can trust them to meet her emotional needs. She also mentions a tendency to feel bored in relationships. Although she brushes this reason off, this sense of boredom may reflect Caitlin's lack of a sense of realness of self, which can be understood as being due to her disconnection from her true self.

3.2.3 Personality structure

Based on the lack of good-enough mothering and experience of a holding environment, approaching this analysis, the researcher expected that the girls would present with certain defenses which have become part of their personality to adapt to environmental failures. It has been explained that there is a continuum that exists between true and false self functioning. For many of the girls, it can be seen that they relate in defensive ways, hiding the true self, as they display evidence of rigid false self functioning. However, there is also evidence of where this is not so rigid, and so it is important to bear in mind that this continuum exists and that the girls' ways of coping move along this continuum. Some level of false self functioning is considered a healthy adaptation, however, it seems that the girls' personalities tend to be characterised by an overreliance on this. In some cases, over-compliant behaviour was evident, while in others, the true self seemed to be expressed in aggressive ways or self-destructive behaviour. The girls' defensive ways of relating can be understood as responses to early environmental failures which have been incorporated into the girls' personalities. Evidence of this is presented below.

3.2.3.1 Distortion of reality

Many of the girls seemed to engage in projection and introjection as defenses. While they tend to project unwanted attributes, especially their vulnerabilities onto others, the introject aspects of others which they perceive as being strong or robust. These distortions of reality can be understood as the girls defensively interpreting reality through omnipotence. One of the areas where this seems to manifest is in the way that the girls speak about each other's mothers. This is evidently a sensitive issue. Leandra's description of a common theme which emerges in fights with the others reveals this: *"Sometimes they'll say "your mother doesn't love you and that's*

why you are in this place". You know, then it goes back to them, 'cause they are also in this place". And sometimes they will swear my mother, or I'll swear their mother...".

Projection is used as a defense to maintain a sense of omnipotence. For example, when Leandra spoke about an incident with a girl at school who had borrowed her ring and had not returned it: *"They were pushing me in her, and then she was like 'please don't hit me, and I'm like 'who said I was going to hit you?' and I'm like 'well I'm not' and then she was like, no, you look like you are really mad' and I'm like 'well I'm not'. And then she's like 'please, I'm begging you '".* Caitlin spoke about wanting to be an assassin, saying *"You know when I was young, I wanted to be an assassin. I wanted to be a person who kills people for money and stuff".* This can be understood as her desire to be more powerful.

Evidence of depersonalization and derealization, which are characterized by a feeling of disconnection from one's own experiences and a sense of disconnection from reality could also be seen in the girls' narratives and were understood as symptoms of the omnipotent defense which essentially creates a disconnect from and distortion of reality. For example, Leandra revealed how she has noticed herself doing this: *"I go blank and I fight... it's like I don't see anything and then when I feel like I'm opening my eyes, all I know is I punched someone. They are bleeding or something. And I don't know what happened"*

During Caitlin's interview, it became evident that some painful feelings may have been evoked for her. Caitlin defended against these by ending off her speech saying: *"But no, I'm fine. I'm a fine person".* This may be understood as a defense against her difficult feelings which were arising in from her, by distancing herself from them. Veronica seemed to be defended in a similar way, saying *"we're all ok".* Some of the girls seemed to lack insight into what their own needs and feelings are. When Sarah was asked to describe her feelings about fighting with others in the home, she seemed to struggle to answer. She said "*I feel... um..."* suggesting that she lacks access to her emotional state and is disconnected from difficult feelings. Similarly, she battled to explain why she felt safer in certain relationships than others. She said that she liked her friends at school more than those in the home, but when probed on why, she could only answer *"hmmm, I don't know".* Another example can be seen in how Samantha was speaking about how she does not understand why she doesn't feel like going to church:

I think I am changing. Me I'm changing. Like when I was young I loved church and going to school. Even if it was raining I'd go to school. If I was sick, I'd go to school.

And now?

Now, I don't want to go to church. I don't like church no more.

Why don't you like it?

I don't know. I'm just changing a lot.

How do you feel about changing?

I don't know. Like [girl from a local church who comes to pick them up for services] - she asked why I never came to church. Then I said I didn't come because I was sick. Then I actually said to her that I don't feel like church for three months now. Then she said "you talking like you crazy, like you happy to say that. You know you not supposed to say that. I would be ashamed".

How did you feel when she said that to you?

I felt like she's right. Then she said I mustn't say that and I'm supposed to say that I want to go to church.

Do you just feel like not going?

I don't know what's wrong with me. It's like something is saying "don't go to church, don't go to church, don't go to church".

Is it just church or other places too that you don't feel like going?

Maybe if there's like an outing then I say I don't want to go then they will say you going then I will say I don't want to, then they will say go and dress because you going.

So you don't feel like going, but you don't know why.

Ja

By Samantha's uncertainty around what she wants, it might be hypothesized that she is disconnected from her real needs, because her true self is so hidden. This is particularly evident in this example around going to church, because it seems that she is made to feel that her needs are not acceptable and she feels judged for not wanting to go to church. This sense of being

judged may evoke experiences of feeling judged and only conditionally accepted, which Samantha defends against by distancing herself.

For many of the girls, a disconnect between external reality and their internal state was observed, resulting in a lack of spontaneity and sense of feeling real. This can be understood as defensive in the sense that the girls false self functioning protects the exposure of the true self, as it may not be accepted. In Caitlin's interview, this incongruence between internal and external realities was observed in her statement:

> There's two parts of me. I'm like this hard rock and I'm this person that's always smiling 'cause that's what everybody wants to see, 'cause that's what [director of the home] told me: "everybody wants to see you happy so you must be happy", so I'll be happy for you people and then it doesn't mean I have to be happy by myself. It's the outside. You know the inside and the outside are two different things. You can be happy… like a book. You can't judge a book by its cover and everybody judges me by my cover.

Caitlin also made reference to when she was younger, in which a disconnection between the true and false self could be seen: *"I had the problem when I was younger I used to cry every night and I don't know why. Tears just come out of your eyes sometimes hey".* Samantha described her feelings saying *"I feel like... I don't even know me anymore. Like I don't even know why I'm here even. Sometimes I think 'why am I in this home?'",* showing how she has a sense of a lack of connection with her real feelings and who she is. This was linked by Samantha to her desire to avoid connecting with others, as she went on to say *"Then I think I must leave this home. Then I will never see those children again".*

A fixation at omnipotent defensive styles was also observable in Caitlin's direct reference to her lack of concern or empathy for others. She spoke about hurting people who have made her upset, saying *"Okay, I will break them. I will break people emotionally...".* She followed this with the reflection that reveals her lack of concern: *"...I can just carry on with my day. It doesn't mean anything to me because I don't care if that person had to die or be alive. I don't care about people so much".*

3.2.3.2 Compliance

Veronica expressed that she felt under pressure to be a good example to others in the home, because she is the oldest, saying *"Now I'm the oldest. So it's always like they expect more from me and then if I do something wrong, it's like 'you're supposed to be an example'... it's hard, like you feel a bit pressured you know".* This pressure to comply with the expectations of others may reflect an experience of not all of the parts of herself being accepted without judgement. She seems to feel that she needs to be grown up and responsible, and she can't be concerned with petty issues (as was reflected on where she speaks about the other girls being immature and below her level). She said *"When you get older, you want more time to yourself and I have got other things to worry about, like my mother. I can't worry about small people".* When Leandra spoke about how she would behave when she lived with her foster mother, before being placed in the home, she explained: *"I couldn't be myself. I had to be a robot. I had to tell her when I was going outside and stuff."* In this instance, Leandra exhibited some insight into the pattern of compliant relating that she was forced to engage in, that she couldn't be her (true) self, she couldn't express her real needs or feelings, because she felt that there was no space for these in this relationship. This way of being served as a protective mechanism for Leandra, as she avoided the risk of exposing her true self in a relationship where she felt it would not be accepted, and she engaged in this consciously. Again, this is not so much the disconnection from her true self, as it is her lack of expression of her true self. Her compliance is not so consciously played out in other instances. When speaking about the same woman who fostered Leandra and her brother, after being asked if she felt angry toward the woman, Leandra replied: *"Ja, but even sometimes if I go visit my aunt, that lady stays close, then I say to my brother:' let's go see her', and he's like 'no, no'. But then I always say we should just go thank her, you know. 'Cause she did a lot for us...".* This reflects a placatory way of being which Leandra seems to engage in at times. The way that Leandra relates to her family suggests that she has experienced her vulnerability and own needs as being unacceptable, and has therefore learned to be strong and together, taking responsibility for her mother and siblings. This is reflected in the comment Leandra made about wanting to kill herself because she felt so bad: *"I was planning so many times to kill myself... But then I was just thinking about my family. Like, if I want to buy my mother a house when I'm older, if I want to take care of my baby brothers and sisters one day, how can I kill myself? How will that make my mother feel?"*. Although it is not abnormal or

uncommon for people to think about significant others in their lives when having suicidal thoughts, for Leandra, her sense of responsibility to her family and needing to be the person who takes care of others instead of having anyone else take care of her seems to be a dominant theme in Leandra's narrative. This seemed to also emerge when Lisa spoke about Samantha, who she identified, along with Caitlin, as being a little closer to her than the others. She said:

> Sometimes I like it that she wants to know what's going on in my life, you know, like she's interested in me. But sometimes the part where she wants to be me, I'm thinking ok, maybe it's a good thing, but then I'm thinking I would like her to be her own self, there's one thing: she's got a low, low, low self esteem. But if you say to me, "I hate your pants", then I will say "ok, that's your problem" but if you say that to her, she will cry. So that's what separates us. She's got a low self esteem. But then I'm trying to help her, but I don't know how to help her to be herself. Because she bought the same top as me at Mr Price, and then I asked her why did she buy the same top as me and she said "because you know we are friends". She's funny. But I just want her to be her, not like me.

It seems that in Leandra's relationship with Samantha, she feels that she cannot easily express her own needs, because Samantha will not be able to cope with or tolerate them. This pattern may suggest that during early development, Leandra's mother could have been over-intrusive, resulting in a compliant way of relating. As Leandra experiences Samantha as being so needy, Leandra feels that it is her role to sacrifice her own needs and feelings within this relationship. In the way that Leandra spoke about Samantha in this section of her interview, it is evident that there is a definite sense of concern that she feels for Samantha, which reveals that Leandra has been able to achieve the capacity for concern, which Winnicott highlighted as being an important developmental achievement. However, in the way that she spoke about Samantha, it was also sensed by the researcher that Leandra feels slightly uncomfortable with Samantha's wanting to merge with her in a way that she experiences as being intrusive. This discomfort may be linked to early traumatic experiences of impingements. Although this is a pattern for Leandra to a certain extent, it seemed that she is able to bring the more unacceptable parts of herself into her relationship with Caitlin, which she described in the following way:

> She's the only person who understands me in this home. I can be like 'oh, you look disgusting', and she will say 'look at all those pimples on your face', and I'm like: 'whatever, look at your scar'. We talk, and I have a habit of sometimes saying things without thinking, and sometimes it hurts people. She's the only one who knows I'm not meaning it in a bad way.

This shows that while Leandra feels that it is generally unsafe to express her true self, and safer to engage in placatory ways, she does find a space in her relationship with Caitlin where she does not have to be so guarded.

Hannah spoke about how the older children in the home tend to bully the younger ones in the following piece of conversation:

> *What else do they sometimes do that makes you not like them?*
>
> When the big ones ask you for money
>
> *Do you give them money when they ask?*
>
> (nods)
>
> *Why do you give them money?*
>
> 'Cause… I don't know
>
> *And if you don't?*
>
> Then they do nothing
>
> *Do you ever get cross with the big ones?*
>
> Yes
>
> *When do you get cross with them?*
>
> Sometimes they hit you hard

This suggests a compliant way of being, so as to avoid conflict in relationships with others. Although, for Hannah, she seemed to oscillate between behaving compliantly and reacting aggressively. When asked to reflect on how she felt about being bullied, Hannah said *"But if I tell them, they won't listen. If I tell them to stop it 'cause I don't like it, then they won't listen".* This reflects Hannah's learnt way of defending herself to be compliant and not attempt to bring her needs and feelings into relationships because there is no room for these – people won't listen

anyway. The girls seem to encourage one another to just accept and ignore it when others hurt them. Hannah said that when she speaks to her friends when she is upset, *"they tell me to ignore them[those who are upsetting her]"*, while Veronica shared that she encourages the other girls in the home to ignore people who make them upset, saying that the way that the girls go about solving their issues in general is *"... stupid. It's childish".*

Samantha indicated some placatory ways of relating when there are fights at school, saying *"I just keep quiet and let them talk and I just leave it... 'cause I know it's just going to go on and they are going to keep swearing at me"*. This way of relating helps Samantha to avoid rejection from others and reflects her understanding of the world as a frightening and uncontrollable place. When she does engage in conflictual ways, it seems that Samantha feels unsafe for the way she has expressed herself and brought her needs into the relationship. This is evident in her description of her feelings after she has had a fight with someone:

> I feel bad, 'cause people don't know me that way with an attitude and stuff like that. Arguing and…
>
> *What do you mean they don't know you like that?*
>
> Well maybe I will shout at this person then they will say "we don't know you like that". Then I will say, "Well you need to start knowing me like that".
>
> *How does it make you feel when they say that they don't know you like that?*
>
> First I will think about ask them "what do you mean", then they will say "we don't know you like that 'cause you never be rude to people like that, you always keep quiet to people and then walk away. What's going on"? So then I say "ok, I'll change my attitude for you guys. It's just not me. Then they will keep quiet and just leave me for the day. Even like the captain of the class said, like when I was sitting outside the she said "why are you sitting outside, since when do you sit outside?" 'cause they don't know me like that.

This piece of Samantha's interview suggests that she feels unsafe when she does express her true feelings, because perhaps these will be judged by others. However, she does seem to be testing out ways of expressing herself, which may be seen as a sign of hope. If her environment does not allow for these and make her feel accepted and not judged, then she will probably

continue to be compliant. Veronica and Gillian both express some guilt around bringing their true selves into relationships instead of being compliant. Veronica's comment indicates her fear that she will be left alone with feelings of rejection if she fights with others and does not make sure she is thought of in good ways again afterwards:

> It's worse to fight with someone that you don't live with because say you are still fighting with someone and then something happens to them, and then how guilty are you gone feel. So obviously you sort it out when you have an opportunity, 'cause you never know what could happen. Ok, here, you also never know what could happen, but at least you know that you will see them the next morning.

This is particularly true outside of the home for Veronica, where she may feel less accepted by others. Gillian expresses guilt when reflecting on how she feels after she has had a fight with someone, saying *"I shouldn't have shouted at them, 'cause then it looks like I'm the main one that is making them feel bad or something. So I feel bad sometimes".*

Caitlin seemed to engage in defenses which are more aligned with the antisocial tendency, however, she did refer to a way that she used to relate, which showed evidence of compliance. She spoke about her reaction to feeling hurt when she was younger, saying *"Ja, that was my problem when I was younger. I used to let people say whatever they want and do whatever they want to me. Now I'm older. Now I can think for myself".*

3.2.3.3 Attempts to reclaim a good experience

Defenses against deprivation were observed in the girls. Some evidence of engagement in destructive acts was found and these were understood as attempts to externalise their intolerable internal states. These acts were found to take the form of self-destructive behaviours as well as aggressive self expression.

3.2.3.3.1 <u>Self-destructive tendencies</u>

Caitlin describes herself as being *"very, very, very rude".* She said *"I'm very rebellious".* This definition of herself may be understood as Caitlin's way of setting herself up in opposition with her environment, in the hope that she might be contained and experience a good environment. Leandra shared that she wanted to engage in self-destructive behaviours in part of her narrative:

> Sometimes I feel like I can just take a cigarette and smoke it, get high, get drunk, get… I don't know 'cause you know a lot of people drink and it's like their problems go away but then they continue drinking. So sometimes I get confused, like I'm thinking "what if I start and I can't stop?" you know. So it's like you know when you feel so mad, like angry at the world and you are just thinking "what's the use, why am I keeping myself pure, why don't I do the other things, look at that person", you know. And like I feel sometimes like when I do good then no one notices the good. But when you do something bad then they want to make this whole big issue. So you think well what is the use of doing something good if nobody notices when you only get attention when you do something bad? It's like, so why am I not smoking, who is telling me that they are proud of me for not smoking? You know it's like, why don't I drink? Why don't I smoke? Why don't I go out partying?

Leandra's wanting to act out in negative behaviours that are self destructive can be understood as her seeking for being held and contained by her environment by the attention she receives in response to negative behaviours, which she seems to experiences as lacking in her environment. Similar thoughts were evident when Leandra discussed having had suicidal thoughts: *"I was planning so many times to kill myself and take an overdose of pills or something".* This indicates how desperate Leandra becomes, but then she went on to talk about how she needs to be around to take care of her family (as has been discussed above), which suggests that even though Leandra feels desperate, she cannot trust others to hold and contain her.

3.2.3.3.2 Unregulated aggression

Many of the girls seem to have patterns of expressing their true self in aggressive ways. When difficult feelings, particularly angry feelings, emerge, the girls tend to become physically violent. This can be understood as efforts made to attain a sense of self experience.

Caitlin described her feelings towards others as being up and down, saying that the up times are *"when they are just there, but we're not fighting about anything in particular. It's fine because everybody stays out of your business",* suggesting that Caitlin is disconnected from others, and the only time she really engages is through aggressive exchanges.

By finding self expression through aggression, it seems that some of the girls find some release from the pain caused by difficult emotions. For example, Caitlin shared:

> It's like a release, you know. Shoo. You know, some people feel bad about it. That's why I wonder what's wrong with me sometimes 'cause I feel relieved you know like I've gotten something off my shoulders. I know it's not going to bother me anymore. Because why must I sit and be thinking of hurting somebody and getting it back when if I just do it then I can just get it off my shoulders. It feels good. It feels nice. It's like if you are writing exams and you're stressing about this exam. Then you finally go in and you write it and when you are over and done with it then it's just like a release you know.

When Leandra shared what she feels like doing when one of the boys makes her feel angry, she said: *"I feel like punching his face. If I don't do that I can cry".* This reflects a pattern which can be seen throughout Leandra's way of expressing her true self. Instead of expressing her feelings in a way that makes her feel vulnerable such as like crying, which she indicated as being the unsafe alternative to aggression. Hannah shared that when people don't want to listen to her, that she gets very angry, saying that she will "*scream at them"* when she feels unheard or uncared for by others. While she tends to comply for a while, Hannah also sometimes feels pushed to fight back in aggressive ways such as screaming and engaging in physical violence to express herself, which can be understood as a sign of hope.

Leandra indicated that aggressive expression is a pattern which she has recognised in the way she relates to others, saying *"You know, I've still got these problems like, that still bothers me*

every time I fight with someone – it's like the problem raises, man you know, and it's like heavy. So to just punch someone's face is better for me, I guess". Engaging in violent and aggressive behaviour seems to be Leandra's default way of expressing difficult feelings which emerge for her, and each time similar feelings are evoked, all the other unresolved feelings also become aroused in her, which she experiences as being quite overwhelming and she needs to find a way of externalising them, which is usually through aggressive relating. This is supported by the way that she speaks about herself, saying *"You know, I'm a short tempered person, so I just go mad, you know. I've had a fight with every girl in the home except Caitlin",* as well as later where she stated *"I get angry too easily".*

Caitlin's narrative indicated a prevalence of aggressive expression of her true self. For example, she said *"If I had a bazooka, I was going to bomb this place long ago... with all the people in it... except maybe Leandra. Even [director of the home] – she can burn with them".* Her aggressive ways of expressing herself are experienced by her as being out of her full control. This was evident in her comment: *"If somebody yells at me then I get angry so I start yelling back at them and I don't know what I would do to that person".* Her aggressive expressions also seem to play out in fantasy, where Caitlin imagines what it would be like to hurt someone:

> Sometimes I get these feelings like I think I'm mad sometimes. 'Cause like, if I walk down the stairs behind someone I just feel like strangling the person. Even if I'm friends with the person. Like let's say I'm friends with you or like… I used to get it a lot with Dorothy when I was younger. And I'm friends with her and everything is fine and we just ate supper and it's like bed time or something and then I just get this urge and I want to strangle her. What will happen if I just stabbed her in the back or if I just hit her. You know, what's going to happen? ... It just like pops out of nowhere, like I think by myself if I had a knife in my hand and I stabbed her in the back, how would she fall? It's weird. I think maybe I'm a psycho or something. Maybe I will grow up and start murdering people. Not that I would care… 'cause you know when I was young, I wanted to be an assassin. I wanted to be a person who kills people for money and stuff. Before, in my funny stages. I don't know, it's something that I used to think about when I was small and it followed me since maybe when I was 14. And now it's like only now and then. And it's not even for people that I hate. It's not when I'm fighting with somebody or

> anything. It's just like, I can be talking to you now and I can think ok, now I'm going to strangle this person. How do I strangle them? It's weird. I don't know, I've never heard of someone that's thinking like that before.

Caitlin's need to express her feelings may be so overwhelming that these urges intrude into her thoughts. She lacks any insight around why she has these urges and what feelings underlie them. She seems to have a sense of emptiness or poverty of emotion around this, suggesting a disconnection from her true self to a significant degree.

The way in which some of the girls spoke about relating in aggressive ways was as though they were normalising this way of being, which reflects the belief of the false self that the world is aggressive and that they have little choice in how they relate, suggesting that they lack a sense of agency. This belief was reflected in Leandra's comment: "*Like how it works here, if people say something that hurts you, then they will continue and eventually you are going to fist fight".*

Aggressive ways of expression seem to be adaptive for the context which the girls find themselves in, and it was observed that the older the girls get, the more likely they are to display unregulated aggression, whereas the younger ones tend to engage in more compliant ways of relating. Leandra described a situation where she felt she had to stand up for herself, which was characterised by unregulated aggression:

> The head girl was like "bitch, tuck in your shirt" so I said "you don't have to be so ugly" and she was like "well tuck in your shirt, bitch" so I said "if you say that word again then I'm going to kill you" so she's this big girl, but I went like I was going for her then I saw she got a fright so then I thought I'm not going to waste my time on her. Then they followed me home and the next morning they were still looking for a fight but I was trying to ignore them, I tried so hard but it's hard for me to ignore someone. Then eventually at the stairs at school, she said something about my mom, so then I kicked her friend downstairs and then we had this big fight and then when she looked at me I saw that her eyes were big, you know – blue.

The disconnection from true feelings which occurs during aggressive forms of expression was evident in Leandra's narrative: *"When you're in that thingy, then I don't feel anything. But after, I feel really bad".* This indicates a level of dissociation which Leandra uses to defend from the painful internal state that she experiences during these times.

3.2.4 Conscious efforts to hide the true self in the context of the home

Often, it is the case that the environment in children's homes tends to perpetuate the need to defend because the home also fails to be a good enough environment which meets the needs of the girls in a way which would provide them with a corrective experience. Instead, the environment fosters patterns of defensive functioning. Due to the nature of care that is generally received in children's homes, environmental adaptation is compromised. Limited individual attention is available due to low numbers of staff. Caregivers in children's homes are often responsible for more children than they are able nurture and stimulate (Harden, 2004). Although physical needs are usually met, these are impossible for limited numbers of staff to be adequately attuned to, which is likely to result in prolonged and intense levels of frustration of the children's needs, surpassing what is tolerable. Emotional attention is for the most part ignored in children's homes due to not enough staff (Shaffer, 1996). Children's homes also do not allow for flexibility. Because of the large numbers of children, structures need to be in place and strict rules and rigid routines are usually enforced. This does not allow for attunement to the needs of babies and children growing up in these environments.

The home appears to foster and reinforce defensive ways of relating. Many of the girls described conscious efforts to not be vulnerable to others in the home.

By the way that Leandra spoke, it seemed that she was not so disconnected from her true self. Her false-self functioning manifests more in the way in which she expresses herself, although she still feels a sense of connection with her true feelings. When speaking about the way she feels when others in the home try to hurt her by telling her that her mother doesn't love her, Leandra said, *"Sometimes I take it and think that my mother doesn't, you know. So it hurts me, but I don't show it. I don't let people see what hurts me".* This comment indicates that she hides her true self. She does not feel safe to express her vulnerability. This is supported by the

comment she goes on to make about why she does not want others to see what hurts her: *"Because they are always going to use it you know".* This reveals Leandra's sense that it is dangerous to show vulnerability or to express needs of her true self to others, because they will take it and use it for their own motives. Caitlin also acknowledged: *"They [other people] don't really know me. Nobody knows me"*, indicating that she does not allow for her true self to be known, but rather keeps this protected and hidden. In a similar way, Hannah showed evidence of a fear of being exposed to others when speaking about trust within her peer relationships: *"Some things I don't tell them... they talk too much and expose everything".* This may suggest that Hannah has learned that it is unsafe to allow people to see all parts of her, because this might evoke an overwhelming sense of vulnerability for her. A fear of being exposed was also evident in Sarah's interview, where she explained why she cannot allow for other to know everything about her: *"Because maybe you can tell them something and then they can go and tell other cottages and then there is a big situation".* She went on to describe the following example: *"...the one day I cutted my hair and then I told one girls and then when I went to the other cottage, then they said 'oh, why did you cut your hair?' and I said 'who told you that?', then they told me".* Gillian answered a question asking whether she felt that her peers knew her in the following way *"I don't know. They know I like to laugh, make jokes, and I like dancing. My roommates know I like sleeping. I think they know – but not the real me".* This is a clear example of how Gillian acknowledges that she does not allow others to see her true self, and that she hides it from others. She keeps her relationships with others at a superficial level in order to protect herself. Melissa seems to make a link between feeling like she is not understood and her lack of trust in others. After speaking about how she does not even really trust her friends, she went on to explain: *"They don't take you seriously ever. Like if I was annoyed at something, I would raise the issue with the group and they will just say "ah, you are taking it too seriously". You know, no homey that you interview will say they trust someone else just about. You can't. Not in a home anyway. It's not that bad".* She also directly alluded to not allowing her true self to be seen by her peers, saying *"A lot of the homeys don't know me for who I am. They just know me for the Melissa that I project on to them. I just can't be open in this place"*, indicating how she only allows parts of herself to be seen. This was linked to how if she allows people to see all of her arts, she will be judged, as she went on to say *"everybody here just thinks I'm a weirdo".*

Melissa also revealed that she felt safer keeping her relationships with her peers at a superficial level, saying *"I can talk to them, have conversations with them. But I wouldn't tell them anything that I would tell those other four. I won't share anything that happened in my family or anything or how I feel or whatever. We would just talk about basic things, weather, school, TV. Very superficial".* However, she did identify some peers as being closer with whom she would share more of herself, suggesting that she does have the capacity to engage in a more mature way in some relationships where she feels safer. Most of the time, it feels unsafe to be real though, as can be seen in her comment around her way of relating to people she does not know so well:

> I'm just very cautious. Like what to say and not to say. You have to be very tactical in this place. You have to know what to say and what not to say. You can get yourself into big trouble. I'm just more wary of them when it comes to conversations and stuff. I keep it very general. I don't go into any actual details on anything I feel very strongly about.

This way of defending seems to be engaged in especially in the home. Melissa stated:

> This side, you have to be on your own mission almost. 'Cause say now you trust somebody and you talk to them about something, they'll go and say that you should talk to somebody of authority about it, and it was something you trusted them to keep. But that's how you get yourself into trouble 'cause they don't. It's happened to me before, so I'm just very quiet inside here. You'll find that outside I'm not very quiet. I'm a noisy person. I try to be. But not in this place. You can't be. I like to just blend in.

This suggests the need to be very protective inside of the home, which is seen as a dangerous environment.

3.3 ATTACHMENT THEORY ANALYSIS

3.3.1 An unsafe world

Some of the comments made by the girls suggested that they view the world as being unsafe. Caitlin normalized the way that life is not safe, saying *"That's life. That's what it does to you. It*

kills you". Not being cared for by others seems to characterise the expectations that many of the girls have of relationships in general. This sense was observed to be evoked for the some girls at times when feelings of rejection emerged for them. For example, when describing her feelings in response to being teased, Samantha shared: *"I feel like outside [of the home] even, nobody cares about me and stuff like that".*

In terms of the expectations that the girls have of others, some evidence was noted regarding the belief that others are a threat to their sense of safety. Some of the comments made by girls indicated that they have developed the expectation that others are likely to have the intention to harm them in some way. Melissa explained how she feels that she needs to be cautious around people who are new to the home, in her comment: *"I'm just very cautious. Like what to say and not to say. You have to be very tactical in this place".* Veronica revealed how she believes that the caregivers in the home don't care about her and even have the intention to harm her when she described the advice she gives to others in the home when they are upset with their housemothers: *"I just say to them that they must don't worry about it. Don't let them [the housemothers] annoy you, 'cause that's what they want".* She also seemed to think of the other girls in the home as having intentions to hurt her in some way. This was suggested in her comment: *"When you live with someone you can't tell them everything because when you fight with them then they will be like, 'oh, but you did this and this', to try make themselves look better than you".* This statement implies that there is an implicit sense of danger in trusting others, which was found to present for many of the girls.

Sarah explained that she cannot trust others, saying that *"maybe you can tell them something and then they can go tell other cottages and then there is a big situation",* which indicated her sense that trusting others is implicitly dangerous in some way. Caitlin also communicated this, saying *"There's lots of people you can't trust in this world. So if someone tells you something, you don't believe them. Never believe somebody because they just lie".* A bit further on in her interview, when she was speaking about how people always let her down, she revealed how she sees all people I this way, saying *"You know how people are".* Hannah also explained why it is risky to trust others, saying *"they talk too much and expose everything",* which indicated her sense that trusting others is difficult for her because it makes her feel unsafe and exposed. Gillian gave an example of an incident where she felt betrayed by a peer in order to explain why

it is dangerous to trust, saying *"One of them spread rumours even though we've been friends for two years. Telling people lies. She said that I was doing things that I wasn't doing.* Melissa emphasized how trust is somewhat of a foreign notion in the home, saying *"You know, no homey that you interview will tell you that they trust someone else just about. You can't".*

When Caitlin was asked about whether there is anyone that she feels closer to and could perhaps trust a little more, she spoke about how trust makes it difficult for her to get close to others, saying *"I just don't believe in that [a close friend who could be trusted] because I don't trust anyone. That's my problem. I don't trust people and I won't be able to tell people everything about my life and things like that. That's nonsense. Since when can you be so clear with somebody about everything in your life? Never".*

3.3.2 The need to defend

The way that the girls view their environment as dangerous and seem to lack a fundamental sense of trust in others provides a basis for understanding their need to engage in defensive ways of relating in order to protect themselves. In this section, these defenses are understood in terms of attachment styles. Within the girls' narratives, evidence of insecure attachment states of mind was observed. It was beyond the scope of this study to classify the actual attachment styles of the girls, but rather the aim was to look for evidence of defenses and these have been linked to different attachment styles. In some cases, the behaviour of the same girl was found to align with a dismissive state of mind at times and a preoccupied one at others. This finding may suggest that these girls have not adopted a consistent way of coping, thus the tendency to move between different strategies. This suggests the 'cannot classify' category that Hesse (1996) referred to. This may be understood as emerging from early disorganised attachment, or from recent trauma.

3.3.2.1 *Evidence suggesting a preoccupied state of mind*

Evidence of a preoccupied state of mind was found in some of the interviews. This suggests that the defensive structures that have been built up in response to feelings of being unworthy and unlovable which characterise the internal working models of those with a preoccupied state of

mind (Hesse, 1996). Early experiences of inconsistent parenting explain how this self representation is formed. Inconsistent early caregiving which has been suggested in the case of most of the girls may have led to their feelings of insecurity around the reliability of others and the belief that they are unworthy of being loved and cared for. Their insecurity is characterised by the anxiety that others will leave them, and therefore they tend to engage in clingy behaviours.

It could be seen how some of the girls become over-dependent on others so as to try and bolster their low self esteem. For example, Caitlin shared that her sister is the only person that she cares about, indicating some attachment to her sister. However, the nature of this attachment was suggested in her comment: *"the only person I care about is my sister... That's the only person I love. That's the only person I live for... if anything happens to her, my life is over".*

Strong dependency needs were also suggested by some comments which reflected the tendency to cling onto others. For example, Veronica revealed how she feels the need to behave in a certain way in order to not lose the acceptance of those to whom she feels attached. She said *"It's worse to fight with someone that you don't live with because say you are still fighting with someone and then something happens to them".*

Many of the girls revealed a sense of hypervigilance, suggesting how they are preoccupied with the responsiveness of others. This preoccupation was also found to include a sensitivity to potential conflict. The behaviour of the girls seemed to indicate that they tend to scan their environment for the anger of and rejection from others. This hypersensitivity was found to result in the common frequent occurrence of conflictual interactions with others in the home. An example of hypersensitivity was Sarah's comment about things that make her upset in the home was *"maybe somebody is teasing another person, then I tell them to stop it. Then they start yelling at me".* This sensitivity to teasing can be understood as a sensitivity to feelings of rejection which are evoked when the girls are teased. A similar observation could be made in some of the other girls' statements. Samantha made numerous referrals to sensitivity around being teased. When talking about whether he liked the others in the home, she said *"some of them I like. Some of them I don't like. Some of them they are teasing me and then I don't like*

them". She then went on to reflect on her feelings in response to being teased, commenting *"I feel like I don't even know me anymore. Like I don't even know why I am here. Sometimes I think 'why am I in this home?'.* Later on in her interview, when Samantha described her sensitivity to that way that Leandra treats her, her hypervigilance was highlighted again: *"She makes jokes, then I get upset because I'm not used to that and I'm taking it very seriously".* Her sensitivity to rejection from others in the form of teasing was brought up again when she explained why she doesn't like some of her peers, saying *"they tease me. They are always trying to get me down and stuff like that".* Samantha's comment about people trying to get her down reflects her expectation that others might harm her. Caitlin referred to times when she feels irritated by others in the home, saying *"when they talk to me, like if I say hello to someone and they are so rude and negative, then I get irritated, and then I fight with them".* This comment of Caitlin's suggests her sensitivity to rejection from others, which was also communicated in her explanation of times when she gets upset with others: *"Like, if I ask them something and then they answer me in a cocky version. You know, I hate it when people are cocky with me so I get irritated about it, and then I will try to figure out why they are saying that, you know. So then it's stuff like that. And if somebody talks behind my back or if someone looks at me funny. If they say bad stuff about me...".* Hannah's sensitivity to rejection was indicated in the way that she spoke about others not listening to her. Her main reason for getting upset with others was described as when *"they don't want to listen".*

Gillian's sensitivity around the responses of other was indicated in her comment: *"I hate fighting and I hate hitting. That's not good because it's not good to lay a hand on somebody else's child, because you never know, it will come back to you"*. Samantha's hypervigilance was evidenced been in the way in which she related during her interview. She seemed anxious and wary about being interviewed. The beginning of her interview suggests that she was sensitive to what was expected of her:

> *What are your relationships with the other kids in the home like? How would you describe them?*
>
> Describe them how?
>
> *Well, how do you feel towards them?*
>
> To be with them?

Samantha's hesitation to answer questions reflects her hypervigilance around others, which was a prevalent theme in her narrative. She made repeated comments around needing to become *"used to"* people before she can start to feel a sense of comfort around them. However, she explained that even though she has become *"used to"* people, she is still not used to their teasing, when she described getting to know a new group of friends saying *"They teased me but then one girl said that I mustn't take them seriously because they're always like that. Now I'm used to them. I'm not used to their teasing though".* This sense of not being able to relax around other people seems to be linked to the way in which Samantha worries about not being accepted by others and her expectations of others being unlikely to accept her. This was suggested in her comment: *"The first time I came here I was uncomfortable 'cause there was so much children... 'cause I don't usually have so much friends. I'm not used to people... I didn't know if they would be friendly with me".*

The hypervigilance experienced by the girls suggests a sense of victimization and this is further supported by some of the girls' reports of identifying with other victims. Sarah stated: *"Maybe somebody is teasing another person so I tell them to stop"*. Similarly, Samantha revealed her feelings in response to when her friends tease others: *"I don't like it. I tell them they must stop because they mustn't talk about other people and the way they look and the way they are because God wants them to be like that".*

Feelings of anger and distress were observed to be intensely evoked for most of the girls in the way that they described interactions with others. Their aggressive responses indicate under-regulation of affect. For example, many of the girls described situations where their natural response was to react by screaming at others when they feel angry. For example, Hannah explained how she reacts to feeling upset with others, saying *"[I] scream at them",* suggesting an under-regulation of affect. Gillian described her reactions to feeling sad or angry saying *"Sometimes I get sad. Or I get so angry. I bang the door or I completely do nothing and just go to my room".* The first bit of this quote, where Gillian describes that she sometimes manages conflict by getting very angry and banging the door represent a preoccupied response, as this action is reflective of her under-regulation of affect. However, the latter part of this quote shows how she sometimes responds in a way which aligns better with a dismissive state of

mind. This is an example of how some of the girls were found to engage in behaviours from both preoccupied as well as dismissive styles, suggesting the possibility of the cannot classify category.

There was also some evidence of physical aggression which appeared to characterise the reactions of the girls. Some of them just spoke about wanting to express intense feelings of anger in a physical way, as could be seen in this piece of the interview with Sarah:

How do you feel when they are mean to you?

Angry

And when you are angry at them, what do you feel like doing?

Like hitting them, but I don't.

Samantha also shared: *"I feel like hitting him but I don't"* when she described her reaction to being teased by others. In describing her interactions with a boy in the home who she seems to have regular fight with, Leandra reported on how she feels towards him during times of conflict, saying *"I feel like punching his face. If I don't do that I can cry".*

Evidence of actual physical reactions was also found. For instance, Caitlin said *"if somebody yells at me, then I get angry so I start yelling back at them and I don't know what I would do to that person".* This is also an example of under-regulation of affect, suggesting that Caitlin struggles to regulate her aroused emotions in a way that restores a sense of equilibrium. She feels very angry at others and has the impulse to act out against them, as could be seen in her comment: *"I've got a very bad temper and I will lose it with anybody very quickly and I don't care who they are...".* This was also demonstrated by her description of how she feels the need to take revenge against others, saying *"I always want revenge... Maybe I will do something to that person. Okay, I will break them. I like to break people emotionally because physical pain doesn't work anymore".* A bit further on, she explained how this way of regulating her emotions serves to lower her anxiety, saying *"Why must I sit and be thinking of hurting somebody and getting hit back, when if I just do it then I can just get it off my shoulders. It feels good. It feels nice. It's like if you are writing exams and you're stressing about this exam. Then you finally go and write it and when you are over and done with it then it's just like a release you know".* A similar sense of

relief was noted for Leandra in her statement: *"Say now we had a fist fight. Then I'm thinking, okay now that's better. Like, I'm more relieved, you know? Instead of having this thingy , because all the anger goes out instead of building up, you know?".* She also referred to her tendency to react aggressively, saying *"I'm a short tempered person so I just go mad, you know"*, indicating her under regulation of affect which results in dramatic displays of her anger. She mentioned that she does try to regulate this to some extent, but usually loses her temper anyway: *"If they go on and on and on, then eventually I will go blank and I fight".* Leandra identified the topic of her mom as a particularly sensitive area where it is hard for her to regulate her emotions, saying *"Anywhere, if people are talking about my mother, I will fight".* The particularly strong emotion which is evoked when people say negative things about Leandra's mother might be understood in terms of feelings of rejection being stirred up in such instances, and therefore the defense mechanism to become very angry and to fight has become quite rigid for Leandra. In Caitlin's interview, an intense feeling of rage was evident. For example, in her comment about the home: *"If I had a bazooka, I was going to bomb this place long ago – with the people in it".*

3.3.2.2 Evidence suggesting a dismissive state of mind

Evidence of a dismissive state of mind was found in many of the girls' interviews. Where girls may have experienced early attachment figures as unavailable to them at times when they were needed, defensive structures may have been built up in response to feelings of rejection. (Fraley et al, 1998). Defenses are therefore designed to avoid further rejection (Cassidy & Kobak, 1988). In some of the girls' interviews, it could be seen how they distance themselves from feelings related to attachment as well as from the attachment to others, which might evoke these painful feelings for them.

Many of the girls made comments which suggested that they minimize the significance of relationships. For example, Melissa described her relationships with other in the home as *"just hello goodbye stuff".* Caitlin described her relationships with others in the home saying *"I live with them. They are not my family so I don't love them. That's all I can say",* indicating how she devalues attachment. This was also suggested in her answer to how she feels toward the others: *"I don't care about them".* When Veronica was asked to describe her relationships with her peers in the home, she replied *"It's okay. Nothing important".* This is indicative of a dismissive

state of mind because it reflects her attempt to be emotionally detached from those in the home. This understanding is supported by her statement about her feelings towards the other girls in the home: *"I don't mind them. I keep just to myself and I don't mind. They're okay. We're all okay. But they're younger and a bit immature".* Veronica was the oldest girl in the home at this time, but she was not so much older than the other girls. Her emphasis on how the other girls are younger and immature may be a way of distancing herself from them. She emphasized how she tries to distance herself from others, saying *"They don't talk to me and I don't talk to them".* Another indication of this was more directly expressed by her statement *"I try to avoid girls... girls are nasty hey. They have foul mouths and they are always putting you down".* This reflects how she avoids becoming close to other girls in order to not risk being hurt or rejected. There is a sense that Veronica really is sensitive to this rejection, but she defends against this, which could be seen in her comment: *"I really don't care. If someone doesn't like me or whatever, who am I? You're entitled to your own opinion, so you can like me or not like me. I'm still going to live and I'm still going to be the same person".* This reveals how Veronica defends against her need to be accepted and tries to keep her feelings of rejection isolated from the way that she sees herself, thereby defending against possible feelings of worthlessness.

Melissa shared that she thinks that others in the home think that she is a *"weirdo".* This was followed by the following piece of conversation:

Why do you say they think you're a weirdo?

No, I'm not a weirdo. I'm just strange to them.

How do you feel about them thinking that?

Nothing much hey. I don't care. I live by, I don't care what the world thinks. I wasn't put in here to win a popularity contest.

They way that Melissa answered the question about why others say that she is a weirdo reflects some sensitivity to this, as she took the question as if the interviewer was suggesting that she is a weirdo. However, she immediately defended against this sensitivity in her answer to the following question, saying that she doesn't actually care. This is suggestive of a dismissive state of mind in order to defend against feeling rejected.

Caitlin emphasized how she does not care about others after speaking about hurting their feelings. She said *"I just carry on with my day. It doesn't mean anything to me because I don't care if that person had to die or be alive. I don't care about people so much... I don't care about other people and how they feel and stuff like that. If they have problems, they must get over it... why must you listen to everybody's problems all the time?".* This indicates the rigidness of Caitlin's dismissive defense of devaluing attachment to others, which helps her to protect herself by detaching from her difficult emotions. She also revealed fantasies of killing people to emphasize how little she cares about them: *"Maybe I will grow up and start murdering people. Not that I would care... you know when I was younger I wanted to be an assassin. I wanted to kill people for money and stuff".* Another statement made by Caitlin: *"Like say now I had a really bad fight with one of my friends and stuff…I won't trust you. You won't be that important to me. I will still talk to you but you won't be my close friend. You can be my friend but you won't mean a lot to me and I won't do much for you"* reflects how she devalues relationships with others so that she can distance herself from others. This was also supported by her statement: *"Just because I'm nice to you, doesn't mean that you actually mean something to me. I don't know, I'm very heartless".* She emphasized how she has hardened herself to others when she spoke about how she doesn't care who it is that she is fighting with or hurting: *"You know, usually when it is your friends you are calmer than when you are fighting with a stranger. With me, my friend becomes a stranger when I'm angry".* The following part of Caitlin's narrative also suggests how she stays emotionally detached in relationships, not allowing others to see "the inside":

> There's two parts of me. I'm like this hard rock and this person who's smiling because that's what everybody wants to see. Because that's what [the director of the home] told me: 'everybody wants to see you happy so you must be happy'. So I'll be happy for you people, and then it doesn't mean I have to be happy by myself. It's the outside. You know the inside and the outside are two different things. You can be happy like a book. You can't judge a book by its cover and everybody judges me by my cover.

Caitlin's tendency to keep her relationships with others superficial can be understood as her defense of avoiding intimacy, as this might evoke her attachment system and make it difficult for her to keep this deactivated. Supporting this was her description of how she thinks about having close friends: *"I don't believe in that stuff.... I didn't come into the world with a friend...*

like best friends – it's such nonsense you know... like fashion. It just comes in and out, in and out. Best friends is like a name brand". Leandra described relationships in the home in the following way: *"we like each other, but not 'like like' I really like you as a friend. It's just we like you 'cause we are staying with you".* This also suggested an avoidance of intimacy. Melissa also indicated how she keeps her relationships with others in the home at a superficial level, saying *"I won't share anything that happened in my family or anything about how I feel or whatever. We just talk about basic things: weather, school, TV. Very superficial... I keep it very general. I don't go into any actual details on anything I feel very strongly about".* This may also be a way of avoiding intimacy in her relationships.

Hannah also revealed that she does not allow others to get too close to her in the following piece of her interview:

And the people in the home, do they know you well?

Yes. But not as well.

Why not?

I don't tell them

Why don't you tell them?

I don't like talking to them

Why don't you like talking to them?

They won't listen

Did you try to talk to them and they didn't listen before?

Nope, I just know

What do you think they'll do?

Walk away

Do you wish you could tell them?

(nods)

This reflects Hannah's expectation that people do not care about her, and so she is avoidant of intimacy so that she can protect herself from experiencing their rejection. However, it is important to keep in mind that people function somewhere along a continuum in terms of engaging in different defenses. This extract from Hannah's interview ends off with a sign that

Hannah does still acknowledge her wish to find attachment. She initially indicates how she avoids this, but at the end, her indication that she wishes that she could allow others to get close to her can be seen as a sign of a slightly more healthy state of mind.

Veronica also minimized any kind of conflict in her relationships with the other girls, saying *I try not be in conflict. It's boring",* and describing their nastiness toward her as *"small", "stupid"* and *"petty".* This could also be a way of distancing herself from her own distress, by thinking of it as being small and petty. This understanding is supported by her reporting that the other girls *"bring up all their own nonsense and then they expect everybody to be like 'oh, sorry'. It's pathetic"*, suggesting that Veronica may dismiss her own neediness as being pathetic. She also said *"I can't worry about small people",* which emphasized her dismissal of neediness. Melissa also spoke about avoiding conflict, saying *"Usually I just ignore it. I don't stress myself with other people's problems",* reflecting how she prefers to stay detached. She spoke about conflict amongst the other girls in a way that supports her desire to detach: *"This is going to sound very mean, but I actually don't care",* and a bit further on she dismissed their conflict saying *"I find it hilarious actually, to watch them fight... It's a joke".*

While the evidence which has been presented above consists of fairly concrete examples of a dismissive state of mind, more subtle indications were also noted. These subtleties were around the way in which they girls seem to be dismissive of their feelings. For example, the following piece of Sarah's interview suggest an inability to access or express feelings around conflict:

How do you feel towards them when you've had a fight?

I feel... um...

Think about a fight that happened. What were you feeling like afterwards?

I felt like the fight didn't start

Do you wish it never happened?

Ja

In this piece of Sarah's interview, she seemed to struggle to access feelings of distress and expressed the wish to avoid situations which evoke difficult feelings for her, such as conflict with others. This was also exhibited when she answered the question about how she feels when

others shout at her, saying *"Just fine".* Hannah responded to a similar question saying *"I feel... I feel not happy",* suggesting that she is not really connected to her hurt feelings around conflict. She also spoke about being bullied and when she was asked about her feelings around this, she said *"But if I tell them then they won't listen. If I tell them to stop it because I don't like it then they won't listen".* Hannah did not answer the question about how she felt, but rather referred to her expectation that others will not respond to her needs. This suggests that her avoidance of engaging in her feelings about being bullied by others is linked to her dismissive way of defending.

Sarah suggested that her preferred way of dealing with difficult emotions, in her statement about what she usually does when others upset her: *"I just ignore them",* evidencing a dismissive state of mind. Samantha also exhibited this in her explanation of how she reacts to people who tease her: *"I ignore him. I don't talk to him. I don't even greet them. I will just look at them like they are just normal. I don't know them".* A similar way of defending against rejection from Leandra was observed in Samantha's description of a fight with Leandra: *"I was just quiet and then I asked her why did she say that, then she said she was just joking so then I just walked away and didn't talk to her".*

Leandra's comment about how she sometimes deals with others who fight with her suggests that she tries to engage in dismissive behaviour in order to avoid feeling rejected: *"I left him and avoided speaking to me and then he will speak to me and say like 'you're a loser' and I know he's speaking to me but I will just ignore him".*

A comment made by Caitlin suggested why there is a need to defend in a dismissive way: *"You get close to one person and then they are gone, then you go to someone else. So you live for yourself here. You don't trust people, you don't believe people".* This reflects the girls' need to defend against being vulnerable by not allowing anybody the chance to break their trust again. It does not feel safe for them to become attached to others and invested in relationships because there is too much of a risk that they might be abandoned. Similarly, Leandra spoke about how she doesn't let people see what hurts her, saying *"I don't let people see what hurts me... then they have to think of something new".*

The girls' narratives also presented some evidence which suggests that they engage in efforts to become emotionally detached from any parts of their attachment history which might have been distressing. For example, Catlin made the statement:

> I don't worry about it. I don't think about it. Maybe it's like… I cut out the bad things in my life so far, that's what I mean. Like if something bad happens I get my revenge and then it's over. I cut it out, it's gone. It's like this blank spot and then I erase it out. It's like 'Butterfly Effect'. Have you watched that movie? Ja, that's what it's like. I erase it out and it feels better and I feel good and um, if someone irritates me then sometimes I just go sit in my room and ja. I had the problem when I was younger, I used to cry every night and I don't know why. Tears just come out of your eyes sometimes, hey. Yus. But no, I'm fine. I'm a fine person. I'm cool.

This statement of Caitlin's reflects how she tries to detach from her emotions by suppressing any distress. It seemed that during this piece of her interview, Caitlin did start to think about painful emotions, but these were defended against by her positive wrap up in the end, saying that she is "fine" and "cool". Melissa also wrapped up on a more positive note when she was talking about not being able to trust anybody, saying *"It's not that bad".* This can be seen as a way of distancing herself from emotions which might have emerged when talking about this.

Another way in which a dismissive state of mind was demonstrated by the girls was the manner in which some of them spoke about their parents. Leandra seems to idealise her mother. By thinking of her mother in an exclusively good way, it may be easier for her to avoid feelings of rejection from being evoked. In order to do this, she made excuses for why her mother is not the one who takes care of her, as can be seen in this part of her narrative:

> We are all in here for different reasons. Sometimes it's not because your parents don't love you. Sometimes it's cos they are an alcoholic, so it doesn't mean they don't love you. They still love you they just have their own problems. Others, they don't have money you know. So they think it's better for you to be here. You don't know what their problem is. Like say for instance, my mother doesn't have money to look after me and

> my brother. Someone else, she might have rich parents but they are alcoholics. So I feel like there's a big difference.

Speaking about her father, Caitlin said *"When I was younger... my dad would forget. He actually still forgets me all the time. And, um... I'm so over that whole fact you know".* This statement suggests how Caitlin denies any attachment-related distress in order to defend against any pain which might be evoked by feeling unloved by her father. Samantha also made a comment that suggests that she tries to detach from emotional distress when she was speaking about finding it difficult to accept that she lives in the home. She described her thoughts around this as *"Then I think I must go out this home, then I will never see those children again".*

Leandra spoke about wanting to distance herself from her hurt feelings by engaging in behaviours which she believed would help her to forget about her pain:

> Sometimes I feel like I can just take a cigarette and smoke it, get high, get drunk, get... I don't know. A lot of people drink and it's like their problems go away... like what's the use of crying you know? Laying in bed and crying. You check other people who you know have got problems and they are drinking and then they laugh and they are having fun. When they are high, they are laughing their heads off. And you are sitting here crying or whatever. I'm sure they do cry, but I think it will make everything better.

This could also reflect a dismissive way of defending, as she wishes to suppress her distress. She wants to forget about her pain so that it will be easier for her to cope.

Chapter 4

Discussion and conclusions

4.1 DISCUSSION

The understandings of the defensive functioning of the girls seem to suggest that they tend to engage in ways of defending which align with either a predominantly dismissive or preoccupied state of mind as outlined by attachment theory. However, some of the girls also exhibited aspects of both, suggesting mixed or more disorganized states of mind in terms of attachment. It has been suggested that the girls who participated in this study have experienced early environmental failures which have not been corrected, but have rather been the pattern of experience for many of the girls. Furthermore, this failure appears to persist in their current environment, the children's home, thus perpetuating the tendency to relate to others in a way that is characterised by rigid defenses. These defenses are necessary in order for the girls to protect themselves from intense feelings of rejection and abandonment. Girls who defend in a more dismissive way seem to be trying to find ways to defend against the emotional pain linked to rejection by finding ways to deny their need for attachment and acceptance. Girls who defend in ways which have been found to be more consistent with a preoccupied state of mind seem to be trying to find ways of adapting to their environment in order to gain attachment and acceptance in some way, and therefore are also seen as attempting to prevent feelings of rejection from emerging.

The theoretical focus of this study was to look at the defense mechanisms of the girls from the perspective of attachment theory and from an object relations perspective. The object relations theory focus has been separated in terms of Klein's and Winnicott's contributions, and while the convergences and divergences of these theoretical understandings have been commented upon, it was not the focus of this study to address all of these in terms of Klein and Winnicott's theory. In light of the way in which this study aims to make a theoretical contribution, the decision was made to structure the discussion in such a way so that attachment theory and Klein' theory are focussed on first, and then the discussion moves on to consider attachment theory and Winnicott's account of object relations theory.

Theoretical understandings offered by both Klein and Winnicott were found to offer some significant insights into the role of the mother (or primary caregiver) in terms of the development and perpetuation of defensive structures used in the girls. Based on the findings,

hypotheses could be made around the way that defenses have developed, and a deeper understanding of the meaning and purpose of these defenses was gained by developing an understanding of this aspect of the object relations of the girls who participated in this study. The defenses which play out have been understood in terms of the broad categories of dismissive and preoccupied states of mind.

4.1.1 Klein's theory and attachment theory

4.1.1.1 A dismissive state of mind as understood from a Kleinian perspective

4.1.1.1.1 Lack of self-integration

The defense mechanism of splitting, as described by Klein is a way in which good and bad internalised objects can be kept separate from one another, in order to protect the good (Feist & Feist, 1998). The way in which the self representations of the girls seemed to be characterised by rigid splitting aligns with the tendency of those who have a dismissive state of mind to keep attachment need related knowledge isolated from their self-representations (Fraley et al., 1998). This does not allow for ego integration to take place (Feist & Feist, 1998), which was evidenced in the ways that the girls in this study revealed defenses aimed at trying to deny and suppress negative aspects of their lives which would otherwise evoke attachment-related anxiety. This was shown in the way they spoke about themselves, as well as the way in which they interacted during the interview, which suggested the suppression of certain feelings which they did not seem able to access. Integrating the negative content of their attachment need related knowledge may threaten good introjects, resulting in the need to defend against this. An example of this is where Caitlin spoke about cutting all of the bad experiences out of her life so far so that she can forget about them. The separation of good and bad that Klein's notion of splitting refers to offers a complex description of the tendency to isolate attachment-related knowledge from one's sense of self when the content of one's internal working model holds negative views of the self as being unworthy and unlovable.

4.1.1.1.2 Devaluing of relationships

Splitting, Klein explained, is used as a defense that allows for good and bad aspects of reality to stay isolated from each other (Lemma, 2003), and was also found to be a way in which the girls in this study could maintain a safe distance from others. A fear or distrust in relationships may lead to them being seen as all bad (Chessick, 1993). By thinking of relationships with others as being all bad, the girls seemed to protect themselves from allowing others the chance to hurt them in any way. In some cases, relationships with others were devalued by disengaging from the other altogether. This may have revealed that good and bad aspects of relationships with others could not be held in mind simultaneously. By distancing from good aspects of relationships, and seeing them as all bad, it may be easier for the girls to engage in the dismissive behaviour of avoiding closeness to others (Fraley et al., 1998). Closely related to this is the way that the girls were found to defend against attachment needs, by finding ways to minimize these. An example is the way in which Veronica spoke about her relationships with others in the home in a way that suggested that she does not need to be close to them in anyway.

4.1.1.1.3 Minimisation

In order to avoid the activation of the attachment system, which is characteristic of dismissive states of mind (Fraley, et al., 1998), it is necessary to deny the need for attachment. This tendency is consistent with Klein's (1946) explanation of the function of denial as a defense. Klein (1946) described this as the denial of the existence of bad objects. In terms of the girls, it was found that they suppressed negative feelings by denying them. This was reflected in the way that the girls sometimes seemed unable to access negative feelings when interviews probed for the exploration of these. They would also minimize the severity of negative emotions by inappropriately normalising situations where painful feelings could have been evoked as well as ending descriptions of such situations with a positive wrap up. By adding on a positive statement at the end of a comment about negative experiences which might have evoked negative feelings, the girls may be able to distance themselves from these feelings by denying the impact that the experiences to which they were referring to have had on them (Fraley, et al.,

1998). By denying negative feelings and emphasizing that they are not vulnerable to these, a dismissive state of mind is maintained.

Negative feelings related to attachment history seemed also to emerge during instances of conflict, resulting in the tendency to deny or minimize aggressive impulses. Aggressive behaviour may represent a sensitivity to the responses of others. It may be this sensitivity that is being defended against when the girls denied their aggression.

A dismissive state of mind is also maintained by the minimization of attachment-related needs. This was found to take place in the way that many of the girls revealed their denial of the need for a good object. The need for a good object can be understood as the need for attachment, or the need to feel loved and accepted in relationships with others. In this way, instead of allowing the emergence of painful feelings which are linked to a sense of not being loved and accepted by others as well as to the expectation that others will not care about them, the girls seemed to rather hold beliefs that do not include a need for others. These beliefs then lead to behaviour which does not allow for the chance for painful feelings to emerge. The frustration of the need to be loved and accepted is not experienced if these needs are denied. This is how the mechanism of denial protects the girls from feeling rejected. Klein (1946) explained that this denial of psychic reality is made possible by initial feelings of omnipotence. The rigid use of denial as a defense therefore suggests evidence of paranoid-schizoid functioning in those with a dismissive state of mind.

4.1.1.2 A preoccupied state of mind as understood from a Kleinian perspective

4.1.1.2.1 Lack of self-integration

A lack of self integration in terms of areas where the girls demonstrated a preoccupied state of mind was manifested in their inability to tolerate ambivalence. Klein's explanation of splitting as a defense to classify people as all good or all bad (Feist & Feist, 1998), may account for the girls seem to protect themselves from feelings of abandonment, by viewing people by whom they feel persecuted (often described by the girls people who tease or irritate) as all bad at the time, as they experience a sense of persecution from others. This accounts for the hypersensitivity to

others which characterises a preoccupied state of mind. Due to their hypervigilance, interactions with others can easily evoke negative feelings of the self which reveal an internal working model characterised by a sense of being unworthy and unloved (Hesse, 1996), which might be considered as similar to Klein's account of persecutory anxiety, which is evoked when needs are frustrated (Lemma, 2003). When interactions take place that result in the girls feeling teased or irritated, their hypervigilance and preoccupation with the responsiveness of others causes persecutory anxiety to arise, and this is defended against by engaging in splitting. An example of this happening which has been illustrated in the results section was where Samantha's interview indicated that when she feels persecuted by Leandra, she cannot access the good parts of Leandra at that time.

4.1.1.2.2 Over-dependence

The sense of unworthiness in relationships with others which characterises those with a preoccupied state of mind (Weinberger, 1998) as well as a low sense of self esteem (Collins & Read, 1990, in Hazan & Shaver, 1994) which leads to a desperate need to attach to others may be understood in terms of Klein's (1946) explanation of the defensive function of idealisation. Klein (1946) explained that excessive idealisation can result from strong persecutory anxiety, which develops in the case of needs being frustrated (Lemma, 2003). Repeated frustration of these needs may mean that some of the girls have failed to adequately internalise a good object, which is Klein's way of understanding the tendency of those with a preoccupied state of mind to have a low self esteem and the need to depend on others in a way that bolsters their self esteem.

According to Klein's account of defenses, a way in which this manifests is the mechanism of idealisation (Klein, 1946) of others. This tendency to idealise others was manifested in the way that some of the girls who demonstrated a preoccupied state of mind seemed to experience their sense of self as enmeshed with others on whom they have become over-dependent. This was evidenced in clingy behaviours, which can be understood as defending against feelings of rejection and abandonment by investing mental and behavioural energy in a way that maintains closeness to others.

4.1.1.3 Comments on Klein's contribution to understanding these defenses

Klein's conceptualisation of the two positions are useful for explaining the way in which the girls relate to their world (Lemma, 2003). It is important to remember that neither of the positions are ever fully resolved and ways of relating can be placed somewhere along a continuum between the paranoid-schizoid and depressive positions. The paranoid-schizoid position is marked by a sense of unintegration and part-object relating, the depressive position encompasses the ability to integrate love and hate impulses, which allows for whole object relating and the capacity for empathy (Feist & Feist, 1998). The depressive position can only be reached if early interactions have been with a good and loving object, which is experienced as neutralizing aggression in some way that will lead to the capacity to tolerate aggressive instincts (Meissner, 1988). The experiences of the girls in this study do not appear to have offered them a supportive environment with a mother who could tolerate and contain their projections in a way that would lead to integration (Joseph, 1988). Instead, their need to be loved and attached seems to have been frustrated in some way and their projected aggressive impulses may have resulted in an internalisation of aggression, leading to the increase of persecutory anxiety (Meissner, 1988). This explains the girls' tendency to often tend towards paranoid-schizoid functioning.

Based on Klein's theory of the paranoid-schizoid position and her explanation of paranoid anxiety, it can be noted that Klein has offered a basis from which to understand the beginnings of insecurities which develop. She has provided some crystallized ways in which defenses can be identified and understood by listing and explaining particular mechanisms such as splitting, denial, idealisation and projective identification.

An area of explanation where Klein seems to be lacking is her failure to provide an account of affect regulation and how this capacity is developed. This observation is consistent with Stern's (1998) critique of Kleinian theory.

4.1.2 Winnicott's theory and attachment theory

Winnicott's theory aligns well with attachment theory in terms of early relationships with a primary caregiver and the development of patterns of certain ways of relating which manifest in other relationships. This is explained by Winnicott in terms of his theory of true and false self functioning.

4.1.2.1 A dismissive state of mind understood form a Winnicottian perspective

4.1.2.1.1 Absence of a good enough environment

The dismissive state of mind as a defensive structure has been thought of as emerging in response to early attachment figures who have not been available (Isabella & Belsky, 1991, in Fraley et al., 1998). This would have resulted in early feelings of rejection, leading to a dismissive attachment style which is essentially an attempt to avoid further rejection (Cassidy & Kobak, 1988). The absence of an available caregiver is understood by Winnicott as leading to the experience of privation (Summers, 1994). The need for a secure base has been frustrated, possibly due to an early caregiver who could not fulfil the important role of responding to the girls' requests for security (Page & Cain, 2009).

The context and history of the girls suggests the possibility of such experiences. This was suggested in the caregiver's reports about some of the girls having come to the home from another home in which they had been placed during infancy. Caregivers explained how some of the girls had been in multiple foster homes before being placed in the children's home. For some of the girls, caregivers revealed adverse circumstances which might have impacted their parent's ability to care for them, such as alcohol abuse, drug dependency and impoverished living conditions.

The circumstances of the caregiving that the girls in this study have had may have never allowed for the experience of a good enough environment facilitated by a good enough mother. This is explained by attachment theorists in terms of an experience of a mother who is rejecting or

insensitive (Isabella & Belsky, 1991, in Fraley et al., 1998), and therefore the false self becomes rigid in order to protect the true self from further rejection.

4.1.2.1.2 Over-regulation of affect

Winnicott's theory speaks about the developmental progression towards internalising the mother's role of holding, handling and object presenting (Fonagy, 2001). However, in order for these to be adequately internalised, they should first be experienced in terms of the mother performing these functions. The internalisation of these functions is what marks the move towards independence. Early experiences which are characterised by the failure to provide a good-enough environment would not have allowed for this shift to occur in a healthy way. The heightened level of self-sufficiency that was noted in the girls who show evidence of a dismissive state of mind is not the kind of independence exhibited by securely attached individuals. Securely attached people still hold the belief that others will be available to them, should the need them (Fraley, et al., 1998). Rather, the girls who engage in dismissive defensive behaviour seem to have a pseudo-independence about them. They do not allow themselves to depend on others due to the expectation which has been formed by the experience of deprivation that others will not be available to them (Hazan & Shaver, 1994). An example of such heightened self-sufficiency is in Caitlin's interview where she talks about not caring what others think about her, and that it does not make a difference to her whether they are dead or alive.

The over-regulation of affect that is exhibited in these girls can be understood as a defense against not having their bids for comfort or attachment accepted. In cases where a mother has been unresponsive to security needs, the girls may have developed the sense that it is not safe for them to express feelings of distress or need. This is understood by Winnicott as the development of a particular type of rigid false self functioning.

4.1.2.1.3 Rigid false self functioning

The purpose of rigid false self functioning is to protect the true self from being vulnerable (Winnicott, 1960). Rigid false self functioning can be understood as a way to keep aspects of the attachment system deactivated. The false or superficial set of relationships that the girls in this

study appear to have built up are explained by Winnicott (1960) as reflective of a difficulty in connecting with others and forming meaningful relationships. This aligns with the avoidance of intimacy that those with a dismissive state of mind have a tendency toward. By keeping relationships at a superficial level, intimate contact which might evoke attachment need related knowledge can be avoided. Intimacy is therefore avoided through the defense of rigid false self functioning. While some of the girls indicated a conscious effort to avoid closeness in their relationships, others referred to a sense of devaluing of relationships in general, indicating the lack of meaningful connections. For example, Veronica repeatedly emphasised how her relationships and connections with others in the home are not important and mean very little to her as she has other things to worry about besides these peer relationships.

The suppression of attachment-related thoughts that characterises a dismissive state of mind (Kelly & Kahn, 1994, in Fraley, et al., 1998) can also be understood in terms of Winnicott's description of rigid false self functioning. The disconnect from their true self enables the girls to distance themselves from their real emotions and needs. By blocking their access to these, a dismissive state of mind can be maintained. This defense is built up because real feelings may be linked to attachment related injury, and would be experienced as too painful if they are evoked. Bartholomew (1990, in Fraley, et al., 1998) spoke about how dismissive adults do not experience attachment-related distress. This is because of the way that the true and false self have become so disconnected. The girls who were found to defend in this way revealed a lack of insight into their feelings and needs.

4.1.2.2 A preoccupied state of mind as understood from a Winnicottian perspective

4.1.2.2.1 Loss of the good enough environment

The inconsistent care which results in preoccupied attachment styles may be understood by Winnicott as the experience of deprivation; the loss of something which was experienced to some degree before (Summers, 1994). A preoccupied state of mind which was evidenced in some of the girls can be understood as defending against the anxiety aroused by inconsistent caregiving. Where attention and the meeting of needs is characterised by inconsistency, the girls may have developed the expectation that relationships are unstable and others are

unpredictable. This poses the threat that they could be abandoned at any time, which may evoke intolerable feelings of rejection. This leads to a hypervigilance which was evidenced in the girls in terms of their sensitivity to the responsiveness of others as well as the way in which they appeared to be constantly scanning their environment for potential conflict.

The preoccupation with the responsiveness of others can be understood by Winnicott as a sign that the girls hope that their environment might serve to repair damages done to their sense of self, and to reclaim a good experience (Gomez, 1997).

4.1.2.2.2 False self functioning

In the case of the girls who show evidence of a preoccupied state of mind, it can be understood that a false self has been built up, but this is not as rigid as for those who have a dismissive state of mind. Preoccupied behaviour represents Winnicott's explanation of a hope that the environment can repair damages done. The true self is therefore expressed, but this happens through preoccupied behaviours. A false self evident, but is not so rigid, as there are moments of their true self being expressed (signs of hope) through preoccupied behaviours. In order to avoid rejection, the girls may try to comply at times (false self functioning), but also were found to act out (true self expression). True self expression also manifests as clingy or possessive behaviour as well as a preoccupation with anger toward others. An example is where Leandra spoke about just wanting to punch one of the boys faces so that she would not cry when his behaviour towards her evoked her feelings of rejection.

4.1.2.2.3 Overdependence

Winnicott explained that deprivation is experienced when some degree of a good enough environment has been provided, but that this is threatened during the developmental phase of relative dependence (Summers, 1994). This means that the negotiation of dependence at this stage is impeded in such a way that the overall developmental achievement of greater independence is not attained. This manifests in the tendency of the girls who were found to have a more preoccupied state of mind, to demonstrate clingy and possessive behaviours, which

could be understood as enmeshed attachments, such as the way in which Samantha's sense of self is seemingly enmeshed with Leandra.

The enmeshment with others was found sometimes to be maintained by idealisation of certain attachment figures. The need to be close to others in order to bolster their own sense of self esteem was found in the way that some of the girls defended against rejection and abandonment, suggesting that they have not adequately been able to internalise a holding environment which gives them an internal sense of security. Due to probable experiences of early environmental failure, these girls still have the need for external holding which manifests in their relationships as overdependence. This includes a hypersensitivity to the expectations of others, which is explained in terms of compliance, which is explained in the next section. It can also manifest in externalising behaviours, which are addressed slightly further on in this chapter in terms of an under-regulation of affect.

4.1.2.2.4 Compliance

Evidence of compliance which was observed in the girls' narratives can be understood in the context of a low self-esteem which characterises the internal working model of preoccupied attachment style (Collins & Read, 1990, in Hazan & Shaver, 1994). The need to be close to others for these girls can be understood in terms of their low sense of self. In order to avoid rejection, the girls engage in compliant patterns of relating due to the fear that their true self will not be accepted in relationships. As has been explained, a preoccupied state of mind emerges from the experience of an unpredictable caregiver. By being compliant, the girls may be trying to make their environments predictable (Summers, 1994). The ways in which the girls adapt in order to make their environment predictable means that they cannot overtly express their own needs in relationships. Rather, they are sensitive to the demands of their environment in a way that resembles the hypervigilance that characterises preoccupied attachment. Winnicott (1954) calls this pattern of relating the freezing of the failure situation (developed due to early environmental failure), which is understood by attachment theory as part of the expectations of others which form part of a preoccupied internal working model. A good example of compliance is where Leandra explained the way that she felt she needed to act when she was living with her foster mother. She described herself as having to be like a robot.

By adapting to the perceived demands of their environment, the girls do not allow the expression of their needs or vulnerabilities in relationships due to the fear that these will not be accepted. They were found to defend by engaging with others in ways that protect them from rejection by trying to meet the expectations of others. Their preoccupation with the responsiveness of others helps them to determine what these demands are. Some of them also seemed to hold the expectation that others would not be able to tolerate their needs, and so these are not brought into their relationships. Compliant behaviour was also used by the girls in order to avoid conflict at times. This can be understood as an attempt to protect themselves from feelings of rejection from being evoked.

4.1.2.2.5 Under-regulation of affect

In terms of Winnicott's understanding, it can be explained that in the context of these girls, the unstable nature of their environment has not allowed for adequate holding, handling and object relating (Fonagy, 2001). The mother-child relationship has not allowed for a gradual progression of moving towards independence, but rather it has been characterised by obtrusive impingements. Therefore, the girls have not been able to internalise the function of emotional regulation. As a result, they tend to engage in behaviours which represent an under-regulation of affect. There is still very much a dependence on the environment to contain them in a way that they cannot do for themselves. The girls were found to engage in self-destructive tendencies and many of their interactions with others were found to be characterised by unregulated aggression, which Winnicott would understand as an attempt to externalise their feelings of being unloved and rejected in the hope that their environment will contain them (Gomez, 1997). Caitlin shared how she experiences a sense of relief after she has physically fought with someone. This is an example of aggressive expression of her true self. She described feeling intense anxiety until she engages in aggressive behaviour, which seems to release her anxiety in some way.

4.1.2.3 Comments on Winnicott's contribution to understanding these defenses

Winnicott's (1965) theory views defenses as functioning to protect the true self from vulnerability. Feelings of vulnerability are heightened when needs are frustrated in some way. a certain degree of false self functioning is healthy if a balance between compliance with societal expectations and being true to the true self can be maintained. However, the false self is considered to be maladaptive in cases where the false self becomes too rigid, and the person cannot ever be true to their real needs and emotions. Winnicott's (1960) conceptualisation of false and true self functioning should be thought of along a continuum. There is always some need for false self functioning, but the level of false self functioning can vary between what is necessary and a level at which the true and false self become completely disconnected with one another. This is where crucial needs are forced to be compromised, and the true self is not allowed to override the false, compliant self (Winnicott, 1960). This type of functioning indicates that exposure of the true self might be experienced as a sense of overwhelming vulnerability (Gargiulo, 1998).

As has been demonstrated, Winnicott's theory provides a detailed account of how early environmental failures may lead to patterns of relating which are captured by Main's (2000, in Shilkret, 2005) attachment states of mind. Winnicott's account of false self functioning seems to contribute to an understanding of how dismissive or preoccupied states of mind develop when a good enough environment is not provided. His explanation of how the true self can be hidden or falsified (Winnicott, 1960) is built on in terms of attachment theory. The description of a dismissive state of mind speaks to the notion of a hidden true self, while a preoccupied attachment style can be understood in terms of being falsified by acting out, as preoccupied behaviours can be seen as expressions of the true self in a distorted way.

Winnicott also addresses the notion of affect regulation in his explanation of how the mother's functions should be internalised so that the individual can tolerate their own emotional states. In cases where this developmental process has not been allowed to occur due to a lack of good enough mothering, an over-regulation or under-regulation of affect results, leading to respective dismissive or preoccupied styles of attachment.

4.1.3 Overall comments

This section has outlined how psychoanalytic object relations theory and attachment theory can be seen as referring to similar phenomena, but have different ways of articulating these. Klein has offered a valuable way of conceptualising defense mechanisms and provided useful explanations of what these defenses look like and their functions in terms of protecting the individual from persecutory anxiety. Winnicott has made insightful contributions in terms of the role of the mother (or primary caregiver) in facilitating the kind of environment conducive to healthy development as well as a coherent explanation as to how this can go wrong, resulting in the need to engage in rigid defenses. He also provides a way of understanding the way in which a capacity of affect regulation is developed through the internalisation of the good-enough environment facilitated by a mother during infancy. Attachment theory can be seen as building on these understandings and clarifying them in a way that takes into account early relationships and then the tendency of a pattern of relating to become set in place as a result of the nature of these.

Defensive functioning can be thought of along a continuum. This has been demonstrated both in terms of the continuum between Klein's concepts of the paranoid-schizoid and depressive positions, as well as in Winnicott's theory of the continuum existing between true and false self functioning. The observed variance in the rigidity of the use of defenses utilized by the girls also suggested a continuum in terms of their alignment with an insecure attachment state of mind. In terms of all three of these theories, the girls seemed to move along this continuum. It seemed that even for those who tended to engage in rigidly defensive ways of relating, evidence of more healthy ways of engaging with others was evident in some of their relationships.

Together, the theoretical contributions made by these three perspectives help to provide an understanding of the real problems which are experienced in the relationships of the girls who part-took in this study by investigating their patterns of relating and the defensive structures which typify these.

4.2 LIMITATIONS

Due to the nature of this study being largely theory driven, it should be noted that a limitation of this research is that patterns which go beyond the chosen theoretical focus may have been overlooked. However, it was the aim of this research to focus particularly on Klein and Winnicott's accounts of object relations, as well as attachment theory, in order to make contributions to understandings in these areas of focus and areas of overlap.

The small sample size used in this study may also be considered somewhat of a limitation. However, it was not the aim of this study to produce generalisable results, but rather to gain an understanding of the nature and manifestations of the defense mechanisms used by these particular girls. Due to the fact that only one children's home was used in this study, it might be said that the results that emerged in this study are a reflection of the values and management style of this home in particular. However, even though the girls had all been living in the home for a minimum period of six months at the time, they had come from different backgrounds leading to their placement at the home. All of their backgrounds have been characterised by significantly inconsistent caregiving, which is what made this group a suitable focus for this study.

4.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the observations made in this study, it may be useful to explore the experiences of the caregivers working in children's homes. By gaining insights in this area, the implications may serve to inform ways in which their relationships with the children in the home could be improved in order to increase their availability to the children. While there have been some studies done around this (for example: Törrönen, 2006; Chetty, 2006), these have been found to have certain limitations.

Longitudinal studies which track individuals from infancy through development and into adolescence may have the potential of offering valuable insights into the development and manifestation of defenses. Studies which incorporate a comprehensive understanding of the participants' histories would also lead to a developed understanding of the emergence of

defenses. It would also be a valuable point of reference to attain formal measurements of attachment of participants in any studies done which explore psychoanalytic attachment theory.

In consideration of the limitations which have been discussed around the particular theoretical perspectives which were focused on in this study, it may be useful to investigate the defenses used from alternative theoretical stances.

4.4 CLINICAL IMPLICATIONS

The insights gained from this study allow for a better understanding of the defenses used by the girls and the ways in which these play out in their relationships. From the understandings gained, interventions with adolescents living in children's homes can be more sensitively and effectively designed.

The perspective which has been gained from an increased understanding of these girls may serve to enlighten those who work with the girls who participated in this study in terms of how to manage their relationships with them in way that will be more beneficial. By understanding the behaviours of these girls better, caregivers may learn to engage in more sensitive ways of relating to them and what kind of environment would be conducive to healthy development. Certain aspects may also be applied in contexts that are similar to this children's home. This implies that caregivers in children's home would benefit from receiving psychoeducation around the use of certain patterns of defending which are engaged in by children living in homes. By having a better understanding of these, caregivers would have an understanding that would help them not to be reactive to the ways in which they may find themselves constantly devalued or raged against. It would also be important to teach caregivers about affect regulation and the ways in which they can manage their relationships with children in homes that are more conducive to helping children to appropriately regulate their emotions. The findings of this research together with theoretical insights suggest the importance of consistent caregiver relationships which also include some allowance for greater degree of flexibility. While it is understandable that the rigid systems which are part of children's home have been set in place for a reason, this study emphasises the need to allow for some flexibility in child-caregiver relationships so that caregivers can be better attuned to the needs of the children.

Therapeutic interventions can also benefit from the insights gained around the use of defense mechanisms. By understanding these from various theoretical perspectives, clinicians will be aided in preventing the repetition of maladaptive patterns of defensive relating to play out in the therapeutic relationship, making them less likely to collude with projections. Patterns which might be expected to surface in the therapeutic relationship can be understood as representing a need to protect from intense feelings of rejection and abandonment. The particular defenses used by those with a dismissive state of mind are likely to result in some level of resistance to attending therapy. Due to their tendency to minimize the importance of attachment relationships, the therapeutic relationship might be difficult for them to forge. They might also be expected to deny negative emotional content and minimize the impact of their history. The pattern of devaluing relationships might also arise in the therapeutic setting may evoke counter-transference in therapists of feeling unimportant and unable to help the client. It is also importance that the high level of self sufficiency exhibited by people who tend toward a dismissive state of mind is not mistaken for true independence, as this could lead to premature termination. Transference which may emerge with clients who defend in ways aligned with a preoccupied state of mind may manifest as a preoccupation with the responsiveness of the therapist. Therapists would need to be cautious in the way that they manage the hypersensitivity of such clients. The therapist might also expect to be raged against, as clients with a preoccupied state of mind may act out in unregulated aggressive ways toward the therapist. This kind of behaviour may be alternated with a tendency to relate to the therapist in a compliant way, as they have fears of being unaccepted which will be an expectation placed on the therapist as well. Therapists should be aware that counter-transference toward clients who tend towards a more preoccupied state of mind may be to become frustrated with the client.

4.5 CONCLUSION

This study set out to explore the defense mechanisms engaged in by teenage girls in a children's home as well as the manner in which they manifest within the girls' relationships. By conducting a narrative analysis from three different theoretical perspectives.

The analysis done from a Kleinian perspective suggested evidence of splitting, projection and introjection, denial, idealisation, envy and projective identification. Results yielded from the narrative analysis done from a Winnicottian perspective indicated the development of a rigid false self to protect the true self from vulnerability through the use of distorting reality through projective and introjective mechanisms. Defensive false self functioning was also found to manifest as compliance. Distorted expression of the true self was found in evidence indicating self destructive tendencies and unregulated aggression. Defensive relating was found to result in a difficulty connecting with others and forming meaningful relationships. The narrative analysis done from an attachment theory perspective indicated that some of the girls had low self esteem, were hypervigilant in their relationships, and displayed an under-regulation of affect. These observations showed evidence of a preoccupied state of mind. Evidence of a dismissive state of mind was also seen in some of the girls in the way that they minimized the significance of relationships, denied their need for attachment, avoided intimacy, lacked the ability to access or express difficult feelings, and revealed ways in which they suppress certain emotions. In addition, it was found that many of the girls made conscious efforts to hide their true self in the context of the home.

By combining the attachment theory analysis with the Klein and Winnicott's object relation perspectives, it could be seen how the different theoretical accounts refer to similar phenomena, but have different ways communicating about them. Klein's theory can be used to understand the defenses used a dismissive state of mind in terms of a lack of self integration and the devaluing of relationships and minimization of emotional distress through the use of splitting and denial. Klein's theory offers a way to gain a deeper understanding of defensive relation of people with more a preoccupied state of mind as a lacking self integration, which is reflected in their inability to tolerate ambivalence and their tendency to engage in idealization which indicates an over-dependence of others for their sense of worth. Winnicott's theory builds on an understanding of defenses used by people with a dismissive state of mind by providing insight into the impacts of the absence of a good enough environment, resulting in the experience of privation. Dismissive states of mind can also be seen as an over-regulation of affect and a form of rigid false self functioning by distorting reality. Winnicott's theoretical contributions are useful for understanding those with a preoccupied state of mind as developing from the experience of deprivation. People who defense from a more preoccupied state of mind

could be described in Winnicottian terms as having a false self which is not so rigid, as it allows for expression of the true self at times, but it is expressed through compliance or through unregulated aggression. Winnicott also provides a possible account for the inability to regulate emotions in his explanation of the failure to internalize a good enough environment in cases where early experiences have been characterized by impingements and the frustration of needs.

Defenses seemed to be aligned with either a dismissive or preoccupied state of mind. Theoretical perspectives used in this study have offered a way to understand how early environmental failures which have been left uncorrected have led to engaging in rigid defense mechanisms. The current environment of the children's home seems to perpetuate these ways of relating, suggesting that the girls' current environment feels unsafe to them and that their needs continue to be unmet. Dismissive patterns of relating were found to be linked to defenses which helped the girls to defend themselves in this environment by denying the need for their frustrated needs to be met. It seemed that those who evidenced a preoccupied state of mind engage in defensive behaviours which are aimed at adapting to their environment in a way that will lead to a feeling of safety and their needs being met.

The defensive patterns of the girls in this study were found to be located at various points along a continuum in terms of all of the three theories used to understand their behaviours. It is therefore an important conclusion of this study that defenses vary in terms of intensity, depending on the level of safeness felt by individuals within different contexts. Certain areas or relationships seemed to evoke less rigid defenses than others.

By integrating the various theoretical bases for understanding the defenses used by the girls in this study, a more developed understanding was gained around these, which is considered useful in terms of informing the management of and interventions designed for the girls in this study as well as others in similar contexts. Furthermore, the integrative nature of this study offers a theoretical contribution in terms of psychoanalytic attachment theory.

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APPENDICES:

APPENDIX A: LETTER OF PERMISSION FROM ORGANISATION

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APPENDIX A:
LETTER OF PERMISSION FROM ORGANISATION

Dear Mrs Harmse

This letter serves to request permission and written consent to conduct research at ******* Children's Home. It also serves to inform you of the nature of the research that I wish to conduct.

I, Jade Richards, a student at WITS University am currently doing my honours degree in Psychology. I have been tasked with producing a research report and have chosen to explore the subjective relationship experiences of teenage girls who have been living in group care of an organization.

The method of my research entails that I will conduct one-on-one interviews with teenage girls who are living at ******* Children's home who are willing to participate. These interviews will be tape-recorded with participants' permission and transcribed by myself for analysis. I would also like to conduct interviews with either yourself and a few other caregivers at ******* Children's home regarding the histories of the girls who choose to participate as well as the nature of their interactions with caregivers. These interviews will also be tape recorded (with permission) and transcribed by myself.

My research will be conducted under the supervision of the WITS Ethics Committee, in order to ensure that the rights of participants are protected. Please will you sign and return this letter.

Regards,
Jade Richards

I, _____, provide Jade Richards permission to conduct interviews with the willing participant teenage girls who are under my care in ******* Children's home, as well as caregivers that are currently employed by ******* Children's home. I am aware of the nature of the study. I also understand that participation of ******* Children's home is voluntary and may choose to withdraw at any time, without negative consequence to the organization or to any of the individuals involved in the event of withdraw or decline. I am aware that the research report produced from this study will not include any identifying information with regards to the organization or individual participants, and confidentiality will be preserved. I understand that there are no direct benefits to ******* Children's home for participation in this research.

Signed: _____
Date:_____

APPENDIX B:
PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET (GIRLS):

Good day,

My name is Jade Richards. I am currently doing my honours degree in Psychology at WITS University. I am doing a research report and have chosen to explore the experiences in relationships of teenage girls who have been living in the group care of an organization.

For this research, I would like to do one-on-one interviews with teenage girls who are living at ******* Children's home who are willing to participate. These interviews will be tape-recorded and I will be transcribing them (writing the tape recordings into words).

By interviewing you, I hope to get a better understanding of your particular relationship experiences. I would like to invite you to be part of this study by allowing me to interview you.

If you participate, I will be doing a one-on-one interview with you, where I will ask you some questions about your personal experiences of relationships and your feelings about your relationships with peers. Each interview will take between 30 and 50 minutes.

If there are any questions during the interview that you don't feel comfortable to answer, you do not have to answer them. Even if you agree to participate, you can change your mind at any time and withdraw from the study. If you decide you would rather not take part, or if you choose to withdraw, there will be no negative consequences for you.

Once the taped interview has been transcribed, myself and my research supervisor, Katherine Bain, will analyse them to see if there are any patterns. The final results of the research will be written up in a research report which will be handed in to the WITS Psychology department to be marked. If you would like to know about the results, please let me know at the end of the interview and then, when the research is complete I will provide you with a brief summary of the results.

This research does not have any direct benefits for you. If you find that any of the content dicussed in the interview has made you upset in any way, I have ensured that there will be free counseling available to you. These include:

- The South African Depression and Anxiety Group: 0800 567 567
- Lifeline: 0861 322 322
- Childline: 0800 55 555
- The Family and Marriage Society of South Africa: (011) 788 4784/5
- St. Paul's United Church: (011) 432 2896
- Or, you can approach your own social worker who works with you at ******* Children's home

I ensure you that your identity will remain confidential. Only I will have access to the tape recordings, and when I do transcriptions, no information will be included that gives away your identity. The transcripts will only be looked at by me and my research supervisor, Katherine Bain. The tape recordings and transcripts will be in a locked cupboard for two years if any publications arise from the study and for six years if no publications arise from the study. After that, they will be destroyed.

If any further information is required, I can be contacted on 082 564 1461. My supervisor, Katherine Bain, can be contacted on (011) 717 4558.

Kind regards,
Jade Richards

APPENDIX C:
INFORMED CONSENT FORM (GIRLS):

I, _____, provide consent to be interviewed by Jade Richards for her exploration of the relationship experiences of teenage girls living in children's homes. I understand:

- the nature and purpose of this study
- participation in this interview is voluntary
- that I may choose not to answer any questions I would prefer not to
- I may withdraw from the study at anytime
- No negative consequences will result if I decide to withdraw of if I decline participation
- My identity will remain confidential
- What I say during the interview may be directly quoted but no identifying information will be used
- There are no direct benefits to participating in this study
- That if I experience any distress because of the interview, I will be referred for counseling that is at no cost to me.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX D:
AUDIO TAPE CONSENT FORM (GIRLS):

I, _____, consent to my interview with Jade Richards being tape recorded for her exploration of the relationship experiences of teenage girls living in children's homes, and I understand that:

- Only Jade Richards will have access to the tapes
- The tapes will only be transcribed by Jade Richards
- No identifying information will be included in the transcripts or the research report
- Transcripts will only be accessible to the researcher, Jade Richards and the research supervisor, Katherine Bain
- What I say in interviews may be directly quoted in the research report, but no identifying information will be included
- All tape recordings and transcripts will be in a locked cupboard for two years if any publications arise from the study and for six years if no publications arise from the study. After that, they will be destroyed.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX E:
INFORMED ASSENT FORM:

I, _____, consent to participate in the study by Jade Richards into the relationship experiences of teenage girls living in children's homes, and I understand:

- The nature and purpose of this study
- Participation in this interview is for me to decide on and I will only be interviewed if I agree to be
- That I may choose not to answer any questions I would prefer not to
- I may change my mind and decide not to participate in the study at any time
- No negative consequences will result if I decide to withdraw of if I decline participation
- My identity will remain confidential and Jade will be the only person who knows what I said
- What I say during the interview may be directly quoted but no identifying information will be used
- There are no direct benefits to participating in this study
- That if I experience any distress because of the interview, I will be referred for counselling that is at no cost to me.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX F:
INFORMED CONSENT FORM (GUARDIAN):

I, _____, provide consent for _____ to be interviewed by Jade Richards for her exploration of the relationship experiences of teenage girls living in children's homes, and I understand:

- the nature and purpose of this study
- participation in this interview is voluntary
- that the participant may choose not to answer any questions she would prefer not to
- Participants may withdraw from the study at any time
- No negative consequences will result if any participant decides to withdraw of if any potential participant declines participation
- The identity of participants will remain confidential
- What participants say during the interview may be directly quoted but no identifying information will be used
- There are no direct benefits to participating in this study
- That if the girls experience any distress in response to interviews, they will be referred for counselling

Signed: _____
Date: _____

APPENDIX G:
GUARDIAN INFORMATION SHEET:

Good day,

My name is Jade Richards. I am currently doing my honours degree in Psychology at WITS University. I am doing a research report and have chosen to explore the experiences in relationships of teenage girls who have been living in the group care of an organization. Studies have shown that teenagers with unstable attachment histories as young children tend to have more relationship difficulties later in their lives. This study hopes to explore this finding in relation to the experiences of the girls living at ******* Children's Home.

For this research, I would like to do one-on-one interviews with teenage girls who are living at ******* Children's home who are willing to participate. These interviews will be tape-recorded with the girls' permission and I will be transcribing.

By interviewing these girls I hope to get a better understanding of their particular relationship experiences. I would like to invite you to allow the girls under your guardianship to be a part of this study by allowing me to interview them.

The interview will be one-on-one and the girls will be asked questions regarding their personal experiences of relationships and their feelings about their relationships with their peers. Each interview will take between 30 and 50 minutes.

If there are any questions during the interview that any of the participants do not feel comfortable to answer, she will not be obligated to answer them. Any participant may withdraw from the study at any time with no negative consequence to themselves.

Once the taped interview has been transcribed, myself and my research supervisor, Katherine Bain, will analyse them to see if there are any patterns. The final results of the research will be written up in a research report which will be handed in to the WITS Psychology department to be marked. If you would like to know about the results, please let me know at the end of the interview and then, when the research is complete I will provide you with a summary of the results.

This research does not have any direct benefits for the participants. There is a some chance that content discussed in interviews might raise issues that participants are sensitive to. After each interview, I will hold a short debriefing session with each of the participants, where they will be able to reflect upon any thoughts or feelings they may have about the interview. It will also

allow the researcher to identify any girls who may have found the interview to be distressing, whereupon they will be referred for counseling. The girls will be provided with the following numbers in the event that they feel they need counseling after the interview:

- The South African Depression and Anxiety Group: 0800 567 567
- Lifeline: 0861 322 322
- Childline: 0800 55 555
- The Family and Marriage Society of South Africa: (011) 788 4784/5
- St. Paul's United Church: (011) 432 2896
- Or, they can approach their own social worker who works with ******* Children's home

Identities of the girls will remain confidential. Only I will have access to the tape recordings, and identifying details will be removed from the transcripts. The transcripts will only be accessed by me and my research supervisor, Katherine Bain. The tape recordings and transcripts will be in a locked cupboard for two years if any publications arise from the study and for six years if no publications arise from the study. After that, they will be destroyed.

If any further information is required, I can be contacted on 082 564 1461. My supervisor, Katherine Bain, can be contacted on (011) 717 4558.

Kind regards,
Jade Richards

APPENDIX H:
PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET (CAREGIVER):

Good day,

My name is Jade Richards. I am currently doing my honours degree in Psychology at WITS University. I am doing a research report and have chosen to explore the experiences in relationships of teenage girls who have been living in the group care of an organization. Studies have shown that teenagers with unstable attachment histories as young children tend to have more relationship difficulties later in their lives. This study hopes to explore this finding in relation to the experiences of the girls living at ******* Children's Home.

For this research, I would like to do one-on-one interviews with teenage girls who are living at ******* Children's home who are willing to participate. These interviews will be tape-recorded with the girls' permission and I will be transcribing. In addition to that, I would like to conduct an interview with yourself, as a caregiver at the home.

By interviewing you I hope to get a better understanding of their particular relationship experiences. I would like to invite you to be a part of this study by allowing me to interview you. The interview will be one-on-one and you will be asked questions regarding their histories and current relationships with caregivers. Each interview will take between 30 and 50 minutes.

If there are any questions during the interview that you do not feel comfortable to answer, you will not be obligated to answer them. You may withdraw from the study at any time with no negative consequence.
Once the taped interview has been transcribed, myself and my research supervisor, Katherine Bain, will analyse them to see if there are any patterns. The final results of the research will be written up in a research report which will be handed in to the WITS Psychology department to be marked. If you would like to know about the results, please let me know at the end of the interview and then, when the research is complete I will provide you with a summary of the results.

Your identity will remain confidential. Only I will have access to the tape recordings, and identifying details will be removed from the transcripts. The transcripts will only be accessed by me and my research supervisor, Katherine Bain. The tape recordings and transcripts will be in a locked cupboard for two years if any publications arise from the study and for six years if no publications arise from the study. After that, they will be destroyed. This research does not have any direct benefits and there are no risks for your participation in this research.

If any further information is required, I can be contacted on 082 564 1461. My supervisor, Katherine Bain, can be contacted on (011) 717 4558.

Kind regards,
Jade Richards

APPENDIX I:
INFORMED CONSENT FORM (CAREGIVER):

I, _____, consent to participate in the study by Jade Richards for her exploration of the relationship experiences of teenage girls living in children's homes, and I understand:

- the nature and purpose of this study
- participation in this interview is voluntary
- that I may choose not to answer any questions that I would prefer not to
- I may withdraw from the study at any time
- No negative consequences will result if I decide to withdraw or if I decline participation
- My identity remain confidential
- What I say during the interview may be directly quoted but no identifying information will be used
- There are no direct benefits to participating in this study
- That there are no psychological risks for my participation in this study

Signed: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX J:
INTERVIEW SCHEDULE (GIRLS):

Demographic Information

Interviewee number: _____

Age: _____ Ethnic Group: _____

Length of stay at children's home: _____ Age removed from parents: _____

Interview Schedule

1. What are your relationships with the other children and teenagers in the home like?
2. How do you feel towards these people?
3. Is there any conflict in these relationships?
4. If so, how do you deal with that conflict?
5. What are your relationships like with your peers at school?
6. Do you have conflict in these relationships and if so, how do you deal with it?
7. Do you have one best friend or a group of close friends?
8. Are your close friends generally the same group of people, or does it change sometimes? If it does change, why?

APPENDIX K:
INTERVIEW SCHEDULE (CAREGIVERS):

Name of girl: _____

Section 1: History

1. How long has this girl been living in the home for?
2. Where was she living before she arrived at the home?
3. What were the reasons for her coming to the home?

Section 2: Current relationships

1. Does she get along with the other children and teenagers living in the home?
2. How does she deal with conflict with the others living at the home?
3. What is the nature of her relationship with caregivers in the home?
4. How does she deal with conflict in these relationships?
5. Do one or both of her parents (or other family members) ever come to visit her at the home?
6. If so, in your opinion, what is the nature of her relationship with them?