

The social psychology of attachment

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This text was originally a part of *Phenomenology in Action in Psychotherapy* but had to be edited out for considerations of space. This paper was a section in Chapter 9, Consciousness in its Habitat of Other Consciousness. The social psychology of attachment refers to the work done by the methodologies employed by social psychologists to research the general beliefs and experiences about adult attachment with self-report questionnaires and similar measures. The summary of beliefs and expectations gathered by Experiences in Close Relationships (ECR) and other self-report questionnaires are widespread in social and personality psychology but do not inquire into specific attachment relationships between adults but ask more general questions (Brennan, Clark, and Shaver, 1985). The work of Mikulincer and Shaver (2007), Bartholomew (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991), Feeney, Hazan, Collins (Collins and Feeney, 2000) and others (Baldwin & Fehr, 1995) provides information about their general experiences, beliefs and attitudes about attachment intimacy. This is in direct opposition to the developmental psychology approach to attachment that investigates specific actual adult and child attachment through observation, the Strange Situation procedure and the Adult Attachment Interview, methods that are concordant with each other (Klohnen & Bera, 1998, Waters & Rodrigues, 2001). Given the limitations of the social psychology approach to attachment, then there is still worth in knowing what the general beliefs and experiences are for adults.

Security in adults

Some adults create secure processes between themselves and others most of the time, regardless of the problems and conflict that they may face. What was provided to them as children were consistent, tender, responses and accurate empathy, that helped them self-reflexively see themselves in the minds of their carers and conclude that their needs and emotions are acceptable even when they are distressed. The key process in secure attachment is that the IWM is set for the flexible targeting and maintenance of contact and autonomy, thus enabling co-operation and exploration, even if previously there was conflict and threat. Because conflict and potential conflict can be negotiated away, secure process involves being

self-correcting and harmonious attunement between self and other. Gregariousness is joyful and mutuality is achieved more often than not. It is likely for self and other to contribute towards intimacy. The IWM of security is that self and other seek intimacy and that good mood and self-esteem and felt-safety occur. Secure contact feels good and provides a warm glow. This inherent valuing of the experience of positive togetherness is the good glue of human relationships.

The core beliefs of a secure map of the world show how, why and where self and others are available. It is expected that people don't interfere with each other but are mutually supportive and communicate assertively and effectively. The generalised social learning is that people aren't manipulative but contribute towards each other's well being in honest and open ways. It's only natural to turn towards each other. Secure adults have long-term relationships and friendships. As personalities, they are confident, self- and other-maintaining and have a positive outlook. It's easy to get close and connect. When problems and conflict arise, they are attended to. Complimentarity, reciprocity and the mutual provision of care is the order of the day so that trust, happiness occur in friendship and love (Hazan & Shaver, 1987, 515). Furthermore, secure adults are likely to offer care for others without being asked. There is the expectation of the easy elicitation of positive responses from others and the establishment of enjoyable social contact.

What the secure process looks like from the perspective of others around them is that they are attractive and likable and obviously have plenty to offer. They know plenty of people and display the psychological wealth of tried and tested personal prestige in their social network. Secure persons are valuable allies to have from the point of view of others, for they are capable of bringing people together and being social organisers. In the secure mindset, it's acceptable to express distress, needs, wants, hopes and fears. It's acceptable to make explicit requests or raise items for discussion even if they are contentious. Self-soothing and problem-solving is achieved either alone or with others. Secure persons problem-solve by themselves *and* seek help when needed. They have excellent verbal and social skills. When there is distress and conflict, they negotiate. It's possible to express concern for the well being of others. It's possible to work on specific problems that are understood mutually. Secure exploration also takes place because care has been received. It shows that the social context is working well. It's acceptable to play and copy pro-social behaviour, explore and be happy. Research on the AAI shows that secure persons have a coherent narrative concerning their own personal history. They unite togetherness with autonomy, healthy interdependence, and co-operation and gain an extroverted sense of safety through social contact. The desire to

meet a friend for a chat, starting out with nothing in particular but knowing that a comment from one person will lead to “me too” self-disclosure from the other.

The parental carers of secure adults were there for their children and were effective in providing care and promoting safe exploration. They were successful in understanding them and so nurturing adults who could satisfy their own needs and be both autonomous and connected with others. In adulthood though, the message is that gregariousness is good and it’s perfectly acceptable to be oneself and be open about one’s distress with others, particularly those who are loved and appreciated. Proper intimacy is being close and making a life together. Such openness means that having needs is acceptable. When something painful is discussed, it has the long-term effects of becoming more assertive and robust through problem-solving and coping and not prolonging the problem.

Anxious process is related to short-term frustration and remaining distressed

Adults who create an anxious process between themselves and others most of the time regardless of the interest, help and support they receive. The anxious process between two adults is of the sort where the anxious party introduces an oscillating movement into the relationship, which is felt on the other side of the relationship (Feeney, 1999). Phase 1: There are temporary moves forward, towards the other in anxious and needy ways. Except to the point where there is felt to be too much closeness with the other, or the tie is understood as potentially too weak to be maintained. Phase 2: Then there is criticism and rejection, leading adults to step back, which introduces a temporary preference to be distant, which can be followed with a desire to be close again. For persons on the receiving end of this treatment, there is the experience of how to deal with changes across time and how to respond. However, the definitive aspects of this process are that satisfactions are never more than momentary and both persons miss each other as regards establishing consistent mutual care. Differences are frequently exaggerated and proper satisfactions are not felt.

Metaphorically speaking, the anxious IWM is excessively sensitive and the driving signal is too big and impulsive. A small stimulus in the other is responded to with excessive actions that contribute to decreasing the bond between persons rather than enhancing it. A hyper-vigilant mis-empathic evaluation of the relationships occurs in two ways. There is an anxious mis-empathising of the unavailability of others (when they are available) and a strong desire to capture their caring attention: both causes motivate ineffective actions. Low self-esteem, shame and paranoid social anxiety ensue in that anxious adults imaginatively

empathise others as disliking them. Secondly, there is a low amount of trust about the availability and responsiveness of others. Anxiety pervades adults who over-use this process so becoming emotionally dys-regulated with others and when alone (Cassidy, 1994). Emotions are unregulated with respect to the frustrations and problems experienced and may concern anxious predictions of disaster, alienation and anger. There is a desire for immediate contact plus anticipatory worry leading to social anxiety about anticipated possibilities of a forthcoming lack of fulfilment of needs. In some situations there could be tests of the other's commitment to the anxious process. There is anxiety on moving towards intimacy and on starting and terminating of relationships. There is anxiety is about anticipated possibilities of excessive distance and disapproval on achieving closeness. These mis-empathies lead to expressed criticism of others and self. Anxiety and anger cause ineffective, impulsive comments and actions without reflection and their own soothing or assertive communication about their concerns. Consequently, general anxiety persists as part of the personality-functioning and can generalise across various domains of life.

There is a mis-understanding that the self is unable to cope alone and generally sees itself as unlovable and feels vulnerable to being cut off and unable to cope. These experiences and meanings are habits of emotion and mis-empathising. Histrionic big signals are used to demand help and support but they might be rejected or ignored. Ambivalence about self and others is comprised of both intimacy anxiety when getting close and being close; and separation anxiety on being apart. Ambivalent persons at times want to be close but are low on trust and that produces worry about the nature of the contact (Cassidy & Berlin, 1994). However once started, ambivalent vacillations prevent proper contact and trust, and work to decrease commitment from others and produce demanding and troubled contact from the perspective of others. Consequently, there is a lack of faith in the self's own abilities leading to low self-esteem, self-doubt and shame that are evidence-based. There are doubts about their own attractiveness to others. In addition, there are sad, angry, fearful, resentful, frustrated, depressed and anxious responses about others being insufficiently close.

However, clinging and a desire for unity with others may elicit feelings in others of being demanded upon and over-dependence. These contrary expressions may alienate others and prevent them from wanting to provide the succour that is demanded. When the anxious process occurs, the anxious self's invasiveness that arouses anxiety in others and may even overwhelm them, possibly leading to them distancing themselves and disconnecting. In total, other people around the anxious person feel irked and have to assert boundaries, reject, criticise or abandon the overly needy self. Others find themselves worried about the anxious

self's intentions, variable supportiveness and have fears about their own needs being met. Accordingly, the quality of mutuality is of an anxious unhealthy sort because intimacy is felt ambivalently by others also. At root, when the anxious process rules, the self believes that the other is unavailable. In the anxious process, self can idealise others as without fault and may denigrate them too. Low self-esteem in relation to others is another cause of anxiety. Anxiety can be mistaken and interpreted as a source of anger because of feeling attacked by others. Alternatively, anxiety is interpreted as further evidence that self is no good, thereby exacerbating low self-esteem and producing semi-permanent shame and self-directed anger. Another exacerbation is that worry and failure to trust others can be generalised and spread into other, previously non-threatening relationships. Therefore, there is over-modulated verbal and nonverbal communication, which may not win support from others because demanding, needy, clingy and protesting communications maybe rejected particularly when they demand merger and intense passion (Hazan & Shaver, 1987, 520).

Rightly or wrongly, with evidence or without it, the anxious process leads to beliefs that friends or a partner is leaving, or otherwise beliefs that people are reluctant to get close to self. Anxious-ambivalent adults find it easy to fall in love but what happens in the relationship is that romantic feelings change considerably across the length of the relationship (Hazan & Shaver, 1987, 515). There are oscillations between, on the one hand, being overly-assertive and demanding, and on the other hand, with the anxious self suddenly disconnecting from others in a huff. They may appear excessively friendly on first contact, but tangles ensue on getting close. There is resistance to care, intimacy or holding when others are ambivalently valued. Sulking and being unapproachable may occur as gambits to get care through turning away. Suddenly, others are manipulated to meet the needs for care and attention. Accordingly, relationships are stormy. The anxious process tries hard but alienates others. Worries are likely to be the result of their interpreted inadequacies that are expressed far too readily and sometimes without evidence to support them. However, when there is insufficient self-reassurance, self-reflection and through mental habits of self-criticism and self-condemnation, the consequence is that these factors weaken the bond with others.

There may be frequent requests for help and contact in such a manner that the persons asked resent being put upon and may try to distance themselves in order to reduce feeling manipulated into providing help, because they would prefer not to have this type of contact. Verbal incoherence occurs in interviews about personal history (Main & Goldwyn, 1998). The anxious process uses protest behaviour and tangles, turns away, withdraws entirely or turns against, criticises, expresses anger and acts it out, picks fights or becomes passive,

threatens to leave, expresses disdain and contempt or forces jealousy-inductions as a means of testing the commitment of others. Tangles describe how anxiously-attached people ask for care and then resist it when it is supplied. All such events weaken the half-attached bond.

In anxious process, attachment needs are expressed through verbal and non-verbal communications that maintain a dynamic equilibrium of confused contradictory messages to others. The ambivalent messages are due to fast-changing feelings and expressions of distress, liking, need, criticism and rejection, and doubts about self and other. How this is heard and felt by others is that overt expressions lead to further pushes and pulls of response in the motivations of others towards the anxious self. Therefore, the anxious process communicates ambivalence between self and others. The interpretation of the anxious self is harsh and a frequent outcome is seeing self in a low self-esteem way, as weak, anxious, damaged, limited and socially inept which, to a degree is accurate. The sense of others is empathised as similarly being critical of self in a type of small paranoia. The cathexis, the emotional investment in the connection and attraction felt towards others, is ambivalent and volatile. The relationship connection is weak and felt as fragile. Not just by one ambivalent person, but with those with whom they are relating. An inaccurate mis-empathy occurs, for in general, it is expected that the connection could break at any moment. The empathised sense of others is that they are the target of anxious caring from self, accurately empathised as anxious. Attachment is half-achieved because some closeness is created and some autonomy, but much of the anxiety cannot be soothed by self, because of the inaccurate beliefs about events as a whole. Technically, the anxious IWM is hyper-activated in that it has a hair trigger (Shaver & Mikulincer, 2002, 141). The process of hyper-activation is to want strongly to go forward towards others – but may then quickly run away and stop connection, on the slightest receipt of a relational event that could be so interpreted. When in this process, in a moment, persons can turn on the spot and run. They are confused in how they feel and appear confusing to others. They are clinging, needy and demanding when turning towards others positively yet may then be critical, angry, untrusting and rejecting when moving away. This is because the caring they received was inconsistent and their carers were unable to console their children on reunion after separation. Past relationship-pain is perpetually close to the surface because memories of past difficulties and disappointments are easy to remember and ruminate about, so re-introducing upset. The anxious self empathises others as seeing itself as insufficient.

Avoidance is the attempt to build self-containment and deal with absence of connection

Avoidant persons are those who create an avoidant process between themselves and others most of the time, regardless of the reaching out of others. They are in denial of their attachment needs and on the back foot, emotionally. Their attachment system is either weakly activated or easily deactivated. They reject, distance themselves, avoid and move away from forms of love, closeness, connection and support. When under stress, they may temporarily become anxious and ambivalent, whilst the stress of getting close is current (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2003). They stay mentally single even if they are in a relationship and prefer to seek and maintain distance. The key process is that the IWM is set to repulsion and repression so that there are few positive signals and no positively-oriented homing-in for intimate connection because, regardless of what is said by the other, psychological contact is assumed to be unavailable long-term. Therefore, attempts at making contact are deferred thereby maintaining distance (rather than contact). Because neglect and rejection from any source become self-neglect, avoidant persons anticipatorily and persistently mis-empathise others as unresponsive even when they are responsive. This is why, from their perspective, there is no point in trying to get close to others as people are anticipated as being capable of withdrawing, or that they will be insufficient if responsive. Avoidant adults mis-empathise others as rigid and fixed in the minimal amount of caring that they could provide. Therefore, the avoidant process rejects others, stays confined and minimises the amount of psychological contact made to prevent disappointment and hurt. Their motto is “I am more comfortable when others are distant”. One consequence for others is that they recognise that avoidant adults are emotionally unavailable and that has consequences. Avoidant attachment occurs through surviving an initial absence of care that produces excessive self-reliance, narcissism and criticism of others without self-reflection. They may idealise an ex-partner, or idealise an imagined perfect other, whilst repressing positive feelings and praise for current real people, if they are felt.

Avoidance is a survivalist strategy. Its purpose is to prevent the pain of loneliness and isolation (Cassidy & Kobak, 1988). They are uncomfortable if others get too close in an emotionally meaningful way, so they repress their needs, emotions and thoughts. For instance, commitment phobia is on-going avoidance with a partner. Avoidant adults are emotionally capable of moving away from a long-term relationship anytime. Positive emotions of warmth and togetherness are repressed which has the consequences that they may end up feeling alone, misunderstood, hostile, aloof, unappreciated, deceived, contemptuous, angry, critical, distant, hateful and self-righteous. The motto is “I need to be

and feel self-reliant and that's why I prefer to be distant". Therefore, they mis-empathise others as untrustworthy and denigrate, dismiss, scorn, trivialise and generalise others as deficient for being loving and open. It's easy to drop a friendship, an attempt at dating or marriage and move on because there is little positive cathexis in other people. Consequently, if the avoidant process is over-used it produces loners or those who have small social circles and find little joy in their families. When there is conflict with others, they deactivate warmth, communication and connection, withdraw, criticise and repress their anger and warmth. It's easy to reject, ignore or ridicule others' bids for contact as needy and clingy when they are not. They are unconcerned about the distress of others and do not respond to their bids to be close and intimate. However, repression fails when under stress, producing an occasional permission to be close that is expressed in anxious attempts, not just the repressed expression reappearing in imagination and an idealised fantasy life.

Avoidant adults are inexpressive in relationships in a general way. They are unassertive and unreflective and have weak or absent communications, so they are hard to be empathised by others. At times, there may be blank, bland, weak, *low* signals or a complete absence of signals, verbally and nonverbally. This has consequences for people around them who may feel ignored and unvalued, and important opinions and emotions are not asserted. For avoidant persons, it is contradictory that they feel hurt from their childhoods because their carers neglected them; but that they fail to express verbal and nonverbal signals and positive emotion sufficiently with those around them now. Avoidant process lacks warmth and expressiveness even in the closest of relationships. Avoidant persons may have mis-empathy due to ongoing distress and poor social skills as they have a tendency to avoid or believe distress to be dangerous. They can find false evidence about poor quality contact with others when there is very little such evidence present or nothing to complain about at all. Therefore, avoidant adults may select only undemanding others to relate with, and that means their long-term loving and sexual relationships are like a dead marriage that is a house-share rather than mutual appreciation and loving support of each other's projects and views. Friendships also stay at a superficial level of self-disclosure. Empirical research shows that avoidant persons have a tendency to be unfaithful as a partner, may desire other persons when in a relationship and may idealise specific actual others or have ideal imagined sexual partners. Avoidant adults are likely to be promiscuous with little or no intimate connection to sexual partners and engage in impersonal sex where there is no sense of loving communication. If the partners of avoidant persons are expecting loving warmth and a sense of connection, then they will be disappointed because they want too much. Pseudo-closeness

can occur through sex but it is neither loving nor committed. Sexual activity is not accompanied by feelings of wanting, liking or desiring to be with others and can occur with either shame or pride at what is really felt.

The avoidant process of long-standing repression of intimacy also includes the interpretation of changes in feeling for others, and the desire to connect with them that could be expressed in social feeling to be united and part of something larger than oneself. This community feeling appears only when the explanatory force of repression is lifted. Positive connections may still occur for people who over-use the avoidant process but falling in love is a brief experience against the background of a previous history of the long-standing absence of such feelings yet their idealisation. What repression minimises, most of the time, are the emotions of anticipatory warmth, for instance, and the sense of connection that being in love would or could bring. If for a while, the desire to connect is permitted, it is soon cut off again. A coldness and sheer absence of the initiative to want positive contact can quickly return. In other walks of life such as friendships outside of work or with colleagues, the psychological function of the process is to survive harsh psychological climates where there is truly no one to love or be intimate with. Nevertheless, in situations that are potentially warm, loving and friendly, avoidant habits, beliefs, assumptions and emotions are inaccurate representations of what could be.

What occurs with repression is anxiety on getting close, when the other is valued for a while, because there is no expectation of the longed-for-satisfaction of the need to connect and co-exist with others. There is a force of repulsion because the safe distance around the self has been invaded. However, closeness anxiety is interpreted to mean that intimacy and genuine psychological contact are beyond what is felt to be tolerable. In a dynamic and future-oriented view, the consequences of intimacy are emotionally-expected to deliver rejection and disconnection. Therefore, the sense is that close relating is likely to become a loss, leading to a sense of thwarted belonging. But that too is a distressing emotion that then needs monitoring as it is felt as emptiness, disconnection, rejection and ostracism. Loneliness and longing can be ambivalent and there is intermittent functioning of the repression of attachment that co-occurs with idealisations about connecting that do not get fulfilled. For the reality of this pseudo-intimacy is that idealisations can never be equalled by real people who are forever imperfect and no match for fantasy.

The social consequences of Freud's repression mean that emotional atomism exists in the sense of Émile Durkheim's idea of anomie (Durkheim, 1951). In Durkheim's anomie, persons are atomised and in chaos in the sense that they do not genuinely participate with

others but are sleepwalkers, not daring to open their hearts to the possibility of love and joy through connection. One corollary of avoidance is not having the courage to bear hurt and loss that might also ensue with the gaining of valued contact, for its always possible that liked and loved others might turn away. The sense of self contains un-integrated aspects of their experience from the past. Because people in avoidant process do not express distress with others, this maintains psychological problems rather than solving them. Accordingly, the influences of past negative experiences persist for far longer than they should. Persons who over-use the avoidant process have a tendency to be depressed because their secure attachment needs are not being met. Their full potential for joy and warmth remain unfulfilled for decades. Consequently, there is a lack of vitality and expression. Avoidant persons are likely to engage in all or nothing, depressed thinking and over-generalisation. They understand themselves as smothered and taken over by others when engaging in normal self-disclosure, social exchange, and anticipatorily fear engulfment and the loss of self. This is why they dismiss and see others' needs as having little or no value, and may feel fear or resentment at the prospect of closeness and spending time together. There are tendencies to a weak sense of self and narcissism is likely as a means of bolstering a simultaneous sense of low self-esteem. It is implied that the attachment drive is repressed most of the time except for those occasions of being anxious on getting or achieving a degree of closeness. Their anxiety concerns being engulfed and losing control of self in intimacy. They believe there is not enough attention to go around and so resent having a large circle of intimates and would prefer to spend time only with distant others in an impersonal way.

Avoidant communication omits the discussion of pertinent matters with others. So whilst not lying, highly significant matters are omitted thereby giving a false impression which does not have the intent to deceive, but is all the same deceptive because difficult truths are not expressed for fear of losing the minimal contact that is preferred. Experimentally, there is evidence to suggest that being told to keep a secret has the opposite effect (Lane, Groisman & Ferreira, 2006). Overall, the desire to pull away, to maintain distance and step back, turn away, turn against and manifest a need for distance and feel less overwhelmed and intruded upon. Verbal incoherence and incongruousness is identified between what is actually thought and felt and what is expressed to others. Although the truth of how they do feel about anyone or any situation may only come out in moments of crisis, as the overall tendency is to prefer to stay uncomfortable about what is really felt, rather than asserting it and problem-solving with the people involved.

There is a particular quality of ambivalence in avoidant adults, which is different to the case of anxious attachment above. For avoidant persons, the ambivalence felt is often not expressed and this causes problems for others because they do not know that they are liked (when they are), nor do they know if there is anything problematic (when there is). The avoidant status quo is to maintain weak and superficial connections with others (due to receiving un-empathic, unresponsive, cold, neglectful and rigid parenting that was resentful of the child's needs and that still influences adulthood). The motivation for avoiding and ignoring attachment figures is that there is a sense of risk in relation to intimacy, as the anticipated implication is that they will not respond positively. The expression of needs, vulnerability and discussion are expected to be too difficult so might be avoided. The anticipatory motivation is that it is believed that expression and self-disclosure of distress will decrease the already vulnerable bond, rather than it being an opportunity for strengthening it and problem-solving. So, core beliefs are that intimacy and self-disclosure of anything, other than the most superficial sort will be punished by refusal, abandonment, rejection, hostility or humiliation.

Accordingly, a mentally solitary lifestyle is sought or one that has a small number of superficial, weak and undemanding friendships and family contacts. All the while, there is excessive self-reliance and an attempt at independence that is far in excess of healthy autonomy. Such self-reliance is valued to the detriment of connecting. When one party is avoidant, he or she is steadfast in refusing to get close. What this introduces is the maintenance of a safe distance so distant that it cannot provide positive evidence of the potential warmth of contact. So, one tendency is for both persons not to be in psychological contact and miss each other's emotions and communications. Another tendency is for avoidant persons to occupy a powerful position through stonewalling, being silent, unresponsive and mentally out of reach, which for others can promote anxiety or rejection and be responded to by trying to get more contact from the person who is backing away. For avoidant persons, the consequence is a repression of the major source of mental and physical well-being by refusing intimacy and warmth that could bring rewards of physical and mental well being. Repression in attachment is the cessation or withholding of the innate drive to connect that becomes inhibited in that processes fail to occur in relationships with others. Object-oriented representations of others are untrustworthy and noticeable in their absence. For instance, a person has a job for eighteen years but fails to regard anyone in the workplace as a friend. The sequelae of repressed attachment needs are forthcoming problems with anxiety and depression and negative and positive representations of others are liable to be

made involuntarily in imagination and empathising. The best way to see these absences is to make comparisons with others who are more confident and trustworthy in their relations with others and proceed to find pleasure in human contact. (Research has shown that loneliness and a solitary lifestyle increase the mortality rate three to fivefold in comparison with persons who experience connection with others, Ornish, 1998).

Avoidant persons have their attachment needs turned off or turned down to low throughout most of the life course. Paradoxically, there is little or no cathexis with others even if they have a partner, children, parents or a best friend. Some persons might be loved and cared for, for instance children, but other adults are kept at a distance. There is little or no worth in getting genuinely close to others and the emotional and relational life can be repressed across several domains. Avoidance is an equilibrium set around the need to minimise contact and communion with others in an emotionally-meaningful and psychologically-intimate way. The balance is set around remaining at a distance from others and repressing biologically-inherent needs for emotional contact and self-disclosure whilst harbouring a tendency to idealise others in an intellectual and imagined way that is close to the psychiatric term schizoid, which means having a strong fantasy life of imagined satisfactions while the actual life remains empty.

Disorganisation in adults

Disorganised attachment in adults has a structure that can take a number of forms that can be characterised by stating that there are fluid senses of self and others in their cultural worlds. But disorganised process is an amalgam and less coherent than both the non-optimal insecure forms. The process maintains weak amalgam of these ego-states or sub-personalities in connection with others, with a weak overall cohesion between them. The defences are that because of overwhelmed by neglect and trauma in childhood, there are many intense experiences that have not yet been unified into the creation of robust and resilient senses of self and others (Hesse & Main, 2000). These serve a function of managing the pre-reflexive experiences, by continuing the lack of integration between parts of self (Hesse, 1996). Let's take a specific example to make the processes clearer. Because this process is more complicated, only the most salient details are mentioned below.

1. The process entails severe ambivalence to the point of there being failures to be connected, reduce anxiety, avoid others and repress distress. There are on-going simultaneous approach and avoidance plus fast oscillations between them. In total, disorganisation features on-going

distress, ineffective approach, and ineffective big signals to gain contact, ineffective avoidance and non-empathic responding to others' distress. Disorganisation comprises both the anxious and avoidant strategies.

2. The result is rapid cycling, disoriented and aimless relating when others are present and absent.

3. Splitting of the self can occur with dissociative phenomena related to trauma, abuse and severe neglect. Despite their differences, the net effects of physical and sexual violence are varying degrees of inner tension produced between contrary motivations thus showing dissociation, repression and ultimately the full splitting of the ego that can produce dissociative disorder not otherwise specified (DDNOS) and dissociative identity disorder (DID). These processes and end states concern various forms of fragmentation, either of the ego or of loss of memories, for varying lengths of time, of access to various experiences (Boysen & VanBergen, 2013).

In the strongest forms, each dissociated identity has entirely different relations to other persons and psychological objects in the world. This latter clinical picture is one where traumata have occurred and non-egoic syntheses beyond the direct control of the ego, coordinate to help the self deal with what it expects to happen in its social world. The anticipation is that catastrophes and violence might occur and defensive changes, between the senses of self and the empathised other, keep changing between extreme states as a way of managing unbearable distress. These emotional-relational states are over-modulated and under-modulated, with little and lacking self-soothing from others or self-soothing. The territory is a number of selves who engage with strong and persistently inaccurate senses of empathised others. Disorganised attachment is related to a spectrum of distress and attempts to manage it right up to trauma-induced psychosis and DID. Disorganised attachment can be explained as a fragmented self that attempts to act in a cohesive way but persistently fails to maintain its proper unity and coherence. For instance, three senses of self might co-exist in relation to specific ways of empathising others. One sense of self could be due to abuse in childhood where there was violence, trauma of various sorts, neglect, or repeated ignoring and rejection of the child's needs. The parenting and adult contact received as children was severely dysfunctional in a variety of ways. This pattern gets replicated in the on-going production of the continuing map of the world as a dysfunctional self in relation to mis-empathised others felt to be untrustworthy and attacking. The psychological world is felt as extremely harsh even in the absence of current evidence to support such conclusions. A second sense of self could be more functional, and this could have been created with respect

to early relationships that were functional and caring. The concomitant behaviour and emotions for the adult self will also be temporarily, at least, positive and accurate but only until anxieties or meanings arise that cause one of the other senses of self to occur, and with that, the process changes altogether. Alongside the above two senses of self, there could be a third sense of self which might also be functional, and to some degree appropriate because of having related with other children or siblings or another person in the family, school or neighbourhood who acted as a role model for how to act in a decent way. The problem of disorganised attachment is that there is no integration of the discrete ways of being a self and dealing with others. Specific meanings and motivations can cause sudden large changes between these ways of being, relating and how to manage distress. It is this discrete changeability that functions as defence in that the overall process provides relief for what is felt to be unbearable threat or the prospect of it.

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