

JYU DISSERTATIONS 22

Barbara Mattsson

A Life Time in Exile: Finnish War Children in Sweden after the War

**An Interview Study with a Psychological
and Psychodynamic Approach**



UNIVERSITY OF JYVÄSKYLÄ
FACULTY OF EDUCATION AND
PSYCHOLOGY

JYU DISSERTATIONS 22

Barbara Mattsson

A Life Time in Exile: Finnish War Children in Sweden after the War

**An Interview Study with a Psychological
and Psychodynamic Approach**

Esitetään Jyväskylän yliopiston kasvatustieteiden ja psykologian tiedekunnan suostumuksella
julkisesti tarkastettavaksi yliopiston Ruusu puiston salissa D104 (Helena)
lokakuun 13. päivänä 2018 kello 12.

Academic dissertation to be publicly discussed, by permission of
the Faculty of Education and Psychology of the University of Jyväskylä,
in building Ruusu puisto, hall D104 (Helena), on October 13, 2018 at 12 o'clock noon.



JYVÄSKYLÄN YLIOPISTO
UNIVERSITY OF JYVÄSKYLÄ

JYVÄSKYLÄ 2018

Editors

Noona Kiuru

Department of Psychology, University of Jyväskylä

Ville Korkiakangas

Open Science Centre, University of Jyväskylä

Copyright © 2018, by University of Jyväskylä

Permanent link to this publication: <http://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-951-39-7565-4>

ISBN 978-951-39-7565-4 (PDF)

URN:ISBN:978-951-39-7565-4

ISSN 2489-9003

ABSTRACT

Mattsson, Barbara

A life time in exile: Finnish war children in Sweden after the war.

An interview study with a psychological and psychodynamic approach

Jyväskylä: University of Jyväskylä, 2018, 61 p.

(JYU Dissertations

ISSN 2489-9003; 22)

ISBN 978-951-39-7565-4 (PDF)

This study is based upon in-depth interviews with ten Finnish war children who were evacuated to Sweden during the Second World War (1939 -1944) and who did not return permanently to Finland after the war. This interpretative and qualitative interview study of war children seems to be the only one of its kind. The interviews were carried out in 2007 in Stockholm. At the time of the evacuation nine of the children were between two and five years of age and one was seven years old. At the time of the interviews they were approaching their seventieth birthday. The interviewees were asked to tell about their life. The method for this study was an application of Grounded Theory and Adult Attachment Interview (AAI) combined with a psychoanalytic perspective that can contribute to a deeper understanding and interpretation of psychic phenomena. The study strived to gain an understanding of what it can mean for a little child to be separated from its family of birth, its environment and its language and to be placed into a new surrounding with people who were strangers and who spoke another language. When the narratives were analyzed, what they said as well as the unspoken was noted. The interviewees had difficulties reflecting over this decisive event in their lives. The patterns that came forth were a lack of curiosity and lack of interest in the past. The lack of interest about the Finnish mother was especially notable. In the interview they were affected by their experiences, which became discernible in both the form and the content of the language. The incomprehensible in the events during the evacuation was still incomprehensible and incoherent in their narratives. An evacuation is an overwhelming experience and also, as found in the interviews, a traumatic one. Such an experience causes memories to be stored and recalled in a special way. A traumatic experience is not revised or changed. It appeared in the interviews as an experience of timelessness. The interviewees spoke of past experiences as if they were part of the present, which indicates that the trauma was still there. A traumatic experience is encapsulated, isolated and separated from the rest of the personality but still affects the emotional life. The fragmented narratives took on coherence when they spoke about their adult lives. Catastrophic experiences do not need to impair learning. The interviewees had as adults found and developed different ways to endure their separation experiences. They could bear with them a kind of normality that provided a necessary defence for them to live their lives.

Keywords: war children, evacuation, impact in adulthood

Author's adress Barbara Mattsson
Björneborgsvägen 2 E
00350 Helsingfors
+358 405 129 298
barbara.mattsson@dlc.fi

Supervisors Professor Jukka Aaltonen
Department of Psychology
University of Jyväskylä

Adjunct Professor Henrik Enckell
Department of Psychology
University of Jyväskylä

Adjunct Professor Ilpo Lahti
Department of Psychology
University of Jyväskylä

Reviewers Eila Laukkanen
Professor
Department of Health Sciences
University of Eastern Finland Kuopio

Timo Niemi
Adjunct Professor
University of Helsinki

Opponent Timo Niemi
Adjunct Professor
University of Helsinki

TIIVISTELMÄ

Mattsson, Barbara

Elinikä maanpaossa: Ruotsiin toisen maailmansodan jälkeen jääneet suomalaiset sotalapset

Haastattelututkimus psykologisesta ja psykodynaamisesta näkökulmasta.

Jyväskylä: University of Jyväskylä, 2018, 61 p.

(JYU Dissertations

ISSN 2489-9003; 22)

ISBN 978-951-39-7565-4 (PDF)

Tämä väitöskirja perustuu kymmenen Suomesta Ruotsiin toisen maailmansodan aikana evakuoitujen ja sinne sodan jälkeen jääneiden sotalasten haastatteluun. Tämän kaltaisen tulkitseva haastattelututkimus lienee ainoa lajiaan. Haastattelut toteutettiin Tukholmassa vuonna 2007. Evakuoinnin aikaan yksi lapsi oli seitsemänvuotias, yhdeksän lasta olivat iältään kahden ja viiden vuoden välillä. Haastattelujen aikaan he lähestyivät seitsemättäkymmenettä syntymäpäiväänsä. Haastateltavia pyydettiin kertomaan elämästään. Tässä tutkimuksessa sovellettiin Grounded Theory ja Adult Attachment Interview – menetelmiä yhdistämällä ne psykoanalyttiseen näkökulmaan, jonka avulla päästiin psyykkisten ilmiöiden syvempään tulkintaan. Tutkimus pyrki ymmärtämään mitä omasta syntyperheestä, ympäristöstä ja kielestä erottaminen sekä uuteen vieraiden ihmisten ja vieraan kielen asuttamaan paikkaan muuttaminen saattoi merkitä pienelle lapselle. Haastattelujen analyysissä kiinnitettiin huomiota siihen mitä haastateltavat sanoivat sekä jättivät sanomatta. Uteliaisuuden ja kiinnostuksen puute menneisyyden tapahtumia kohtaan näyttäytyivät suurimassa osassa haastatteluissa eräänlaisina puolustuskeinoina. Erityisen merkittävää oli vähäinen kiinnostus suomalaista äitiä kohtaan. Haastateltavilla oli vaikeuksia pohtia tämän keskeisen tapahtuman merkitystä elämänsä kannalta. He olivat siitä huolimatta vaikuttuneita omista kokemuksistaan, mikä näkyi sekä kerronnan muodossa ja sisällössä. Haastateltavilla oli paikoin vaikeaa ajatella tätä elämänsä keskeistä tapahtumaa. Evakuointitilanteen käsittämättömät tapahtumat näyttäytyivät edelleen käsittämättömiltä myös haastateltavien kertomuksissa. Evakuointi oli traumaattinen kokemus. Tämä voi johtaa muistojen erikoislaatuiseen tallentumiseen ja mieleen palauttamiseen, että sisältöön. Traumaattista kokemusta ei muokata eikä muuteta mikä näyttäytyi haastatteluissa eräänlaisena ajattomuutena. Haastateltavat puhuivat menneestä ikään kuin muistot olisivat olleet osa nykyisyyttä. Tämä viittaa trauman jatkuvaan läsnäoloon. Traumaattinen kokemus kotoituu, eristäytyy ja erottuu muusta persoonallisuudesta, mutta vaikuttaa silti tunneelämään. Haastateltavien katkonaiset tarinat saivat koherentin muodon, kun he puhuivat aikuiselämästään. Katastrofaaliset kokemukset eivät välttämättä vahingoita oppimista. Haastateltavat olivat aikuisina löytäneet erilaisia keinoja sietää erokokemuksiaan. He olivat rakentaneet eräänlaisen normaaliuden, joka tarjosi heille tarvittavan suojan elämänsä hallintaa.

Avainsanat: sotalapset, evakuointi, vaikutus aikuiselämässä

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My interest in the theme of the Finnish war children goes back to my own childhood as a Finnish war child. Even though I returned to Finland after the war, I remained close to my Swedish family in many ways. I visited them every summer and throughout their lives they were dear and comforting people to me.

Around the millennium shift, a new interest and openness arose in Finland toward the war children and their destinies. At that time I also became deeply engaged, for the first time, in questions around my own war childhood. I got together with professor Singa Sandelin and Dr Pertti Kavén, both of whom had long been engaged in the subject of the war children, and we started to brainstorm around this theme. Our group soon grew larger as we met and discussed the possibilities of starting a research process. After Singa Sandelin suddenly passed away, the co-ordination of the work to come was taken over by Nina Santavirta, Associate Professor at the Department of Behavioral Sciences at the University of Helsinki. She has been a pillar of strength throughout the entire research process. Sinikka Maliniemi, a psychologist and psychotherapist, also joined the group. We began to develop a plan of research that at first included cooperation with Martin Parsons in England. He was working on a study of evacuees sent from cities to the countryside during the Second World War. Later the decision was made to limit the research to the Finnish war children. In the questionnaire study that developed into the first project, it proved to be difficult to find conclusive results on differences between evacuated and non-evacuated Finnish children. Insights from the questionnaire study gradually led to other ways to approach the question of what the evacuation had meant for the children who had been war children.

The cooperation between Sinikka Maliniemi and the present author was crucial for the interview study presented here concerning the war children who remained in Sweden after the war. The joint processing of the interview material entailed an intensive collaboration that extended over several years. Especially Sinikka Maliniemi's deep insight into research on infants, which has led her to develop an acute alertness to the non-verbal in a communication, was of utmost importance throughout the time during which we analyzed and interpreted the material together. During this stage Professor Suzanne Kaplan was our adviser, providing a firm foundation for our research.

Henrik Enckell's initiative to hold a writer's seminar under the leadership of the Finnish Psychoanalytical Society has also contributed to the final results of the present study. At a later time a research seminar came into being as well, also within the framework of the Psychoanalytical Society. The original goal, to publish some articles on our war child study, took another turn when it proved to be possible for me to write a dissertation. From that moment onward, Professor Jukka Aaltonen has been an inspiring and encouraging adviser. His knowledge and accessibility have been indispensable for me, but most of all I

appreciate his never-ending enthusiasm and backing during the processes of writing and publication. In addition, I have had an advisory group consisting of, besides Professor Jukka Aaltonen, also Adjunct Professors Henrik Enckell and Ilpo Lahti. They have shown great patience in reading through and critiquing the different versions of my work.

Pamela Boston has translated the text to English. Her keen sense of language and her dependability but most of all her patience have provided a constant source of support.

I also thank Lari Assmuth and Nora Ervalahti for their help with the format, lay-out and design of the dissertation and the reference list, as also Kuno Öhrman and Michael Rießler for their crucial help with computer problems.

A grandmother who writes a dissertation needs help non-stop and a large number of grandchildren. Oskar and Elias have taken turns rescuing me from critical situations. The grandchildren's parents have been on hand when various difficulties with the dissertation have turned up. Thank you Jonna, Henrik, Laura and Jani, but also all of the younger grandchildren who bring so much joy to my life, Samuel, Aina, Isak, Signe, Klara, and Vega.

I would also like to thank the Finnish War Child Association, the Signe and Ane Gyllenberg Foundation and the Academy of Finland for their funding of this research.

Last and most of all, I would like to thank the people who took part in the interviews, the adult war children who courageously agreed to be part of this project.

Helsinki 9.9.2018
Barbara Mattsson

LIST OF ORIGINAL PUBLICATIONS

- I Mattsson, B., Maliniemi-Piispanen, S. (2011). An interview study with a Finnish war child. *The Scandinavian Psychoanalytic Review*, 34, 31–40.
- II Mattsson, B., Maliniemi-Piispanen, S. (2013). Thinking about the unknown. An Interview Study of Finnish War Children. *Trauma and Memory*, 1, 34–46.
- III Mattsson, B., Maliniemi-Piispanen S., & Aaltonen, J. (2015). The lost mother tongue: An interview study with Finnish war children. *The Scandinavian Psychoanalytic Review*, 38, 1–12.
- IV Mattsson, B., Maliniemi-Piispanen, S., & Aaltonen, J. (2017). Traces of the past: An interview study with Finnish war children who did not return to Finland after the second World War. *The Scandinavian Psychoanalytic Review*, 40, 129–137.

Barbara Mattsson has been one of the designers of this study, one of the interviewers and the first author in all articles.

CONTENTS

ABSTRACT

TIIVISTELMÄ

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

LIST OF ORIGINAL PUBLICATIONS

CONTENTS

| | | |
|-----|---|----|
| 1 | INTRODUCTION | 12 |
| 1.1 | Historical background and framework for the evacuation of Finnish children to Sweden..... | 12 |
| 1.2 | Arrangements..... | 13 |
| 1.3 | Adoptions | 14 |
| 1.4 | Evacuations during WW II..... | 15 |
| 1.5 | The Finnish war children's own publications, war child associations and debates..... | 15 |
| 2 | THE THEORETICAL BACKGROUND | 16 |
| 2.1 | Research on Finnish war children..... | 16 |
| 2.2 | Psychological and neuroscientific viewpoints | 18 |
| 2.3 | Early separation | 21 |
| 2.4 | Psychodynamic angles of interpretation..... | 23 |
| 2.5 | Early phases of life and their significance for a child's development..... | 24 |
| 3 | METHODS | 26 |
| 3.1 | Selection of interviewees | 26 |
| 3.2 | Carrying out the interviews and processing the material | 27 |
| 3.3 | Method of analysis | 28 |
| 3.4 | Procedure | 28 |
| 3.5 | Processing of the material..... | 29 |
| 3.6 | Ethical considerations | 30 |
| 3.7 | Interviewees..... | 30 |
| 3.8 | List of interviewees..... | 31 |
| 4 | OVERVIEW OF THE ORIGINAL STUDIES | 33 |
| 4.1 | Study 1: An interview study with a Finnish war child | 33 |
| 4.2 | Study 2: Thinking about the unknown: An interview study with Finnish war children | 34 |
| 4.3 | Study 3: The lost mother tongue: An interview study with Finnish war children | 35 |
| 4.4 | Study 4: Traces of the past: an interview study with Finnish war children who did not return to Finland after the war | 36 |

| | | |
|-----|---|----|
| 5 | RESULTS | 38 |
| 5.1 | Background factors..... | 38 |
| 5.2 | Results from the interviews..... | 39 |
| 6 | DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS..... | 41 |
| 6.1 | The absent depression..... | 45 |
| 6.2 | The War Child Associations..... | 45 |
| 6.3 | Understanding the war children’s experiences? | 46 |
| 7 | SUMMARY OF KEY RESULTS..... | 49 |
| 7.1 | Main results | 49 |
| 7.2 | Applicability in the world of today..... | 51 |
| 7.3 | Closing words | 52 |
| | SUOMENKIELINEN YHTEENVETO | 54 |
| | REFERENCES..... | 56 |

Denna generaliserande strävan att förmå både den allmänna och den personliga historien att tåga har många konsekvenser i sitt släptåg. Så blir det, exempelvis, svårare att avlyssna dess motpol: själens kärlek till sitt förflutna, till den person man tidigare var och till de gestalter som befolkade den världen och de processer som nu utspelar sig som en följd av vad som var då. Vilket försvårar bruket av ett av de verksammaste botemedel som finns mot rädslan för döden, mot andra själsliga ångestförslamningar och depressiva stämningar. Nämligen att med hjälp av inre bilder, ekon och fragment ur det förgångna gestalta utvecklingslinjer och utspana helheter i det egna livsförloppet.

Mikael Enckell, *Okändhetens följeslagare. Med frågan som drivkraft och mysteriet som färdmål*. 2015

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Historical background and framework for the evacuation of Finnish children to Sweden

The Finnish Winter War broke out on November 30, 1939. The interim peace lasted from March 13, 1940, to June 25, 1941. At that point the Continuation War began and did not end until the autumn of 1944.

Approximately 70 000 Finnish children were evacuated during the war (1939-1944) to their neighboring countries. Sweden, Denmark and Norway.

When the war broke out an initiative arose immediately from within Swedish women's organizations to help Finnish children by moving them to Sweden. This was the beginning of what has later been called the largest evacuation of children in world history. Denmark and Norway also took in children from Finland. About 3000 children went to Denmark and 109 to Norway, some of whom were accompanied by their mothers. When the German invasion of Norway began, their stay was cut short and they were sent back to Finland (Kavén, 2010).

On December 4, 1939, along with the above- mentioned women's groups, organizations and authorities in Sweden took up the question of how Sweden could support Finnish mothers and children. A committee called Central Aid for Finland was set up to coordinate all aid to Finland. Only one week later, 5000 Swedish families had already submitted that they were willing to take Finnish children into their homes. The first transport took place on December 15, 1939. Figures concerning the number of refugees during the Winter War vary greatly, from 8000 till 12 000 children (Kavén, 2010).

In Sweden there was a massive and positive response to the call to aid Finnish war children. Sweden and Finland have had a long history in common, which most probably played a large role. The idea of Nordic unity meant that the Swedish people had a generous posture toward their Nordic neighbors but a more restrictive one toward for example Jewish, German and Baltic peoples.

The Lutheran ethic of solidarity with the poor and the weak can be one reason behind the establishment of the Nordic welfare state. To take a Finnish child into one's home was considered an altruistic deed. Most of the children came to foster homes (Sköld, Söderlind & Bergman, 2014).

Most of the children came to Swedish families but some of them were placed in Swedish orphanages. These Finnish children who were sent to other countries during the Winter War and then during the subsequent Continuation War are referred to collectively as Finnish War Children.

1.2 Arrangements

The first transports took place by boat from Turku to Stockholm. Later it was deemed safer to send children by train, making the long journey north via Tornio and Haparanda. The transports by boat were not completely terminated and some of the children were evacuated by plane. As soon as the children arrived in Sweden, they were taken to sanitary centers where they had a health check-up and were deloused. After that, they were moved to quarantines for about a week. Medical factors were prioritized but importance was also placed on checking the children's nutritional state and luggage. When necessary, they were given clothing. After quarantine, the children were taken to different local centers with the goal of continuing to their final destination. Local voluntary organizations took care of the major part of the placements and provincial offices handled the registrations of children and other administrative issues. An important detail was that the children were forbidden to have money with them (Heilala, 2016).

Denmark and Norway joined the aid efforts somewhat later. All in all, about 70 000 children were evacuated during the entire war period. In Finland the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health was the highest instance for matters concerning the war children. Information on the evacuated children can be found in the Finnish National Archives in Helsinki and in the Swedish National Archives in Stockholm. On the average the children spent one year and eight months in Sweden. Twenty per cent of the children were under five years of age (Santavirta et al., 2015).

Most evacuated children generally came to Swedish families whose socio-economic status was higher than that of their Finnish parents (Kavén, 2012). The Swedish foster parents were also in general older than the Finnish parents and most of them had children who were older than the war child.

At first the children who were designated for evacuation were primarily those who were sick and could not get adequate care in Finland, Karelian children whose parents had returned to Karelia to restore their war-torn area, children from bombed out-homes and children of invalids and of those fallen in war. In 1942 the criteria were expanded to include children whose fathers had been mobilized into the armed forces and whose mothers had to work, and children of pregnant mothers who because of lack of sufficient support could

not manage their economy or take care of their children. During the Continuation War, the transports of children were considerably larger. At this point the transports were organized and supervised and the Finnish Ministry of Social Affairs and Health was in charge of matters pertaining to war children. The largest transports began in January of 1944. The war had taken a turn and people feared the worst, which is to say, an invasion. In the summer of 1944, the transports increased once more when Karelia was evacuated for the second time. The Finnish authorities encouraged the evacuations of children. Frequent bombings and food shortages were one of the reasons; health questions were another (Kavén, 2010; Kärppi, 2003).

The Finnish war children were evacuated under controlled conditions, whereby they were supervised during the entire journey, and the system with placement in foster families was well organized (Heilala, 2016; Kavén, 2010; Kärppi, 2003).

In Finland an uncompromising decision had been made that all Finnish children should return to their homeland after the war. This led to great difficulties in many cases. The younger children had forgotten their Finnish, a problematic circumstance that was not given special consideration upon their return. School children had a hard time until they had learned Finnish anew. The children who came back after the war had worse school results and a lower level of education compared to the Finnish children who had not been evacuated, thus a life-long effect (Heilala, 2016). Approximately 6000 to 8000 children did not return home after the war but remained permanently in Sweden (Kavén, 2010; Lumu, 1974; Sandelin et al., 2006) and documents stored at the Finnish National Archives. One reason that it has been difficult to assess the number of children who remained in Sweden can be that many went to Sweden outside of the official registration. It is now considered that 7100 children remained in Sweden, most of them staying as so-called foster children (Kavén, 2010).

1.3 Adoptions

The majority of applications for adoption concerned children who had come to foster parents when they were less than three years of age. The children whom foster parents were most eager to adopt were the youngest children who had been with the foster parents the longest time. The biological Finnish parents in these cases belonged to the lowest social classes. Language and state of health were often used as arguments. Economic aspects dominated the decision of whether or not to grant adoption. Another important argument for adoption was that the child would get a chance to study (Virkamäki, 2005).

1.4 Evacuations during WW II

There were also other major evacuations of children during World War II. In the “Kindertransports” around 10 000 Jewish children had already been sent to England before the war broke out from countries where Nazism was spreading widely (Kavén, 2010; Sebald, 2000).

English school children, the so-called evacuees, were sent from bomb-threatened cities, primarily London, to the countryside. Around 1.5 million children were involved (Parsons, 1998).

At the end of the Vietnam War in 1975, the government of the USA decided that Vietnamese orphans would be moved to the USA for adoption. This was called “Operation Baby lift” and involved 2547 children (Kavén, 2010).

The transports of children were shrouded in relative silence all the way until the turn of the century. Almost no one talked about them. Varvin describes this as “the conspiracy of silence” (Varvin, 2014).

1.5 The Finnish war children’s own publications, war child associations and debates

However, as early as the 1970s and 1980s, various autobiographies about the Finnish war children’s experiences began to be available. They have not been translated to English so the titles are given here in Swedish or Finnish. Examples of the most talked about and earliest to be published are as follows: Annu Edvarssen: *Det får inte hända igen. Finska krigsbarn 1939–1945* (1977); Pertti Kavén: *70 000 pientä kohtaloa* (1985) or in Swedish *70 000 små öden* (1985); Ortmark-Almgren: *Du som haver barnen kär* (1989); Singa Sandelin: *Gäst i eget hem* (1982).

Reading the war children’s autobiographies gives a good insight into how difficult life was for them after the war, especially for those who returned to Finland. In many cases they returned to conditions of severe deprivation: a harsh emotional climate, poverty, overcrowded living quarters and food shortages.

In the 1990s war child associations were established in both Finland and Sweden with a number of local chapters, around ten in Sweden and sixteen in Finland. War child associations hold recurring debates on the theme: Was it good or bad to send children away during the war? This theme is both a never-ending and a controversial one. Opinions are divided and the question evokes strong feelings. There has been a debate around these questions: “Can children be seen as a country’s resource?” “Who gained from the evacuation, Finland or Sweden?” (Kavén, 2010). There were many years of silence around these questions. That is to say, an open discussion did not exist concerning what the evacuation from Finland to another country meant for the evacuated children.

2 THE THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Research on Finnish war children

Recent years have seen a wealth of research on Finnish war children. The surprising thing is that this kind of research has not taken place earlier. One reason at least in part is that the war children theme had long been beset by taboos, not only in Finland but also in other European countries that were involved in the Second World War. Around the millennium shift, a decisive change occurred.

The first study on the theme of war children in Sweden, titled *Finnish War Children*, was made by Langebro and published by Umeå University (1994). She studied 61 people out of a population of war children who had remained in Sweden. She found an elevated risk for depression and other psychiatric disturbances. The interviewees reported feelings of rootlessness and insecurity. They considered their adjustment to Sweden to be superficial. After this study with war children who remained in Sweden the following concern those who came back to Finland after the war.

In Finland the pioneering study was by Räsänen (1992), who gave a brighter picture of the consequences of the evacuation for the children than Langebro. She investigated all children evacuated from 1939 to 1945 from the county of Kuopio. She compared evacuated and non-evacuated children with regard to the change of culture and language and found that the physical health of those sent to Sweden was better than that among members of the reference group. In contrast, she found that evacuees had language difficulties, especially when scholastic skills and education were examined. The professional level of the evacuees was lower than that of the control group. Her conclusion was that the war children had done rather well in life despite the many changes of great magnitude that they had experienced in childhood. She saw no connections between the experiences of childhood and the physical, psychic and social problems of adulthood. This study was primarily a questionnaire study.

However, 60 individuals were chosen who were willing to participate in a personal interview. Those interviewed consisted of war children and a control group who had not been war children. The questions studied were the individual's ability to establish bonds with others, adaptability, ability to manage life changes, general attitude toward life, and psychic status, which included basic emotional nature as well as emotional capacity. The interview study did not find any differences of significance between the different groups.

After these studies published in the 1990s, over a decade would pass before more studies became available. In the early 2000s, two extensive projects were started at the Department of Behavioral Sciences at the University of Helsinki. Except for the present study, all recent studies are survey studies about war children who returned to Finland after the war.

One of the projects was based on the "Helsinki Cohort Study" database (e.g. Räikkönen et al., 2011) and the other was named "The child in the Eye of the Storm - War child then (1939-1945) and Now" (e.g. Sandelin et al., 2006). All the following studies concern those war children who returned to Finland after the war. The research has showed an increased incidence of depression and diagnoses of psychic disturbances later in life (Eriksson, Räikkönen & Eriksson, 2014). In the same study it was also found that evacuation engendered early life stress (ELS) with long-term consequences of higher vulnerability to mental health disorders, depressive symptoms, cognitive functioning and physical and psychosocial functioning. The Finnish war children who returned to Finland after the war had more difficulties than the children who were not evacuated, according to the Helsinki Cohort Study (Pesonen et al., 2007; Räikkönen et al., 2011). The results indicate that the war children run a greater risk of suffering from coronary diseases, diabetes and psychic disturbances. The majority of the war children in the study saw their time as evacuees as a positive experience when they were asked upon their return to Finland after the war.

In two separate studies (Alastalo et al., 2009; Alastalo et al., 2012) were found higher levels of coronary health disease morbidity as well as an association between separation in early life and cardiovascular diseases and diabetes 60 years later.

Santavirta and Santavirta found no differences in depression rates between evacuees and non-evacuees as measured by the Beck Depression Index (Santavirta, N. & Santavirta, T., 2013). Santavirta et al. gave evidence of lower risk of hospital admission for any mental disorder among evacuated men, whereas for women there was no association between evacuation and the overall risk of admission for a psychiatric disorder (Santavirta et al., 2015). When admissions for individual psychiatric disorders were analyzed, evacuated girls were significantly more likely than their non-evacuated sisters to be admitted to hospital for a mood disorder as an adult.

In her doctoral thesis, *The Child in the Eye of the Storm - Unveiling the War Child Syndrome*, Heilala found that war children who returned to Finland had more difficulties compared to those who were not evacuated (Heilala, 2016).

The general impression was that the evacuees were well taken care of in their foster homes. No differences in psychosocial well-being were found between the evacuees and non-evacuees. "*Sense of coherence*" was a significant predictor, and favorable childhood home circumstances were a protective factor in psychosocial well-being for evacuees and non-evacuees. Re-joining the original childhood family was stressful for many of the evacuees because of the loss of their mother tongue.

In two studies based on sibling data, war child data were matched to the Finnish Hospital Discharge and Death Cause Registers, respectively (Santavirta, 2014; Santavirta et al., 2015). The results showed that the evacuation did not increase the risk of psychiatric morbidity, nor was the mortality rate found to be higher in the evacuated sibling than in the non-evacuated one. The results from sub-diagnosis groups showed that the risk of substance abuse for evacuated boys was higher than that for their non-evacuated brothers, whereas the risk of depression severe enough to warrant hospitalization was twofold in evacuated girls compared to their non-evacuated sisters.

The latest findings about Finnish war children come from a population-based cohort study where female, but not male, offspring of mothers placed in Swedish foster families during World War II had a significantly higher risk of hospitalization attributable to mood disorders than their female cousins (Santavirta et al., 2017). This finding suggests that a trauma may be passed down from one generation to another.

The results show unequivocally that the war children who came back to Finland later in life had poorer health and poorer school results than those who were not evacuated.

The questionnaire study that was the basis for Heilala's study was also the basis for the questionnaire later sent to the Finnish War Child Association in Stockholm, and which in turn has served as the starting point for the present study.

There is no study apart from the present one that has used a psychodynamic approach based on personal interviews with people who were war children.

2.2 Psychological and neuroscientific viewpoints

Freud introduced the trauma concept within psychoanalysis. He made use of the metaphor of an archaeologist who digs into the past as a way of describing the therapy through which he treated traumatic memories through hypnosis.

According to the psychoanalytic view, a trauma breaks down the protective stimulus barrier and arouses excitement and psychic energy that cannot be bound. A traumatized person becomes a part of the traumatic experience and becomes involved in a scenario, which can form the breeding ground for an identification process such as identification with the aggressor (Freud, 1926).

Freud's view of trauma does not completely cover the same phenomena as are now seen as central in a severe trauma and especially when dealing with trauma at an early age. His view has later developed into an object-relationship perspective. The object-relation viewpoint sees trauma as a basically interpersonal experience where lack of empathy from the other plays a major role. When the relationship to the empathetic other is broken or damaged, the ability to think about the experience is also affected. At that point reality must be rejected or denied. What has been experienced cannot be symbolized nor can it become a part of the personal life history (Laub & Auerhahn, 1993; Varvin, 2003). A person who has experienced total helplessness falls back to an archaic and primitive psychological level and obliterates his/her ability to think and to symbolize (Saraneva, 2008; Varvin, 2003).

Varvin summarizes the current view of trauma (Varvin, 2003). A psychic trauma arises when an external event brings about helplessness and fear that the person afflicted is not capable of dealing with. The person then becomes overwhelmed by unbearable sensory impressions and affects and is forced to take on defensive maneuvers and to develop early defence mechanisms. The central feature in a traumatic experience is the perception of having been abandoned by outer and inner protective forces. Trauma can lead to impairment in the ability to trust others and in the possibility to link to a dialogue with an inner empathetic object. Symbolizing, which is necessary in order to make an experience meaningful and possible to cope with mentally, is dependent on the inner objects. The traumatic situation and the post-traumatic process have consequences both on a bodily level and on the level of social adjustment and human relationships. Traumatic experiences involve the entire personality, the body and the social surroundings.

The primary symptoms of trauma are not symbolic, defensive or driven by secondary usefulness. The key issue is the inability to integrate the reality in a specific traumatic experience, resulting in the repetition of the trauma in images, acting out, feelings, physiological states and interpersonal relationships. The effects of the trauma can be regarded here as being beyond motivation, imagination and conflicts of drives, that is to say, in opposition to Freud's early trauma theory. The question is thus whether a trauma can be represented and recalled in the memory, or if it can only be repeated and acted out (McFarlane & Van der Kolk, 1996; Varvin, 2003). What one does not remember is present nonetheless as a force in the now. When a psychic phenomenon is unconscious, this means that it is not integrated or articulated. The unconscious processes are at work nonetheless but these unconscious impulses, feelings and conflicts take on a timeless character (Eriksson, 2014).

Neuroscientific viewpoints play an especially key role in the discussion of trauma today. Dissociation is a core concept within trauma literature. Dissociation here means feeling unreal and alienated toward oneself or toward those in one's surroundings. It can also mean memory loss or identity confusion (Ryden & Wallroth, 2008). It is a mechanism that is responsible both for protecting consciousness during an ongoing overwhelming situation and for

providing a later defence against memories that could be too frightening. In both cases, an experience is being kept separate from consciousness, often in a de-symbolized form. Dissociation can be a way to bear the unthinkable and to know about and at the same time not know about the trauma. It becomes like a mental state where sensory impressions dominate. Consciousness is then blurry and the cognitive functions are of no help in understanding the meaning of what is happening or in establishing the historical source of the memory. The age of the traumatized person and his/her earlier experiences are of significance. Adults can react with some kind of capitulation or resignation toward trauma, a more controlled reaction where the observational ego holds ground, while children can experience so-called mortal fright. Younger children lack an adult's observational ability and cannot guard themselves against the threat (Varvin, 2004).

From a neuroscientific perspective (van der Hart, Nijenhuis & Steele 2006) dissociation is seen to have particular consequences for children. The child's attention is turned to feelings of something threatening, thus making it hard for the child to focus on play or learning. It can also be difficult for the child to distinguish between outer and inner threats as well as to develop the ability to be alone and to calm itself. The ability to regulate self-hatred and other social feelings such as shame, guilt, embarrassment and degradation is then also affected. Traumatized persons have a tendency to hide behind a veneer of normality.

Understanding trauma solely as dissociation can give a mechanical picture of the trauma process. Gullestad emphasizes the importance of listening to the narrative style of the traumatized person (Gullestad, 2015). The analyst can come into contact with the affects through the transference relationship by listening to the person's manner of expression rather than to the literal content of the dialogue. Insight can be conveyed by bodily and psychological attitudes, via gestures and mimics as well as through the use of language. The Adult Attachment Interview (AAI) focuses on the psycholinguistic qualities of the individual's discourse: the structure and syntax of language are central. In AAI affects are also registered as they are communicated through body language, thus demonstrating to what extent affect is integrated and mentalized. AAI focuses on the form of the narrative rather than its content. It can also be fruitful to listen to an unstructured interview using the same approach as described for analysis of AAI.

In order to understand trauma, it is also important to understand how trauma relates to affects and impacts memory functions. Following Gullestad affects inform us about our experience of ourselves and provide us with a basis for action (Gullestad, 2005). Immediate affective evaluation takes place between people. Affects can be described as implicit procedures that bring to light internalized qualities in object relationships that can be difficult to express in words. Affective evaluations also take place between people: a process that occurs rapidly, automatically and subliminally. Affects are in action during an interview as well and are the foundation for transference and

countertransference reactions. Affects can also be described as non-verbal language.

The unconscious of one human being can react upon that of another without passing through the consciousness (Gullestad, 2008; van der Hart et al., 2006; Ryden & Wallroth, 2008).

Today the dominant perspective in memory research centers on the question of the past as a construction that we create according to our present needs and possibilities (Bohleber, 2008).

2.3 Early separation

British psychoanalysts such as Bowlby and Winnicott in the *British Medical Journal* in 1939 warned about risks connected to the British government's plan during the Second World War to evacuate school children, primarily from London, to the countryside. They strongly advised against it. However, this plan was carried out on a large scale. There is no evidence that Winnicott would have written anything afterwards that dealt specifically with conditions for evacuated children during the war.

Anna Freud and Burlingham laid the groundwork for understanding the risks that could arise when very young children were separated from their mothers (Freud & Burlingham, 1943). This understanding was not yet generally held at the time of the evacuation of the children. In contrast, they did not subject the father's significance to analysis in the same way, which is surprising considering that an absent father was a reality during the entire Second World War. They have stressed that an observer can seldom judge the depth and seriousness of the pain of a little child. Is the child's pain short-lived? Perhaps the psychological situation for the child is that a love-object that does not give the child what it needs is turned into a bad object. The memory of good things that might have happened earlier is destroyed by the child's disappointment. (cf. Laub, 1993).

Bowlby was the pioneer in understanding the threats when young children were removed from their mothers and placed with strangers (Bowlby, 1960a & b). Gullestad summarizes Bowlby's central conclusions around early separation (Gullestad, 2001). Bowlby saw three phases following separation; protest, despair and de-attachment. His contribution was his focus on the infant's need for an unbroken early close contact to the mother. He underscored the crucial nature of a little child's uninterrupted and secure attachment to its mother after having studied children's reactions during hospital stays. De-attachment refers to a phase following separation characterized by the termination of protest and despair. This behavioral reaction in the child was previously regarded as adjustment for example to the hospital setting. Bowlby demonstrated that de-attachment, far from expressing healthy adaptation, was the result of defensive processes that could indicate disturbance in the child's attachment relationships. Bowlby also pointed out that children who had not

had a chance to form a secure attachment could show signs of either partial deprivation, that is to say an exaggerated need for love, or revenge and depression, or, in the case of total deprivation, listlessness, autism and delayed development. During later phases of development, other symptoms could appear, such as superficiality, lack of genuine feelings, concentration problems, and tendencies toward deception or kleptomania.

Fonagy outlines reactions to trauma in children, describing how trauma interferes with the developmental process and can lead to partial inability to reflect on one's own mental states and those of the objects (Fonagy, 2001, p. 174):

The child who is surrounded by threat or actual trauma will have little opportunity to develop an awareness of any distinction between inner and outer...there is little room for attention to the internal world. It forces the child to attend primarily to the physical world in general, --- and to be suspicious of the inner. Abandonment of reflective function may be seen as an extreme defensive response of children confronted with traumatic situations where they will find overwhelming the contemplation of mental states in their caregiver or themselves --- They thus abandon this crucial psychological capacity, with sometimes disastrous consequences.

An early separation means that the trust experienced by the child disappears. Continuity is thereby destroyed along with expectations of the presence of a possibility for linkage and empathetic understanding (Laub & Auerhahn, 1993).

A similar description of traumatic reactions is the following by Bohleber (Bohleber, 2009, p. 5):

In a case of trauma the utter helplessness causes inner objects, which were previously protective companions, to fall silent. Thus, the continual presence of good objects and the expectation of empathy are destroyed. A catastrophic isolation and dread, a quasi-autistic region of a non-self arises in which no empathetic other is available, accompanied by mortal fear, hatred, shame and despair.

In Kaplan's study of Jewish children who survived the Holocaust, she has created a model that describes the psychological consequences of children's experiences of war (Kaplan, 2006 & 2008). According to her terminology, "generational destruction" refers to the loss of the earlier life while "generational linking" shows a possibility of preserving significant memories from the past. The concepts represent a base dimension that provides a psychological framework for understanding the circumstances faced by children who have suffered catastrophes and for understanding the different affects that can come to life. She also made a special note of her finding that children could remember their lost father more than they could remember their lost mother.

2.4 Psychodynamic angles of interpretation

The psychoanalytical perspective provides an opportunity for a deeper understanding of elements that are not explicit, i.e. elements that are not necessarily present in spoken form.

A disruption in the early mother-child relationship can be considered to be one of the main causes of psychological disturbances that may appear immediately or later in life (Bowlby, Miller & Winnicott, 1939; Freud & Burlingham, 1943).

“A false self”, “dissociation”, “substitute formations” and “normopathy” are all different ways to name similar phenomena that describe an inner state where parts of the personality do not fit together. These terms can also refer to psychic limitations and consequences of trauma.

In the article “The Fear of Breakdown”, Winnicott writes about something that happened that could not be experienced at the time it happened (Winnicott, 1974). A breakdown would be necessary in order to experience what was most painful and ultimately to achieve an understanding by realizing the significance of what had happened. A person can be emotionally ignorant until he faces a about himself breakdown and thus becomes able to think the unthinkable. If the breakdown is to become part of the present, the individual must endure the pain of revisiting what happened in the past.

A “false self” (Winnicott, 1965) can develop in the absence of a capacity to create a potential space, a psychological space between reality and fantasy, that is maintained throughout one’s life. Instead one relies on defensive substitutes for the experience of being alive, such as the development of a based upon a false personality organization self. Or as McDougall, expresses it (McDougall, 1985, p. 149):

A false self is an attempt to survive psychically in the world of others, but without sufficient understanding of the emotional links, signs, and symbols that render the human relationship meaningful.

Ogden has expanded Winnicott's thoughts about the same them and talks about how individuals can misinterpret their own reactions and feelings (Ogden, 1992). He describes the anxiety of not knowing about one’s inner condition and the defences that serve as attempts to ward off this anxiety. Examples of such substitute formations include obsessional, authoritarian, as-if, false self and projective identificatory forms of control over one’s internal and external objects (Ogden, 1992, p. 165):

The illusion of knowing is achieved through the creation of a wide range of substitute formations that fill the potential space (Winnicott), in which desire and fear, appetite and fullness, love and hate might otherwise come into being.

He describes how an individual can live partly in a state of psychological deadness – that is, there are sectors of his personality in which even unconscious meaning and affects cease to be elaborated.

In addition to Winnicott, Ogden and McDougall also Bollas has written about the same issues (Bollas, 1987). The conditions described by Bollas probably have a common base with Winnicott's "fear of breakdown" and Ogden's "non-experience" and all of them reflect emotional limitations that could be likened to a kind of psychic death. Bion's term -K (Bion, 1962a) can also be seen as an extension of the same theme. A state of unknowing can be a part of a traumatic experience that can later be developed into an obstacle to learning and into the dominance of the reality principle and that can also lead to an impairment of the curiosity impulse (Bion, 1967).

Heavy shame reactions can also be seen as a kind of break down. Shame can be a reaction to the absence of approving reciprocity between the self and the outside world. Intensive feelings of shame can be paralyzing. In that case one may try in turn to belittle the other. Shame can also be followed by feelings of guilt (Reichardt & Ikonen, 1993).

That which seems devoid of meaning in a life story can be the result of a trauma (Bollas, 1987). In such cases also imagination can be subjected to limitations. Eriksson, J. reminds us that we always live in relation to the past (Eriksson, 2014). A traumatized person manifests or actualizes the relation to the earlier life by repetition and by performing certain actions. Since psychic suffering is relegated to the unconscious, this suffering takes on a timeless character, i.e. the unconscious has no relation to time. The traumatized person deals with what has been repressed not as a memory but as an action.

2.5 Early phases of life and their significance for a child's development

"In the course of an infant's development a sense of self evolves in the context of the management of need by the mother-infant pair" (Bollas, 1987, p. 35). The mother's containing ability creates meaning for the child of what it is like to be himself/herself. This meaning is what the child gets used to and expects. Containing also describes the mother's capacity to experience her infant's dread and yet retain a balanced outlook (Bion, 1959). An insecure or anxious mother is unable to be sufficiently accessible to her child. (Bion, 1962b). Inter-subjectivity (Stern, 1985) provides the mutual, shared affects between the child and a living, psychically present mother.

The child's first language is built upon personal meaning. It is unique and has a central status in the child's perceptual world (Bollas, 1987, p. 15):

The acquisition of language is perhaps the most significant transformation. It results in an ego change which alters the nature of the infant's internal world.

In language there is a meaning that is formed in the early contact with the mother. It constitutes the roots in the build-up of an identity. When the mother tongue disappears, the inner significance of the language is blotted out.

Matthis summarizes the importance of early language usage from a neuroscientific point of view (Matthis, 2006, p. 21):

The early non-verbal communication between a mother and a child is conveyed via emotions... subjectively-experienced emotions are related by the child to the object that it perceives is causing them. Research shows that when the infant child mimics the adult, the same areas are activated in the child's brain as are active in the adult's brain. This brain physiological response correlates with the ability of the child not only to have feelings itself but also to experience the sensory state of the other--- The first vocalization is also linked to these unconscious affective processes. Bodily reactions as well as language have their foundation in the first communication between the first primitive self and its surroundings.

3 METHODS

The aim of this study was to clarify the significance of the evacuation in the lives of the interviewees. More specific goals were formulated during the course of the research process. All four articles concern the same interviewees. The methods have been the same while the focus has varied.

3.1 Selection of interviewees

A questionnaire survey concerning Finnish war children was carried out by the Department of Education at the University of Helsinki. At that time the survey was sent to a sample of Finnish war children who had returned to Finland and to a control group of non-evacuees.

The same questionnaire survey was sent out in 2007 to all 202 members of the Stockholm branch of the Finnish War Child Association. The questionnaire was modified in order to adjust it to Swedish conditions. At the end of the questionnaire there was a question about an interest in participating in an interview study. One hundred and fifty-nine people answered the questionnaire and of those 144 said that they were willing to participate in a personal interview. Out of this sample, the researchers chose people who were relatively young at the time of their departure from Finland.

The interview started off with the question of whether or not the interviewee was willing to give written permission for the content of the interview to be used in research.

Among the questions in the questionnaire were the following:

- How old were you when you were evacuated to Sweden for the first time?
- How old were you when you were given a permanent foster home in Sweden?

- Describe what you remember about your trip to Sweden. If you were sent over several times, describe the time that you experienced the most strongly.

The formulation of the questions meant that it was impossible on the basis of the questionnaire to know anything about the children's movements after the war.

The questionnaire also included Beck's Depression Scale and Antonovsky's Sense of Coherence. The answers to those questions have not been taken into consideration in the present study.

The two interviewers interviewed five persons each. Those who had indicated a willingness to participate in a personal interview when they answered the questionnaire were contacted by telephone. Even though 144 people had said they were willing, it turned out to be more difficult than anticipated to find interviewees, especially since the plan was to choose people who had been relatively young during the evacuation. The interviews were audiotape-recorded and transcribed verbatim, even to the point of noting all breaks in narrative as well as somatic reactions (coughing, throat-clearing, crying and laughing).

The research questions concerned what the interviewees as adults remembered or did not remember about their experiences of their early evacuation and how they thought, felt and spoke about their war childhood.

3.2 Carrying out the interviews and processing the material

The interviews began with an open request "Tell me about your life." The war childhood was not emphasized, since the interviewees were prepared to talk especially about what they had answered on the questionnaire about their war childhood experiences. If the interviewees asked what was meant by the opening request, they were told that it was up to them to decide.

The method for reading results that was closest at hand for the researchers was the Adult Attachment Interview (AAI), since one of the interviewers, Sinikka Maliniemi-Piispanen, had experience in this area. The reading method that AAI has developed is based on a manual with precise questions and cannot be used for open interviews, but knowledge about the thinking behind the AAI influenced the reading. Accordingly, the interviewers listened to what the interviewees said, but also to their way of expressing themselves. The focus was then on the linguistic qualities in the narrative, where the structure and the syntax are central (Crittenden & Landini, 2011; Gullestad, 2015). The interviewers of course listened not only to the form of the language but also to the content.

3.3 Method of analysis

The research method for analysis of the material in this study has been primarily an application of Grounded Theory (Glaser, 1992 & 1994). The method is considered suitable in areas where there is not much other research and where there is thus a need for basic exploration and mapping out. This is especially true of the research area involving interview studies of war children. The main approach in Grounded Theory is to seek regularities, to identify and categorize elements and study the relation between them. Chenitz and Swanson also consider Grounded Theory to be suitable for research in which there are gaps in knowledge (Chenitz & Swanson, 1986). Open coding incorporates free analysis, mostly of written material, for example transcripts of interviews.

In this study there were no readymade hypotheses, which made it possible to keep an open stance toward the interviewees' ways of describing their lives. During the interpretation process, the researchers could identify various statements that they experienced as meaningful and significance-bearing and compare them to similar statements in the entire group of interviewees. When different connections could be discerned between the interviewees' narratives, it was possible to derive a picture of common features. As the process continued, it was possible to categorize different statements since they had common implications.

Glaser has emphasized that the best way to do research is to *think about one's data*. Kaplan has stressed that the researcher needs to maintain two positions - to go into the individual narratives and at the same time to keep a meta-perspective (Kaplan, 2002). There should be a balance between cognitive searching for knowledge and the ethical demands connected to human interaction. It is also necessary to guard against crossing the boundary between one's own and the subject's worlds.

The goal of every study is to find common features that can be generalized to a larger population (Eisenhardt, 1989).

3.4 Procedure

In order to give the interviewees the greatest possible space for choosing what to talk about, no leading questions were asked. The only questions were those that arose when something remained unclear for the listener. When there are no readymade hypotheses, the researcher becomes open to all the communication that takes place between the interviewee and the interviewer, both the spoken and the unspoken. The interviewers of course had notions of what the war children might speak about, for example, abandonment, sorrow and losses.

3.5 Processing of the material

The interviews were transcribed with great precision. The reading process is also part of the methodology. Psychoanalytic theory and listening with the so-called third ear were also a vital part of the research process. When processing an interview, the researcher who had not met the interviewee could contribute standpoints that could come to her mind since she had not been emotionally involved and engaged in the interview itself. Perhaps she could then contribute to a more objective picture of what had been said. The meetings during which the interviewers read the texts together and shared thoughts and emerging ideas strengthened the analysis. Having several researchers can in this way increase the creative potential of a study. During the readings both researchers became intimately immersed in all of the individual interviews, which made it easier to compare the different cases. This process also prevented the drawing of hasty conclusions. An important issue was to take up the similarities and the differences in the material.

The interviewers were psychodynamically oriented and they reasoned in such terms. An interview could evoke strong feelings in the interviewer as well as in the interviewee. When the material was processed, the countertransference feelings of the interviewers as well as the interactions between the interviewee and the interviewer were noted. Transference and countertransference are the terminology for the feelings that emerge most specifically between patient and therapist during a therapy session but that can also emerge in other life situations. Transference means that one person can transfer an emotional atmosphere unconsciously to another, as a patient does to a therapist. This transference can then awaken complementary countertransference feelings in the recipient, the therapist. This phenomenon can also come alive during an interview. The interviewers' psychotherapist/psychoanalyst identity played a guiding role.

The texts were read thoroughly, over and over again, and could be compared with each other. The interviewers took one interview at a time and read it aloud slowly, reflected over the content and made notes simultaneously. The interviewers listened to their transference reactions and tried to understand them. They sought to create a secure atmosphere as a prerequisite for daring to test different thoughts during the processing of the material. The fact that two interviewers studied the texts and read them aloud to each other provided another, more living, level compared to what would have been the case had they read the texts on their own. The shared and thorough reading and analysis made for a valuable complement since there was always a possibility for recurring discussions, reflection and questions. One could see the cooperation as a dyad with a studied "third" person. The process of interpretation could also be likened to a psychic task where the interviewers strove to transform the interviewees' "beta-element" (unformulated but present elements in the narratives) to a level for "alpha functions" (Bion, 1962a) in order to make the

spoken comprehensible, meaningful and comparable with other narratives. As Kestenberg and Fogelman have stressed, psychologists and psychoanalysts are able to use applied psychology as a tool to find the meaningful in a given context (Kestenberg & Fogelman, 1994). It is a matter of pinpointing a subjective experience that can be seen as a basis for the individual's personal truth.

3.6 Ethical considerations

One might feel ethical misgivings about making an interpretation of something in a way that the interviewees themselves did not state explicitly. By interpreting, one goes beyond what they exactly said. It could be posited that a way to underscore ethical correctness would be for the interviewer to talk to the interviewee afterwards about what came up in the interview, especially things that were understood in another way from what the interviewee himself or herself expressed. However, the researcher would then take the position of a psychotherapist. In addition, it would imply a readiness for an extended therapeutic commitment. The researchers solved the problem by recommending pre-informed psychotherapists in Stockholm whom the interviewees could contact if they felt the need to do so.

The Regional Ethical Review Board in Stockholm approved the interview project on March 12, 2007. The researchers carried out the interviews at the Karolinska Institute.

3.7 Interviewees

The interviewees had a number of things in common. All of them had been evacuated from Finland to Sweden during the war and they had lived their adult lives in Sweden. They were all Swedish citizens and active members of Stockholm's Finnish War Child Association. All of them felt this association to be important to them and it gave them a chance to have contact with other war children.

During the interviews it emerged that some of the interviewees had lived in a Finnish environment where they already had serious problems before the evacuation to Sweden, such as short-term stays at an orphanage (two of the interviewees), food shortages and insufficient clothing in the family, as well as an absent father. They were in a war and everyone was affected by anxiety and fear. Most of them came from relatively modest conditions in Finland.

The economic circumstances in Sweden were in their cases significantly better than they would have been in Finland. However, many of the interviewees expressed their disappointment over not receiving more than an elementary education in Sweden when they were of school age. All of them later completed courses in adult education, which is probably exceptional for

the war child population as a whole. It is doubtful that they would have had the same possibilities for further education in Finland as they had in Sweden.

The interviewees had stable relationships and most of them had children. There were no divorces. They mentioned their present families but did not speak about them in more detail.

3.8 List of interviewees

1. Evacuated as two-year-old. She was first placed in a foster family, and then in orphanages, after which she came to a family consisting of two women. When she was five years old, her Finnish mother insisted that she come back to Finland. At the age of 13, she returned to Sweden to the family where she been living previously. The Finnish authorities had intervened and sent her back to Sweden because of neglect.

2. Evacuated as a two-and-a half year-old together with her two older sisters. They were placed in different foster homes. She was sent back to Finland after the war, but because "she refused to sleep anywhere but in the kennel", her Swedish parents were notified and they came to fetch her back to Sweden. Both of her Finnish parents later moved to Sweden after the war, but they did not live with their children.

3. Evacuated as a two-year old. Moved back to Finland after the war as a schoolgirl and returned to Sweden later. She visited the Swedish family during holidays and summers. She regarded the Swedish family as her own.

4. Evacuated as a three-and-a-half year-old. He came to a permanent foster home.

5. Evacuated as a three-and-a-half year-old. From the age of six, he lived with his Finnish mother in Sweden.

6. Evacuated as a three-and-a-half year-old. When he was eight and a half years old, his Finnish mother, married to a Swedish man, moved to Sweden and took the boy into their home despite his protests. He maintained a strong bond to his Swedish foster parents.

7. Evacuated as a four-year-old. She did not make any mention whatsoever of her Finnish parents.

8. Evacuated to Sweden right before her fourth birthday. When she was sent back to Finland as stipulated at the end of the war, she refused to eat and her physical condition deteriorated, the same symptoms that had motivated her

original evacuation to Sweden. This led to her being sent back to Sweden and she was later adopted by her Swedish foster parents.

9. Evacuated to Sweden at the age of five together with her younger sister. Her Finnish mother later moved to Sweden, but they did not live together.

10. Evacuated to Sweden at the age of seven. Her mother moved to Sweden after the war, but they met extremely rarely. Their relationship seemed to be dysfunctional.

Those of the parents who moved to Sweden probably did not arrive until the early 1950s when the visa requirement for entering Sweden was abolished (Kavén personal communication 2017), thus almost 8–10 years after the children had been evacuated to Sweden. Only two of them later lived with their parents. This information was not attainable from reading the questionnaire answers when the researchers were selecting possible interviewees. Most of the war children could not speak Finnish as adults.

Relationships during and after the war proved to be more multifaceted and complex than one could have imagined. Common to all interviewees were the evacuation itself and the placement in a Swedish foster home. They had a varying degree of contact with their Finnish families. Almost all the children met their Finnish family and relatives in Finland after the war. They said that they had to speak through an interpreter. This probably created somewhat of a sense of alienation.

This interview material is not homogeneous. The essential commonality is that all of the interviewees were evacuated to Sweden during the war. Their lives took on many different destinies and they met their Finnish parents and their Finnish relatives to different extents.

4 OVERVIEW OF THE ORIGINAL STUDIES

4.1 Study 1: An interview study with a Finnish war child

The first article was an exploratory and mapping-out introduction to the complex situation of the war children. The article was a case description of a girl who had her fourth birthday when she came till Sweden.

The interviewee described how she as a child in Sweden suffered from various exhausting compulsive and phobic symptoms, something that was unique for this material. Her inner conflict from having two different sets of parents and especially two mothers seems to have been unbearable. She struggled with feelings of helplessness and inner conflicts of loyalty, which led to different defensive attempts to control those around her, something that also came to the fore as a transference reaction in her relationship to the interviewer. She wanted to be the one who knew and the one who was right during the interview as well. She had an exceptional memory for individual details, which could be seen as an "autistic" reaction in an attempt to hold together the incomprehensible events of her childhood. It also became obvious that she was insisting that she remembered details that it would have been impossible for her to have known as a child but that she had woven together to make a unified narrative. Several acute reactions shown by the interviewee during the interview bore witness to a trauma awakened to the surface. An early trauma can be experienced as a perpetual "now", as could be observed during the interview when she talked about different past episodes in the present tense.

It became apparent that the "narrative of childhood" often had a given and rote-learned composition. One dilemma for the war children was the absence of anyone in Sweden to whom they could legitimately direct their contradictory feelings. In order to survive psychically the children had to seek out some person for protection but in so doing they often faced a condition of unbearable inner conflict.

The article concerned to a large degree what a person remembers, how she remembers and what she forgets. *The interaction between the interviewee and the interviewer turned out to be a key to understanding every individual war child's way of reacting and of putting up defence mechanisms.* The interviewer's countertransference was likewise a source of insight about what was present but unspoken in the narrative. Since the interviewers were two people who read the texts together, they had the possibility of comparing the insights and the feelings that came to life. McDougall among many others has underscored the importance of listening to countertransference since we are talking about so-called primitive communication in these instances (McDougall, 1979).

4.2 Study 2: Thinking about the unknown: An interview study with Finnish war children

This article focused on how these Finnish war children related during the interview to their experiences of evacuation, the transport to Sweden and their life in the Swedish family. It seemed as though the war children had entirely obliterated their curiosity about their earlier lives. The article had numerous examples with extracts from different interviews that showed many similarities but also a wide variation in their narrative styles. The common feature was the difficulty that the war children had when it came to thinking about the evacuation's significance for their lives. There were obviously considerable obstacles for them when it came to dealing with such issues as the anger that existed under the surface but which appeared as displacements in the narrative. Acute traumatic reactions occurred in most of the interviews. The article also presented extracts from interviews that illustrated how the interviewee, visibly unmoved, told about harrowing experiences.

Bion's concepts knowing and not knowing, K and -K, constituted the theoretical framework for this study, where K stands for knowing and seeking to find meaning in one's experiences, which are always linked to human relationships and feelings, while minus K can be seen as a perversion of K, reflecting a denial of reality rather than an emotional experience. Bion also emphasizes that a prerequisite for the development of thinking is that an individual is aware of his/her losses. Such awareness brings about a possibility of mourning. An element of K is curiosity which, according to Bion, is always object-seeking. He sees the lack of containing as a decisive cause of disinterest and denial of reality. If individuals are not aware of their losses, they may go on to perceive the lost object as bad.

The consequences of evacuation for most of the interviewees proved to be a paralyzing effect on the ability to integrate thoughts and feelings into a narrative where the experience of ambivalence, doubt and uncertainty would also have been given a place. *These deficiencies in thinking and in emotional diversity did not seem to have been changed during the course of their lives.* What

could have been sorrow had instead taken the form of unconscious anger that could be directed toward other objects than the source, for example anger toward the Finnish state. Deductive thinking (if-then) was also found to be difficult for most of them. While the first article described a war child with a compulsive need to be the one who knew, albeit as an illusion, this second article was about the interviewees' equally determined efforts to bury the past. An early psychic trauma is an all-encompassing experience in which there is a radical change in the child's experience of himself/herself and his/her image of others. *The previously good object may become bad.* Bion's concept -K (Bion, 1962a) is a way to describe the consequences of a traumatic experience.

4.3 Study 3: The lost mother tongue: An interview study with Finnish war children

Most, but not all, of the interviewees started by talking about the evacuation process itself. In many of the narratives, this section was found to be different from the others. The article centered on observations of different ways that the language used in the narrative was affected during talk about the evacuation, that is, the interviewees' ways of expressing themselves rather than the content of what they said. The language was found to have a special style that was not characteristic for the rest of the interview. Their presentation could be incoherent and not addressed to the listener, making it difficult for the interviewer to follow along. Upon closer analysis of these sections of their life stories, what could be found was a solitary and often confused or fragmented speech characterized by unfinished sentences, mismatching adjectives, slang and a syntax that was surprising or that quickly trailed off into nothingness. The interviewee did not speak to the interviewer as someone who needed to understand. She was treated as peripheral or, more accurately, absent at that moment, reflecting the loneliness that must have held true during the actual evacuation process to Sweden.

The method for the Adult Attachment Interview (AAI) was not unfamiliar to the researchers, who could conclude that the language of the interviews occasionally took a form that expressed something not integrated in the mind of the interviewee. When the interviewee switched to the present in certain sections of his/her narrative, it communicated to the interviewer that the interviewee experienced a perpetual "now", which is also regarded in the neurosciences as *an expression of unprocessed trauma*. The special use of language at times was in other words an indicator that the experience of the evacuation was still an acute, present traumatic reality that had not been psychically processed.

The article also discusses an observation about another aspect of the traumatized child's world. As a contrast to what the interviewees said in earlier phases of the interview, with their descriptions of their early childhood

experiences, their narratives took on a special ring when they talked about their adult lives. They emphasized how well they had done in their lives. They described their adult lives as problem-free. This suggests a tendency to compensate for their early experiences of evacuation by making themselves appear ordinary and normal in later life. Someone who has been traumatized needs to appear to himself/herself and to others in a different light from what the childhood experiences had brought on. In trauma literature this need is referred to as *normopathy*, (Bollas, 1987; McDougall, 1980).

4.4 Study 4: Traces of the past: an interview study with Finnish war children who did not return to Finland after the war

This article looked at the question of whether there were any traces of the lost Finnish biological mother, had she completely disappeared from the war child's mind or were there hidden signs of her somewhere? Based on the supposition that traces of the early mother indeed are always engraved in some way in our minds, the interviewees' defence systems were examined. The conclusion was that the mother's presence could be sensed on an implicit level, but she was not openly visible. Instead one could say that her presence was actively repressed. Bollas and Botella's view of the mother's constant shadow-like presence was the basis for the article (Bollas, 1987; Botella, 2014).

The second question posed by the article was whether it was possible to summarize the meaning of being a war child. Through the interviewers' countertransference, it was possible to discern different feelings that matched up with war childhood, including anger and shame experiences. It could be concluded that the war children because they projected their feelings onto the interviewer, were not in touch with these, their own feelings. An identity that could be called a war child identity was unclear since projections and denial were common defence systems in this group. It is likely that a child who was older at the time of evacuation had another defence pattern. An early trauma is a solitary, perhaps also wordless, experience, difficult to share with another person.

The interviewers made special note of their countertransference feelings, where shame and anger were recurrent, giving a hint about the interviewees' hidden state of mind.

Someone who is traumatized empties his mind of things that are difficult to think about. On the other hand, if such a person could get in touch with his early experiences, could he then live an ordinary life? *When trauma is present there are feelings of abandonment, of helplessness and of being lost, and these feelings are experienced as what is true in the now.* The person is afraid and loses trust in himself/herself and in the other. The experience is diffuse, wordless and incomprehensible but at the same time *present*. Anxiety can take root anywhere whatsoever in the present. Not knowing creates defensive compensations. *The*

loss of the past, the early life, the foundation of existence, leads to feelings of not knowing about one's origin, of not understanding the context and of not having control over one's life. Under such circumstances people cannot know themselves; they cannot know who they basically are.

5 RESULTS

The aim of the study has been to gain a picture of the psychological after-effects of the evacuation and to capture the unspoken as well; those aspects of the narratives that could not be accessed by other means than those provided by a deep interview, that which is there in the words and beyond the words, that which exists in the relationship to the “other”. Since certain after-effects of the evacuation could be wordless or difficult to articulate, understanding had to be sought through other channels, that is a psychoanalytic understanding and interpretation.

During the analysis it was possible to pinpoint certain significant consequences of the evacuation more precisely. The interaction between the interviewee and the interviewer was essential for interpretation of the narratives.

5.1 Background factors

As a background we know that the mother, from the child’s point of view, disappeared in one fell swoop without prior warning. The child could not understand the implications of an evacuation even if people tried to prepare him/her. The evacuation brought about the loss of the early object and a loss of the early context that the child had taken for granted.

During the process of evacuation there was no containing person present who could have helped the child to understand the context or to put his/her feelings into words (Bion, 1962b). The situation could therefore lead to among other things quasi-autistic, that is to say, temporary autistic reactions (Bohleber, 2008; Tustin, 1986).

When the child was moved from one country to another, from one life to another, and from one language to another, the circumstances of life were changed and the early objects disappeared. In the new environment, no one

knew the child from earlier. As a defence reaction, the child was forced to silence parts of himself/herself and, consequently, parts of his/her earlier life as well (Hodges, 1987). The foster parents and the new language were void of marks of familiarity and affective charges. It could be described with Stern's words as a hole in the fabric of the earlier childhood reality (Stern, 1985).

The war children adapted themselves to their new life at the price of forgetting and denying their earlier one. It became necessary to build up a barrier against everything that was no longer reachable. In crisis situations the child's ability to reflect decreases when he/she turns his/her attention outward, and the own emotional experiences are not noted (Fonagy, 2001).

5.2 Results from the interviews

The results revealed different expressions for trauma. These expressions for trauma come with many different nuances as well as different psychological defence patterns.

Those interviewees who were between two and five years of age at the time of the evacuation could not remember anything from the trip itself.

Acute traumatic reactions during the interview were common in all interviewees when they spoke about the evacuation, which they did not remember, but had later received some information about. They were however deeply touched by their own stories, which came forth in part by the way they spoke about the evacuation in the present tense. There was thus a manifestation of trauma present in the interview from the very beginning. The need for control played a dominant role in parts of the life stories. This can be understood as a defensive reaction on their part to having once lost all possibilities for control. This need for control also encompassed the relationship to the interviewer during the interview.

The interviewees had made decisive efforts to bury the past. During the interviews it could be seen that curiosity about the past had disappeared, while the feeling of having been abandoned and deserted was a chronic inner condition. The identity became fragmented. They had remarkable lapses in their ability to integrate thoughts and feelings about their early experiences. All of the interviewees knew that they were bearing inside of themselves an inner catastrophe, but the extent and the details remained partially unclear. What could have been sorrow took instead the form of shame and unconscious anger. Deductive reasoning was confused at times, which could lead to difficulties in assessing cause and effect in a course of events.

Language usage proved to be one of the clearest indicators of how the trauma manifested itself in the present. The broken and fragmented language that was observed in the beginning of the interview when the interviewees spoke about the evacuation process reflected the broken down and incomprehensible elements within the interviewees that had not been changed or modified over the course of the years. The disrupted language, mostly in the

present tense, was also something that was beyond conscious intentions. When they spoke about the evacuation they themselves did not know/note that they were expressing themselves in a way that was different compared to how they talked about other parts of their lives. When the mother tongue disappears, it affects the inner communicative meaning of language.

The way of relating to the interviewer, the relationship of the interviewed adult war child to the "other", the interviewer, which was not a conscious process, revealed a part of the inner psychological dynamic. The interviewer was given different roles at different times: the one who just does not get it, the one who has to be corrected, and the one whom it is permissible to tease or intimidate. Experiencing the feelings of being an evacuated and vulnerable war child could lead to various attempts to project embarrassment or loss onto the interviewer. At the same time, agreeing to be interviewed also remained what it was, an act of trust.

The early contact with the Finnish mother had been blotted out and was not present as a conscious feeling of loss or of missing her. On the other hand, the interviewees could describe different reactions that they supposed belonged together with their early experiences, among these being for example different psychic symptoms such as anxiety, uncertainty about their own identity, rootlessness or feelings of emptiness. They also spoke of anger, often however in connection with outer phenomena: it was "Finland" that had wronged its children.

The interviewer's countertransference was found to provide important clues about the present but unspoken feelings of the interviewee such as sorrow and sympathy but also shame reactions, anger and confusion. These countertransference feelings opened a possibility for deeper understanding of the interviewee's inner world.

In addition to trauma indicators, all of the interviewees also had various defence patterns of their own, psychic symptoms such as denial and projections, as well as signs of dissociation.

It was not possible for the war children as adults to restore contact to the past. The pursuit of normality in adulthood can be seen as an attempt to save oneself. Traumatized children develop ways of functioning to prevent the state of traumatization from returning, which may lead to destruction of parts of the self and also to a development of a "false self" personality organization.

The evacuated children's sense of having been abandoned by their Finnish parents had not been modified. The evacuation impacted their thinking, emotional life and identity. They could have a hard time answering the question, "Who am I?" A traumatic experience is at the same time something an individual knows about and something he does not know about. In that case a narrative can give signs of temporary cognitive and affective paralysis.

6 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

This is an interview study with ten Finnish war children who were between two and seven years old when they were evacuated from Finland to Sweden during World War II. At the time for the interview they all lived in Stockholm and they were Swedish citizens.

The aim of the study as a whole has been to try to gain a picture of the psychological after-effects of the evacuation and to capture the unspoken as well, those aspects of the war children's narratives that could not be accessed by other means than those provided by a deep interview; that which is there in the words and beyond the words, that which exists in the relationship to "the other". Since certain after-effects of the evacuation can be wordless or difficult to articulate, understanding must be sought through other channels. This kind of study with a psychological and psychodynamic approach differs from previous research about war children as the conclusions are based on register studies. In that case one can reach knowledge about different physical and mental conditions, but nothing about what the war child experience had meant for these people.

When the interviews were conducted, the interviewees were approaching their seventieth birthday. We asked them to tell us about their lives.

The interviews were audiotape-recorded, studied and analysed according to the rules for Grounded Theory. The theoretical basis was also a psychoanalytic approach and to some extent the framework for the Adult Attachment Interview as well. The psychoanalytic approach has a long tradition whereby the analyst specifically endeavors to *understand* various psychic phenomena by means of the interaction in the therapy situation. In this study the researchers listened to the spoken but also to the unspoken, to the interviewees' way of relating to the interviewer and to the interviewer's countertransference, i.e. to the feelings and reactions that arose during the interview. Transference and countertransference feelings can be observed and interpreted in a psychoanalytic relationship, but they also arise as an ongoing process within all of us, in any kind of interaction.

During the interviews it became clear that the interviewees were traumatized by their early experiences. The current view of trauma unanimously asserts the existence of a connection between dissociation and trauma whereby someone who is traumatized has an overwhelming sense of something threatening, resulting in a failure in mental processing (Gullestad, 2005). The concept of dissociation, however, leads to a mechanical picture of the traumatic process if dynamic thinking is excluded and the narrative's style and the listener's countertransference are not taken into account. These considerations are necessary in order to increase understanding of individual nuances. Countertransference is defined as the analyst's affective reactions to the unconscious communication from the patient, i.e. implicit reactions (Gullestad, 2013). Gullestad writes (Gullestad, 2005, p. 639):

The specific psychoanalytic contribution – the emphasis on unconscious conflict and meanings – is for the most part excluded from the discourse of dissociation. It may lead to a neglect of the personal elaboration of the trauma stained by conflicting influences, fantasies and unconscious meaning.

The tendency to “normopathy” is coupled with a strong effort to be a functioning and “ordinary” person. We can see it as a diagnosis (Bollas, McDougall, van der Hart) but there are also important rehabilitating features in the pursuit of normality. To get an education and to prepare for a profession are parts of reality and ways of seeking contact with a normal and ordinary life. The interviewees showed that they had been capable of living their lives if we define the criteria for living a life as being to survive, to become an adult, to build a family and to take up a profession. It was necessary for the war children, if only it was possible, to create a picture of normality, to fulfil the demands of their own self-esteem. The war child identity remained partly unclear.

All of the interviewees had various psychic symptoms as well as their own defence patterns. The psychic symptoms included compulsive acts, phobic reactions, social anxiety, and defences such as projections, idealizations, denials and displacements. Defensive cheerfulness (inverted anger) also occurred. All of them had their own strategies, such as compensation for experiences of humiliation, but also a tendency toward idealizations.

The interviewees in their narratives consistently gave signs of reactions that could be seen as expressions of trauma, even though they did not use that term themselves. The signs of trauma did not appear in what they said but rather in their way of saying it. The clearest indicator was the change of verb tense to the present during the course of the narrative when they talked about things that had been traumatic for them, indicating that they had not left frightening experiences behind them. Something that had been frightening could thus come to the surface and be re-lived in the moment. Dissociation in turn also occurred, for example, in the form of “empty memories”. The war children could describe individual elements of a difficult event in a manner not connected to emotions, for example when they spoke of appalling experiences

or tragic losses. A sense of emptiness came from not having had anyone present with whom they could have shared what was happening.

The interaction between the interviewers and the interviewees was important for understanding that which could not be explicitly stated. The way of relating to the interviewer, the relationship to the "other", which obviously was not always conscious, illustrated part of the inner psychological dynamic. The interviewers were given different roles at different times: for example, the one who does not understand, the one who must be corrected, or the one who can be teased or intimidated. The experience of being and of having been an evacuated and vulnerable war child could lead to different attempts to make the interviewer feel embarrassed, confused or ill at ease. However, one must also remember that it was an act of trust to agree to an interview.

The interviewees' transference reactions and the interviewers' countertransference were a key to understanding what was present but unspoken in the interview situation. The interaction between the two parties was a guiding factor. Killingmo reminds us that our character traits contain built-in unconscious strategies that we have learned can be useful in our interactions with others (Killingmo, 2007). These come into action when we are striving to obtain something or to avoid something. Relational strategies have a built-in message to the listener. In the same way as they emerge in the interaction between the patient and the therapist, it is so between the interviewer and the interviewee as well, especially in a meaning-bearing situation. The interviewees' way of expressing their thoughts during the interview was characteristic for them in particular in relation to the other, the interviewer. One can see the authenticity of the interviewees' narratives through the transference situation. If normopathy involves a sort of distortion of reality, relational patterns are *true* expressions for the inner life, the life that is perhaps not always conscious.

The interviewees could have difficulty formulating their inner experiences, but it was possible to collect signals that conveyed something about their internal processes. The interviewers could, for example, note the countertransference and also listen carefully to their language usage. Early experiences could be there under the skin, so to speak. During the interview, the evacuated child came forth: the insecure, unknowing and, most strikingly, the confused child. The interviewees' tendency sometimes to confuse the listener as well is an example of projection and at the same time also *a message*. When the interview material was interpreted by the interviewers, the differences between the various interviewees' defence systems could be discerned. The psychoanalytic angle means that we can look at another human being with different eyes at the same time. In the same person, we can see the child and the adult, the contact-seeking one and the detached one, the clear, the unclear, the trusting and the distrusting, all of them.

The researchers could also ask themselves "who is speaking?" Bollas cites Paula Heimann (Bollas, 1987, p. 1):

A patient could be speaking with the voice of the mother or the mood of the father or some fragmented voice of a child himself either lived or withheld from life. And: To whom is the patient speaking?

These questions are relevant to the interpretation of the material. The interviewees sometimes spoke as one adult to another but sometimes also as the acutely vulnerable war child where no adult or supportive person was present. This was apparent at the times when the interviewees did not address the interviewer in an attempt to make her understand them. The interviewer could experience herself as being in the role of, for example, the Finnish mother (the one who abandons). In the case of one of the interviewees (who had a facade of joviality that concealed other parts of his world of experience), the interviewer was put in the role of a representative of the Finland-Swedish people who felt that "Karelian mothers (such as his own) were not suitable to take care of their children." That is possibly something that he heard being said somewhere that he remembered, and that apparently had taken on a special meaning for him. All of them had their strategies for relating to the interviewer as they gave her different roles during the interview. The interviewer was thus given an opportunity to step into and experience projected parts of the interviewee's inner world.

The interviewees could start with a "readymade" or "rehearsed" narrative, so-called rigid narratives, something that they had presented in some earlier context. A readymade story can be an attempt to keep emotions at a distance. It can also be a way for the interviewee to have a life story to which to adhere, thus maintaining an illusion of coherence in his or her life (Kaplan, 2006). In this study, regardless of whether the narrative was a so-called readymade one or a non-readymade one, it nevertheless resulted in symptoms of an activated trauma with various bodily reactions and emotional expressions, showing how difficult it can be to control strong emotions. If repetitions of a standardized life story are an attempt at control, then the attempt failed. The painful aspects still made themselves known.

Sometimes it could also be difficult to know whether the war children's different descriptions of their experiences and emotional states were their own descriptions or repetitions of what someone had told them. People who have been traumatized know and at the same time do not know about their trauma, especially if one considers that an early trauma is not (necessarily) stored in the memory as concrete images and perceived feelings. The ever-present and elusive question is what belongs to the now-time and what actually comes from the past. They flow together as a physical and psychic state and often make for torment in the present.

6.1 The absent depression

The questionnaire sent to all members of the Stockholm War Child Association before the interview included Beck's Depression Scale. It did not give positive indications for depression among those interviewed, while Pesonen et al. using the same scale found that precisely depression was a prominent finding in the war children who returned to Finland after the war (Pesonen et al., 2012). Here is a clear difference when compared to this interview material.

Leuzinger-Bohleber sees a connection between guilt, rage, aggressions and depression when dealing with trauma (Leuzinger-Bohleber, 2015). Depression is in such instances linked to feelings of hopelessness and helplessness. In the present study, shame and aggression appeared but not depression. However, there was one exception. One of the interviewees had a deep depression when she retired. It did not seem probable that her depression was attributable to her experience of separation.

An early trauma can in many cases be found to give rise to chronic depression. Those who are depressed blame themselves and not the outer world, while those who project see the strange and wrong as being outside themselves. The tendencies toward projection, which were seen in many narratives, closed out depression. Since the interviewees in the present study did not show signs of depression while those who moved back to Finland did show such signs, there are indications that their circumstances were different. To be sure, the material is so small that one cannot confirm the difference, but it is in any case of interest that depressions were not found in this interview group. Depression would mean a hidden sorrow or anger. Our interviewees were more likely to show signs that they projected their anger on external targets – which closed out, at least on a conscious level, sadness and depression.

Why did the children who returned to Finland after the war have a greater risk of depression than their non-evacuated siblings (Eriksson et al., 2014) while those who remained in Sweden did not show similar reactions? The ones who returned could compare the conditions in Sweden with the conditions of Finland. They could also have felt like strangers in their Finnish family, especially if they had forgotten their Finnish. Was their depression tied to the move back to Finland in itself or did it come from experiencing a conflict of loyalty, or both?

6.2 The War Child Associations

The War Child Association proved to be of great importance for those who participated in this interview study. The association offers community and togetherness. The Stockholm Association also provides opportunities for discussions in smaller groups. The members receive information about the

circumstances surrounding the evacuation, even down to details such as the food served during the journey from Finland to Sweden.

The association also has a wide range of programs and lectures about children's vulnerability that give participants a chance to gain knowledge and psychological understanding. But were the participants able to turn what they learned into integrated knowledge and personal insight? On the one hand, being together with other war children gives them an opportunity to tell about their experiences in a way that the others can take in and understand. Saraneva, with experience of psychotherapy with traumatized people, observes that there may also be a risk of reinforcing the traumatization if a therapy group consists of participants where everyone has had a similar fate (Saraneva, 2008).

6.3 Understanding the war children's experiences?

At the beginning of the interview, the interviewees, when telling about the evacuation process, had a tendency to use idiosyncratic language and to speak as though they were in a vacuum, alone with no listener present instead of addressing the interviewer. In other words, it is conceivable that a traumatic past can be traced through language usage and through the way of relating to the other. Such communication traits bear witness to the impulses that come to the surface in a challenging situation, such as an interview, and which awaken to life elements of the past.

It was obvious that the interviewees during the interview had difficulties thinking about their own early experiences. This partly reflected the lack of holding to which they had been exposed earlier in life and specially during the evacuation process. One can therefore also ask if this experience was a reasonable explanation for their words about "holes", "vacuums" or "rootlessness". Were they actually describing their own way of experiencing what happened or were they basing their description on something that they found out or heard later. It seems to have been a repetition of other people's words since they did not show signs of curiosity or grief over their own past lives during the interview. Their inner being was truly full of "holes" (Stern, 1984) - something they talked about but perhaps could not feel or experience.

A common finding was that most of the interviewees mentioned their Finnish parents but did not talk about them in the sense of describing or wondering what they were like. The Swedish foster parents, in contrast, were the target of positive or negative descriptions and speculations, which of course is understandable since they lived the major part of their childhood with them. They could describe different episodes where the foster parents came to life. Descriptions of the Finnish parents were more diffuse and for the most part entirely missing. If they felt that their Finnish parents abandoned them, they in turn abandoned their Finnish parents through their lack of interest and indifference. In short, specific findings for these war children showed them to be active and functioning individuals, but individuals who carried with them a

loss that manifested itself primarily as shadows and circuitousness. It is not possible to mourn if one has never acknowledged one's losses. This situation can lead to the development of a "false self" in relation to others and one can give an impression of being strikingly ordinary and normal (McDougall, 1994). The tendency of the interviewees toward so-called normopathy (Bollas, 1987; McDougall, 1990) can also be included in this description of affect pathology or a "false self". These people have a great need to be normal and their behavior can be seen as an attempt to silence their inner life in order to avoid psychic pain. Bollas reasons that when these traumatized people were children, there was no space for them to develop an individual self. Such a course of events can find its parallel in the war children's early experiences that were tied to their Finnish family and that became meaningless in Sweden. Did they then clothe themselves in a role that fit their circumstances better, for example, no loss, no sorrow? This can be seen as a struggle for psychic survival but it can also lead to a lack of understanding emotional connections in human relationships.

At the time of the evacuation there was a conviction that little children forget difficult experiences and that these experiences therefore would not have importance later in life. However, we know now that trauma leaves a mark in little children as well but not on a level at which it can be represented. Habermas points out (Habermas, 2014, p. 952):

The first two or three years are the dark ages of every subjective life story. How is it then possible to reach a little child's early trauma experiences? Psychoanalysts have approached this and related questions in different ways during the course of time: A strategy for dealing with the dilemma of infantile conflicts beyond the scope of individual memory was to give up any references to individual biographical experiences, substituting them with universal psychic structures. The degree of pathology is assumed to correlate with how early in life it originates. These structures could be unconscious phantasies (Klein), defensive structures like a false self (Winnicott), defense mechanisms (Kernberg), narcissistic deficits (Kohut) or the relative inability to symbolize urges (Bion).

He continues (p. 954):

Because trauma traces are non-verbally encoded, they cannot be accessed by conscious recollection. Instead these traumatic experiences leave action tendencies, sensations, affect states and images, which tend to re-appear out of context later in adult life. However, in therapeutic practice some of these approaches still used the personal past to understand present conflicts, even if it was a reconstructed past.

He continues (p. 955):

A strong argument against limiting psychoanalytic interpretation and theorizing to the *hic et nunc* is provided by traumatic memories. It is argued that for traumatized patients it is of prime importance to establish that traumatic memories regard not merely a phantasied past, but a socially confirmed, real past. Having a receptive other who is willing to listen and reconstruct a probable past reality reinforces reality testing and enhances self-understanding.

Botella argues that traumatic experiences from early life continue to have an influence later in life (Botella, 2014). A traumatic experience tends to be

relived, but not remembered and cannot be understood, because it appears out of the historic context. Also Eriksson, J. points out how unconscious processes in various ways can invest a situation with infantile energies and associations (Eriksson, 2014). What could have been a dynamic experience is transformed and takes on a static and infantile character, thus creating a stage on which the unconscious impulses and conflicts can later be acted out and repeated as a force in the now.

One reason that it can be difficult in *questionnaire studies* to see differences between different groups may be that the relevant aspects of the war children's experiences were not possible for them to express explicitly and could not be understood without interpretation. As previously mentioned, the interviewees often gave a different picture of their psychic state when responding to the questionnaire preceding the interview compared to the picture that came forth during the interview. This finding could be understood as the interviewees' insufficient insight and as their being out of touch with their inner lives. However, such shortcomings could be true of many people when they tell their life history.

In addition, when we are the recipient of a narrative given by a war child or are working with a patient, we inevitably become a part of that narrative, for example through transference – countertransference feelings. If we want to understand trauma, it is especially important to enter into the traumatic experience and live with it for a time. The shame reactions the interviewees noted as their own feelings, specially afterwards, reading the scripts, gave a hint of projected shame. It can be felt as shameful to be abandoned by mother and also to be an evacuated child. It may wake up the question “what is wrong with me?”. Trauma and shame seem to be closely connected (Goldblatt, 2013).

As already emphasized, something that seems devoid of meaning in our life story can be the result of a trauma. In such cases one cannot create meaning and the imagination is subjected to limitations. The void that is created by the trauma interrupts the unconscious processes. As Eriksson, J. points out, we always live in relation to the past (Eriksson, 2014). A traumatized person manifests or actualizes this connection to the past by repetition. Psychic suffering is relegated to the unconscious, and thus take on a timeless character, i.e. the unconscious has no relation to time. The traumatized person deals with what has been repressed not as a memory but as an action.

7 SUMMARY OF KEY RESULTS

In this interview study with ten Finnish war children who remained in Sweden after the end of the World War II, the aim has been to gain an understanding of what the displacement meant to them by listening to how they as adults being interviewed responded to the encouragement "Tell me about your life". The core method of analysis was Grounded Theory, which meant openness in the face of material obtained without readymade hypotheses. The theoretical background was also built upon psychodynamic reasoning. The interviews were compared to each other from different angles. The task of listening to the interviewees' narratives called for noting the spoken but also the unspoken as well as the role that the interviewer was given during the course of the interview. The interaction between the interviewer and the interviewee proved to be important for the understanding of that which could not be explicitly expressed, providing keys to understanding the child's hidden or unformulated mental processes.

7.1 Main results

The evacuation from Finland to Sweden and the fact that the interviewees did not return permanently to their country of origin made for profound transformations in their lives. Their roots to the past were severed, which created an irreparable inner void. The loss of their past life and the evacuation itself were traumatic experiences that could be discerned in various forms during the interview. The clearest indicators of an activated trauma were seen when the adult war child talked about the evacuation and other related early experiences in the present tense and not only changed tenses but also changed language usage. Their sentence structure could be broken and incomplete and their choice of adjectives could be peculiar, a sort of language usage that was not observed in the interviewees when they talked about their adult lives. In

addition, they did not communicate face-on with the interviewer in an effort to make her understand. They gave a solitary speech just like evacuation had been a solitary experience, where a supporting adult had been absent. Thus, during the interview, they repeated parts of their early childhood experience as though those parts were present right there at that moment in time. The trauma also included different defence patterns as the need for control and a desire to be the one who knew as opposed to the interviewer. On the other hand, they showed an indifference to their earlier life in Finland.

This study conveys the importance of language to a child – and what it means to lose it. A child's language is formed in the early interaction with the mother and constitutes the roots in the forming of an identity. When the mother tongue disappeared, its early inner communicative significance was blotted out. Their early childhood was implicit in the narrative of the adult war children through its total absence, through their lack of curiosity about the past, in their language usage and in their relationship to the interviewer, who became a target for various projections. The Finnish mother, as a living person, was excluded in most stories.

The interviews brought to light aspects that were lacking or insufficient in the psychic development of the war children, but also produced a picture of ten people who had struggled their whole lives to get on the right side of their early experiences. Despite their tumultuous early childhood, they did well, had a profession and, like most of them, also a family of their own. The effort to be normal gave the traumatized children compensation in adulthood and an opportunity to experience that they had an ordinary and functioning life. Feeling thus could be a way to be at peace with the past, at least occasionally. Each individual, besides experiencing dissociation, also had his/her own psychological dynamics and defence pattern.

Most of the interviewees had lost their emotional ties to their former homeland and to the people who had been present for them in that world. They had also lost their curiosity about the past, a loss which made its mark on their thinking, their emotional life and their identity. They did not reflect on the significance of their parents. In this regard trauma can truly be said to create a hole in a life story. They could not remain faithful to their Finnish parents, their siblings or their original surroundings. This can be seen as a catastrophe, or, in the words of Kaplan (2006) as generational destruction. The defence patterns that also came to the surface showed another side, the interviewees could note the defences and what was being missed and what had disappeared. What then emerged were forgetfulness, indifference, denial, need for control and compensation attempts. A trauma is something that a person bears with him/her all his life and that shapes his/her identity. But thinking about a trauma can be impossible. Using the words of Enckell, H., the metaphorical process was not always alive (Enckell, 2002).

By participating in an interview, however, the war children could also take on a generative position, a desire to share their experiences, and thus possibly spread knowledge about the ramifications of moving children from

one country to another. It was especially generous of these interviewees since they also knew that they were exposing themselves to matters that had been painful and that could also still be painful. They knew that their experiences could be helpful to others in similar life situations.

The interviewees showed interest in their past through their involvement in the Finnish War Child Association and through their participation in the interview.

7.2 Applicability in the world of today

Can we, through insight into the fate of these war children, draw a parallel to today's world with refugees who have lost contact with their country and perhaps their relatives? They may find themselves in the same situation as the Finnish war children, where their early language has been lost and their original self, formed in their early contact with their parents in their home country, has lost its meaning. If we compare to today's situation where children are often alone in their escape from different war zones and may run into various forms of exploitation on the way, the placement of Finnish children in Swedish foster homes was relatively safe. The Finnish children's move to Sweden was well organized and was carried out with the best interests of the child in mind. In addition, they came to neighboring countries (also Norway and Denmark) where the culture was in many ways comparable to Finnish culture. For today's child refugees, the situation, over 70 years later, is completely different. Their journey to safety has been considerably harder, often also risky. Even so, certain of the findings in the present study can possibly increase people's capacity to understand and empathize with today's refugees. In particular, the psychological conclusions of this study could be useful and relevant for children in some sort of displacement situation.

During and after the war there was in Finland a kind of collective expectation for people to be grateful to Sweden. To be sent to Sweden was often regarded as a privilege, at least it was depicted that way, which led to a denial of the abandonment that the child also felt. When children change parental figures, they must adapt to different environments and this adaptation is likely to be superficial as it is forced from the outside. The absence of stable internal objects can affect the development of the superego.

Today's refugees are also expected to be grateful, in the same way as were the Finnish children. When it comes to children, one might think that it would also be necessary to understand their contradictory feelings. It is not insightful to expect only gratitude and such expectations can easily cause the children to have an ambivalent relationship with their new home country. There is an inner conflict between remembering the past and adapting to the new environment. What the people who are already part of the country, that is new for others, may find difficult to accept is the ambivalence and perhaps also the loyalty

conflict that the newcomers can feel. On the other hand, it is known that a denial of the past can be like a partial psychic death.

Problematic issues emerged when Finnish boys who had been war children returned from Sweden to Finland. They proved to have an increased risk of being sentenced to juvenile prison (Westling, 1956) compared to those who were not war children. Finnish boys who had been war children and who continued living in Sweden after the war had to do their military service in Finland at Dragsvik, a Swedish-language garrison. The former war children reacted to this conscription notice with various kinds of protests and disobedience (Enckell, M., 2012, personal communication).

A trauma always disturbs the narcissistic balance. While there is no possibility of "curing" a trauma, there is in any case an opportunity to alleviate the narcissistic damage that results from the traumatic experience (Gerzi, 2005). One way to soothe the injured self-esteem could be to focus on the issue and take action around it. All the interviewees in this study had accomplished "restoration" later in life by completing higher education and into becoming "ordinary" Swedish citizens. A meaningful profession can increase a person's willingness to identify with the recipient country. A trauma never disappears but through insight it is possible to gain a new or perhaps a changed relationship to the traumatic course of events.

One of the important functions of war child associations and other similar groups can be that, as members, people can see themselves as part of a broader context. Healing powers can be found in the relation to culture, in cultural models, literature and values. At this level, personal experiences can gain meaning. Individual interviews or personal memories can also make a contribution in a historical sense. Life stories are a complement to the picture of historical events and can contribute a perspective that in general is left out of descriptions of major happenings such as war (Kaplan, 2006).

A follow-up step in the research on war children should be to interview the children of the war children according to the same pattern as in this study. The aim would be to find out how they were affected by the fate of their parents. The present study can serve as a foundation or a point of reference for hypotheses or suppositions in other interview studies with a greater number of participants.

7.3 Closing words

Sometimes a poem can cut right to the core of an incomprehensible experience in a few powerful words. Tustin interprets the poem "Wodwo" by Ted Hughes (1970) (Tustin, 1986). This poem can contribute to an empathetic understanding of what a person can experience when exposed to an overwhelming and threatening situation that is totally bewildering to him or her. In truth, this is something that could happen to anyone of us.

Here is a short excerpt from the poem: "... I seem / separate from the ground and not rooted but dropped / out of nothing casually I have no threads / fastening me to anything I can go anywhere / I seem to have been given the freedom / of this place what am I then?"

The poem describes confusion that has an autistic character. Tustin interprets (Tustin, 1986, p. 201):

Hughes' poem expresses very cogently the bewilderment associated with states in which the sense of personal identity is under threat and things are perceived as utterly discrete and separate because there are no threads linking them together. Connections have broken down or have not been established. Nothing can be taken on trust. There is a vacuous sense of lack of purpose, of understanding, of meaning. There is no coherent picture of the world, nor of the subject himself. He lives in a peripheral world of vague guesses, conjectures and speculations which have no basis in previous experience...it comes from lack of a sense of being encircled by caring understanding and meaning.

Hughes describes the desolation and the existential anxiety that Tustin, with a long experience of autistic children, can interpret so that readers can gain an empathetic understanding of their plight. What we have is total loneliness when nothing makes sense, when a person can disappear into nothingness and cease to exist. To be sure, the war children were not autistic, but they had autistic reactions as could anyone who is struck with an unbearable situation. An autistic experience like this can be difficult to understand without the help of the metaphorical power of poetry such as we find in "Wodwo".

SUOMENKIELINEN YHTEENVETO

Elinikä maanpaossa: Ruotsiin toisen maailmansodan jälkeen jääneet suomalaiset sotalapset. Haastattelututkimus psykologisesta ja psykodynaamisesta näkökulmasta

Tässä sodan jälkeen Ruotsiin jääneiden kymmenen suomalaisen sotalapsen haastattelututkimuksessa tavoitteena on ollut saada käsitys siitä mitä evakuointi on heille merkinnyt.

Tutkimuksen keskeisenä menetelmällä on ollut Grounded Theory, mikä tässä tutkimuksessa on tarkoittanut laadullista analyysia ilman etukäteishypoteeseja sekä avoimuutta keskeiseen haastattelukysymykseen ”kerro elämästäsi”. Teoreettisena taustana ja haastattelumateriaalin luokitteluna ja tulkintana oli psykodynaaminen näkökulma. Se antoi mahdollisuuden kuuntelemisen ulottuvuuteen joka sisälsi julkisanotun mutta myös sen mikä jäi sanomatta sekä sitä osaa jonka haastattelijat saivat haastattelun aikana. Haastateltavan ja haastattelijan vuorovaikutus osoittautui tärkeäksi tiedon lähteeksi sekä antoi myös siitä mitä ei ollut mahdollista lausua suoraan sekä antoi myöskin avaimet sotalapsen piilotettuihin tai formuloimattomiin mentaaliin prosesseihin. Evakuointi Suomesta Ruotsiin sekä se etteivät haastateltavat palaneet pysyvästi Suomeen sodan jälkeen merkitsi syvää muutosta heidän elämäänsä.

Ensimmäinen artikkeli oli tapauskertomus työstä joka täytti 4 vuotta kun hän saapui Ruotsiin ja kuvaa hänen kamppailuaan kahden äidin välillä (Artikkeli 1). Haastatteluissa ilmeni kuinka useilla sotalapsilla aikuisina puuttui kiinnostus ja uteliaisuus omaa varhaista elämää kohtaan mikä esti mahdollisuuden pohtia omaa elämänkulkua ja mahdollisesti surra menetyksiään. Evakuointi sinänsä ja suomalaisen perheen ja äidinkielen menettäminen olivat traumaattisia kokemuksia jotka tulivat esille haastattelun aikana eri muodoissa- ja myös vaikutti ajatteluun. Niin sanottu normopatia oli yleistä tässä aineistossa. Ilmiö kuvaa sitä että henkilöllä on suuri tarve olla tavallinen, etenkin kun aikoinaan lapsena ei ollut ”tavallinen” vaan juuri erilainen (Artikkeli 2). Aktivoidun trauman indikaattorit nousivat erityisesti esille, kun sotalapsi puhui evakuoinnista ja siihen liittyvistä varhaisista kokemuksistaan preesensissä, kuin olisi kyseessä nykyhetki mikä ei esiintynyt. Tämän lisäksi myös *kielenkäyttö muuttui* haastattelun aikana, lauseenmuodostus saattoi olla epätäydellistä ja rikkinäistä ja adjektiivit erikoisia mikä ei esiintynyt silloin kun he puhuivat aikuisesta elämästään. Kerronnan aikana haastateltavat eivät aina näyttäneet olevan tietoisia siitä ymmärtäisikö haastattelija heitä. Heidän puheensa oli yksinäistä, kuin ketään tukihenkilöä ei olisi läsnä (Artikkeli 3). Haastatteluissa he toistivat osia varhaisista lapsuuden kokemuksista ikään kuin ne olisivat olleet läsnä nykyhetkessä (preesens). Trauman ilmenemiseen liittyi myös erilaisia puolustuskeinoja kuten kontrollin tarve ja pyrkimys olla hän joka tiesi. Moni heistä eivät pohtineet suomalaisen äidin merkitystä eikä myöskään pohtineet millaista olisi ollut kasvaa Suomessa suomen äidin kanssa. Oli kuin uteliaisuus suomalaista

äitiä kohtaan olisi kokonaan poissa, ja kuitenkin tiedämme, että varhainen äiti on aina jättänyt jälkensä. Suomen äiti saattoi ilmetä implisiittisellä tasolla kuitenkin hän ei ollut avoimesti läsnä. Haastateltavilla oli vaikeaa surra menetyksiään mikä puolestaan saattoi rajoittaa ajattelua (Artikkeli 4).

Tutkimus toi myös esille, että näiden sotilasten varhaiset kokemukset eivät estäneet koulutusta, ammatinvalintaa tai perheen muodostamista. Tutkimuksen tulokset voisivat olla viitteenä nykypäivänä, kun pyrkii ymmärtämään ja tukemaan yksin tulleita pakolaislapsia.

REFERENCES

- Alastalo, H., Räikkönen, K., Pesonen, A-K., Osmond, C., Barker, D.J.P., Kajantie E., & Eriksson, J. (2009). Cardiovascular health of Finnish war evacuees 60 years later. *Annals of Medicine*, 41, 66-72.
- Alastalo, H., Räikkönen, K., Pesonen, A-K., Osmond, C., Barker D.J.P., Heinonen, K., Kajantie, E., & Eriksson, J. (2012). Cardiovascular morbidity and mortality in Finnish men and women separated temporarily from their parents in childhood – a life course study. *Psychosomatic Medicine*, 74, 583-587.
- Beebe, B., Knoblauch, S., Rustin, J., & Sorter, D. (2005). *Forms of Intersubjectivity in Infant Research and Adult Treatment*. New York: Other Press.
- Bion, W.R. (1959). Attacks on linking. *The International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 40, 308-315.
- Bion, W.R. (1962a). *Learning from experience*. London: William Heinemann Books.
- Bion, W.R. (1962b). The psychoanalytic study of thinking. *The International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 43, 306-310.
- Bion, W.R. (1967). *Second thoughts. Selected papers on psychoanalysis*. London: Maresfield Library.
- Bohleber, W. (2008). *Traumatic Memories, dissociative states and reconstruction*. Paper for presentation at the Finnish Psychoanalytic Society, Helsinki April 12.
- Bohleber, W. (2009). *Remembrance and Historicization: The transformation of Individual and Collective Traumata and its transgenerational consequences*. Paper for presentation at the Finnish Psychoanalytic Society, Helsinki October 22.
- Bollas, C. (1987). *The Shadow of the Object: Psychoanalysis of the Unthought known*. London: Free Association Books.
- Bollas, C. (1995). *Cracking up – the work of Unconscious experience*. New York: Hill and Wang.
- Botella, C. (2014). On remembering: The notion of memory without recollection. *The International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 95, 911-936.
- Bowlby J. (1960a). A psychoanalytic view of consequences of separation and loss. *The International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 41, 89-113.
- Bowlby, J. (1960b). Grief and Mourning in Infancy and Early Childhood. *The Psychoanalytic Study of the Child*, 15, 9-52.
- Bowlby, J., Miller, E., & Winnicott, D. (1939). Evacuation of Small Children. *BMJ*, 2(4119), 1202-1203.
- Chenitz, W.C. & Swanson J.M. (1986). *From Practice to Grounded Theory: qualitative research in nursing*. Menlo Park, CA: Addison-Westley.
- Crittenden, P.M. & Landini, A. (2011). *Assessing adult attachment. A dynamic-maturational approach to discourse analysis*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company.

- Edvardsson, A. (1977). *Det får inte hända igen. Finska krigsbarn 1939–1943*. [It must not happen again. Finnish war children 1929–1943]. Stockholm: Askild & Kärnekull.
- Eisenhardt, K.M. (1989). Building Theories from Case Study Research. *The Academy of Management Review*, 14, 532–550.
- Enckell, H. (2002). *Metaphor and the Psychodynamic Functions of the Mind*. Doctoral Dissertation. University of Kuopio.
- Eriksson, J. (2014). Att minnas – om erinring, upprepning och genomarbetning. [Remembering – about reminding and working through]. *Divan*, nr 3–4, 74–85.
- Eriksson, J. (2017). Att bli människa – om övervinnande av oidipuskomplexet och etablerande av det själsliga livets fundament. [To become a human being – to overcome the Oedipus complex and to establish the fundament of mental life]. *Divan*, nr 1–2, 5–15.
- Eriksson, M., Räikkönen, K., & Eriksson, J. (2014). Early Life Stress and Health later Health Outcomes – Findings from the Helsinki cohort Study. *American Journal of Biology*, 26, 111–116.
- Fisher, J. (2011). The emotional experience of K. In C. Mawson (Ed.) *Bion today*. London: Routledge, 42–63.
- Fogelman, E., & Kestenberg, J. (1994). *Children during the Nazi reign*. Westport, Conn. [u.a.]: Praeger.
- Fonagy, P. (2001). *Attachment theory and psychoanalysis*. London: Karnac.
- Freud, A. & Burlingham, D. (1943). War and Children. *Social Service Review*, 17, 518–519.
- Freud, S. (1926). *Inhibitions, symptoms and anxiety*. S.E.
- Gerzi, S. (2005). Trauma, narcissism and the two attractors of trauma. *The International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 86, 1033–1050.
- Glaser, B.G. (1992). *Basics of grounded theory analysis*. Mill Valley, CA: Sociology press.
- Glaser, B.G. (1994). *More grounded theory: A reader*. Mill Valley, CA: Sociology press.
- Goldblatt, M.J. (2013). Shame in psychodynamic psychotherapy of post-traumatic states. *The Scandinavian Psychoanalytic Review*, 36, 104–111.
- Gullestad, S. (2001). Attachment theory and psychoanalysis: controversial issues. *The Scandinavian Psychoanalytic Review*, 24, 3–16.
- Gullestad, S. (2003). The Adult Attachment Interview and psychoanalytic outcome studies. *The International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 84, 651–668.
- Gullestad, S. (2005a). In the beginning was the affect. *The Scandinavian Psychoanalytic Review*, 28, 3–10.
- Gullestad, S. (2005b). Who is who in dissociation; A plea for psychodynamics in a time of trauma. *The International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 86, 639–656.
- Gullestad, S. (2015). How to capture character through the patient's language? *The Scandinavian Psychoanalytic Review*, 36, 31–37.

- Habermas, T. (2014). Dreaming the others past: Why remembering may still be relevant to psychoanalytic therapy, at least in some traditions. *The International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 95, 951–963.
- Heilala, C. (2016). *The child in the eye of the storm – unveiling the war child syndrome*. Doctoral dissertation. Faculty of Behavioral Sciences, University of Helsinki.
- Hodges, J., Boletti, R., Salo, F., & Oldeschulte, R. (1985). Remembering is so much harder: A report of work in progress from the research group of adopted children. *Bulletin of the Anna Freud Center*, 8, 169–179.
- Hodges, J. (1989). Aspects of the relationship to self and objects in early maternal deprivation and adoption. *Bulletin of the Anna Freud Centre*, 12, 5–27.
- Kaplan, S. (2006). Children in genocide. Extreme traumatization and the affect propeller. *The International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 87, 725–743.
- Kaplan, S. (2008). *Children in genocide. Extreme traumatization and affect regulation*. London: International Psychoanalysis Library.
- Kavén, P. (1985). *70 000 pientä kohtaloa*. [70 000 small destinies]. Helsinki: Otava.
- Kavén, P. (2010). *Humanitaarisuuden varjossa: poliittiset tekijät lastensiiroissa Ruotsiin sotiemme aikana ja niiden jälkeen*. [In the shadows of humanity: political factors regarding the evacuations to Sweden during our wars and after them]. PhD Thesis. Department of Philosophy, History, Culture and Art Studies, University of Helsinki.
- Kestenberg, J. & Fogelman, E. (1994). *Children during the Nazi Reign – Psychoanalytical Perspective on the interview process*. Westport, Connecticut: Praeger.
- Killingmo, B. (2007). Relational-oriented character analysis. A position in contemporary psychoanalysis. *The Scandinavian Psychoanalytical Review*, 30, 76–83.
- Krystal, M.D. (1978). Trauma and affects. *Psychoanalytic Study of the Child*, 33, 81–112.
- Kärppi, P. (2003). Andra världskriget – Finska krigsbarn i Sverige. I S. Ortmark Almgren (red.), *Krigsbarns erinran*. [The second world war – Finnish war children in Sweden, in War children’s recollection]. Stockholm: SinOA, 13–47.
- Lagnebro, L. (1994) *Finska Krigsbarn* [Finnish war children]. Studier i socialt arbete vid Umeå universitet. Institutionen för socialt arbete. Umeå universitet nr 19. (Studies in social work at Umeå university. Institution for social work, University of Umeå no. 19).
- Laub, D. & Auerhahn, N. (1989). Failed empathy--a central theme in the survivor's Holocaust experience. *Psychoanalytic Psychology*, 6, 377–400.
- Laub, D. & Auerhahn (1993). Knowing and not knowing of massive psychic trauma: Forms of traumatic memory. *The International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 74, 287–302.
- Leuzinger-Bohleber, M. (2015). Working with severely traumatized, chronically depressed analysands. German Psychoanalytic Outcome study of

- Psychoanalytic Association. *The International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 96, 611–636.
- Lomu, J. (1974). Lastensiirtokomitea ja sen arkisto 1941–1949 [The committee for evacuation of children and the archives]. Kirjoitus ylempää arkistotutkintoa varten 1.10.1974. [Writing for higher archive examination 1.10.1974].
- Matthis, I., Kaplan, S., & Varvin, S. (2006) *Trauma i vår tid*. [Trauma in our time]. Svenska Psykoanalytiska föreningens skriftserie nr 9.
- Mattsson, B. & Maliniemi-Piispanen, S. (2011). An interview study with a Finnish war child. *The Scandinavian Psychoanalytic Review*, 34, 31–40.
- Mattsson, B. & Maliniemi-Piispanen, S. (2013). Thinking about the unknown. An interview study with a Finnish war child. *Trauma & Memory*, 1, 52–71.
- Mattsson, B., Maliniemi-Piispanen, S., & Aaltonen, J. (2015). The lost mother tongue: An interview study with Finnish war children. *The Scandinavian Psychoanalytic Review*, 38, 128–139.
- Mattsson, B., Maliniemi-Piispanen, S., & Aaltonen, J. (2017). Traces of the Past. An interview study with Finnish war children who did not return to Finland after the war. *The Scandinavian Psychoanalytic Review*, 40, 129–137.
- McDougall, J. (1979). Primitive Communication and the use of Countertransference. *Contemporary Psychoanalysis* 14, 173–209.
- McDougall, J. (1985). *Theaters of the mind. Illusion and truth on the psychoanalytic stage*. London: Free Association Books.
- McDougall (1989). *Theatres of the body: A psychoanalytic approach to psychosomatic illness*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company.
- McDougall, J. (1990). *A plea for a measurement of abnormality*. London: Free Association Books.
- Ogden, T. (1992). *The primitive edge of Experience*. London: Maresfield Library.
- Ortmark Almgren, S. (1989). *Du som haver barnen kär*. [You who love the child]. Stockholm: LTs förlag.
- Ortmark Almgren, S. (red.), (2003). *Krigsbarns erinran: snäll, lydig och tacksam*. [War childrens' recollection: nice, obedient and grateful]. Stockholm: SinOA.
- Parsons, M. (1998). *"I'll take that one". Dispelling the Myths of Civilian Evacuation 1939-45*. Peterborough: Beckett Karlson.
- Pesonen, A-K., Heinonen, K., Räikkönen, K., Forsen, T., Kajantie, E., & Eriksson, J.G. (2007). Depressive symptoms in adults separated from their parents as children: A natural experience during World War II. *American Journal of Epidemiology*, 166, 1126–1133.
- Pesonen, A-K. & Räikkönen, K. (2012). The lifespan consequences of early life stress. *Physiology & Behavior*, 106, 722–727.
- Ryden, G. & Wallroth, P. (2008). *Mentalisering: Att leka med verkligheten*. [Mentalizing: to play with the reality]. Stockholm: Natur & Kultur.
- Rechart, E. & Ikonen, P. (1993). The origin of shame and its vicissitudes. *The Scandinavian Psychoanalytic Review*, 16, 100–124.

- Räikkönen, K., Lahti, M., Heinonen, K., Pesonen, A-K., Wahlbeck, K., Kajantie, E., Osmond, C., Barker, D.J., & Eriksson, J. G. (2011). Risk of severe mental disorders in adults separated temporarily from their parents in childhood: The Helsinki birth cohort study. *Journal of Psychiatric Research, 45*, 332–338.
- Räsänen, E. (1988) Lapsuusajan separaatiokokemusten vaikutus aikuisiän psyykkiseen ja fyysiseen terveyteen sekä sociaaliseen hyvinvointiin [Effects of separation experiences in childhood on psychic and social well-being in adulthood]. Doctoral dissertation. University of Kuopio.
- Sandelin, S. (1982) *Gäst i eget hem*. [As a visitor in your own home]. Helsingfors: Schildts.
- Sandelin, S., Santavirta, N., Mattsson, B., Järventausta, S., & Keinänen, M. (2006). Lapsi myrskyn silmässä - sotalapsi silloin (1939–1945) ja nyt. Suomen lähihistorian avaamaton lehti. [The child in the eye of the storm - war child then (1939–1945) and now. A blank page in Finnish history]. *Historiallinen Aikakausikirja, 104*, 181–184.
- Santavirta, T. (2012). How large are the effects from temporary changes in family environment: evidence from a child-evacuation program during World War II. *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics, 4*, 28–42.
- Santavirta, N. & Santavirta, T. (2013). Child protection and adult depression: evaluating the long-term consequences of evacuating children to foster care during World War II. *Health Economics, 23*, 253–267.
- Santavirta, T. (2014). Unaccompanied Evacuation and Adult Mortality: Evaluating the Finnish Policy of Evacuating Children to Foster Care During World War II. *American Journal of Public Health, 104*, 1759–1765.
- Santavirta, T., Santavirta, N., Betancourt, T., & Gilman, S. (2015). Long term mental health outcomes of Finnish children evacuated to Swedish families during the second world war and their non-evacuated siblings: cohort study. *BMJ*, 350.
- Santavirta, T., Santavirta, N., & Gilman, S. E. (2017). Association of the World War II Finnish evacuation of children with psychiatric hospitalization in the next generation. *JAMA Psychiatry, 75*, 21–27. doi:10.1001/jamapsychiatry.2017.3511.
- Saraneva, K. (2008). Freudin traumateoria ja Nachträglichkeit-periaatteen merkitys psykoanalyysissa [Freud's trauma theory and the use of the Nachträglichkeit- principle in psychoanalysis]. *Psykoterapia, 27*, 168–188.
- Sebald, W.G. (2000). *Austerlitz*. Stockholm: Wahlström & Widstrand.
- Sköld, J., Söderlind, I., & Bergman, A-S. (2014). *Fosterbarn i tid och rum*. [Foster children in time and room]. Stockholm: Carlsson.
- Stern, D. (1985). *The interpersonal world of the infant. A view from Psychoanalysis and developmental psychology*. New York: Basic Books.
- Tustin, F. (1986). *Autistic barriers in neurotic patients*. London: Karnac Books.
- van der Hart, O., Nijenhuis, E.R.S., & Steele, K. (2006). *The Haunted self. Structural dissociation and the treatment of chronic traumatization*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company.

- van der Kolk, B.A. (2003). The neurobiology of childhood trauma and abuse. *Child & Adolescent Psychiatric Clinics of North America*, 12, 293–317.
- van der Kolk, B.A. & McFarlane, A.C. (1996). The Black Hole of trauma. In B.A. van der Kolk, A.C. McFarlane, & L. Weisaeth (Eds.), *Traumatic stress*. New York & London: The Guilford Press, 2–23.
- Varvin, S. (2003). *Mental survival strategies after extreme traumatization*. Copenhagen: Multivers Academic.
- Varvin, S. (2004, September). *Dissociation. Unowned experience*. Performed during EPF conference in Helsinki.
- Varvin, S. (2010) The stranger and the strange: psychoanalytic reflections on meeting otherness. Paper held at the XXII Nordic Psychoanalytic Congress. Helsinki, August 5-8.
- Virkamäki, S. (2005). "Att få ett gott hem..." *Finska krigsbarnsoptioner i Stockholm 1946–1947* ["To get a good home" Adoption of Finnish War Children in Stockholm 1946–1947]. (Web Reports No. 7). Turku: Siirtolaisinstituutti.
- Westling, A. (1956). *Juurettomana omassa maassa*. [Without roots in one's homeland]. *Lapsi ja nuoriso*, 15.
- Winnicott, D.W. (1960). Ego Distortion in Terms of True and False Self. In D.W. Winnicott, *The maturational process and the facilitating environment*, New York: International Universities Press, 140–152.
- Winnicott, D.W. (1965). *The Maturational Processes and the Facilitating Environment: Studies in the Theory of Emotional Development*, London: Karnac Books.
- Winnicott, D.W. (1974). The Fear of Breakdown. *International Review of Psychoanalysis*, 1, 103–107.



ORIGINAL PAPERS

I

AN INTERVIEW STUDY WITH A FINNISH WAR CHILD

by

Barbara Mattsson & Sinikka Maliniemi-Piispanen, 2011

The Scandinavian Psychoanalytic Review, 34, 31–40.

Reproduced with kind permission by Taylor & Francis.

An interview study with a Finnish war child

Barbara Mattsson and Sinikka Maliniemi-Piispanen

This study presents an interview with a Finnish woman who as a child was evacuated to Sweden during World War 2, and did not return to her homeland after the war. The interview material, which was first collected in a larger, ongoing study on Finnish war children, was elucidated with the method of "Grounded Theory" as well as by applying psychoanalytic theoretical perspectives and information derived from the interviewer's countertransference. Among the identified experiential themes, which are typical of permanently displaced Finnish war children in general, were emptiness, rage, internal conflicts related to having two pairs of parents, and signs of traumatic reactions. The analysis illuminates how the interviewee's defensive efforts were directed against ignorance (not knowing), helplessness and psychic conflict.

Key words: *war child- evacuation- ignorance- helplessness- Grounded Theory*

During the last war, the years 1939-1944, about 80,000 children were evacuated from Finland, primarily to Sweden. It is uncertain how many were left behind in their adopted country after the war; various estimates vary between 7,100 and 15,000 children (Kavén, 2010). In the summer of 2007, the authors of this paper interviewed 10 Finnish war children who stayed in Sweden at the end of the war and did not return permanently to their original homeland. Our research interest was to explore how the childhood experiences of war-time evacuation are reflected in adult memories. In this article, we present one of these interviews as a case study.

Observations in the larger interview study

The unstructured interviews of our study of 10 Finnish war children began with the open request "tell me about your life". By using the method *Grounded Theory* (Glaser 1992, 1994, 2010), we looked at our material without any preconceived hypothesis. Still, upon self-reflection, we noted in ourselves a shared expectation that the displaced child's experiences of the break-up and separation from its family and adjustment to a new family and culture would be associated with se-

vere challenges to its wellbeing (*cf.* Kaplan, 2003). We read the interviews together, at the same time trying to be unbiased and open to emerging themes, as required by *Grounded Theory*, and listening to the material "with the third ear," that is, interpreting it in light of our clinical experience and knowledge of early infant-parent interaction.

The stories collected in the larger interview study - of 10 adult war children remaining in Sweden since WW2 - had great individual variation. In the case presented in this article, we have applied the following themes generated in the larger study: feelings of emptiness, rage, conflict related to having had two pairs of parents, and signs of traumatic reactions.

In the larger study, feelings of emptiness were repeatedly expressed in formulations such as "I am nothing", "I have no roots", "it is like a black hole". Rage was expressed directly or in hidden ways as projections or projective identification. All participants had to relate to the fact that they had two sets of parents. Almost all of them had parental images with marked idealizations of one of the parental couples, most commonly the adoptive parents. The participants further showed obvious signs of traumatic reactions, for example, ex-

pressions of timelessness, which indicates difficulties in maintaining a stable inner structure or mental space, disrupted thinking and fragmented narratives with interruptions or memory blanks, various affective reactions, and also somatic expressions of affect, for example, chronic coughing, stammering, and laughing.

By observing the interplay between the interviewer and the interviewee, we also learned that *transference* and *countertransference* phenomena were in force and could be used as a source of information in research interviews. For us, this was an important methodological finding.

All of the interviewed individuals in the larger, group study were members of a war child association and volunteered to participate in the study. All were well educated and professionally well-established, and all had lasting family bonds and relationships. They had been between 3 and 7 years old when evacuated from Finland.

Psychoanalytic and other psychological studies concerned with war and separation

In 1939, British psychoanalysts, among them, Bowlby and Winnicott, warned of the long-term consequences of separating small children from their mothers by evacuating them to the countryside. They maintained that the psychic damage of an evacuation could be just as serious as a physical injury (Garland, 1998). Similar thoughts were put forward by Anna Freud and Dorothy Burlingham (Freud, A. & Burlingham, 1943). Jewish children who survived the Holocaust were studied as adults by Kaplan (2006, 2008), who created a model to describe the long-term psychological impact of war on children. She sees *generational destruction* as a basic dimension that should be considered when trying to understand a child's experience when separated from its familiar physical environment, family and relatives, language and traditions. Some experiences can be "perforating" and penetrate the psychic shield. *Trauma linking* is an aspect of generational destruction, which describes how traumatic experiences and affects may re-emerge associatively later in life, in the present. *Generational linking*, which describes what unites the past with the present despite generational destruction, can create a base for memories and future psychic integration. Kaplan's model of the oscillation between trauma linking and generational linking is a helpful psychological framework for studies of war and children. Some of its core concepts are applied in the analysis to follow.

As far as is known, there is only one earlier systematic interview study of the Finnish children who were sent to Sweden during World War 2 and who remained there after the war (Lagnebro, 1994). One recurring

opinion of the participants of that study was that they would never send away their own children to another country. Lagnebro also reported that the interviewed persons experienced strong feelings of rootlessness, uncertainty and that their adjustment to Swedish society was often superficial.

Räsänen (1988) presented research on children who were evacuated to Sweden during the war and later returned to Kuopio County in Finland. Her conclusion was that in adulthood, it was not possible to find differences in the psychic well-being or physical health of the evacuated children and persons in her comparison group, which consisted of subjects who as children had less than two months of separation from their parents. The "Helsinki cohort study" (Pesonen et al., 2007; Raikkonen et al., 2010) similarly includes research on evacuated war children who subsequently returned to their homeland. Their results, however (similar to those of Lagnebro on evacuated children who remained in Sweden) point to an increased occurrence of symptoms of depression and other diagnoses of psychic disturbances later in life.

The narrative as a case history

Freud's (1937) idea was that psychoanalysis could reconstruct a "historical" truth as distinct from the "material truth" of past experiences. In a later narrative tradition in psychoanalysis, the terminology shifted so that the internal or psychological truth referred to by Freud as "historical" was now called "narrative truth" (Spence, 1982). The narrative truth means that the themes in the story fit together and constitute a meaningful whole (cf., also, Schafer, 1983). The logic in the narrative may be thought of as a criterion of validity. This truth concept has to do with coherence, wholeness and a complete gestalt (Karlsson, 2000).

Karlsson (2000) strived for an integration of both narrative and historical (or material) truth. Man's ability to symbolize and permeate his self-image and his world with meaning provides different perspectives and an historical truth that cannot be static or absolute. The narrative is a reconstruction of the past as is seen from the present.

We imagine that the participant's inner reality emerges in the interview, in the present, but that it may also reflect something of the war child's experiences in a real (material) and objective sense. It is in this spirit we have read and reread the interview with one of the participants of the larger interview study: *Kirsti*, who is presented in this case study.

THE INTERVIEW

A short summary of Kirsti's background

Kirsti was born in 1938 in Helsinki and moved with her family to the countryside after the outbreak of the war. In the family there were 6 children, 2 of whom were younger than Kirsti. Father served in the war. When Kirsti was 2 years old she spent 2 months in a children's home together with her siblings, because mother was in the hospital.

When Kirsti was almost 4 years old, it seems that the municipal physician urged Kirsti's mother to send her to Sweden, since she was obviously undernourished. She was sent off to in 1942. She came to a childless foster family in a small town in the middle of Sweden. Two of her brothers were also later sent to Sweden, but to different places.

In 1946, Kirsti was sent back to her Finnish family in accordance with a regulation that applied to the Finnish war children. However she remained in Finland for only 2 months and then returned to Sweden, something she herself keenly desired. She protested against her stay in Finland by refusing to eat. Later on Kirsti did well in school, took a university degree, married and had two children.

Selected parts of Kirsti's interview

The interview took about two hours and was taped and transcribed. The order of the selected parts is the same as it was in the actual interview. The interviewer was from Finland. Some words that we consider particularly meaningful are italicized.

I: Tell me about your life

Kirsti: Well [laughs], that wasn't so easy. Where do you think I should begin?

I: Just as it occurs to you
(silence)

I: mm ...

Kirsti: Do you mean from the beginning or ...

I: I mean that it is completely up to you to decide

Kirsti: Oh, well ...

I: I'm inviting you

Kirsti: It might take a long time.

I: Well, we have some time

Kirsti: We have some time - OK. Then I'll start from the beginning, when I was born.

I: That's absolutely OK

Kirsti: I was born in Helsinki and in 1942 - No, what am I saying? (laughs). I have no idea where I am, in 1938 ... Yes, exactly. I came to Sweden in 1942 and ...

I: How nice. You can talk about two births

She said that she was born when she came to Sweden. The time perspective disappears. The interviewer supported her so that the mix-up would not feel too difficult. After this Kirsti became more precise, providing many details. Was it important for her to show that she was well oriented?

Kirsti: Well ... I have almost always talked about that because when I came to Sweden in 1942, the passage to Sweden was hard work, because it was an incredibly cold winter that January. The boat with the war children on board got stuck in the ice in the Gulf of Finland, so there was talk of helicopter transportation to take food and water down to the boat, but the problem solved itself, eventually. Then we arrived in Stockholm. Those days were especially dramatic. But we had to spend time in Stockholm in the hospital for [medical] examinations. Only then did I go on to Vasteras, where it had been decided that I should go, and my Swedish mother came to pick me up at the hospital for infectious diseases, and the only memory I have from the hospital is the stone step on the stairs. I previously had very many memories of the trip and my life in Finland, although I was so young when I left; I was only 3 years old. I was 3 when I traveled to Sweden and I was 4 when I arrived, so I had my [4th] birthday there.

Kirsti immediately took over the description of the two births. When she talked about the hardships of the passage, she had the perspective of an adult, describing details she could not have known about when it all happened. When she described the stairs she focused on a detail, thus diverting her attention from overwhelming feelings. Focusing on a detail indicates a link to trauma (Kaplan, 2006, 2008).

I: You had your birthday

Kirsti: Well, sometimes I say it this way: sometimes I'm 3 and sometimes I'm 4, but then anyway when I talk about my birthday the picture in my mind is when my mother had picked me up and it was terribly cold; it was cold in Sweden then, too; it was 30-40 degrees centigrade. They were those cold wartime winters, so she wrapped me up in

a blanket, I was very small; I was already 4 but I was only about 88cm tall, so I was like a little 2-year-old. My mother had sewn clothes for me that should have been for a 4-year old, everything was 20 cm too big, but it was that special feeling when my foster mother wrapped me in the blanket and we went in a taxi or a car home, that I used to talk about *my second birth*, for it was such a fantastic feeling, *I think* that now I came to people who were incredibly good-hearted and fine and *I think* I felt it through the blanket - yes, it felt like that - not only was it, it (stammering) warm and comfy, and that someone was holding me, but it was as if something pulled right through me. And at the same time I felt enormously secure, there was a person there who after all those weeks took care of me, and that's why *I talk* about my second birth [laughs] when *I'm sitting* there in the blanket *coming home* to Sweden.

The present tense (timelessness) suggests an activated trauma during the interview itself. The perspective of time disappears and the experience is present here and now. It may be that Kirsti was afraid, even though she herself said something quite different. It is also possible that after all her trials during the journey Kirsti immediately clung to the person who took care of just her. To some extent, there is an adult perspective in her narrative. It is characteristic of her way of talking that at first she hesitates about some detail but then decides that this was just the way it was. Consequently Kirsti wanted to be the one who knows. During the whole interview, Kirsti mixed two approaches: she let herself be overwhelmed by affects, then she protected herself by turning to an adult perspective.

I: You can still feel this - the feeling you had?

Kirsti brought the feeling into the present moment and the interviewer picked it up.

Kirsti: Yes, I can recognize it. I recognize the blanket. It was in the 1940's. It was probably a gray [extra] blanket that was perhaps stored in a box? - it was so cold - that sort of dark gray blanket, and then there were gray stripes in a lighter gray; I remember that.

She jumped from the present affect to a concrete object (trauma linking). She described the blanket but not her mother or the house she had moved to, nor did she introduce her Swedish family.

Kirsti: I remember the first meal my mother cooked. I thought it was what you called "*lappgröt*" [Sarni porridge], I think it was probably only rye flakes or something like that and not sweet, that porridge, and then there was a little milk, *maybe*, and then, to top it off, there was a little lingonberry jam, and I thought it was so good, it was so fantastic. Or this is just a mental picture of that food, because I knew that my mother had to be very careful - the stomachs were so delicate, but also this - you sat down to eat, and consequently I had a lot of trust in my mother.

The food tasted good. Here her trust seemed to be a memory of an experience. She emphasized mother's caring ways.

Kirsti: I was fearful when a stranger came in. This was because the environment was new. People spoke Swedish, which I didn't understand, and I know, well, partly remember this. But then, also, it probably was my mother who told the story, and it was perhaps a week or so later that I was sitting at the table having my food and sat like that with the spoon, and when my mother's friend *comes in* and *greet*s us, and *I do not move for 20 minutes* because this *is*, this *is* typical of Finnish war children, something you *read* about in the newspaper. "They were, of course, nice, docile as they were ... ". [In truth] we were more-or-less panic stricken in some way in many situations [coughs]. I was apathetic, in some way, I think, this was an effect of ... When just a few minutes before I had been laughing and been lively with my mother, and curious people knocked on the door, and mamma and papa didn't have any children, and if a neighbor got a child everybody just stared, but *I do not move* until she had left. Of course, this [behaviour] passed, it's just a reaction I remember.

Here Kirsti told us that she was panic-stricken and at the same time apathetic in the face of the unexpected and unknown. Being paralyzed is a powerful trauma indicator, a frozen reaction (Krystal, 1978). In the interview, the affect was somatized (cough). Kirsti said that the frozen reaction in the presence of strangers gradually passed; later her anxiety found expression in other ways. She overcame her frozen reactions, but would instead run away when strangers arrived.

Kirsti talked a long time about her shyness and her language difficulties. She did not know Swedish from earlier times, although her biological father spoke Swedish. Not knowing the language spoken by those

with whom one lives and being unable to make oneself understood are conditions we regard as traumatic.

Kirsti gradually turned to thoughts of her life in Finland.

Kirsti: Well, it was like this. On the one hand I lived in Helsinki and I imagine that when things were at their worst in 1940, we moved away to the country- side, outside Borga, since my father was Finland-Swedish and my mother was from Karelia, and it was from there (Borga) that I then moved to Sweden ... I was three that winter or ... that winter I would be four. I remember rather many pictures from that [time], particularly I remember the late summer before this, when I was three and a half, maybe ... because it was such a positive memory: it is summer and we were 6 siblings, so I had 2 brothers or 3 - no, wait, 4 brothers and a sister and then I had 2 brothers who were smaller and then there was one who was a baby then, and it is this that I remember from the summer. The sun is shining and I liked the walk and *I'm sitting on A_ "iti's* [Finnish for mother's] lap and this has, like, stuck in my mind, and I have gradually understood now, later on, why it has stuck: it was of course because of the fact that, besides, she had a brother who was two years younger than I, he was probably 11h or perhaps 2 years old, and in addition, [there was] my baby brother who naturally took up her attention and time, and then there was me, who was allowed to follow along on that walk. It was only me, that is, there weren't any siblings with us, but there was me.

Kirsti began the narrative about her Finnish family with a possible construction of her early life, a construction she doesn't seem to be completely sure of. She described herself as separate from her family: she wasn't moved to Sweden, she was the one who moved. She spoke as if the initiative had been hers and that she had control over what happened. She told how she sat on *Äiti's* lap. *Äiti* and she were the central figures in this picture and the siblings were her competitors.

I: You and your mother ...

Kirsti: Yes. It was just *Äiti*, I make a distinction between *Äiti*, *Äiti* in Finland, and ... my mother in Sweden; you know this is a good way to make a distinction ...

I: Yes

Kirsti: (stammering) ... so that that image in my memory in which the sun is shining and we have picked flowers, and then I don't remember much

more until the winter, and then partly a picture of my father who was home on leave on Christmas Eve ... I, like, only *see* how he *sits* down and *lights* the candles on the Christmas tree. I remember that and I remember the Christmas tree. I don't know if it was a Finnish tradition to hang apples on the Christmas tree, maybe it's a mistake, maybe there was an apple on the table ... Anyway I remember that there was an apple.

The memory of traditions in the home told us that she connected to good memories that she may possibly be able to pass on. This exemplifies generational linking (Kaplan 2006, 2008). There was a tentative, reflective mood at this point in Kirsti's story. After this her father disappeared from the narrative.

I: It was surely extremely worthwhile to have the apples, those winter apples.

Kirsti: Yes, they certainly were winter apples. That's very likely, because they were so heavy, they were hanging on the tree ... Then I also remember a time before that, maybe it was in the autumn; we were playing, there wasn't much to play with ...

Äiti was cleaning and she of course had rag rugs, and they were rolled up and taken out and beaten, or were already cleaned and had been taken in, and I played with that rag rug; maybe I was inspired by her [*Äiti*], for she was feeding my little baby brother. So ... *I'm sitting* there with that rag rug in my arms, and there wasn't so much food, she had made pancakes. I remember that there were pancakes or maybe those small pancakes, and I *feed* the rug with the small pancakes (laughs), stuck the food into one end, yes, I remember that and then I remember that when I *play* as I did then, then those pancakes had gotten sticky, and I was told not to feed the rug with pancakes. But then also, this was probably just before I was going to travel to Sweden and so we were out playing and it was not the same thing there - there was a lot of snow and it was cold, yards high, so that we had dug out tunnels in the snow - I was so little then, so high, and you could draw in the new snow, so then and there [in the snow] I drew plates, for my sister and myself, so you could sit as if you were at table. And I also remember the snow cave that perhaps the boys had made and where they locked me in; it wasn't any fun, I remember.

Kirsti took over the interviewer's thoughts of winter apples and knew that they were hanging in the tree. She gave a vivid picture of the interior of her Finnish

home: she was sitting on the floor to eat, *Äiti* had the little brother in her arms. Why was she playing with the food? Kirsti was said to be undernourished.

Kirsti had a tendency to describe herself and exclude others, in this case her sister. The game with the plates was not a game they played together, as she first described. Nor did the interview become a mutual "game". Although the things she remembered and told about her relationships tended to be sunny memories, Kirsti could recall an unpleasant experience. Parts of the story were told in the present tense.

Kirsti: ... I remember the boat trip but not the leave taking [from ,fritz]. I don't remember when *Äiti* left me and I think that's something, I think that's the way it was, that there I must have felt some kind of, well I don't know, disappointment and very abandoned. I had no one else, I mean in perspective, I had my beloved mother in Sweden, but at that time, I had no one else but *Äiti* ... Papa had been in the war since 1939, so then I had *Äiti*, and then I was sent away, since I don't remember this at all ...

Her narrative activated the traumatic separation from *Äiti*. This was one of the few events she did not claim that she remembered.

Kirsti: I think also that there was, I don't know, I think that perhaps it was some kind of, well I thought of it as some kind of disappointment, for I don't really know what my attitude toward her was when I came to Sweden, so consequently all the time I was thinking about this [I asked myself], was it like this? I belong, of course, to those who were lucky: there was communication between Finland and Sweden, between parents, I mean. My mother wrote, and it was translated, the librarian in Viisteras translated all the letters. Of course, they were clipped by the censors, if someone had written something unsuitable about the war. Of course there was censorship but there was communication, and they immediately sent photographs of ... of (stammering)-*Äiti* had gone to a photographer after I left, and my mother always put the photo [*Äiti* sent] on the bureau. So, I had it and at the same time felt that I was not part of it (laughs); they were my other siblings. I knew it all the time, I knew from the picture what she and my siblings looked like and such, but, but (stammering) at the same time I think I also knew that when you are little you can sense a conflict when you love two people.

Something happened to Kirsti's (inner) picture of *Äiti*. Kirsti wondered what she felt. She recalled her traumatic memories and tried to talk about them. This led to reflection. Her narrative also included later constructions relating to the exchange of letters and the censorship; it was not merely a child's perspective. Kirsti had a tendency to laugh when the affects were activated. "Mamma always put out the photograph on the bureau," said Kirsti. We wondered: who took it down?

Did the presence of the Finnish interviewer arouse these memories of *Äiti*, and was this why her anxiety over the separation was activated in what followed in the interview? It seemed that her happiness in Sweden, with mother, was threatened.

Kirsti: I had terrible anxiety when I came to Sweden, when I was little, I mean.

Kirsti: Well, but ... but (stammering) ... but all this about catastrophes, it's just about things that are connected to Mamma. If my [Swedish] father had died I would have been extremely sorry, but if I were to know that Mamma should die, then I wouldn't have managed at all. I mean, my experience tells me that I would not have been able to handle it. But then, just that, that (stammering) which I understand was a trick for mastering my anxiety, probably started very early after I arrived, because my father might say something like that I was so orderly, because I folded up my clothes so neatly ... That was, of course, something positive that he could say to my mother: "she is so orderly, she folds her clothes so neatly, she lays them on the chair". Afterwards I have realized that even then, for I remember that I busied myself with such things, this was a way to get the upper hand over chaos [and] that you could perhaps repeat things, or you could put away things very nicely and so on. I: Things in order

Kirsti: I always *see* the catastrophe ahead. It must be connected to the fact that I came as a war child. I: This farewell ...?

Kirsti: Yes partly. But also this, I *think* that the worst has happened. *It is the same kind of feeling that I have to things* [things that are good] *that I must destroy*. I do not, but I *feel* that way ... I must not *feel* this joy and happiness, then one has to destroy it. And then I think, then, that she [mother] will die. And I had a lot of those anxiety ticks.

When I was little I had an extremely strong fear of death and of course that also has a connection [with what happened], because that was the

first summer ... the second summer, I was 5-years old, when Mamma picked peonies. They *are* so beautiful and *have* such a lovely scent. They were in a vase on the table and the whole time I had to turn around and look at the peonies, for I knew that they were the last I would see, since I was convinced that *I'll die* tonight, and that was overwhelming (it wasn't only Mamma who would die): I would also die, and these very peonies would be lost to me. Now I have peonies in the garden at our country home that are wonderful, and I don't think about this anymore, but earlier they were associated with death ...[In those times] I had to turn around and look at the peonies one last time and then creep down [in bed?], and it was also like, you know, when you have to repeat things several times, I had to look one more time at the peonies because *this is the last time* I'll see them, and then, well, there was so much more like that ...I remember myself, how I like stared or opened my eyes wide, and maybe Mamma said: "Don't do that with your eyes, it might not be good for them", after which I thought that I would be blind. So that was also a kind of fright - that I would be blind ... It could never be completely dark , it mustn't be so now either. If it's pitch dark I jump out of bed and believe I'm blind.

Someone would die, Mamma or herself. Was she in the dark, "blind" when she was separated from *Äiti* and lost contact with her?

Kirsti: I know now, of course, that I could very easily fall into things I did in childhood: you threw the ball, repeated it a thousand times because otherwise *Mamma dies*, and then you were completely worn out, that's the way it often was when I was doing something. It was a number thing, four times and four times and still there could be something negative, and if I did it three times there was one time left, then Mamma might say "don't do that." Maybe she was annoyed with me, perhaps it was something I shouldn't be doing, and then I panicked because why should she stop me now when I had just one time left.

Negative as well as positive feelings were forbidden and dangerous and had to be mastered. Kirsti emphasized that she had been well taken care of in Sweden. An example of this was how she thought of her first meals in Sweden; she sat at a table and was the object of Mamma's care. She considered herself the center of her new family. It can be assumed that such a self-image

was also supported by the idea that she could steer or control the adults' decisions, either magically as in the anxious experiences and memories just presented or more realistically, for example, when she wished and was allowed to travel back to Sweden and where her food protest played some role.

Kirsti recalled her student time.

Kirsti: Well, then there was the anxiety during my time as a student in another town. I was depressed for a while and went to the doctor.

I: This was, of course, an enormous separation, for a young adult or teenager.

Kirsti: So that ...

I: Many young people regard this period as trying.

Kirsti: I didn't *think* it was, I *know!* They called it some kind of inner depression that was caused by some thing or other. But it was probably a concurrence of concurrence [repetition] of various factors, I think.

This is an example of how Kirsti defended herself against the interviewer's thoughts about separation anxiety. She was not ready to listen. She did not do the interview together with the interviewer. As Kirsti wanted to be in command of her own life it was difficult for her to listen to others.

When Kirsti's *Äiti* visited in Sweden at her confirmation , Kirsti avoided her perhaps as she avoided the interviewer. She declared that she was ashamed of her *Äiti* who wanted to sing Finnish songs. She wondered why it was easier to associate with *Äiti* in Finland when her [Swedish] mother was not present.

DISCUSSION

In an attempt to evaluate how she was influenced by her experiences, we have followed the war child Kirsti's memories of her evacuation and adjustment to Sweden. We looked at the interview material via the interviewer's countertransference feelings and the Grounded Theory categories, thus exposing Kirsti's feelings of emptiness, rage, and conflicts in maintaining relationships to two parental couples, as well as manifestations of trauma.

Countertransference feelings

Transference and countertransference feelings can best be observed and interpreted in the psychoanalytic relationship, but are also a constantly ongoing process within us all, in any kind of human interaction.

In Kirsti's narrative it often seemed as if no dialogue with the interviewer would develop. Recurrently, she either did not hear the interviewer's questions or responded to them by talking over the head of the interviewer. Sometimes the interviewer was not allowed to finish speaking; there was an interruption in communication. The interviewer recalled that early in the interview she noted Kirsti's vulnerability. The interviewer had the feeling of holding her breath and couldn't speak spontaneously and therefore became cautious and controlled.

We picked up two messages with regard to the most manifest transference-countertransference dynamic: (a) in Kirsti's world, one doesn't do things together, and (b) control is important. With these attitudes, which were strongly felt by the interviewer, Kirsti conveyed something of her frozen reactions.

McDougall (1979), among many others, has emphasized that it is particularly important to listen to countertransference when understanding so-called primitive communication: a person can use his speech as an action when catastrophic events have made it impossible to keep together and work through emotional experiences. Speech may contain messages that have not been processed on a verbal level and which can only be listened to or registered by reflecting on countertransference. Instead of feeling and remembering, the patient tries to get the therapist to feel and experience.

The applicability of Grounded Theory categories

We selected Kirsti for this study partly because she was different from those other children of war whom we had studied, who often emphasized their *feelings of emptiness*. Kirsti's narrative was rich in content, it was characterized by memories with actual episodes. She supplied us with powerful images of her early childhood. She also reported things that she herself could not possibly have remembered or known about at the time she was talking about. In so doing, she adopted an adult perspective, which gave her narrative a character of being both open and defensive. She did not want to be a person who did not know. We imagine that her *ignorance* and subsequent *helplessness* was humiliating and painful to her and that she masked her feelings of emptiness.

Many psychoanalysts use the concept of emptiness, emptiness experiences, and black holes in their description of narcissistic traits, early disturbances, autistic reactions, and deep depression. Severe psychic trauma always causes a lasting narcissistic wound. The traumatized person may further feel that the inner object's protective function has failed and that what is mean-

ingful in his or her existence falls apart. The destroyed protection by empathetic, internalized, primary objects may create a feeling of inner loneliness and great helplessness (Garland, 1998; Gerzi, 2005; Bohm & Kaplan, 2006).

Our thoughts of hidden disappointment and *rage* were aroused by what Kirsti told about her compulsive actions as a child. Her ways of dealing with affects are to keep unmanageable emotional experiences outside of herself and also outside the interactions with those who are close to her. She tried to manage her dread of becoming blind or dying and the fear that her mother might die. She also had difficulties in putting into words disappointment or anger: she expressed mostly good memories of her relation to others.

Untreated or unconscious anger can be expressed by vengeful actions or thoughts of revenge (Kaplan, 2008). Such fantasies may tell us about affects that the subject cannot reflect upon. In the background there may be early feelings of shame. Was it a vengeful act when Kirsti abandoned *Äiti*?

Sandler & Sandler (1998) described how insecure psychic structures may lead a person to drop from consciousness - dissociate - what is disturbing and unknown and turn to what is certain and familiar. The unknown may be interpreted as catastrophic, albeit at a distance. If a person has not developed own structures that will carry through separation or disappointments, he may cling to idealized figures in the external world. Kirsti's relation to her adopted mother seemed to be characterized by idealization; she was not described as an independent person in her own right. *Äiti*, on the other hand, was described more like a living person who Kirsti, however, kept at a distance. Even though she could reflect upon her conflict in relation to *Äiti*, Kirsti's tendency to disassociate was also discernable in her attitude to the interviewer, whose contributions were repeatedly interrupted and dismissed.

Many war children reported how shameful it was to be the one sent away. Kirsti seemed to experience shame and expressed it in projective ways. When *Äiti* visited in Sweden, Kirsti avoided her just as she avoided the interviewer. She said that she was ashamed of her *Äiti*, who wanted to sing Finnish songs. Kirsti turned her back on her "old" mother. However she acknowledged that she had a tendency to destroy what was good; she had a sense of reconciliation and an understanding of *Äiti* in adulthood.

Fathers were glimpsed only in the periphery in the interview with Kirsti. A missed father may be a factor that goes together with feelings of emptiness and regressive and destructive tendencies.

Kirsti's solution to the problem of two sets of par-

ents was that she chose her mother in Sweden as number one in her life, yet maintained contact with her *Äiti*. Nonetheless, the person she is able to describe the best and who she talks about in her interview is *Äiti*. In reality, Kirsti had forgotten the Finnish language and could never more speak to her *Äiti* without a translator.

That Kirsti's mothers were the pervading theme in the interview reflects what we call *the eternal conflict* of the Finnish war children: "My biological roots are far away in the Finnish-Swedish and Karelian, so it feels extremely positive." Whether or not this description is an idealization, Kirsti maintained that she is not without roots; her biological inheritance adds to the richness of her soul.

In our text, we have pointed to what we consider to be *traumatic reactions*. Memories that emerged during the course of the narrative activated painful affects. However, Kirsti usually managed to recount and reflect on these memories. When she agreed to tell her story she dared to take the risk of being emotionally affected. She was thus able to convert in a creative way some of her traumatic memories into something vital in the present (generational linking). She has also referred to details in ways that, in Kaplan's terminology, can be described as linking objects: china, interior decoration, songs and poems. Kirsti actively worked through aspects of her trauma and tried to find space for a normal life and an existence in the present. Her trauma did not prevent psychic work.

We can discern more difficult effects of Kirsti's trauma in her easily aroused anxiety and thoughts of catastrophes as well as in the ready-made scenario she stuck to in the interview. The traumatized person is on the lookout for a repetition of the trauma. When Kirsti was on guard against questions, we believe this may be an avoidance of an earlier affective reaction. In the interview, she repeatedly felt threatened; we noted this through the timelessness in her narrative and her efforts to maintain control. Her good memory for details, which obviously already existed before her evacuation to Sweden, can be seen as an asset that contributes to a rich inner world, but it may also serve defensive needs. When she became attached to a single neutral detail like the stone of the steps or the blanket she was wrapped in, this may be a way of diverting attention from her own insecurity and emptiness.

Traumatization can also be perceived in Kirsti's frozen reactions in surprising situations. Krystal (1978) makes a distinction between infantile trauma and adult trauma. Infantile trauma can be compared to mortal fright, whereas the adult traumatic experience includes a self-observing ego that is rarely completely put out

of play. Children's reactions to trauma depend on their developmental stage and on the defenses that are available at these stages. It is conceivable that Kirsti, after the evacuation, had to protect herself with early defenses such as denial and projection. Traumatic events in childhood may release a fear of losing control over aggressive wishes, which in turn elicits both magic fantasies (of causing destruction) and a need to defend against such affects and thoughts (*cf* Krystal, 1978).

It seems as if Kirsti was especially sensitive about not knowing and not understanding. In her interview, she tended to immediately pick up something the interviewer said and turned it into her own truth (my second birthday, the winter apples). This is something one might call her "closed system" (Novick & Novick, 2010) where she does not want to be dependent on another person. Novick & Novick (2010) distinguish between locked, omnipotent and sadomasochistic ways to meet life with little opportunity for development and the opposite - openness and competence - where one strives for changing the self. Kirsti's description that she must destroy what is good can be seen as a manifestation of a closed system that includes severe obstacles to being helped. Novick & Novick (2010) emphasize that a closed system may form an effective defense against the experience of helplessness and from which it is therefore difficult to refrain.

Compulsive features may also occur as a thin "membrane" between the present and the underlying, inner threatening experiences of emptiness and isolation (Tustin, 1986).

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The interview with Kirsti had certain recurring themes. There were, for example, several instances in which her separation trauma was present. When she tried to deny the significance of her inability to remember or to understand and when she focused on things she was uncertain about, it seems clear that strong defenses were mobilized against her helplessness. Various forms of control were also repeated. These may have been remaining vestiges of previous overpowering events in her life but they were also meaningful reactions in the present.

A fear of ignorance, of not knowing, which was a prominent theme in this study, can be seen as one aspect of feelings of emptiness. It is probably an element in the lives of all children who were evacuated at an early age. Not knowing and not understanding reflects the Finnish war children's exposed situation. Most of them say that they do not have any memory

of the journey to Sweden, nor of the mandatory initial quarantine. It is likely that this amnesia contributed to feelings of emptiness and fragmentation. One must add that the experience of being evacuated in many cases was not the first separation, possibly not even the most difficult one.

Kirsti's reactions reveal something that concerns all the interviewed war children: the reaction to loss - generational destruction - which leads to an inner void and contributes to a vulnerability in facing later disappointments and frustrations. Such experiences are difficult to handle when there is no known distinct legitimate aim, nor an object, for the anger or the ambivalence.

This is an ongoing research project. Our aim is to further develop a theoretical understanding of the psychological impact of childhood evacuation.

REFERENCES

- Bohm, T. & Kaplan, S. (2006). *Hämnd och avstafran att ge igen*. Stockholm: Natur och Kultur (2011). *Revenge. On the dynamics of a frightening urge and its taming*. London: Karnac.
- Freud, A. & Burlingham, D. (1943). *War and children*. New York: Medical War Books.
- Freud, S. (1937). Constructions in psychoanalysis. *S.E.*, 23.
- Garland, C. ed. (1998). *Understanding trauma. A psychoanalytic approach*. London: Karnac, The Tavistock Clinic series.
- Gertzi, S. (2005). Trauma, narcissism and the two attractors of trauma. *Int. J Psychoanal.*, 86: 1033-1050.
- Glaser, B. G. (1992). *Basics of grounded theory analysis*. Mill Valley: Sociology Press.
- (1994). *More grounded theory: a reader*. Mill Valley: Sociology Press.
- (2010). *Att göra grundad teori - problem, frågor och diskussion* [Doing grounded theory- problems, questions and discussion]. Mill Valley: Sociology Press.
- Kaplan, S. (2006). Children in genocide. Extreme traumatization and the affect propeller. *Int. J Psychoanal.*, 87: 725-746.
- (2008). *Children in genocide. Extreme traumatization and affect regulation*. London: International Psychoanalysis Library.
- Karlsson, G. (2000). The question of truth claim in psychoanalysis. *Scand. Psychoanal. Rev.*, 23: 3-24.
- Kavén, P. (2010). Humanitaarisuuden varjossa. Poliittiset tekijät Jastensirroissa Ruotsiin sotiemme aikana ja niiden jälkeen [In the shadow of humanitarianism. Political factors in child evacuation to Sweden during our wars and later]. *Historian tohtoriväitöskirja*. Helsingin Yliopisto.
- Krysta I, M.D. (1978). Trauma and affects. *Psychoanalytic Study of the Child*, 33: 81-112.
- Lagnebro, L (1994). *Finska krigsbarn* [Finnish war children]. *Studier i socialt arbete vid Umea universitet. Institutionen for socialt arbete*. Umea universitet nr. 19.
- McDougall J (1979). Primitive communication and the use of countertransference. *Contemporary Psychoanalysis*; 14: 173-209.
- Novick, J. & Novcik, K. K. (2010). *Sadomasochistic obstacles to the developmental transition from adolescence to adulthood: the closed system of self-regulation*. Unpublished lecture held in Helsinki, October, 2010.
- Pesonen, A.-K., Raikkonen, K., Heinonen, K., Kajantie, E., Forsen, T. & Eriksson, J.G. (2007). Depressive symptoms in adults separated from their parents as children: a natural experiment during World War II. *Am. J Epidemiol.*, 166: 1126-1133.
- Raikkonen, K., Lahti, M., Heinonen, K., Pesonen, A.-K., Wahlback, K., Kajantie, E., Osmond, C., Barker, D.J.P. & Eriksson, J.G. (2010). Risk of severe mental disorders in adults separated temporarily from their parents in childhood. The Helsinki cohort study. *Journal of Psychiatric Research*, doi: 10.1016/j.psychires.2010.07.003; in press.
- Räsänen, E. (1988). Lapsuusajan separaatiokokemusten vaikutus aikuisian psyykkiseen ja fyysiseen terveyteen sekä sosiaaliseen hyvinvointiin [Effects of separation experiences in childhood on psychic and social well-being in adulthood]. *Kuopion yliopisto*.
- Sandler, J. & Sandler, A.-M. (1998). *Internal objects revisited*. International Universities Press.
- Schafer, R. (1983). Narration in the psychoanalytic dialogue. In: *The psychoanalytic attitude*. New York: Basic Books, pp. 212-239.
- Spence, D. (1982). *Narrative truth and historical truth: meaning and interpretation in psychoanalysis*. New York: Norton.
- Tustin, F. (1986). *Autistic barriers in neurotic patients*. London: Karnac.

Barbara Mattsson
Björneborgsvägen 2 E
00350 Helsingfors
Finland

barbara.mattsson@dlc.fi

Sinikka Maliniemi-Piispanen
sinikka.maliniemi-piispanen@presenssi.com



II

THINKING ABOUT THE UNKNOWN. AN INTERVIEW STUDY OF FINNISH WAR CHILDREN

by

Barbara Mattsson & Sinikka Maliniemi-Piispanen, 2013

Trauma and Memory, 1, 34–46.

Reproduced with kind permission by Europa Ricerca Onlus.

Thinking about the unknown. An Interview Study of Finnish War Children

Barbara Mattsson* & Sinikka Maliniemi-Piispanen*

Abstract. During the Second World War, 1939-45, around 80.000 Finnish children were evacuated to neighbour-countries, the vast majority of them to Sweden. Approximately one-third of them were between two and five years of age at the time of their departure. Ten of the approximately 5000 to 7000 children who did not return to Finland permanently after the war were interviewed in 2007. The present study focuses on how they as adults during the interview cope with their early experiences of evacuation and on the ways they are thinking about and remembering, or not remembering these matters. This material was processed in line with the principles of Grounded Theory and with a psychoanalytical perspective. The conclusion is that the war children had great difficulties when it came to thinking about the significance of the evacuation for their lives. Obstacles to reflection were manifested, among other things, as acute traumatic reactions during the interview. Most of the interviewees could not confront or handle their ignorance and anger. Bion's concepts of K and -K give precision and depth to the picture of the evacuation's traumatic after-effects. Lack of containing has an influence on the capacity to experience mourning and loss and therewith on the development of thinking as well.

Keywords. Evacuation, trauma, containing, development of thinking

Introduction

In Finland the Second World War started in November 1939 with Soviet attacks. Almost immediately, Sweden sent an invitation to Finland expressing a willingness to provide homes for Finnish children in order to protect them from the dangers of the war. It was understood as an expression of neighbourly solidarity. The evacuation of children was carried out under the management of the Finnish government. The evacuation of children had a humanitarian dimension but also a political base. Finland was eager to maintain a close contact to Scandinavia. Sweden had a strong need to engage in Finland in the light of uncertainties over Soviet invasion of Finland. (Kavén, 2010).

Of the 80 000 Finnish children who were evacuated abroad, mainly to Sweden, during the Second World War approximately one-third were between two and five years of age at the time of their departure. The transports of children were carried out for the most part by boat or train and the journey could take between two and six days. The groups were large, around 600 children per transport. There was usually one attendant per 30 children (Kavén, 2010). Upon arrival in Sweden, the children were required to spend a certain period of time in quarantine.

We have a research material consisting of interviews with ten persons, "war children" as they are called in Finland, who were evacuated from Finland to Sweden and who did not return to Finland on a permanent basis after the war. Nine of the interviewees were between the ages of two and five and one of them was seven years old at the time of the evacuation from Finland. They were interviewed in Stockholm in 2007 with an open request, "Tell about your life". Here we wish to study what it means to a person to remember or not to remember these central events in his or her life. We try to trace how the war children as adults, during their interview, cope with these matters. We view our findings for the most part through the lens of Bion's theoretical concepts, especially his thoughts around K, getting to know. His thoughts about man's central striving to understand his

* Institute of Behavioural Sciences, University of Helsinki, Finland. E-Mail <barbara.mattson@dlc.fi>, <sinikka.maliniemi-piispanen@presenssi.com>.

life and to give meaning to his experiences, concentrated in K, appear to have special relevance in relationship to the war children.

Not much is known about the effects of separation and emigration in early childhood. The little child's relationship to its mother and separation from her are often characterized in terms of attachment, trauma and loss. A disruption in the early mother-child relationship can be considered to be one of the main causes of psychological disturbances and may appear immediately or later in life (Bowlby and Winnicott, 1939, Freud, A. & Burlingham, 1943).

Varvin (2010) stresses that a society, because of war and destruction of its social structures, may not be able to uphold the frames that support the child's development and the family's functions. Lack of adult presence witnessing what a child experiences leaves him alone with encapsulated anxiety. An anxiety-ridden mind deprives a person of the psychic space needed to understand and to think about anything that is different, new or unfamiliar. Such encounters create anxiety and fright and pave the way for early defences such as splitting, projections and denial. The ability to symbolize is disturbed. Traumatized persons often perceive themselves as though they were partially outside the sphere of shared definitions or meaning. Traumatic experiences are expressed as dissociated representations and lead to feelings of unreality since these experiences cannot be shared with another person. Human beings in exile can be cut off from their cultural roots and different signals can have confusing and alienating qualities.

Bion describes the circumstances that should prevail in order for children to be able to develop an understanding of them selves and of the world. Experiences of "knowing or not knowing" take on a deepened meaning through Bion's theoretical concept K, "knowing", the human striving to understand and give meaning to experiences as well as to seek truth. Other alphabet-based concepts are L and H, which stand for love and hate in different forms. We can see these, L, H and K, as impulses, feelings and instincts, three summarizing categories that provide a key to the dominating emotional atmosphere in a relationship. K could be seen as a process, a tendency for a person to want to make sense of his or her reality. Also, K is always object-seeking and tied to emotional experiences. A living K means a capacity to tolerate uncertainty and doubt, a capacity that thus ensures a continued flexible curiosity (Fischer, 2011).

Attacks on K lead to a denial of the truth. Here we have not merely an absence of K but more accurately a perversion of K which tell about a denial of reality rather than about an emotional experience (Bion, 1962a).

A prerequisite for the development of thinking is that a person is conscious of his losses Bion (1962a). If not the person makes the absent good object into a present evil object. If the object remains good, despite its absence, mourning is possible. The ability to bear absence and accepting tension is necessary for the development of understanding and thought. If this tension cannot be borne, understanding becomes distorted and knowledge is then replaced by various demands on the outside world. Feelings of not knowing and of doubt are thus avoided. This leads to illusions. If a person imitates knowledge, he turns to rituals and dogmas that help to avoid a genuine investigation and inquiry. If the archaic super ego dominates, the person might seek facts but he does so first and foremost in order to be able to deal out accusations (Bell, 2011). As an element of K, the impulse toward curiosity is always object-seeking. According to Bion, a close adult's containing capacity is the prerequisite for the child's development of K. The basis for our thinking process is the modification of our pressing needs so that we are able to postpone satisfaction (Bion, 1962b).

Successful containing according to Bion's concepts has much in common with secure attachment according to Fonagy's theory of attachment (Fonagy, 2001).

Ogden (1992) speaks of the unconscious fear of not knowing. "What the individual is not able to know is what he feels, and therefore who, if anyone, he is" (p. 165). Something a person is not always capable of knowing is the origin and nature of his feelings. He needs to explore these matters in order to know who he is. It can be difficult for him to accept that there is something he does not know. Ogden refers to Bion, who describes how psychic pain can be fended off, not only through projections or projective identification but also through entering into a state of non-

experience. Here an individual lives partly in a state of psychic death, i.e. there are parts of his personality where unconscious meaning and affects cease to be dealt with.

Our previously published article concerning the same research material (Mattsson and Maliniemi-Piispanen, 2011) was a case study. Analysis of the entire interview material made up the background of the case study: feelings of emptiness, anger, the conflict of having two sets of parents (the lost Finnish parents and the Swedish foster parents) and different signs of traumatic reactions were common for all of the interviewees. Traumatization was confirmed through two methods for discourse analysis (Crittenden and Landini, 2011; Kaplan 2008). In the case study we became interested in how our interviewee related to that which she remembered vs. did not remember. We studied her way of coping with her memories, especially when it came to things that she could not have known anything about. Her narrative about her life was pervaded by attempts at control, which led to various defensive manoeuvres, most notably compulsive actions. We designated her central communication pattern as attempts to cope with “not knowing”. She compensated for not knowing by creating narratives that could be seen as an attempt to hold together childhood experiences that were split at an early age, owing to the evacuation. Our conclusions were that the interviewee tried to defend herself in various ways against feelings of not knowing, helplessness and psychic conflict. Our interest in the significance of not knowing has led us further to Bion’s thoughts.

The research material

Interviews with the ten Finnish war children were carried out in 2007 at Karolinska Institute in Stockholm. The interviewees, who were all members of Stockholm’s War Children’s Association, participated on a voluntary basis. They had previously answered a questionnaire about their experiences of the evacuation and were asked if they were interested in giving an interview. We did not have a special selection process but we could observe that all ten interviewees turned out to have stable relationships, were well educated and had established themselves professionally.

We have processed this material in line with the principles of Grounded Theory (Glaser 1992, 1994, 2010) and we have a psychoanalytical frame of reference. The interviews took approximately two hours per person and were held in Swedish. They were audiotape-recorded and transcribed. The authors of this article functioned as interviewers and are from Finland but are also Swedish speaking.

The present study

The overarching aim of the present study is to expand and deepen the theoretical understanding of the psychic consequences of the evacuation of children. The study is based on the same interview material as the previous article and takes examples from five different interviews. Based on insights gained from the previous study we believe that the war children’s lack of knowledge about earlier and crucial courses of events in their lives can be experienced as confusing and worrying as well as contribute to feelings of helplessness. We know that the children did not have a close adult with them during the evacuation or during the subsequent quarantine. They lost contact with their Finnish parents and most of them later became attached to their Swedish foster parents (there is a large deal of popular literature war children have written about their life stories). Many war children experienced a great deal in connection with the evacuation that they did not understand or were not able to know anything about. This has meant that the children, even in later phases of their lives, have been forced to react in some way to their memories, or lack of memories, or their lack of knowledge concerning this event, the event that has had a decisive effect on their lives. They have borne their uncertainty or defended themselves against their lack of knowledge in various ways. The ability to bear uncertainty and ambivalence is central to the ability to think, according to Bion (1962a).

We focus on the relationships of the war children to their Finnish and Swedish parents and siblings as well as on their ways of describing people close to them. Fonagy (2001) emphasizes that individuals' ability to give a coherent description of the actions of their parenting figures and of their own actions in terms of mental states is a crucial factor in the assessment of stable attachment. Furthermore, Bion (1962a) underlines that knowledge or lack of knowledge about oneself and one's life is always tied to human relationships and feelings. The ability to experience loss and mourning is decisive for thinking according to Bion. Therefore a central question to consider is whether or not the interviewees were able to mourn and express their losses.

The relationship of the interviewee to the interviewer is also a reflection of the relationship to "the other", another individual who is separate from oneself in the outer world (Hämäläinen 2009). To experience the other is at the same time a measure of differentiation and individuation. The interviewer also represents "the one who does not know", that is to say, an aspect of the war child's dilemma.

During the processing of our previous article, we observed that the interviewer's counter-transference was an important source of information about the interviewee's unspoken feelings. In this study as well, we listen to our counter-feelings.

Results

Cases

Anna was five years old at the time of evacuation and the oldest of the persons in these examples. She gave her narrative chronologically and took the interviewer along with her as she let the events of her life unfold. She reflected over her relationships to different people in Finland and Sweden. Anna spoke with pride and satisfaction about her early life in Finland. Prior to her evacuation, she had lived with her parents at the home of her paternal grandparents. She described her parents as young and disoriented while her paternal grandmother stood for order, principles, care and continuity, qualities with which she strongly identified. *"All my love lies there with grandma and grandpa."*

Anna travelled back and forth between Finland and Sweden and kept up her contacts with her closest relatives in Finland. As an adult she found her wartime letters to her Finnish mother. The same question, repeated again and again, was found throughout all of them: *"Please mum, may I come back home?"*

During the interview she said: *"And I can't remember writing that...but I have wondered how it happened that I didn't feel any warmth toward my Swedish foster parents...I didn't feel that they understood me."*

She gave some time to the thought that she had forgotten about writing those letters to her mother, with all the longing and discontent that they expressed. She returned several times to her feelings about different people from her childhood. Anna had had many difficult experiences in Sweden. She expressed a strong and conscious hatred over abuse to which she had been subjected.

In Anna's narrative we see a functioning combination of L, H and K: Anna was conscious of her different feelings, positive as well as negative. When Anna was evacuated as a 5-year old, she had already had time to establish stable bonds with her Finnish family.

Pirjo told her life story by sweeping over matters to a great extent. She started by stating that she had just had her fourth birthday when she was evacuated to Sweden and that her brother came over a little later but was placed in a family in a different town. She had four sisters and one brother in her Finnish family. She spoke fleetingly about where she was placed and where her brother ended up. Then she made a leap forward in her story and remembered when she had visited her former hometown in Finland together with her evacuated Finnish brother in 1952 and 1958. All she said

about this was “...and I couldn't talk to them... (probably the Finnish parents) it was so hard on me not to be able to talk to them.”

She had forgotten her Finnish language. She burst into tears and cried during almost the whole interview. Then she spoke at length about her (also evacuated) brother and said that his Swedish family had wanted to take him because he was a boy. She also spoke in detail about his school years and his marriage to a Finnish girl. About her self, she finally said that she had repressed most of what had happened.

“I mean I really don't remember much of anything in particular... I don't know...” (cries).

“They (the foster parents) said I screamed like a pig at the slaughter and when I was told to go to bed I apparently made a horrible fuss.”... “They said they had to give me something from home only then could I calm down”

She spent a considerable amount of time speaking disparagingly about herself and about her foster parents. For example, she mentioned how they showered her with toys that she cared nothing about. She had come to a culture that was alien to her and that made it harder for her to create meaning in her new existence. She did not say much about her life with the new family and she offered no explanation about why she had remained in Sweden after the war. When she was six years old a little brother was born in her Swedish family and she actually did stop there to give a detail:

“They (foster mother and son) were so tight, like, if you know what I mean.”

This life-changing experience was followed two years later by the divorce of her Swedish parents.

“There was a huge row of course and I was told (by the foster mother): ‘If things don't suit you, you can just go back (to Finland).’ ... When people say stuff like this you don't feel worth much, do you?”

At this stage Pirjo's narrative became more and more chaotic and difficult to follow, owing to incomplete sentences among other things. She cried a lot, had a childish vocabulary and often used slang.

Pirjo's foster father later tried to help her in various ways with her education and work situation but she felt that he did not understand what was right for her. She did not express any gratitude; on the contrary she blamed him for her failings:

“That was nothing for me, absolutely wrong!”

However, about herself she spoke at length and in detail about certain phases of her life, such as her schooling. She could describe how she managed different situations but ended by saying:

“Oh, well, it wasn't much of anything.”

Here we see elements of omnipotence behind her mien of humility. However, what she talked about most were her biological brother and her foster brother. Her envy toward them was obvious. It seemed as though they were more valuable and more living for her than she herself was. With the help of the interviewer she was able to say something toward the end of the interview about her Swedish mother.

“...I have never had a close mother-daughter relationship.”

And, in another context

“...are adults allowed to treat kids that way?”

The interviewer felt that there was something arrogant or edgy about Pirjo when she did not offer any details or when she skipped over things so that the interviewer could not understand her. In such moments the interviewer's counter-transference turned into mounting anger. We can infer that Pirjo was staging her own feelings of not knowing and letting the interviewer feel the same thing through projective identification. Aside from Pirjo's fragmented and unclear narrative, there were also many other trauma indicators in her presentation, such as stuttering, affect outbursts and leaps on the time axis. She showed no signs of a psychic work of her experiences, which left her in a state of helplessness. Her trauma was active and made her bitter but also incapable of thinking and reflecting upon who she was and who she had become.

We see her as a clear representative for those who “don’t know” and have not wanted to know, either, about e.g. different details of their lives. We think that her envy and her concealed anger have been determining obstacles (Bion 1962a). Perhaps she also had, if we use Bion’s terms and word choices, problems with curiosity combined with arrogance and “stupidity”. Such a combination of characteristics means that a psychic catastrophe has taken place according to Bion (1967). He spoke about catastrophes and not about trauma.

In the interview it was as though Pirjo had obliterated all thoughts and feelings in relationship to her Finnish parents. She did not mention them one single time. Nor was the interviewer present to her as a living person to whom Pirjo should orient her narrative. Her foster parents remained strange people according to her narrative, difficult to understand. It seemed that she was incapable of making observations about “the other”. Nor was she able to formulate the question “why?” which Bion (1967) sees as a disturbance in the curiosity impulse, e.g. as the obliteration of curiosity. In such a case it also becomes impossible to exercise deductive reasoning (if-then), which could otherwise have created some order in her mind. Pirjo had not been able to grieve over her Finnish parents and she bore a feeling throughout her life of having been treated unfairly. All in all, the picture that we got is of a four-year old present at the interview, unchanged, unmoved and encapsulated.

Kari told about his life in a richly detailed and light, chatty manner, with many vivid episodes. He oriented himself toward the interviewer and made an effort to give a coherent narrative. The interviewer’s counter-feelings consisted of interest but also of empathetic sorrow, even though Kari himself spoke for the most part without obvious affects. He gave a long, detailed account of his career that the interviewer perceived as a way for Kari to gain security for a while during the interview. Here he deadened the curiosity of the listener.

Kari was evacuated together with his family the first time from Karelia (an easterly part of Finland that was later occupied by the Russians) as a baby, with severely impaired lungs. He felt that his mother had saved his life by sending him as a three-year old to Sweden. He came to a well-to-do family with no children of their own. As if it were just a comment in passing, Kari said that his compassionate Swedish foster mother died when he was six years old. He thus had had two major losses at the ages of three and six, respectively, his separation from his Finnish mother and the death of his Swedish foster mother, but he did not make any reflections about this. He said that while he was growing up in Sweden, the thought of Finland made him see red. He was afraid of being sent back to Finland, something that his Finnish father wanted to happen. A real obstacle lay in his path as well: his lung disease was being successfully treated at a Swedish hospital.

As a young adult, Kari made renewed contact with his Finnish parents at the initiative of his fiancée. He spoke about his mother in an admiring and idealizing manner and said that she was looked upon locally as a “wise woman”. The home of his Finnish parents was extremely poor; for example, it was hard to keep the house warm during the winters. He had forgotten his Finnish and could not speak directly to his parents. He gave a picture of his father that was comical and caricatured. He laughed about how he had tricked his father to keep him from knowing that Kari was to attend a local dance. In contrast, he also gave an account of how during the war his father had been a member of a partisan group that had carried out raids on the other side of the Russian border and of how he underwent periods of war psychosis after the war.

The tone changed toward the end of the interview when Kari spoke indignantly about a visit his Finnish sister had made to him some years ago. He asked her to tell him about their family and she refused. He tried to make her understand:

“You know that I have no one else to ask. You’re the only human being I know who can tell me about my life as a little child so to say...”

But she did not want to tell him and only got angry.

“When no one’s left, you get more and more curious.”

He spoke at length about his children and grandchildren.

In the following section, verbs in the present tense are marked.

“I only know that it’s important for them to know – to know before – before I disappear.” ... “Many people maybe think that – that what I’ve lived through, what I’ve told you now, is dramatic and whatnot, but there’s no..., I mean it’s a normal life really, it’s an ordinary life when all’s said and done. But okay, a little, little different anyway, isn’t it? To be a foreigner in another country and not know the language and then suddenly know the language, but not know your own – your real language or ...”

“When I asked my mum questions via the interpreter, the interpreter often just said, “ridiculous, ridiculous” and then did not translate the questions for my mum. And that was the worst word I knew. It is horrible and it shows she hadn’t understood why I was asking those questions ... and I took her to mean that – ‘you who are so young, your brain shouldn’t be burdened with – with details about such awful things’... I wanted to know, I wanted to know so badly and I never got to know anything (cough) so it’s missing ... so much is missing, like, in my knowledge, like, about myself and about them ... I got quite annoyed when I hear these tendencies to say ‘you shouldn’t talk about these things ... they say you’ve had such a good life in Sweden, you know, you’ve been to school and you’ve had food on your table and you’ve managed but we here in Finland, we haven’t been given anything, we didn’t get to go to school, we’ve had to – had to live in poverty, you have to understand.’ ... and I’d like to say to them ... just because you’ve had a hell of a life there, okay I know, but, well, don’t think we haven’t had – had our own little hell here, haven’t we, and so – so you can’t make comparisons like that... many of us (war children) feel that everyone let us down, you know... .”

Here he exposed his vulnerability when he described how he had landed outside the fellowship of his Finnish family. The trauma was present and was made visible for example when he changed verbs from the past to the present tense; time stood still.

Despite what Kari said about wanting to know, it seems as though when he spoke to his sister, he placed the responsibility on her to be the one who knew: he asked but he did not make any reflections of his own. Perhaps he harboured envy toward his sister, who had both the language and the family ties that he himself lacked. Can we say that he was curious? He did not try to make his own formulation of how his life had been. The things that were wrong in his life were considered to be someone else’s fault. In the passage referenced, it seems as though he lashed out at everyone with attacks and accusations. He was in a paranoid-schizoid position for some moments.

Kari also mentioned in passing that an other sister two years older than himself, had held him in her arms during the evacuation from Karelia and took care of him when his mother had to get off the train to look for food. As an adult she suffered a psychosis and was reported to have screamed out his name in despair.

When the actual interview was over and the dictaphone turned off, he mentioned having heard that Finland-Swedes (a language minority in Finland) thought that Karelian women (as his mother was) were unfit as mothers and that it was therefore considered right to take their children away from them. Notions like these about their native country were observed de facto in almost all of the interviewees. The descriptions were often about something threatening or strange that happened in Finland. Are these notions remnants of the lost Finnish parents? In Kari’s case, the remark can also have been meant as a jab at the interviewer, who was a Finland-Swede. Perhaps he was projecting his own ambivalence toward his mother into resentment and anger over those, the others, who said that Karelian mothers were unfit. He however expressed a strong and conscious anger over the fact that the Finnish authorities had turned down a request to give Finnish passports free of charge to war children who had remained in Sweden. He felt that the Finnish state denied and excluded its own children. Perhaps it also awoke feelings about how his family excluded him.

Kari held a distancing and normalizing posture throughout the major part of the interview. He belongs to those who have kept up a relationship to their country of birth. He considered that he had a living interest in Finnish culture and pointed out that he had chosen to retain his Finnish surname, even though this sometimes made problems for him. Kari was preoccupied in his thoughts with the

consequences of the evacuation. He partly hid his bitterness but felt wronged and left out. However, he projected his disappointment over having been sent away on “the others” who had disparaging thoughts about Karelian women. His career was impressive and he himself was greatly satisfied with it.

Ossi began his narrative like this:

“Yes, right, I was born in Kotka [a small town in the eastern coast of Finland] at the height of the war, so to say, to an unmarried mother, yeah, and while bombs were falling I was taken by boat to Stockholm and then we continued on to a delousing camp ... one of those camps where we were scrubbed clean and deloused like they always did and then by and by I was placed in a foster family.”

(You were three years old, right?)

“I was three and a half years old at the time.”

“And I have a, a first memory of ... when I was riding a bicycle and I rode down toward the house, where I sat on the bicycle ... down at the bottom of a hill so – so there was a little cabin there, and when we came closer then – then the door was opened and there I remember seeing my little foster brother crawling around in the opening of the door.”

(Was that the first time you went there?)

“Yes, and that cabin I have, yeah (clears his throat) in a precious painting that I got as a gift or a memento of my foster parents when – when my foster father had died, he died last of my foster parents (cough, throat-clearing) and ...it was said I heard how, I mean – how this family thought I was a playful and nice little kid, who was an early starter, who started to teach my foster brother some words in Finnish.”

(How old was he?)

“He is one and a half year younger than me. He died of cancer in December last year. And now all three of them are buried.”

He talked about his foster brother in the present even though he was dead but evidently highly present in his mind. He talked about the cemetery and then returned to his arrival in Sweden.

(Do you remember anything about the delousing?)

“... don’t remember anything, absolutely nothing. But I’ve heard people say that my physical status was pretty bad since I had one of those puffed out, hanging bellies that a kid gets because of hunger, right? Hunger belly. Like you see when they show kids in some places in Africa on TV nowadays.”

(How did it feel to be reminded of that?)

“It didn’t feel any special way, really, anyhow not just that particular thing all by itself. ... I don’t have so many memories from my childhood, but, yeah, I mean they’re there but they’re hidden, but the feeling can sometimes trigger, yeah, trigger, what’s it called, I’ve got some triggers in my personality and they, they ... yeah, they wake up feelings in me ... I mean feelings of – of, yeah, of separation and divorce. I remember one time when I was supposed to give a speech for my foster parents and thank them for the invitation and thank them for a nice time and thank them for the years that had passed ... but it turned into a total, I mean a total catastrophe as far as giving a speech was concerned because my feelings took over and it was just, you know, tears. It was that thing about leaving something and losing something that’s called loss and grieving ... right there is a hidden trigger package that gets to me sometimes... . There was an elderly lady there at that dinner and she said afterwards: ‘That was the most powerful thing I’ve ever experienced.’”

(Do you think it has been a torment for you your whole life, the fear that you might expose this feeling?)

“No, I haven’t felt any fear like that at all ... not in the least.”

The above is an example of the contrasts in Ossi’s narrative: first he told about the degrading quarantine that had the features of a concentration camp and then about the precious painting of his foster parents’ cabin that he had received as a memento. During the opening minutes of the

interview he told about the deaths of both foster parents and his brother but he mentioned nothing about his family in Finland. Then he told about how undernourished he had been. Later he was the one who thanked everyone at the dinner party for the years that had passed. The narrative alternated between affect isolation, images of shame, denial and the need to get revenge. His reference to the quarantine was not a memory but instead a hateful attack on what he had been made to endure. He “knew” but did not remember.

What confused the listener were the changes in tempo, with fleeting images that were quickly changed into something else. Ossi would tell about something tragic but just a moment later his associations would go to something that turned out to his advantage, where weakness was turned into victory.

After the war his Finnish mother moved to Sweden and married a Swede. Ossi was eight years old at the time. Here he mentioned his biological mother for the first time.

“My mother refused to let me be adopted (by the foster parents) but instead insisted that I should leave my foster home ... and it was of course a – a huge crime all over again and emotionally I was of course very hungry there because I didn’t get, you know, the same things as I got from my foster parents. The love and the warmth and the kindness and the closeness and, yeah, empathy, were not up to the level I was used to.”

(After all, your mother didn’t know you so well.)

“No, she didn’t know me at all and I didn’t know her ... so it happened once again, a kind of situation where there was emptiness all around me.”

When everything became empty around him, it looks as though he lost contact with his language (the Swedish language), which did not keep its living character but rather became rigid and technical. A little later he told about a fight, a crucial, life-threatening, physical trial of strength with his stepfather, which Ossi won. He became however aware of his physical strength and after that he did not have to hear constant derogatory remarks.

To be sure, the split nature of his narrative was an expression of trauma. An interview with a traumatized person is seldom logically or chronologically structured. He told his sorrowful story but soon covered up the sorrow with an example of some achievement. Much that he said about his adult life in the latter part of his narrative gave the impression of being so-called generational linking (Kaplan 2008), i.e. restorative activities to deal with the split life that he had had: he sought his Finnish roots and he sought a father image in order to be better able to live in the present. And he sought to pinpoint who was responsible for all the injustices he, and by extension, his Finnish family, had suffered. When he told about how he looked for his father, he however lost his Finnish mother in the sense that he did not talk about her any more. She did not stand out as a person who was living or present. Upon closer examination his activities do not seem to be simply restorative but perhaps more an attempt to create an idealized picture of himself, with the guilt placed upon all those who had made his life so hard. At the same time his narrative was also about trials of condemnation and revenge.

It did not become clear until toward the end of the interview and later after several re-readings that we perceived ourselves as witnesses to this central path in his life: an atmosphere of a trial existed in the present and was powerfully experienced in the interviewers’ counter-transference feelings during the re-readings; “what is true?” Early during the actual interview, the interviewer was aware at first of an admiration for Ossi when he told about all the hardships that he had to go through.

There were hints in Ossi’s narrative as well about something mysterious that had happened in Finland after the war: people disappeared, certain words could not be spoken about ... his mother worked for the railroad under inhuman conditions during the war, etc. He also referred back to the Finnish Civil War (1918) in which his maternal grandfather was shot in a prison camp, undeniably a cruel and unjust action. As a polar opposite he also said that he identified with the leader for the other side in the Civil War. Was Ossi seeking confirmation of his wishful thinking, to be guilt-free? The archaic superego gives just two possibilities, either guilty or not guilty. For Bion (1967) truth is

central to mental development and without it the psyche does not develop. Deception leads to self-deception and trust is turned into mistrust. The interviewer experienced this pattern in her counter-feelings toward the end of the interview. Ossi's narrative awakened thoughts about how the working through of childhood experiences can be used in the service of denial. We are reminded here of Bion's (1967) thoughts about how knowledge can be replaced by illusions, leading to a situation where the archaic super ego dominates and stands in judgement of – others. This is the effect of a stern and destructive super ego on the child's curiosity.

As an adult, Ossi, with a singleness of purpose, had worked himself upward to better and better career positions. His life was governed by various defence manoeuvres, such as the way he had developed a sort of psychological language that did not seem integrated. Questions about his worth were acutely present as was also the question of guilt. "To know" requires an endurance of uncertainty and a tolerance of doubt. We think that parts of this narrative come close to –K.

Elina gave an extremely chaotic narrative about her life but was in some way aware that it could be difficult for the interviewer to follow her. She was evacuated as a two-year old. She related that she had believed herself to be the Swedish foster family's own child, despite the fact that her two Finnish sisters were living in neighbouring homesteads. Accordingly, she lived the first six years of her life under conditions in which she was not given true or real knowledge about herself or her surrounding world. She then experienced it as a catastrophe when she, like all Finnish war children, was summoned to return home to Finland after the war. However, as it turned out, she was only there several months after which she was fetched by her foster parents for a return to Sweden.

As an adult Elina suffered from serious illnesses and her children had major problems, but after having told about all this, she said many times: *"But I'm an optimist!"*

However, she also said: *"I've always had a hard time trusting people. But animals, I trust them."*

She told how as a child she had sat in the stable between the horse's front hooves and cried. But what she cried about remained obscure. Obviously there was something the whole time that was too much for her: she had attempted suicide as a young girl. We can sense that an alcoholic foster father and an aloof foster mother made life tough for her. Despite this, the impression was that Elina for the most part denied all the tragic elements of her life. She expressed no sorrow in her narrative about her adult life. She was resolutely upbeat and positive. She talked about how she had made it in life through enterprise and decisiveness. Once when she had wondered about a scar she had on her back, her Finnish mother told her that when she was a baby her father had thrown her up on the hot stove in his anger over her having been born. This matter was not mentioned any more during the interview.

At first this incident involving the stove also disappeared from the interviewers' minds just as did Kari's earlier mentioned loss of his foster mother at an early age and his sister's psychosis. We have made the following analysis of this: Neither of the interviewees put any emphasis on these events but instead treated them fleetingly, without giving them any special implications. We wondered later how it could be possible that we missed them. We see it now as the interviewees' communication patterns. Elina answered the questions she was asked but deviated from the time axis in a way that made everything hard to follow. She violated time in a way that made her answers meaningless. For example:

(How was your relationship with your dad (as a child)?)

"He was impressed by my profession."

(How was your relationship with your foster mother?)

"Things got better when she became senile."

The meaning in the communication was rubbed out. We think that our inability to notice these certain moments during the actual interviews may reflect something that comes close to Ogdens (1989) description of "non-experience".

Elina's inability to think also came to expression in the problem she had discerning any chronology in her life. Much of that which had happened was incomprehensible to her. The axis of time was so split that it was impossible for us to arrive at an understanding of "why?" We became co-actors in her denial. What had she experienced? Questions of guilt and accusations were missing from her narrative.

Elina did not ponder over why she had remained in Sweden after a short visit to Finland right after the war or why she continued living with her foster parents after her Finnish parents had moved to Sweden. Nor did she ponder over the significance of the evacuation. To be sure, she cannot have had any memories of her own about the evacuation considering how young she was. She had various manoeuvres to keep the unthinkable hidden and the interviewers were not capable of hearing that at first. Of course the child's age at the time of evacuation influences the adult's way of relating to it. But was it impossible to ask: why did you send me away? Why didn't you take me back home?

Discussion

We have studied Finnish war children who were evacuated to Sweden during World War II and remained there after the war ended. During the open interview "Tell about your life", we see how they are prepared to remember or think about their early life history and how they put it into narrative form. We have processed this material in line with the principles of Grounded Theory (Glaser, 1992, 1994, 2010) and we have a psychoanalytical frame of reference. The significance of how the interviewees relate to the interviewer and of the interviewer's counter-transference has been taken into account as an aid to understanding the material when it was analyzed. These issues have come to clarity through repeated readings of the interviews, where we have looked for common reactions and phenomena.

We think that the adults' retrospective looks at their lives, as they take form during the interview, can give us a picture of the significance of separation and evacuation in their life histories. In an earlier study it was found that their attitude toward "not knowing" can be problematic for the war children. This finding alerted us to Bion's thoughts. During their evacuation to Sweden, these children had no containing possibilities for their experiences. They were torn away from all the contexts that were familiar to them (family, surroundings, language). Little children cannot understand different courses of events in their lives if they do not have an adult close to them who can help them interpret what is going on (Bion, 1962b; Varvin, 2010).

We do not know much about the children's circumstances in their Finnish families but the absence of a containing adult during the evacuation process has been common to all of them. We see in them as adults an inability to reflect over the significance of this turning point in their lives. Furthermore, they seem to lack an open, reflecting posture toward life in general. At the same time we do see an oscillation between a greater openness and a closed position. However their narratives indicate that the war children are unable to work through the consequences of their evacuation and first and foremost unable to pay heed to the fact that they have two sets of parents. Experiences that are not worked through are impossible to think about and thus impossible to tell about as well.

Most of the interviewees show signs of a locked defensive position coloured by early defences such as denial and projections which does not leave space for psychic flexibility. This defence pattern has apparently prevailed from childhood since it is shared by most of them. The absence of interest and openness toward events in one's own life, -K, can be seen as a trauma indicator. If the object is absent, curiosity dies out, a pattern observed in most of the life stories. The younger the child was during the evacuation, the harder it seemed to be for him or her as an adult to think or fantasize about the past. In such cases it has not been possible to work through experiences of loss and absence. Many of the war children talk about a "black hole" of emptiness and unknowing.

The war children brought with them their war experiences, which could be hard for their foster parents to understand. Even though Sweden is so close to Finland, there were many differences

during war time. Most importantly, the language was different, an issue that was mentioned by all of the interviewees. When the children forgot their Finnish mother tongue, their living contact with Finland was also shattered.

Most of the interviewees also expressed various notions about threatening or mysterious events in Finland. Did they say that something incomprehensible had happened in their lives? Perhaps they were trying to find an expression for the emptiness and lack of meaning they felt at times. Perhaps these shadows of unspoken experiences stand for the remnants of disappointment and hateful but unconscious feelings that separation has brought with it?

Older children could understand the reality and dangers of war.

Various affective reactions that acutely came to the fore in the interview situation indicate a present and non-worked-through problem in accordance with the laws of procedural memory. There were moments of timelessness. In many of the interviewees, we discern a hidden anger and bitterness over their fate. The presence of mourning is harder to ascertain. On the emotional level there are traces of the trauma which have not been possible to compensate in spite of the educational achievements and stable human relationships held by all of our interviewees. The traumatic reactions that we have noted, e.g. invading and activating affects (Kaplan, 2008), were present in the now, during the interview itself. The trauma was active and manifested itself, among other things, as a split narrative, as a disregard for time markers and as a communication pattern where it could be difficult to perceive the interviewer as a separate individual who wanted to know and to understand. Bion (1970) wrote about how it is possible to feel pain without suffering it. The pain can therefore not be detected, which could give rise to feeling the pain and bear the experience. We have been able to see how disrupted containing, especially with children between two and four years of age, deprives these individuals as adults of the chance to integrate feelings and thinking in relation to their pasts and also of experiencing a sense of well-being.

We have also noted the interviewees' educational and professional development and the psychological significance of these factors. All ten of the interviewees have given their schooling and education a great importance in their lives. Do we expect education to compensate or to cover up the original traumatic state of unknowing? We believe that in such cases education possibly functions as a compensation for helplessness. The state of unknowing is a part of the traumatic experience that can later be developed into an obstacle to learning and to the dominance of the reality principle. Bion (1967) connected the capacity for curiosity and the consequent ability to learn. However, in our interactions with the interviewees, it appears as though learning and knowledge acquisition would not have been inhibited while at the same time the dominance of the reality principle would have been. We have seen this as a possible new angle of approach for a later study.

We have interviewed war children who have managed well in several important areas of life. War children who, unlike our research subjects, do not belong to an association for war children might possibly give a different picture.

Conclusions

In our research material we have been able to see how the consequences of the evacuation have had a paralyzing effect on the war children's ability to integrate thought and feelings into a narrative where expressions of ambivalence, doubt and uncertainty, combined with interest in their own life stories, could also have their place. These obstacles have not been possible to compensate through the course of their lives. We draw this conclusion because traumatic reactions were activated and present during the interview itself. We believe that the evacuated children's sense of having been abandoned by their Finnish parents has not been modified. We have been on the lookout for mourning but we have mostly encountered reactions that we have interpreted as unconscious anger. The search for truth is a constantly ongoing process, which a person can tune into or avoid. What

counteracts searching for and striving toward the reality principle can be various forms of unconscious envy and hatred, which have clearly come to the fore in this study of war children.

Some of our interviewees oscillated between the will to know and the will not to know about courses of events in their lives. However, an inability to reflect over the effect of the evacuation on their lives dominates in many of them. They were especially unable to reflect over the significance of their Finnish parents, which would have led to, in our assessment, an encounter with frustration, loss and abandonment.

The desire to seek the truth and to explore the reality of their lives, expressed in the concept K, was brought to realization in part in some of our interviewees but was shattered in a notable and crucial way in many of them. In this study we see how Bion's concept –K gives precision and depth to the understanding of traumatic after-effects of evacuation.

Acknowledgements: This study was financed by the Academy of Finland and by the Signe and Ane Gyllenberg Foundation

References

- Bell, D. (2011). Bion: the phenomenologist of loss: in Mawson (2011) ed. *Bion today*. The new library of psychoanalysis. London: Routledge. Pages 81 – 101.
- Bion, W. R. (1962a). *Learning from experience*. London: William Heinemann Books.
- Bion, W. R. (1962b). The psychoanalytic study of thinking. *Int J Psychoanal*, 43, 306-310
- Bion, W. R. (1967). *Second thoughts*. Selected papers on psychoanalysis. London: Maresfield Library.
- Bion, W. R. (1970). *Attention an interpretation: A scientific approach to insight in psychoanalysis and groups*. London: Karnac.
- Bowlby, J., Miller, E. & Winnicott, D. W. (1939). Letter: Evacuation of small children. In C. Garland (ed.) (1998) *Understanding trauma*. London: Karnac.
- Crittenden, P.M. & Landini, A. (2011). *Assessing adult attachment. A dynamic-maturational approach to discourse analysis*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company.
- Fisher, J. (2011). The emotional experience of K. In Maslow (Ed.) (2011), *Bion today. The new library of psychoanalysis* (pp. 43 – 63). London: Routledge.
- Fonagy, P. (2001). *Attachment theory and psychoanalysis*. London: Karnac.
- Garland, C. (ed.) (1998). *Understanding trauma. A psychoanalytic approach*. London: Karnac. The Tavistock Clinic Series.
- Freud, A. & Burlingham, D. (1943). *War and children*. New York: Medical War Books.
- Glaser, B. G. (1992). *Basics of grounded theory analysis*. Mill Valley: Sociology Press.
- Glaser, B. G. (1994). *More grounded theory: a reader*. Mill Valley: Sociology Press.
- Glaser, B. G. (2010). *Att göra grundad teori – problem, frågor och diskussion*. Mill Valley: Sociology Press.
- Hämäläinen, O. (2009). The relationship of the inner and outer in psychoanalysis. *Int J Psychoanal*. 90, 1277-1297.
- Kaplan, S. (2008). *Children in genocide. Extreme traumatization and affect regulation*. London: International Psychoanalysis Library.
- Kavén, P. (2010). Humanitaarisuuden varjossa. Poliittiset tekijät lastensiirroissa Ruotsiin sotiemme aikana ja niiden jälkeen [In the shadow of humanitarianism. Political factors in child evacuation to Sweden during our wars and later]. Ph.D thesis in History. Helsinki University.
- Mattsson, B. & Maliniemi-Piispanen, S. (2011). An interview study with a Finnish war child. *The Scandinavian Psychoanalytic Review*. 34, 31-40.
- Ogden, T. H. (1992). *The primitive edge of experience*. London: Maresfield Library.
- Varvin, S. (2010). The stranger and the strange: psychoanalytic reflections on meeting otherness. Paper held at the XXII Nordic Psychoanalytic Congress. Helsinki, 5 -8 August, 2010.



III

THE LOST MOTHER TONGUE: AN INTERVIEW STUDY WITH FINNISH WAR CHILDREN

by

Barbara Mattsson, Sinikka Maliniemi-Piispanen & Jukka Aaltonen, 2015

The Scandinavian Psychoanalytic Review, 38, 1-12.

Reproduced with kind permission by Taylor & Francis.

The lost mother tongue: An interview study with Finnish war children

Barbara Mattsson^{a*}, Sinikka Maliniemi-Piispanen^b and Jukka Aaltonen^c

^a*Department of Behavioural Sciences, University of Helsinki, Psychoanalyst (IPA), Björneborgsvägen 2 E, 5900350, Helsingfors, Finland;*

^b*Department of Behavioural Sciences, University of Helsinki, Psychoanalytic Psychotherapist Stora, Robertsgratan 26 A, 1400120, Helsingfors, Finland;* ^c*Department of Psychology, University of Jyväskylä, Professor in Family Therapy, emeritus, Psychoanalyst (IPA) Århusgatan 3 B, 4820320, Åbo, Finland*

This article presents the third study of an interview investigation concerning 10 Finnish war children who were evacuated during the World War II to Sweden and who did not return to live in Finland after the war. The focus is on how they remembered or did not remember their early experiences of displacement and on how they expressed thoughts about their childhood and their adult life. We found that all of them as adults still bore signs of trauma. The younger the children were at the time of the evacuation, the more difficult or even impossible it was for them to think or fantasize about the past. It was consequently not possible for them to work through their experiences of loneliness, absence, and loss. All of them had lost their Finnish mother tongue and their ties to their earlier lives in Finland. The present study focuses on how their thinking and language changed when they during the interview talked about their childhood. Effects were seen on the structure of the language, syntax as well as on their word choices. Their narratives could become incoherent, with unfinished sentences and their emotional language collapsed. We compare their descriptions of their childhood with their accounts of their adult life.

Keywords: war children; evacuation; traumatic reactions; lost mother tongue; language usage

Background

Approximately 70,000 to 80,000 children were evacuated during the World War II, years 1939–1946, from Finland to Norway, Denmark, and Sweden, primarily Sweden. Most of the children were placed in foster families. A decision had been made that all of the children would return to Finland again after the war, but somewhere between 7,000 and 15,000 in fact remained in Sweden. We have interviewed 10 of those who did not return permanently to Finland. The main goal of our research is to identify and understand how war children during the interview dealt with their early experiences of the evacuation, how they remembered or did not remember it, and how they looked upon their adult lives. In this study, we focus on how thinking and language were formed and how they underwent changes during the course of the narrative.

Other studies on Finnish war children

There is not much research on the Finnish war children, especially not on those who remained in Sweden after the war. Räsänen (1988), using mainly questionnaires, has studied all of the children in Kuopio County who were evacuated to Sweden and compared them to those who were not evacuated. Her investigation was partly an interview study as well. During the personal interview a clinical diagnosis was carried out with regard to the

interviewee's psychic condition, capacity, and adaptability. Räsänen's conclusion was that in adulthood it was difficult to find differences in psychic well-being between those who had been sent to Sweden and those who had remained in Finland during the war.

The "Helsinki cohort study" (Pesonen et al., 2007; Räikkönen et al., 2011) studied adults who had been war children and who came back to Finland after the war. Their results show an increased incidence of depression and diagnoses of psychic disturbance later in life.

The study "Long term mental health outcomes of Finnish children evacuated to Swedish families during the second world war and their non-evacuated siblings: Cohort study" by Santavirta et al. (2015) is not a psychological study but it nonetheless takes up questions concerning psychic well-being. The study gives evidence of a lower risk of hospital admission for any mental disorder among evacuated men, whereas for women there was no association between evacuation and the overall risk of admission for a psychiatric disorder. When admissions for individual psychiatric disorders were analyzed, evacuated girls were significantly more likely than their non-evacuated sisters to be admitted to hospital for a mood disorder as an adult.

The two last mentioned studies were not based on personal interviews with those who had been war children.

Study design

In 2007 all 202 members in the Stockholm branch of the Finnish War Child Association received a questionnaire about their experiences of the evacuation. This questionnaire was part of a larger study tied to the University of Helsinki. It included a question about a possible interest in participating in an interview. 159 persons answered the questionnaire and 144 respondents were willing to participate in a personal interview. From this sample we picked up those who were Finnish speaking from the beginning and who were relatively small at the time of evacuation and contacted them. Many of them had practical matters preventing them from participating. Finally we had 10 people who were willing to give an interview. At the time of their departure from Finland, our interviewees were between two to five years old, except for one, who was seven years old. Seven of them were women and three were men. The interviews took place in Stockholm at Karolinska Institutet and were made in Swedish. We asked the war children to tell us about their life. The interviews took about two hours. The interviews were audio-recorded and carefully transcribed, with all the details, pauses, and somatic reactions noted. The two first authors, Barbara Mattsson and Sinikka Maliniemi-Piispanen read the texts together several times, associated to them and paid special attention to countertransference reactions. The interviewees gave their informed consent for using the interviews;

names have been changed.

We used the grounded theory approach (Glaser, 1992, 1994). We followed the central idea of the method, which means that we worked from discoveries in the material. During the reading process, when we went back through the transcripts, we found that transference and countertransference also apply in interviews and that the interviews are an interaction. Together, these constitute an important source of insight about the present but unspoken. Another issue that came up was whether the interviewee addressed his words to the interviewer in a desire to be understood; could the interviewee perceive that the other was the one who did not know, but who wanted to understand (Hämäläinen, 2009)?

Summary of earlier interview results of our project

Time distortion and other recurring features in the interviews

Upon evaluation of the interviews, it became clear that all of the war children were more or less traumatized. Traumatization was confirmed through two methods for discourse analysis, "Assessing adult attachment" (Crittenden & Landini, 2011) and "The affect propeller" (Kaplan, 2008).

Traumatization came to the fore in the form of different reactions during the interview itself. One example was time distortion; that is, an earlier experience could come to

life during the course of the narrative. The interviewee at times did not feel the difference between then and now. The use of the present tense indicates that no time has passed, no changes have been made. An interviewee could describe a threatening situation in this way:

A security guard took out his gun and then he aims it at me . . .

We also noted fragmented stories with breaks or voids, and somaticized affects, such as coughing, throat clearing, stuttering, laughing, or crying.

There were other commonly recurring features in the interviews that reflect the specific nature of the war children's world. All of them found it hard to relate to the fact that they had two sets of parents, the Finnish biological parents and the Swedish foster parents. Many (8 out of 10) idealized one parental couple, usually the Swedish foster parents. It is difficult, as anyone can imagine, having two sets of parents.

As two interviewees expressed it:

I became attached to my Swedish mother very much so the great horror was that she would die. . .

The empathy of my Finnish mother did not come up to the level that I became used to in Sweden.

Many mentioned a sense of emptiness and most of them pointed to varying degrees of rage and anger, often in projected form. Various early defenses such as denial and projection were common in the interviews. The interviewees felt cheated and had a sense of shame and humiliation. All of them had in common a displacement from Finland to Sweden, a separation from their Finnish parents and the environment familiar to them. All of them came to a new family and a new environment and had to learn a new language.

War children's ignorance of their previous life in Finland

In a previous article, the first one (Mattsson & Maliniemi-Piispanen, 2011), we presented a case study on one of the war children, Kirsti who had her fourth birthday when she arrived to Sweden. She had developed various defenses against her ignorance, her not knowing, about key events in her childhood. For example, she could give a vivid description of various things that had happened in her childhood, but the knowledge that she had about them could not possibly have come to her until later. She could be uncertain about something at one point but then later in the interview she might take it up as something she knew about. Her uncertainty reflected the child's experiences, but when she "knew" something, she was giving an adult perspective, an adult interpretation. The only thing she could not remember at all was her parting from her Finnish mother. When she came to Sweden she became immediately attached to her Swedish foster mother. But that came at a price: soon after her arrival, she developed

various obsessive systems and she tried to master her feeling of threat through various exhausting rituals. She was also terrified that she herself would go blind. Perhaps blindness to Kirsti was the same as no longer being able to “see mother.” Kirsti had developed a painful psychic defense; one could become blind, the person one needs could disappear and perhaps one would be to blame (Winnicott, 1958).

Through Kirsti’s narrative we started to realize how difficult it can be if a person does not know about the key events in his/her childhood. Many of our interviewees visited their Finnish homes at times after the war. As their Finnish language was forgotten they could not communicate with the Finnish relatives, but they might have had possibilities to make observations about their families. This does not appear clearly in most of the accounts.

Projected anger and absence of a containing adult

In another article (number 2) (Mattsson & Maliniemi-Piispanen, 2013), we outlined the significance of the findings that our interviewees (5 out of 10) were as children unknowing about why they were evacuated and had few or no memories of the trip or of their earlier life in Finland. We asked ourselves what significance these gaps in their knowledge of their past had had for them and how they responded to this issue as adults.

Since the war children were evacuated by train or boat, the trip took from two to six days. The groups were large, about 600 children per transport with one nurse per 30 children (Kavén, 2010). Most interviewees did not remember anything from the crossing: there was no one who could explain what was happening or what was going to happen. In addition, after the trip itself, the children spent a period of time, sometimes shorter, sometimes longer, in quarantine. It is said that many children impressed those they met at first in Sweden as being “quiet and nice.” They lost their own identity – but had a tag with information about them hanging around their neck. Adults who were strangers to them supervised them and took care of their routines. Their “niceness” was most probably a kind of paralyzed state (Krystal, 1978). After quarantine, the children moved on to live with Swedish families.

They found it difficult to reflect on this crucial event in their lives. In a way, it is obvious that if the evacuation experience has not been worked through, it is also difficult to talk about it. However, even as adults, they still had difficulties in reflecting on their lives. If the object is absent, curiosity dies out, a pattern we found in many narratives. The younger they were as children at the time of the evacuation, the more difficult or even impossible it

naturally was for the interviewees to think or fantasize about their past. Under such circumstances it was not possible for them to work through their experiences of loneliness, absence, and loss. These obstacles had not been compensated for at later stages in their lives.

Nor had the experience of having been abandoned been modified in most cases. We were on the lookout for expressions of grief but in most cases we encountered something we interpreted as unconscious projected anger. Many had ideas and thoughts about Finland that we have interpreted as projections, for example, descriptions of mysterious or strange happenings in Finland. Many conveyed images from Finland that seemed mad and incomprehensible:

In Finland people thought that Karelian mothers were unfit and that therefore their children should be taken away from them.

I think that’s what they do in Finland. They send their children away in the summer.

Some of the interviewees could not even as adults reconcile themselves with their native country. They said that something incomprehensible had happened in their lives and that they had difficulties finding a way to express the emptiness and lack of meaning they experienced. We attribute their lack of interest in their early lives and their absence of reflections about their later, adult lives, primarily to the absence of a containing figure during the evacuation process.

Most of the war children were beset with the dilemma of not knowing about their early lives in their Finnish families and of being cut off from their early roots. The lack of a holding adult figure, during the upheavals and after the evacuation, led to a sense of unknowing and a diffuse anger that was difficult to direct toward an object present in their new environment.

The lost mother tongue

In this article, we focus on how thinking and language were impacted when the war children during the interview told about their early childhood experiences. When we read and re-read the interview material, we noted that the language in the beginning of the interview was often chaotic, fragmented and difficult to understand as, among other things, the interviewees used faulty syntax and word choice when they spoke about their early experiences of evacuation while such language deviations were not as apparent or did not occur at all when they talked about their adult lives. We illustrate these findings with different examples from the interviews.

A fragmented narrative

The following is the beginning of an interview with Leena. She was evacuated when she was 3 years old.

Interviewer: "Tell me about your life."

Well, I was born in Finland – yes in Finland – in 1938 in Lahti, I'm almost sure it was, so it's not easy to tell about my life because my mom never wanted to answer questions even though I kept writing letters to her and questions and the like. Through an interpreter, and so on, I have asked about my childhood and about her herself and her life and relatives and it happened now when she died that I asked for a certificate from the pastor's office and there I had siblings that she had given birth to, children I did not know about, I had had several siblings and her answer to all of my questions had always been, 'Everything is fine, nothing has happened,' that was all. It has later been explained to me that those war mothers in Finland were overcome by a war neurosis and did not want to deal with this terrible thing that happened to them and when it comes to memory, we could do nothing but sit in – in shelters during the bombings and then later as a three year old I was sent by freight train to Sweden via Haparanda.

And now I'm going to, as I said, go through these piles (indicating a box of papers she has with her) that I have not looked at before and find out a little more exactly about how it all fits together.

Leena was thinking that somebody else, her mother, not herself, should tell how it was even if she had contact with her mother after the war and also spent even longer times in Finland. It was as if everything she wanted to know was in her mother's pocket. She sounded unsure about where she was born and did not use her own experiences as the basis for what she said. We did not get to know anything about the Finnish family of her early childhood or about the circumstances that led to her being sent to Sweden.

She continued: "I ended up in an orphanage and then in a foster home."

–You were in an orphanage?

Right, or maybe I was put in a foster home first. The people turned out to be a woman and a man, married, a boy 10 years older than I am (present tense), but then he (who?) got called into service and so the lady of the house felt that she couldn't cope with it all, they were very good people in every way, and I guess it was at that point that I ended up in an orphanage . . . lived in bunk beds and peed from top to bottom I remember then an order was put in for me, a family put in an order for me as a . . . well my God you know . . . as a Finnish war child . . . they had ordered a boy, they are (present tense) so surprised, but we came to love each other and it was good but they had collected toys for boys in the garage and so that's the way it was and they became my wonderful family . . .

This section reflects her chaotic state of mind. In particular, the language is confused, with misplaced and

unclear points of reference that make it difficult to follow her. Nor did Leena try to make her narrative understandable. The unclear points of reference indicate that she herself did not really know who was who or what led to the various moves to different people and places. In addition, she made her narrative unfold partly in the present, indicating that time past invaded into the time present. She described all the infringements she experienced of being sent here and there and of being the object of an "order." She also described a happy ending which, to be sure, had elements of the idyllic. Her appraisal of the first foster family, "they were very good people in every way" was an adult way of expressing things, in the middle of the confusion.

The interviewer described what she experienced during the interview: it felt as though Leena found herself in an inner earthquake when she told about her life.

The beginning of the narrative had no chronology, as Leena jumped between different stages of life. She was alone in her confused narrative. She said she did not know. There was something that was worrying and could not be put into words. The language broke down. The fragmented narrative has also been described by Kaplan and Laub: an interview with a traumatized person is rarely built up logically or chronologically (Kaplan & Laub, 2009).

Leena was not the spokesperson in her own life. Someone else, in this case her mother, should tell how things really were. She said she had been kept in the dark and that something was hidden. She did not tell how it felt when she found out that her mother had withheld key information on siblings from her. She had thus adopted her mother's position: this is nothing for you to know. This adoption of unknowing was also her way of reacting, which possibly can be seen as dissociation. Dissociation cannot be understood as a psychic defense but rather as a mechanism that splits the personality (Gullestad, 2005; Varvin, 2010). She probably experienced being sent away to Sweden as shameful since she says she was sent by freight train, which is hardly the case according to a Finnish researcher who studied the circumstances surrounding the evacuation (Kavén, 2010). Leena seems to be making a nonmemory-based reconstruction. Later she talks about the quarantine in terms of a "refugee camp." Her sense of shame and vulnerability came indirectly to the surface. She shared these feelings with many other war children. From the very start, her narrative thus contains a lot that can be open to interpretation. Leena in a way is a contrast to Kirsti, who presented herself as knowing what was going on. Leena made an effort not to know while Kirsti's narrative was dominated by a controlled adult perspective which at times surprised the interviewer as a countertransference reaction. The interviewer was confused, not Kirsti.

Not knowing about their early life in their Finnish family and being closed off from their early roots was

something most of the war children were exposed to. Lack of adult support during the cataclysmic events led to the experiences of not knowing and a diffuse anger that was difficult to direct toward an object present in their new environment.

The presentations by Kirsti and Leena illustrate the dilemma of not knowing and feelings of having been deceived. Bion (1962b) says that the mind is nourished by true experiences and poisoned by false experiences. Young children cannot understand themselves or the world in which they live if they do not get help to understand it, if it is not interpreted for them. For children to be able to transform the perceptions of their senses into their own observations and to develop reflecting minds of their own, they need the primary experiences of active holding in their mothers' minds. Through such holding experiences, the child gets an opportunity to develop a longing to understand, rather than a need to "know." The child can then internalize the caregiver's soothing abilities and make them his/her own (Waddell, 1998). Kirsti wanted to know in order to have a sense of control while Leena fended off insights that seemed threatening.

Early defense mechanisms

Olli, evacuated when he was 3 years old, said:

... at the height of the war, so to say, and while bombs were falling I was taken by train to Haparanda (a Swedish town), then Torneå (a Finnish town) and on to a delousing camp and there, by and by, I was placed in a foster family ...

The cities came in the wrong order, from Sweden back to Finland, which is hardly because of ignorance on Olli's part, but most likely because of his affected state that he wanted to hide by instead emphasizing his knowledge of geography and thus achieving a sense of control.

"It was one of those camps where they deloused us war kids like they always did. It was the usual thing."

—Do you remember anything more about the delousing?

"No, I don't remember anything, absolutely nothing."

Olli's choice of words suggests that he felt shame and anger at the thought of his time in quarantine, even though he did not remember it. The words "like they always did ... the usual thing" reflect his sense of degradation. His account was a hate-filled attack on what had happened to him, which he so to say "knew" but did not remember. In this part of the interview, the 3-year-old child is concealed and an enraged adult emerges. His interview was filled with accusations.

Early defense mechanisms can pose a threat to verbal reasoning as the verbally expressed is essential in order for

an individual to be aware of the difference between inner and outer reality (Bion, 1967). Although the war children did not remember anything from the transport as such, they nonetheless bore with them their experiences of being away from home and from everything that was familiar. The children harbored feelings of humiliation and locked-in rage. As there was no one at whom they could direct their frustration, they were left with a feeling that was diffuse and difficult to work through. They did not have a legitimate current target for the feelings they bore inside.

Some of the war children alternated between the will to know and the will not to know about various events in their lives. It seemed to be especially difficult, or actually impossible, for them to think about the significance of their Finnish parents. Aino often referred to her Finnish mother as "that one." One of the interviewees, Pirjo, did not mention her Finnish parents at all.

A slightly older child can experience the displacements differently. In the case of children's displacements, their age is a crucial factor when it comes to remembering and to how their later life and their ability to reflect will possibly develop. We continue with some illustrations from Aino's narrative. She is the one of our interviewees who was the oldest when she was evacuated. She was 7 years old.

During the interview, she stumbled over her words from time to time and her adjectives could be contradictory or, more accurately, shallow. These factors indicated that she was feeling anxiety during her narrative, even though she tried to hide it. Her early experiences made their presence felt as she spoke. She began by describing the circumstances at her home in Finland:

We moved to Porvoo (a Finnish town) but they were bombing there too so each and every night we had to run down to that cellar ... I was really scared and then saw ... it came ... and it went ... we could see them (the Russian airmen) there inside the plane, it was ... how horrid it was.

I guess we had some sort of way to get our own food as best we could, dad caught fish and then we had rabbits, that we ate, that I let out (laugh). Yes, I felt so sorry for them. It was okay I guess and everything, if it hadn't been that my — my (stuttering) mom was, I have to say, very ... I don't know why she would beat me all the time, she had a birch rod on the stove and she chased me and (clearing her throat) and beat me and I ran to the neighbour lady's house and hid under her skirts. So that was of course a pity. I don't know what I had done.

—Can you maybe imagine what you might have done?

"Well obviously when I let the rabbits escape, that wasn't so good."

Her mother accompanied her and her brother to Sweden which was unusual.

... she placed me and my little brother in different families. Well anyway there were no other kids there. I remember when mom left me, it was right away, on the

same day . . . no hug, nothing, just ‘good bye’ and then she walked away and I stood at the window and watched her go. I have even drawn, painted a picture of . . . what I see when she walks there, only her back . . .

Then I got even sicker, I got even more asthma.

And that lady (the one that I was supposed to stay with in Sweden), do you know what? I had to live in a room under a stairway even though they had so many rooms, so that was a shame, wasn't it? I think so. And then, my beautiful white knit dress, she dyed it blue or red and then I was so sad. . . . And the food was so strange. I didn't like this, I didn't like that and I didn't like whatever. . . . and I gave them a hard time about the food, I didn't want eggs, yuck. Maybe that's the kind of thing to go on strike about, I don't know.

. . . then I came to a home for children with tuberculosis.

I sat there and ate at the table in the dining room and at that place we weren't allowed to leave the table until we finished all our food, so there I sat almost the whole day almost every day. And the rest of the days I lay in a tiny storage closet and looked at magazines trying to find pictures of my parents. Can't (present tense) anyone send me a picture? Listen to me you, you parents when you send your kid away, you'd better send her pictures. Finally I cut out something really nice, it was something nice, because they were also awfully nice themselves, right? (laugh, Aino is ironic).

The evil mother also showed up in Sweden and her food was inedible. Aino had severe asthma that she did not take care of before she reached retirement age. A physical symptom can be felt as valuable possibly because it carries an emotional part of the personality that has not been formulated (McDougall, 1989). During the interview Aino spoke three different times of being placed in a closet, a closed-in space. Was there a link to her asthma? Perhaps her own space during childhood, both in Finland and in Sweden, was too closed-in. McDougall also mentions the use of language and the role of language – or rather its lack of a role in psychosomatic phenomena.

In Aino's narrative, we can see the difference between the way a 7-year-old experienced the world and the way the children who were sent away as younger experienced it. She had memories that were linked to various difficult events. She could describe something of what it felt like when her mother disappeared. She described her own loneliness and vulnerability. She had not forgotten. Her life was dominated by hateful feelings toward her mother and later toward all other mother figures. But though she remembered her experiences, she could not reflect on them. She was not struggling to understand but brought her memories unchanged of time to the present moment. She had no distance to her memories. However, it felt like Aino, for example when she described her parting from her

mother, wanted to pull the interviewer into an alliance where they together would blame the mother. The listener could experience Aino's feelings from time to time but while the pictures were sad, she sometimes seemed more accusatory than sad. Throughout the course of the narrative, the mothers stood for what was evil and no reconciliation seemed possible.

These are examples of memories that are vivid but that have not been worked through at all. She kept her affects under control. A recurrent pattern in this regard was her choice of adjectives that downplayed her feelings. When the foster mother dyed her white dress, something that was valuable and familiar clearly disappeared, something that – despite everything – was linked to her home in Finland.

The move to Sweden and the new language

As soon as the children were moved to Sweden, their past lives and their contact with the familiar were cut off. The foster family did not know the child that they took in. The new foster parents did not have any in-depth knowledge about where the child came from nor did they know about the child's early history. As far as the child was concerned, his/her early life lost its chance of being put into words. In Sweden, there was no one who could build a bridge going back to life in Finland. Or as Varvin (2010, 2014) has pointed out: People who live in exile become cut off from their cultural roots and the different and alien signals that they encounter may be confusing. To be in exile is to be rootless, to lose something and to come to a situation where nothing fits together. Losing one's sense of belonging in one's environment and culture is to lose the basis for one's entire existence. Kaplan (2006) describes the same phenomenon through the term “Generational destruction.”

Although Finland and Sweden are neighbors, the cultures of the two countries were different. Moreover, when many of the children visited their Finnish homes after the war, they were met with little or no understanding. They were considered privileged for having escaped the harsh conditions of the war. They had had enough to eat and had been able to attend school. Kirsti, who returned to Finland for a few months after the war, said that she yearned to return to Sweden where she had the chance to be an only child. Her original tie to her Finnish mother no longer existed. It seems that the long separation during the war time had a distancing effect on both the Finnish mother and the evacuated child.

In cases of early trauma “the internal mother is always a bystander who witnesses the attack to occur, or at least failing to prevent it.” A trauma can break up family relationships “by undoing basic trust. . . and creating barriers against intimacy. . . trauma disrupts the link between the self and the empathic other” (Laub & Auerhahn, 1993, p. 287).

What happens when the mother tongue disappears?

The mother tongue is a primal force with strong emotional meaning. The mother language bears with it feelings and belongingness. Can a new language ever have the same significance? When we studied the use of language in the interviews, we got a picture of what happens when the roots of the early language are lost; language may lose its natural source and its spontaneous ring.

When thinking is affected by early trauma, this is also reflected in language. Language effects in the interviews concerned structure, syntax, and word choice. As already described, it was primarily emotional language, the mirror of feelings and a sense of belonging, which was impacted. The displacements of the war children thus meant that they lost their Finnish mother tongue, which everyone also spoke about in the interviews. All of them experienced that the change of language was crucial for them. Our interviewees were well educated, had a rewarding work life and had excellent skills in Swedish. But as they gave their account, their language could switch to slang or childish expressions, become confused and contain unfinished sentences, contradictory, unexpected adjectives or technical terms, pompous expressions, time-distorted tense changes, and unclear points of reference.

These observations show how confusing the displacement had been. The interviewees had a lack of connection to what they were talking about. Their language was not a living language and they had difficulty communicating their experiences to the interviewer. The incomprehensible elements of the events during the evacuation and their transfers to new caregivers also became incomprehensible, incoherent, and chaotic in their narratives.

All of our interviewees later visited their Finnish homes, but all of them said the same thing; their Finnish had disappeared and they were forced to talk to their relatives through an interpreter. Some of them later tried to learn Finnish again from the beginning but without much success. Their early language was forever lost. A break had taken place in their early existence and in the continuity of their life. The presence and the imprint of our first objects exist as something wordlessly woven into us, taken for granted and familiar, but this familiarity is gone in a new environment.

If language is dead, it cannot bear up meaning. A difficult or painful feeling brought on by an emotional experience may lead to an attempt to evacuate the feeling but it can also lead to attempts to modify it – if the individual can tolerate frustration but what is affected by dissociation is the actual experience of a self and of a personal agenda of one's own (Gullestad, 2005). The capacity to symbolize is affected by trauma as well (Garland, 2004).

Kristiansen (2014, p.126) describes the early origin of language in the connection to the objects: "And when the child explores its first sounds and words, it is within the

frame of relating to someone else, in a relational context. This first exploration involves not only the word's meaning or reference but also the child's own voice and its own subjectivity, the boundaries and relations between the internal and the external and between himself and the other." The author points out that the connections of language to the body still remain in the adult individual.

Also Loewald (1980) describes the roots of language in the child's early life. He stresses the importance of language as a binding force that connects human beings, the self and the object world, as well as abstract thoughts, with body sensations. Primary and secondary processes are combined in the words.

Both Kristiansen and Loewald talk about the rooting of language in the body and in the early maternal and paternal environment, through which language shapes our early understanding of ourselves and the world around us. van der Hart, Nijenhuis, and Steele (2006) points out that speech is informative about the capacity to verbalize feelings and thoughts and links it to possible structural dissociation specially if there is use of many indirect pronouns so that sentences are confusing, sudden changes in or unusual syntax, lapses in discourse, vagueness and abrupt subject changes, sudden changes in tone (e.g., Loewenstein, 1991).

Obliterated meaning and feelings

Aino said:

"I didn't have any – any real relatives to invite to the wedding, so we had a couple of friends who came along. We had a great time."

Aino is hiding her disappointment. The capacity to experience one's affects as one's own is crucial for a meaningful perception of one self (Killingmo, 2006).

Olli's interview was characterized by a defensive psychological language that was not integrated. The following sequence came close to the beginning of the interview.

"I don't have so many memories from my childhood, but, yeah, I mean they're there but they're completely hidden. But – but the feeling can sometimes trigger – trigger, yeah, what's it called, I've got a trigger in my personality and they – so they wake up feelings in me."

–What sort of feelings?

What do you mean?

(He gets a little more time.)

–What sort of feelings?

"Well, feelings, I mean feelings of – of, yeah, of separation and divorce." (He speaks formally and in a voice isolated from himself. Here he leaves out the word "I". Olli speaks about feelings but speaks without feeling.)

The same elements are found as Olli continues his narrative:

I've heard people say that my physical status was pretty bad (when I came to Sweden) since I had one of

those puffed out, hanging bellies, can you believe it, a kid is three years old and has a hanging belly sticking out like that because of hunger, you know . . . and I kept hearing people say that for a long time, during my entire childhood that I was . . . that my body was like that when I came.

The expression “my physical status” again shows how much Olli must distance himself from his feelings. When the interviewer asked him how it felt when he was reminded of that, he said:

I don’t guess it felt any special way, really, not just that particular thing all by itself.

Olli would describe something like that and then deprive it of all meaning. The interviewer was deeply shaken and struck by what he said. War children can thus describe something they know about and then deny its importance the next minute. What has happened has thereby been given no emotional meaning whatsoever for the speaker himself and becomes confusing for the listener.

But there may be yet another dimension to language usage, in cases where it is no longer defensive but rather a series of spoken words where all meaning is obliterated. This dimension is clear in parts of Elina’s interview. She was evacuated when she was two and a half years old. The interview started like this:

–Tell me about your life.

“Oh, goodness gracious me! I came to Sweden some time in ‘44 I think . . . well, you know, my Swedish parents said there was a lot of snow and it was very cold, myself I don’t remember. . .”

–How old were you at the time?

“I think I was a little over two years . . . around two and a half, thereabouts.”

–A little girl.

“Right, and I believed the whole time that I was their child well okay sometimes maybe I thought it was kind of weird that I got blamed for what my Swedish brother did but in time (laughs) I guessed it was not that, no it was because he was a boy, but anyhow the stable was very nice.”

–The stable?

“I came to a farmstead, me and then my two other sisters, there were three farmsteads, located next to each other so we sisters could keep in touch the whole time, everything was kind of okay I guess until somewhere around . . . ‘47 (1947) when my Swedish dad came one day and told me that it was time for me to go back to Finland because (crying) the Finnish state wanted to have us back . . . and at that point I didn’t know that I wasn’t their child, no, it came as a shock . . .”

Elina had not been given a true picture of herself and the people and world around her. Her narrative was contradictory: she said she believed that she was a child of the

Swedish family, but she also pointed out that she kept in touch with her sisters who lived on neighboring farms.

The trauma was present and was kept in the child’s perspective. She gave many details, but did she herself know which details were important and which ones were not so important for a person who was trying to understand her? However, there was an even more disturbing sequence in the interview: She said that when she once asked about a scar on her stomach, her Finnish mother had told her:

(This happened in Finland when you were a newborn baby). When your dad came home on leave, he went into a rage at you, because he didn’t want you, so he took you and threw you up on the stove, so that made burns . . . or scars, what’s it called . . .?

She immediately began to talk about other things. The incident also disappeared from the interviewer’s mind, and it was not mentioned again during the interview. Elina’s way of telling about the event was drowned in a stream of words. The story of the scar and the father’s rage disappeared.

Communication became meaningless. Elina’s difficulty with her thought processes stemmed partly from her difficulties in seeing any chronology in her life. She did not wonder about, for example, why she came back to Sweden after her short stay in Finland after the war, or why she remained living with her foster parents even though her Finnish parents moved to Sweden after the war. She was also incapable of making observations about others. She had obliterated her curiosity and had difficulties carrying out a line of reasoning that could have created some order in her mind. As an adult, she developed a positive attitude and said that she was an optimist despite all the difficulties that struck her in adulthood. The difference between Olli’s and Elina’s denial was that Olli was able to convey something to the interviewer that struck a chord while Elina said something that did not reach her listener: the interviewer “did not hear.” There is an obvious difference between knowledge as facts and knowledge as experience (Bell, 2011). When Elina spoke about her adult life, about her children and grandchildren, she was an empathetic grandmother and it was not difficult to follow her in her narrative.

To know or not to know

Bion (1962a) describes the circumstances under which children are able to develop an understanding of themselves and of the world they live in. His concept K (knowing) stands for the desire of humans to give meaning to their experiences and to seek the truth. K stands not only for knowledge in itself but also includes the search

for objects and ties to emotional experiences. A vibrant K carries with it the ability to endure doubt and uncertainty, a characteristic that is coupled with a continuous, flexible curiosity (Fisher, 2011).

–K, on the other hand, can also have a protective effect by safeguarding the individual's perception that life goes on. If K is the process by which one wants to know, –K is a process of not knowing, of misunderstanding and distorting. Holding on to –K can be a way of securing one's entire existence and fending off the losing of one's mind or of one's perception of a self (Schneider, 2005).

Bion's description of K and –K includes psychic dynamics. The prerequisite for the development of thought, according to Bion, is that the child is aware of his/her losses. If children cannot bear the thought of their losses, their understanding becomes distorted. They can then avoid the painful awareness of not knowing and of doubt. The capacity for thinking can thus be seen as a conscious, basically emotional dimension (Bion, 1962a). According to Bion, having an adult close by with a functioning containing capacity is a prerequisite for the child's development of K, knowing (Bion, 1962b), something that war children lacked during the evacuation.

Adult life

When the interviewees told us about their adult life, many described a life with order and stability both when it came to family and to career. They stressed that adult life, in contrast to childhood, was in their own hands, that is to say, under their control. What was often missing, nevertheless, as mentioned earlier, were reflections on how their adult life had been marked by their early experiences.

All of the interviewees lost their mother tongue and felt betrayed by their country, which in this regard may also stand for their Finnish parents. But it seems as if the Swedish family had a calming impact on them and their fragmented stories gradually became more whole when they spoke of their adult lives. Here we got a picture of the war children as Swedish citizens taking responsibility for their family and their professional lives. The picture even became to some extent idealizing and so "right" that it seemed to turn into a cliché. Bollas (1987) speaks of the phenomenon normotic illness to describe people with a strong need to be normal. He posits that this "normality" may stem from these people's efforts to stifle their inner lives in order to escape psychic pain. He suggests that these people as children did not have space for an individual self. His observations can be likened to the war children's early self-perceptions that were linked to the Finnish family and that became meaningless in Sweden. Did they then cloak themselves in a role that fit better in the new conditions, as for example "no mourning and no sense of loss"? Bollas (2011) is also the one who coined

the expression "Everybody has a past but not everyone has a history."

The war children's experiences of catastrophe, however, did not prevent them from learning or from accumulating objective knowledge. All of the interviewees ultimately did well in school: they were interested in school and in studying. They all regretted that they had not been able to get more schooling in childhood but they made up for it with their later studies. Laub and Auerhahn (1993) have noted that many traumatized individuals can have success in their professional lives. They suggest this success may lead to their having a kind of parallel lives, but that their career may fail to bring them satisfaction. When one of our interviewees told us about his professional advancements and successes, the impression was of a C.V. being presented.

"An individual's professional success may be related to a desire to gain control over his/her existence and thus to feel like a whole person. There may also be a striving to leave an identity as a 'war child' behind and (over-)emphasize other parts of one's identity – such as being successful at one's work. The success does not necessarily involve creativity or ability to symbolize, but it can function as a defense." (Kaplan, 2012, personal communication).

There is a slight subtlety of meaning that we noted: the interviewees' descriptions of their lives as adults contained elements suggesting that everything was just fine, maybe a little too fine in the sense that everything was so "right." There were also some surprising remarks in certain cases such as, for example, "my wife has proved to be a wonderful resource." We now return to Bollas's term, normotic illness. We can see it as a diagnosis, but we can also give it a different significance. Our interviewees were able as adults to find and develop a way of coping with their childhood catastrophes of evacuation and separation. They could carry with them a kind of normality that provided the defense they needed in order to live their lives.

All of the interviewees alternated between different states of mind at different points in the interview. Sometimes the connection to the trauma dominated while at other times an active desire to forge ahead with life was expressed. This process of creating a life for oneself and one's family and for the next generation has been described in detail by Kaplan (Kaplan, 2008). The wish to be normal in this context can be seen as a search for a good life and dignity after all of the severe trials of childhood.

Discussion

In this third part of our interview study with ten evacuated Finnish war children, nine of whom were evacuated between the ages of two and five, and one of whom was

seven years old, we have first described our findings from previous studies in order to provide a general background on the consequences of displacement and the specific factors that we see as war child trauma. We have followed the principles of Grounded Theory and thus have used the findings in our material as a starting point for our analysis.

Here we have focused on how experiences connected to the evacuation and the change of language affected the war children's way of telling about their life. We noted both the formal aspects and the content of their language. We could see that early trauma had a far-reaching impact on their thinking and their language usage. Through various examples from the interviews we have illustrated the forms their narratives have taken. We have stressed that a description that reproduces the "now" can be seen as a re-experienced traumatic situation. This tendency appeared only when the war children talked about their early experiences.

The war children's attempts to know or not to know about their trauma play a decisive role in organizing their psychic life. However, we have also observed a personal and psychological dynamic pattern in the narratives.

Many who have been traumatized must protect themselves from knowing, in which cases their narratives can result in cognitive and affective paralysis, where the center for the trauma no longer exists in the experiencing self (Laub & Auerhahn, 1993).

Overwhelming experiences change the way in which memories are recalled, they are simultaneously something an individual knows about and something he/she does not know about (Bohleber, 2008; Laub & Auerhahn, 1993).

We have shown how traumatic memories are like something that has been buried alive but that still crowds its way to the surface in the form of repetition compulsion, possibly with an unconscious hope that it at some point can become a part of the conscious personal history (Gerzi, 2005). If one cannot talk about one's trauma, one can manifest it nonetheless, as the interviewees did through their language usage during the interviews.

This clarifies why language usage was altered when the interviewees talked about the circumstances around the evacuation. The traumatic experience could be present or, alternatively, completely encapsulated, even though they were talking about it. The beginning of the interviews was often fragmented since the interviewees talked about their displacement, while the subsequent stages provided an opportunity to study the different approaches war children had developed toward their confusing experiences.

The distinguishing feature of this group of interviewees was that all of them lost contact with their mother tongue and never regained it completely. The origin of language in the early psycho-soma totality between the child and the mother as described by Kristiansen (2014) bears witness to the loss, in addition to the broken continuity, that these children had experienced emotionally and language-wise. Thought and

language were also affected in the interviewees as evidenced by uncertainties in many of them with regard to the notion of time, chronology, and cause-effect relationships. We understood these findings to be an expression of the loss of meaning brought about by breaks in continuity through change of language and change of family. Laub and Auerhahn (1993) likewise emphasize that the capacity of traumatized individuals to know and to tell their stories is dependent on language and at the same time their language can be both inadequate and incomplete for a description of traumatic experiences. Moreover, it may be necessary for them to fend off knowledge in order to protect themselves from the affects that otherwise could be awakened to life. The concept of defense is complicated when we are dealing with trauma. Dissociation cannot be considered a psychic defense but rather as a reaction to trauma. Dissociation is often defined as a splitting of the personality into an emotional and a cognitive part (van der Hart et al., 2006). In psychoanalysis defense is something that is seen as an attempt to use psychic resources to gain control over trauma (Varvin, 2003), while dissociation is a designation that is not dynamic. In line with Gullestad (2005), we ask ourselves if it would be better to use a term that is closer to psychoanalysis, as for example denial. Gullestad stresses that in a discourse analysis we can study affect regulation, the style of the narrative and the countertransference feelings evoked by the narrative whereby we may obtain a more multifaceted picture of the trauma and its consequences.

When early trauma is mirrored in language usage, we come to a deeper view of the traumatic experience and we can then also reach a psychodynamic and developmental level of understanding. The childhood experiences emerged in the interviews in a way that conveyed each individual interviewee's unique way of dealing with the past and present. They had their own agendas and talked about their experiences in a way that showed a recurrent pattern in their narratives.

Summary

Our research has brought out certain specific features that apply to the evacuated children's reactions to their experiences:

Evacuation of children is a break in the continuity of their early existence, with the hitherto familiar and taken for granted. Their early sense of belonging connected to their mother tongue disappears.

To be unknowing of one's early childhood has far-reaching consequences. It can emerge as a lack of interest about early experiences and subsequently prevent reflection and mourning in later life.

The ways in which one knows or not know about early traumatic experiences influence thinking and emotional life even in adulthood. When the roots to the earlier life and the mother tongue disappear there is a loss that

influences the possibility to tell one's own life story and experience continuity in one's life span.

Our study has been limited to Finnish children who remained in Sweden after the war. We have a new material, so far partly unprocessed, consisting of war children who returned to Finland. We are convinced that insights we gained in this study make us more sensitive and open to the new material. We have an assumption that a traumatic life story is often encapsulated in the opening stages of an interview and that whatever emerges later indicates the development and degree of various defense patterns. The advantage of an interview study is that it provides access to taped and transcribed material that is possible to revisit again and again. We believe that in an interview study we can reach a dynamic and developmentally based understanding of the interviewee by being on a careful lookout for physical as well as verbal expressions. In addition, the interviewer needs to be alert to countertransference feelings throughout the interview.

A limitation of the study is that the interviewees were members of the Stockholm War Child Association and it is likely that a sense of duty had something to do with their agreeing to participate. They were thus a select group and did not represent the entire war child population.

The results have brought to light various phenomena associated with the consequences of the evacuation of children. These phenomena can be possible to generalize and can broaden understanding within the psychoanalytic field. Research based on psychiatric diagnosis does not provide insight into psychological dynamics.

Can we draw a parallel to today's world with children who have been sent away and lost contact with their roots, their homeland, and perhaps also their family? Who are they at that point? They may find themselves in the same predicament as the war children, whose early language has been lost and whose original self, shaped in early contact with their parents, has lost its significance.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

Funding

This study was supported by the Signe and Ane Gyllenberg Foundation.

Notes on contributors

Barbara Mattsson is a practising psychoanalyst, teacher in psychotherapy and has published different writings on Finnish war children.

Sinikka Maliniemi-Piispanen is a practising psychotherapist, clinical work with infant-parent interaction.

Jukka Aaltonen is a researcher and supervisor of several doctoral theses of psychotherapy and municipal psychiatric treatment projects; practising psychotherapist and trainer in psychotherapy training programs.

References

- Bell, D. (2011). Knowledge as fact, knowledge as experience: Freud's "Constructions in analysis". In S. Lewkowicz, T. Bokanowski, & G. Progier (Eds.), *On Freud's "Constructions in analysis"*. London: Karnac.
- Bion, W. R. (1962a). *Learning from experience*. London: William Heinemann Books.
- Bion, W. R. (1962b). The psychoanalytic study of thinking. *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 43, 306–310.
- Bion, W. R. (1967). *Second thoughts: Selected papers on psychoanalysis*. London: Karnac.
- Bohleber, W. (2008, April 12). *Traumatic memories, dissociative states and reconstruction*. Paper for presentation in the Finnish Psychoanalytic Society, Helsinki.
- Bollas, C. (1987). *The shadow of the object. Psychoanalysis of the unthought known*. London: Free Association Books.
- Bollas, C. (2011). *The functions of history*. The Christopher Bollas Reader. London: Routledge.
- Crittenden, P. M., & Landini, A. (2011). *Assessing adult attachment. A dynamic-maturational approach to discourse analysis*. New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company.
- Fisher, J. (2011). The emotional experience of K. In C. Mawson (Ed.), *Bion today. The new library of psychoanalysis* (pp. 43–63). London: Routledge.
- Garland, C. (2004). The perversion of loss. Psychoanalytic perspectives on trauma. In S. Levy & A. Lemma (Eds.), *Traumatic events and their impact on symbolic functioning*. London: Whurr Publishers.
- Gerzi, S. (2005). Trauma, narcissism and the two attractors of trauma. *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 86, 1033–1050. doi:10.1516/2TTK-G0TL-9DWL-UHWY
- Glaser, B. G. (1992). *Basics of grounded theory analysis*. Mill Valley, CA: Sociology Press.
- Glaser, B. G. (1994). *More grounded theory: A reader*. Mill Valley, CA: Sociology Press.
- Gullestad, S. E. (2005). Who is who in dissociation? *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 86, 639–656. doi:10.1516/KD27-XR94-RNXG-B2JE
- Hämäläinen, O. (2009). The relationship of inner and outer in psychoanalysis. *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 90, 1277–1297. doi:10.1111/j.1745-8315.2009.00199.x
- Kaplan, S. (2006). Children in genocide. Extreme traumatization and the affect propeller. *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 87, 725–746. doi:10.1516/9C86-H1RG-K3FF-DRAH
- Kaplan, S. (2008). *Children in genocide. Extreme traumatization and affect regulation*. London: International Psychoanalysis Library.
- Kaplan, S., & Laub, D. (2009). Affect regulation in extreme traumatization – Fragmented narratives of Holocaust survivors hospitalized in psychiatric institutions. *The Scandinavian Psychoanalytic Review*, 32, 93–104. doi:10.1080/01062301.2009.10592652
- Kavén, P. (2010). *Humanitaarisuuden varjossa. Poliittiset tekijät lastensiiroissa Ruotsiin sotiemme aikana ja niiden jälkeen*. [In the shadow of humanitarianism. Political factors in child evacuation to Sweden during our wars and later]. (Ph.D. thesis in History), Helsinki University.

- Killingmo, B. (2006). A plea for affirmation relating to states of unmentalised affects. *The Scandinavian Psychoanalytic Review*, 29, 13–21. doi:10.1080/01062301.2006.10592775
- Kristiansen, S. (2014). Towards a “full” language. Concerning bodily aspects in the psychoanalytic talking cure 1, 2. *The Scandinavian Psychoanalytic Review*, 37, 125–132. doi:10.1080/01062301.2014.986971
- Krystal, M. D. (1978). Trauma and affects. *Psychoanalytic Study of the Child*, 33, 81–112.
- Laub, D., & Auerhahn, N. (1993). Knowing and not knowing of massive psychic trauma: Forms of traumatic memory. *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 74, 282–299.
- Loewald, H. W. (1980). *Papers on psychoanalysis*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press.
- Loewenstein. (1991). An office mental status examination for complex chronic dissociative symptoms and multiple personality disorder. *Psychiatric Clinics of North America*, 14, 567–604.
- Mattsson, B., & Maliniemi-Piispanen, S. (2011). An interview study with a Finnish war child. *The Scandinavian Psychoanalytic Review*, 34, 31–40. doi:10.1080/01062301.2011.10592881
- Mattsson, B., & Maliniemi-Piispanen, S. (2013). Thinking about the unknown. An interview study of Finnish war children. *Trauma and Memory*, 1(1), 52–71.
- McDougall, J. (1989). *Theatres of the body*. New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company.
- Pesonen, A.-K., Räikkönen, K., Heinonen, K., Kajantie, E., Forsén, T., & Eriksson, J. G. (2007). Depressive symptoms in adults separated from their parents as children: A natural experiment during World War II. *American Journal of Epidemiology*, 166, 1126–1133.
- Räikkönen, K., Lahti, M., Heinonen, K., Pesonen, A. K., Wahlbeck, K., Kajantie, E., ... Eriksson, J. G. (2011). Risk of severe mental disorders in adults separated temporarily from their parents in childhood: The Helsinki birth cohort study. *Journal of psychiatric research*, 45(3), 332–338.
- Räsänen, E. (1988). *Lapsuusajan separaatiokokemusten vaikutus aikuisiän psyykkiseen ja fyysiseen terveyteen sekä sosiaaliseen hyvinvointiin* [Effects on separation experiences in childhood on psychic and social well-being in adulthood] (Ph.D. thesis in psychology). University of Kuopio, Kuopio.
- Santavirta, T., Santavirta, N., Betancourt, T. S., & Gilman, S. E. (2015). Long term mental health outcomes of Finnish children evacuated to Swedish families during the second world war and their non-evacuated siblings: Cohort study. *BMJ*, 350, g7753.
- Schneider, J. A. (2005). Experiences in K and -K. *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 86, 826–839. doi:10.1516/HDCG-54WD-07M7-RK1W
- van der Hart, O., Nijenhuis, E. R. S., & Steele, K. (2006). *The haunted self. Structural dissociation and the treatment of chronic traumatization*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company.
- Varvin, S. (2003). *Mental survival strategies after extreme traumatization*. Copenhagen: Multivers Academic.
- Varvin, S. (2010, August 5–8). *The stranger and the strange: Psychoanalytic reflections on meeting otherness*. Paper held at the XX11 Nordic Psychoanalytic Congress, Helsinki.
- Varvin, S. (2014). *Bulleteng for norsk psykoanalytisk forening: Eksil*. Kateksis (pp. 4–8). Oslo: Norwegian Psychoanalytic Society.
- Waddell, M. (1998). *Psychoanalysis and the growth of the personality*. Inside lives. London: Karnac.
- Winnicott, D. W. (1958). *Psychoanalysis and contemporary thought*. London: Hogarth Press.



IV

TRACES OF THE PAST: AN INTERVIEW STUDY WITH FINNISH WAR CHILDREN WHO DID NOT RETURN TO FINLAND AFTER THE SECOND WORLD WAR

by

Barbara Mattsson, Sinikka Maliniemi-Piispanen & Jukka Aaltonen, 2017

The Scandinavian Psychoanalytic Review, 40, 129–137.

Reproduced with kind permission by Taylor & Francis.

Traces of the past: an interview study with Finnish war children who did not return to Finland after the Second World War

Barbara Mattsson^a, Sinikka Maliniemi-Piispanen^b and Jukka Aaltonen^c

^aDepartment of Behavioral Sciences, University of Helsinki, Helsinki, Finland; ^bDepartment of Behavioral Sciences, University of Helsinki, Helsinki, Finland; ^cDepartment of Psychology, University of Jyväskylä, Åbo, Finland

ABSTRACT

This paper is an in-depth qualitative study based on interviews with 10 Finnish children who were evacuated to Sweden during Second World War and who did not return to Finland after the war. The interviewees were asked to tell about their lives. Nine of them were between 2 and 5 years and one was 7 years old at the time of evacuation. The aim was to study how their childhood experiences were reflected in adult memories, how they remembered or did not remember. This paper focuses on the consequences of not knowing about one's early life and also on whether it is possible to observe signs of the Finnish mother. She did not appear explicitly but could be sensed in the tendency of the interviewees to express negations, displacement and active denial. The interviewees' countertransference gave a sense of the unspoken but present, as feelings of shame and diffuse anger. The difficulty for the interviewees to think about or reflect over the loss of mother and the experience of evacuation led to a reduced ability to create meaning – in the sense of knowing oneself. We also looked for a comprehensive picture of the war children's experience.

Background to the research

In Finland, the Second World War started in November 1939. During wartime, 1939–1944, 70,000–80,000 Finnish children were evacuated to Denmark, Norway and mainly to Sweden. Approximately, one-third were between 2 and 5 years of age at the time of their departure. The transports were carried out for the most part by boat or train and the journey could take from 2 to 6 days. The groups were large, around 600 children per transport. There was usually 1 attendant per 30 children (Kavén, 2010). Upon arrival, the children were given health checks and were deloused in sanitary centres. Then, they were placed in smaller groups and transported to quarantine centres for about a week. Medical issues were given priority but much weight was also put on nutrition and clothing. Most of the children were placed in Swedish foster families (Heilala, 2016, p. 11).

The Finnish authorities stipulated that every child without exception should return to his or her homeland as soon as the war ended. But after the war, 5000–8000 of these children did not return to Finland permanently (Kavén, 1985).

Other studies on Finnish war children

There is not much research on the Finnish war children who remained in Sweden after the war except for one study where it was found that the war children as adults felt insecure, without roots. They assessed their adjustment to Sweden being superficial (Langebro, 1994).

Recent studies are survey studies about those who returned to Finland. The Helsinki Cohort study (Pesonen et al., 2007; Räikkönen et al., 2011) showed an increased incidence of depression and diagnoses of psychic disturbances later in life. Eriksson, Räikkönen and Eriksson (2014) found that the evacuation engendered early life stress with long-term consequences of higher vulnerability to mental-health disorders later in life. Santavirta et al. (2015) found that the evacuation showed risks for substance misuse for evacuated boys compared to their brothers whereas the risk for depression was twofold in evacuated girls compared to their non-evacuated sisters.

Those war children who returned to Finland showed a different pattern of life compared to those who stayed in Sweden.

There is no study except for ours with a psychodynamic approach. In addition, there is no other study based on personal interviews with those who remained in Sweden.

Study design and participants

In 2007, all the 202 members of the Stockholm branch of the Finnish War Child Association received a questionnaire about their war childhood experiences. This project was organized by Helsinki University, the Department of Behavioural Science. The interviewers were from Finland but were Swedish speaking. In the questionnaire, there was a question about an interest in participating in an interview study. From those who expressed such an interest, the interviewers selected 10 persons, 7 women and 3 men. We had previously thought that we should prefer those who were small at the time of evacuation. The selection was difficult because many of the possible interviewees we contacted could not take part in the interview as they were away from Stockholm at the time we could offer for the interviews (in the middle of the summer). Nine of the finally selected were between 2 and 5 years of age and one was 7 years old when the evacuation took place. Seven of them were women and three were men. All of the interviewees were active members of the Stockholm branch of the Finnish War Child Association. The choice of the interviewees was selective in the sense that all of them turned out to be managing well as adults. At the time of the interviews, the interviewees were between 65 and 70 years old. They gave their informed consent for the study. The interviews, which took an average of 2 h, were taped and transcribed verbatim. There were no set questions. At the opening of the interview, they were asked to tell about their lives. During the interview, they were sometimes asked to be more precise or to explain. Otherwise, the interviews were not steered.

Method

The method was grounded theory (Glaser, 1992, 1994), where the main approach is to identify elements and to study the relationship between them. This method is suitable for studies in which there are gaps in knowledge. Open coding, as in this study, entails analysis of written material, such as transcripts of interviews.

In this study, one of the interviewers was a psychoanalyst, and the other a psychoanalytic psychotherapist, experienced in 'Adult Attachment Interview' (AAI) (Crittenden & Landini, 2011). During our interviews and later examinations, we noted the content, the cues,

the structure of language, somatic expressions, emotional reactions during the interview and also the interviewer's countertransference reactions.

The narrative style was also noted. In interviews, the manner of expression can mediate affects. It is possible to listen to an unstructured interview using the same approach as in the AAI. AAI was a guide (Crittenden and Landini (2011)). We also had an interpretive psychoanalytic base.

The two interviewers (BM, S M-P) read the transcribed interviews together aloud, back and forth and repeatedly in minute detail, associated to them and listened to their countertransference reactions to get in touch with the unspoken.

Previous publications with these interviewees

The first publication was a case study where the need for control had a central position (Mattsson & Maliniemi-Piispanen, 2011).

The second was about the interviewees, lack of interest in their early experiences, which formed an obstacle towards reflection and mourning in later life. We also noted a strong will to be normal; that is, a common defence in trauma. The central theoretical background was *Bion's* thinking (Mattsson & Maliniemi-Piispanen, 2013).

The third was about the observation that the war children's early experiences, in many cases, were not so much to be sensed in what they said but rather in how they said it. When the interviewees talked about the evacuation, their language was often chaotic and their language structure collapsed. The trauma was there in the grammar. The language conveyed the chaotic, which could not be remembered but was present nonetheless. Effects were seen on the structure of language and syntax as well as on their word choices. The narrative could become incoherent with unfinished sentences and the emotional language collapsed (Mattsson, Maliniemi-Piispanen, & Aaltonen, 2015).

Common features in the interviews

The interviewees' narratives were often fragmented, showing disrupted thinking. Obvious memory lapses could be observed, as could various somatic reactions such as recurrent coughing and throat clearing, stuttering, crying or laughing. The interviewees spoke of feelings of emptiness, rootlessness and black holes. Various early defences such as projection and denial also occurred.

What was noticed first and foremost was the manner in which the interviewees presented their

narratives. Sometimes, it seemed that they were not making a distinction between the present and the past or they would switch to the present tense in the middle of telling something from the past, making their narrative chaotic. We see this as one of the principal trauma indicators in the material: there were emotional reactions in the present, which could be understood as signs of a trauma from the past asserting itself in the present. In these moments, the narrative was not directed at the interviewer.

Often, the spoken narratives were so unclear that the interviewer could not follow or understand them. The story was in a way dissociated from the interactional ties to the situation. This lack of clarity was connected to the fact that they themselves, as they talked about the evacuation, did not remember what had happened to them. At the beginning of the interview, they referred to information that they had acquired later in life. Even though they did not have clear memories from that time, they were nonetheless obviously affected emotionally by their stories during the interview. They conveyed something of their experiences even though they could not remember them.

The interviewees did not express feelings of disappointment or come with accusations towards their Finnish parents whereas they might well express the feeling that their native land had betrayed them. Another thing they did not express was thoughts about the significance of their Finnish mother and father. The father had probably been a more distant person since most of the fathers had been away from home, at the front. One exception was the girl who was 7 years old at the time of evacuation. She had some bitter and painful memories about her parents from the times in Finland. Kirsti (see the detailed case in this paper) evacuated at 4 years of age had some memories from her Finnish home and from the evacuation. The memories, however, were isolated as still pictures, and such memories could be understood as a defensive act. The absence of a holding adult especially during this evacuation process was seen as a contributing factor to the finding that many had difficulties in thinking about or reflecting on the significance of this crucial event in their lives. We observed that the war children did not have an emotional connection to their early experiences and the feelings that belonged to them. They had different ways of trying to overcome their insecurity. In effect, all of the interviewees had different 'selves' that came forward: the traumatized child and then the adult, the normal, so to speak. There was a clear difference in the way the interviewees talked about the evacuation versus about their adult lives. It is conceivable that it was difficult to maintain the early

emerging experience of a self that had been developed in Finland. The child's experience of him/herself changed from what had been taken as a matter of course in the Finnish environment to an existence without roots in the past. The war children lost a vital part of themselves when they changed country and language. The foster parents did not know the child who came to live with them. What had previously been taken for granted could not get any resonance in the new home. Since all interviewees changed language from Finnish to Swedish, language was intimately tied to the change.

A distinguishing feature was that all of the interviewees as adults had done well in life and had stable relationships. They had completed higher studies and most of them as adults had families and children. No one had been divorced. However, it is tempting to speak of a kind of 'normopathy' (Bollas, 1987; van der Hart, Nijenhuis, & Steele, 2006) since their emotional life as adults was cut off from childhood experiences and they did not talk much about problems in adulthood. Their narratives included few descriptions of their partners or their own children.

This study

Descriptions of the role of the Finnish mother

The specific aim of this article is to explore whether there are some signs of the biological Finnish mother and also whether it is possible to formulate the experience of being a war child. Examples from the interviews are presented here via excerpts and comments concerning Kirsti, Ossi and Elisa. They represent different ways of handling the relation to the Finnish mother.

Need for control and displacement

The case of Kirsti

She had her fourth birthday when she arrived in Sweden.

Kirsti: I don't remember when Äiti (the Finnish mother) left me, and I think that is something, I think that's the way it was, that there I must have felt some kind of, well I don't know, disappointment and so abandoned by, I had no one else, I mean in perspective, I had my beloved mother in Sweden but then I had no one else but Äiti, so I had Äiti and then I was sent away, since I don't remember this at all. . . .

From the crossing to Sweden, she remembered the fabric in a little girl's skirt and from the quarantine, she remembered nothing but the step stone in the house where she had been. Beyond these isolated memory images, there are the things that were impossible to think about, fragments, as an autistic response to the unbearable. She suffered throughout her entire childhood from severe compulsive actions where her fear was that her Swedish foster mother or she herself was going to die. These symptoms can have had their origin in connection to her Finnish mother but what she experienced was anxiety concerning the death of the Swedish mother. We can see traces of an unprocessed trauma: the fear that something will happen that in effect had already happened. She was one of the few interviewees who spoke about psychic symptoms. She was keenly aware of her fear and pain but she thought that she was avoiding catastrophes in the present.

The isolated still pictures described earlier can be understood as a defensive manoeuvre of attaching herself to concrete objects. This attachment to separate details can be seen as an autistic tendency in difficult situations. According to Tustin (1986, p. 201), we have here 'the bewilderment associated with states in which the sense of personal identity is under threat and things are perceived as utterly discrete and separate because there are no threads linking them together'. Maybe Kirsti's Finnish mother had not been able to function as a sufficiently containing object earlier in her life, before the evacuation. When Kirsti was sent to Sweden right at the time of her fourth birthday, there were already two younger siblings in her Finnish family.

Kirsti felt a dread that her foster mother or she herself would suddenly die which tells us that she knew very well that one can be stricken by a sudden disappearance (Mattsson & Maliniemi-Piispanen, 2011).

Comments about the interview

Kirsti mentions the leaving from her Finnish mother, and she is deeply affected when she tells about it. But the Swedish mother is hereafter the one who is the centre for her life and the target for the different symptoms she developed.

After reading Kirsti's narrative several times, we could see upon closer examination that she sometimes gave a vivid description of different events or singular objects from her childhood that she could not possibly have known about when she was a child. For Kirsti, it was important to create a feeling of control and of

being the one who 'know'. We also noted that Kirsti tended to disregard the interviewer's comments and presented herself as the one who knew while the interviewer was constantly wrong. Kirsti had not been able to control her Finnish mother but she wanted to control the interviewer. This led the interviewer to be very cautious.

In Kirsti, we have been able to see reflections of a foundation that was invisible in itself: in her psychic symptoms, we can assume echoes of her experiences in relation to her Finnish mother. In her strong will to be the one who is in control, we can see a reaction to how it is to be confused, insecure and vulnerable.

Feelings of negations, anger and compensation

The case of Ossi

He was 3.5 years old when he came to Sweden.

Ossi's fate was special in the sense that he after the war as an 8–9-year old was moved against his will to live with his Finnish mother, who got married in Sweden. At that point, he had spent over 5 years with his Swedish foster parents, who remained his real parents in his eyes.

Ossi: ...and by and by, we were placed in different foster homes and I came to this particular foster home. And it (cough and throat-clearing) was so that, you know, I heard people talking at the time about how, I mean – how this family thought I was a fun and nice little kid, who was an early starter, who started to teach my foster brother some words, a little bit of Finnish, and we had lots in common after sometime.

Ossi: I don't have so many memories from my childhood, but, yeah, I mean they are there but they're hidden, but the feeling can sometimes trigger, yeah, trigger, what's it called, I've got some triggers in my personality and they, they awaken feelings in me.

I: What kind of feelings?

Ossi: Well, I mean of course feelings of – of, yeah, of separation and divorce.

I have felt an enormous emptiness in myself, in my person, you know, and . . . yes, as I said I was born out

of wedlock and when my mother at last did get married, she wouldn't let me, I didn't get adopted, she refused to let me be adopted by my foster parents and at that point I was forced to move over to the home that she created in Sweden.

I had to leave my foster home and move to the home that she created and that was of course once again a huge new breaking point for me as I say . . . and emotionally I was of course very hungry . . . so it happened once again, a kind of situation where I had that feeling of emptiness all inside me.

Comments about the interview

The Swedish family said that he was 'a fun and nice little kid'. He described himself through the words of others, distanced from himself. He taught his foster brother some Finnish words, but the difficult part was that he himself, the outsider, had to learn a new language.

He described different affective states, but he isolated and compensated for them quickly. He used distancing psychological terms.

' . . .so it happened once again, a kind of situation where I had that feeling of emptiness all inside me'. So, he knew that he has experienced this before. 'Emotionally I was of course very hungry. . .'. He made this statement but at the same time he described it in psychological terms, indicating that the affect had been isolated.

Ossi was able to maintain his balance through projections and idealizations. He divided up his world into the good part and the bad part. What about his Finnish mother then?

He talked about deprivation and sorrow. But the mother whom he met again as an 8-year old was the one towards whom his anger was directed. The one that he consciously missed was his unknown father, not his mother.

When Ossi met his Finnish mother after the war, she represented the unwanted and the troublemaker. The earlier ties to her were gone. Maybe we can sense the course of events that Ogden also describes: 'The creation of a psychological defence can be understood as the organization of systematic misrecognition' (Ogden, 1992, p. 197).

The case of Elisa ('the weeper', the constantly crying child)

She was 4 years when she came to Sweden.

Denial. A mother who disappeared.

She began her narrative with a long sequence about her Finnish brother (also evacuated). ' . . .myself I came to Stockholm then, I do not know, I think, I have

repressed most of it, so I do not remember anything special (crying) . . . I do not know. . .'

She told of a never-ending conflict with her Swedish foster mother, but never mentioned her Finnish mother. She had in any case been told that she at first could not fall asleep if she did not get something from her Finnish home to have beside her. The new toys she received in Sweden meant nothing to her. That which could have been an occasion for joy was turned into a disappointment. She was given the wrong toys.

Elisa's narrative of her life was chaotic and she could not possibly remember what she had felt or thought. Her language was confused and she often spoke of the past in the present tense. She also made derogatory remarks about herself. The red thread in her interview was her sense of being an outsider and being insignificant as well as her attempts at compensation. In many ways, she had managed well in her adult life and got the education that she wanted to have. But every success she described was accompanied by a disparaging comment – 'Oh, well, I guess it wasn't much of anything'. She had a hard time feeling anything other than the injustices and disappointments that she had experienced with her Swedish foster mother. 'Are adults allowed to treat kids that way?' Elisa asked while she described how she felt when her Swedish foster brother was born when she was 6 years old and took her place. Her Finnish mother was no longer present as a person for Elisa to direct her disappointment towards. Elisa had obliterated her Finnish mother from her mind. Her whole life she suffered from feeling abandoned by her Swedish foster mother.

Comments about the interview

Elisa's body language told a story of its own; she coughed, cleared her throat and cried. These reactions indicated that she did not have any distance to what she was telling about. Her experiences had not been worked through psychically and they were present in the moment. There was no interactive process. Elisa did not take notice of the other person's presence. She left the interviewer abandoned and sometimes in the dark when she omitted details or broke off her sentences half way. She repeated her experiences of being abandoned by abandoning the interviewer. The interviewer sometimes expressed curiosity but received no answers to her questions. Elisa at times had not only a false-positive attitude but also arrogance behind a facade of modesty, which left the listener hesitant.

Thoughts around the examples

In Kirsti's interview, we can not only sense her loss but also her need for control, which showed up clearly in

the way she related to the interviewer. She was anxious to appear knowing and was quick to correct the interviewer making the interviewer cautious and insecure.

In Ossi's interview, we can see how he struggles with feelings of worthlessness and feelings of emptiness. His humiliating experiences probably formed a tendency towards compensation and in his *account*; he was the winner in the end. His Finnish mother was hated at the same time as his Swedish foster parents were idealized. His narrative evoked considerable *sympathy*. However, later when the interview script had been reread several times, the interviewers started to rethink their reactions since it became clear that he exaggerated what he knew and had accomplished.

In Elisa's interview, we met never-ending, chronic disappointment and the feeling of being worthless. Do these feelings signify her identification with the 'worthless' Finnish parents? Elisa omitted certain details and did not always finish her sentences that at times could have helped us to better understand what she was talking about. The interviewer felt that Elisa teased her as if to say: 'I leave you in the same bewildered state that once was my destiny'.

Both Kirsti and Ossi rebuked the interviewer from time to time during the interview. These ways of reacting can be seen as a kind of hostility and understood as responses to the interviewer's intrusion into their lives, as a transference reaction. The interviewers on those occasions picked up the interviewees feelings, something of the anger that belonged in the past but that was brought to life during the interview.

Discussion

This is a study with interviews of 10 Finnish war children, who were between 2 and 7 years of age at the time of evacuation from Finland to Sweden during Second World War and who remained in Sweden after the war. The aim was to focus on the question of whether it was possible to trace something of the Finnish war children's earlier life in Finland and especially signs of the Finnish mother. In addition, there is a general question that is in effect overreaching for the entire study: what is the nature of the war child experience?

The method of analysing these open-ended interviews was based on the grounded theory, psychoanalytic thinking and the ways of listening in AAI approach.

A Finnish mother of their earliest childhood was present even though she did not directly step forth in the war children's narratives. We have not been able to see what the early childhood meant for the individual child but we do know that a disruption occurred and

we can see the defence. The early Finnish mother can be seen as a foundation that the interviewees did not talk about explicitly. However, all interviewees met their Finnish parents later in life after the war when they themselves visited Finland or their Finnish parents visited Sweden. This later reunion could have opened them up to talk about their mother and father. They could have said something about the mother who they met as older and wondered about how it would have been to have grown up with her. However, our interviewees did not come up with any such speculations. There was no psychic space for playing with or trying such thoughts. Bion (1962) has pointed out that knowledge about one self and one's life is tied to human relationships and feelings. Ability to express loss and mourning is decisive for thinking. Even if the interviewees mentioned the Finnish mother, they did not think of her role in their life. Their Finnish father was mostly disappeared in their story.

So far, we have seen how a past that is in itself invisible is reflected in false security, compulsive symptoms, compensation and a pronounced lack of interest in the significance of the past. The reactions conveyed the chaotic, which could not be remembered but was present nonetheless. The emotional anchors to the early Finnish mother were invisible in the conscious awareness of these interviewees.

The question of what the war child experience has meant for these interviewees remains partly unclear but includes feelings of shame, anger, compensation and a strong wish to be normal. There were also signs of an unarticulated loss in their narratives.

The mother

Upon reading the interviews, the absence of the Finnish mother was found to be striking. The mother usually stands for continuity and regularity but when it comes to the past and the Finnish mother's significance, she was present in most of the interviewees as a negation: evidenced by the interviewees indifference to the past as well as in their feeling of emptiness and lack of mourning and reflection. Traces of the war children's early life were not visible in the explicit narrative of their lives. The mother seldom appeared in her own individual person but rather as something actively neglected and cast away while at the same time being felt as a shadow hovering over the stories. This can be seen as a natural need of the ego to defend itself from pain, but can there ever be a real detachment from the mother? Bollas states, 'Our internal word is transformed by the mother's unconscious desire into a primary theme of being with her that will affect all

future ways of being with the other' (Bollas, 1987, p. 3) and continues 'This is the shadow of the object as it falls on the ego, leaving some trace of its existence in the adult' (Bollas, 1987, p. 35).

An early separation from the mother breaks the course of a child's development and forms a void that is always present. Unformulated experiences of abandonment and disappointment can turn off the need to know about one's past. Nevertheless, one can still assume that the early relationship to the mother and what happened in the past were discernible in the war children's narratives.

Botella (2014) has posed the question of whether the early mother might be like a strange figure that does not emerge as a specific representation, but rather as a tendency towards various actions and dreams. The mother shows up as a formative principle, not as a specific content. This principle can be discerned in the war children's narratives. The content is less important; what counts is that the affect is repeated independently of the content that conveyed it. Traces of the war children's early life were not visible in the interviewees' explicit narrative of their lives. The study seems to show that such traces are implicitly present in the narrative's form or, often, its lack of form.

In a paper about adopted children, Hodges (1989, p. 23) underlines,

at some levels the biological parents will never be relinquished, their loss, first understood as abandonment, never entirely dealt with. One reason is that their representation and particularly their giving up of the child have become translated into aspects of self-representation. And once inscribed there, can the self-representation lose such parts of itself without leaving behind at least a vulnerability, a shadow of the past?

What then is the self-representation that the war children could have picked up as a part of themselves? They showed a tendency, on one level, to abandon in turn their Finnish parents, since they did not talk about them or wonder what they were like or how it would have been to have grown up with them. Hodges, Bolletti, Salo and Oldeschulte (1985) make similar observations about adopted children. Inability to remember their parents can be seen as defensive.

One could say that the war children were not living with their entire truth, as Bollas (1995) has pointed out, trauma can be traced when something in the life story seems meaningless, as nothing.

Normopathy was also in line with the missing connection that the war children had with their origins and their early life.

The experience of war childhood

Hodges et al. (1985) have elucidated how children in foster families or adopted children can have a deficiency in their experience of continuity. In addition, they often do not have an adult who could help them to maintain and form a coherent picture of their experiences from the past and thus help them to join these experiences to the present and to understand what they can expect in the future. This description also applies to the war children's dilemma.

Regarding the war children, their difficulties in remembering things of the past on their own can also be connected to the fact that the evacuation was an abrupt break in their lives, the implications of which the children could not have been prepared for. Traumatized children seem to develop ways of functioning to prevent the state of traumatization from returning. Thus, war childhood also seemed to be a muted fact that limited thoughts and imagination and resulted in the destruction of parts of the self. The unspoken was sensed during the interviews in language usage, breaks in grammar and the interviewees' countertransference.

In order for thinking to be developed, a person must be aware of his or her losses, helped by a containing capacity in the object (Bion, 1962). If the object remains good despite being absent, it is possible for the child to think his or her thoughts and thereby also to mourn, that is to say, something that most of our interviewees were not capable of doing.

The war children talked about feelings of emptiness and rootlessness that suggest deficiencies and the loss of 'something'. In order to attain a more complete picture of what the war child experience signified, the interviewees had to keep close to their countertransference feelings, where especially shame and anger played a role. When we made associations with the material, we discovered that our countertransference helped us to track emotions such as shame, anger, hatred and mistrust that the interviewees were not able to express. The suppressed anger of the war children could be sensed and was not difficult to understand. Many war children were encouraged to be nice and grateful, something that runs like a red thread through autobiographical war child literature (e.g., Ortmark Almgren, 2004).

Temporary feelings of shame and anger in the interviewees were especially clear during the read through of the interview material. They were surprising and uncomfortable feelings, difficult to confess to the fellow interviewer. But doing so opened new perspectives for

understanding the war children's frame of mind and active defence mechanisms. By observing her own feeling states the interviewer could pick up something of the war children's projected feelings.

Goldblatt (2013) has called attention to counter-transference shame, which confirms and reinforces the significance of the interviewers' observations during the interview dialogue and during the repeated read through evaluations of the transcripts. He has emphasized that shame can suddenly come to the surface as a mutual countertransference reaction with traumatized patients. Still according to Goldblatt (p.105)

. . .in trauma overwhelming affects are dissociated and denied enabling survival of a fractured self, but at a cost of limited functioning, guilt and shame. . . Shame can be brought on by the traumatic experience itself or by the stress of the shattered self in the post-traumatic state . . . lack of empathic attunement plays an important part in shame formation.

The paper with their personal identity numbers that the war children had to wear around their necks during the evacuation process has often been seen as a symbol for their war childhood. It signified first and foremost being de-personified, being without a name.

Difficulties in remembering, common to most of the interviewees, can also be tied to the ego's defensive response to aggressive impulses, something also confirmed by observations made in the interviews.

Acute traumatic reactions during the interviews bore witness to the war children's inner, but denied, reality. Their life stories bore an unformulated truth. It is conceivable that those who were older during the evacuation would have been able to talk about their feelings and express themselves in a different way. 'We must forget in order to exist in the present. Traumatic events can therefore be perceived of as "nothing"' (Bollas, 1995, p. 48).

Instead of remembering, the traumatized person empties his mind of what feels overwhelming to think about. On the other hand, consider the alternative: if one could get in touch with early traumatic experiences, could it be possible to live with them? The presence and awareness of a childhood trauma can wake up feelings of abandonment, helplessness and a sense of being lost. One feels that something is present that cannot be seen or named, but that is constantly disturbing, arouses anxiety and fear and takes away confidence in oneself and the other. Many of those interviewed hinted at feelings of worthlessness, which in turn created the need for facades and for compensation. It is understandable that an adult may have difficulty, for example in an interview situation, to expose

himself, to describe himself as 'poor pitiful me'. Also, Goldblatt (2013) emphasises that traumatized persons have a strong impulse to hide their humiliating thoughts and feelings.

All of our interviewees had 'composed themselves' and struggled to make their lives function. Perhaps at the core of the war children's dilemma is the difficulty in answering the question 'who am I?' as parts of their history remain in darkness.

Conclusions

In most of the interviews, a description of the Finnish mother was missing and in particular, thoughts about what it meant for the war children to be separated from her was not expressed. They did not remember her, but they also did not wonder about her significance. The adult war children showed a pronounced lack of interest about their past life and especially about their Finnish mother. For the most part, the father had disappeared from the child's world through his absence because of the war. The curiosity was lost. The observation aroused an interest in attempting to formulate what had happened in their inner world.

The study's aim has been to give life and expression to the Finnish war children's early experiences and their consequences. This material can be a contribution to a response of insight and understanding that can be difficult to reach in, e.g., questionnaire surveys since some of the war children's experiences have not been possible to formulate explicitly and therefore must be interpreted. The interviewers could also note things that were missing. Moreover, the interaction that arose between the interviewee and the interviewer was an important addition to understanding for the researchers. At the same time, however, conclusions based on understanding and interaction between two people always contain a factor of uncertainty.

The need for further research is obvious. There is a strong need for knowledge about war children's fates. When families are broken, the psychology works in the same way as in this study; that is, there might be ongoing problems with emotional life and identity for these children. The loss of roots, the abrupt change of language and the absence of anyone to whom one can direct disappointment or anger are probably common experiences for all children in a situation similar to that of the war children described in this article.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

Notes on contributors

Barbara Mattsson is a psychologist and psychoanalyst. Her research has focus on Finnish war children. Her publications can be found in *The Scandinavian Psychoanalytical Review* and the journal *Trama and Memory*.

Sinikka Maliniemi-Piispanen is a psychologist and psychotherapist (IPA). Her special interest is in early interaction and development.

Jukka Aaltonen is M.D., PhD., psychoanalyst and professor of family therapy (emeritus) in Jyväskylä university, Finland. His main scientific interest has been in the development of the Need-adapted approaches of the treatment of schizophrenia within municipal psychiatry. He is, also, one of the first organizers of family therapy training systems on Finland.

References

- Bion, W. R. (1962). The psychoanalytic study of thinking. *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 43, 306–310.
- Bollas, C. (1987). *The shadow of the object*. London: Free Association Books.
- Bollas, C. (1995). *Cracking up – The work of unconscious experience*. New York, NY: Hill and Wang.
- Botella, C. (2014). On remembering: The notion of memory without recollection. *The International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 95, 911–936. doi:10.1111/1745-8315.12220
- Crittenden, P. M., & Landini, A. (2011). *Assessing adult attachment. A dynamic-maturational approach to discourse analysis*. New York: WW. Norton & Company.
- Eriksson, M., Räikkönen, K., & Eriksson, J. (2014). Early life stress and later health outcomes-findings from the helsinki birth study. *American Journal of Biology*, 26, 111–116. doi:10.1002/ajhb.22502
- Glaser, B. G. (1992). *Basics of grounded theory analysis*. Mill Valley, CA: Sociology Press.
- Glaser, B. G. (1994). *More grounded theory: A reader*. Mill Valley, CA: Sociology Press.
- Goldblatt, M. J. (2013). Shame in psychodynamic- psychotherapy of post-traumatic states. *The Scandinavian Psychoanalytic Review*, 36(2), 104–111. doi:10.1080/01062301.2013.852877
- Heilala, C. (2016). *The child in the eye of the storm – Unveiling the war child syndrome*. (Research Report 271). University of Helsinki, Faculty of Behavioural Sciences. The institute of behavioural Sciences. Helsinki.
- Hodges, J. (1989). Aspects of the relationship to self and objects in early maternal deprivation and adoption. *Bulletin of the Anna Freud Center*, 12(1), 5–27.
- Hodges, J., Bolletti, R., Salo, F., & Oldeschulte, R. (1985). Remembering is so much harder: A report of work in progress from the research group of adopted children. *Bulletin of the Anna Freud Center*, 8(3), 169–178.
- Kavén, P. (1985). *70,000 peintä kohtaloa (70,000 small destinies)*. Otava.
- Kavén, P. (2010). *Humanitaarisuuden varjossa. Poliittiset tekijät lastensiiroissa Ruotsiin sotiemme aikana ja niiden jälkeen. (In the shadow of humanitarianism. Political factors in child evacuation to Sweden during our wars and later)*. (Ph.D). Thesis in History. Helsinki University.
- Langebro, L. (1994). *Finska krigsbarn (Finnish war children)*. Studier i socialt arbete vid Umeå universitet. Institutionen för socialt arbete. Umeå Universitet nr.19.
- Mattsson, B., & Maliniemi-Piispanen, S. (2011). An interview study with a Finnish war child. *The Scandinavian Psychoanalytic Review*, 34, 31–40. doi:10.1080/01062301.2011.10592881
- Mattsson, B., & Maliniemi-Piispanen, S. (2013). Thinking about the unknown. An interview study with Finnish war children. *Trauma and Memory*, 1, 52–71.
- Mattsson, B., Maliniemi-Piispanen, S., & Aaltonen, J. (2015). The lost mother tongue: An interview study with Finnish war children. *The Scandinavian Psychoanalytic Review*, 38 (2), 128–139. doi:10.1080/01062301.2015.1119612
- Ogden, T. (1992). *The primitive edge of Experience*. London: Maresfield Library.
- Ortmark Almgren, S., (red). (2004). *Krigsbarns erinran*. Alma Pluss: Lettland.
- Pesonen, A.-K., Räikkönen, K., Heinonen, K., Kajantie, E., Forsen, T., & Eriksson, J. G. (2007). Depressive symptoms in adults separated from their parents as children: A natural experience during World War II. *American Journal of Epidemiology*, 166, 1126–1133. doi:10.1093/aje/kwm254
- Räikkönen, K., Lahti, M., Heinonen, K., Pesonen, A.-K., Wahlbeck, K., Kajantie, E., . . . Eriksson, J. G. (2011). Risk of severe mental disorders in adults separated temporarily from their parents in childhood: The Helsinki birth cohort study. *Journal of Psychiatric Research*, 45, 332–338.
- Santavirta, T., Santavirta, N., Betancourt, T. S., & Gilman, S. E. (2015). Long term mental health outcomes of Finnish children evacuated to Swedish families during the second world war and their non-evacuated siblings: Cohort study. *BMJ*, 350, g7753. doi:10.1136/bmj.g7753
- Tustin, F. (1986). *Autistic barriers in neurotic patients*. London: Karnac Books.
- van der Hart, O., Nijenhuis, E. R. S., & Steele, K. (2006). The haunted self. In *Structural dissociation and the treatment of chronic traumatization*. The Norton Series on Interpersonal Neurobiology, Daniel J. Siegel, M.D., Series Editor. New York London: W.W. Norton & Company.