

**THE PREVALENCE OF AGGRESSION
IN PRIMARY SCHOOL
CHILDREN IN UNSTRUCTURED
ENVIRONMENTS**

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**THE PREVALENCE OF AGGRESSION IN PRIMARY SCHOOL CHILDREN
IN UNSTRUCTURED ENVIRONMENTS**

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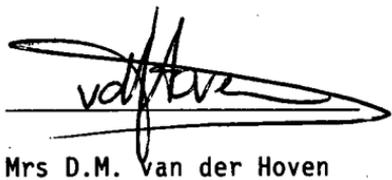
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JUNE 1995

I declare that **THE PREVALENCE OF AGGRESSION IN PRIMARY SCHOOL CHILDREN IN UNSTRUCTURED ENVIRONMENTS** is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.



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SUMMARY

The phenomenon of aggression has been of interest to psychologists for many years, and has resulted in a variety of theories which attempt to explain its existence in man.

Aggression is prevalent in our primary schools today and it was this observation which initiated the research project. The Relationship Theory was applied in order to gain insight into the life-world of the aggressive child and to explore possible causes which may originate from changes in our society.

KEY WORDS

Aggression; Primary school child; Life-world; Relationships; Unstructured environments; Idiographic research project; Projective media

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTORY ORIENTATION: PROBLEM ANALYSIS; STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM; CONCEPT DEFINITION AND AIM

1.1 INTRODUCTION

"To fight is a radical instinct; if men have nothing else to fight over they will fight over words, fancies or women, or they will fight because they dislike each other's looks, or because they have met, walking in opposite directions" (Rogers 1983:202).

The above quotation, written by George Santayana, is indicative of man's tendency towards aggression. But aggression is not confined to humanity alone. Although seldom found in lower invertebrates, it can be observed widely in the animal kingdom from fighting lobsters, spiders such as the Black Widow spider who eats her spouse after mating, the farmyard rooster, and mammals. However, at the upper scale of primate aggressiveness stands man (Scott 1975:5-6).

That man is aggressive, and has a history of aggression cannot be disputed. The book of Genesis in the Bible records the first act of human aggression, namely, the killing of Abel. History books and daily newspapers are testament to acts of aggression.

A wide range of behaviour is described by the word "aggressive". The competitive rugby player; the judge passing a sentence; the adolescent threatening to commit suicide in order to capture his parents' attention; the cold-blooded murderer and the rebellious

child striving for independence are all part of this all-encompassing term (Storr 1969:x). Thus aggression, which is inherent in our world, will also find expression in our primary schools.

Children spend a large proportion of their day interacting with their world. This interaction may be with adults, children, animals, inanimate objects and the mass media. It is through this involvement with their world, that meaning is attributed (Vrey 1987:20).

Kahlil Gibran (1979:20) writes, "Life goes not backward nor carries with yesterday" reminding us that life is not stagnant but everchanging. The meanings assigned in life are thus always changing too. How often do we hear elderly people speaking about "the good old days". This indicates their belief that our world has changed, and not for the better.

It is appropriate then to question whether these changes in our world and society, which have occurred and are ongoing, may have resulted in an increase of aggression in children, and whether primary schools are experiencing the results of this possible increase.

1.2 PROBLEM ANALYSIS

An analysis of how the researcher first became aware of the problem and the follow-up exploration of the problem will now be discussed.

1.2.1 Awareness of the problem

Being a primary school teacher, the researcher was in a position to observe the behaviour of pupils, as well as hearing the complaints of parents and teachers.

Over a period of time the researcher noticed an increase of aggressive behaviour on the playground. Waiting for extra mural activities and after school transport, seemed ideal opportunities for children to become involved in acts of aggression. These included fighting, bullying and verbal abuse. In the absence of a figure of authority or some formal structure, acts of aggression made their appearance.

Teachers started complaining that the children seemed to be worse each year and that discipline was an ongoing battle. Parents came to the school more frequently to complain about injuries sustained on the playground, eg cracked ribs. Comments such as "When my older child was in primary school things like this just did not happen" became more common. The probability of these incidents being accidental diminished with each additional complaint and incident.

The researcher, as a result of these experiences, wondered whether there was possibly an increase of aggression in children, and what factors could be influencing this situation.

1.2.2 Exploration of the problem

The researcher decided to conduct a pilot study in order to establish whether the problem of which she had become aware in the primary school had been experienced by other primary school teachers.

A questionnaire was constructed and given to a small population of primary school teachers to complete. This sample group of twenty teachers was randomly selected and considered to be a representative cross-section of primary school teachers in the area of Johannesburg at any given time (Bailey 1982:110).

The questionnaire consisted of eight questions of which the answer was based on opinion and attitude. The answers were ordinal, offering the respondents a choice of four categories.

The response scale was:

- A - not at all
- B - not really
- C - quite a lot
- D - very much so

A ninth question was included, but this question was optional. This question allowed for the respondent to include any personal views which they might have on the subject of aggression.

QUESTIONNAIRE (CONT)

	A	B	C	D
	not at all	not really	quite a lot	very much so
4. I have observed aggression while pupils are changing classes for subject teaching.				A B C D
5. I have observed aggression after school when children are waiting for extra-mural activities.				A B C D
6. I think aggression is more prevalent in boys than in girls.				A B C D
7. Children are expressing their aggression physically.				A B C D
8. Children are expressing their aggression verbally.				A B C D
9. If you have any further thoughts on aggression in primary school children, fill them in on the space provided below.				

1.2.2.2 The results of the pilot study

Table 1: A summary of the questionnaire responses

Question	Percentage of the response			
	Scale			
	A	B	C	D
1	0%	10%	60%	30%
2	0%	60%	40%	0%
3	0%	15%	70%	15%
4	0%	15%	70%	15%
5	0%	35%	45%	20%
6	0%	35%	30%	35%
7	0%	15%	45%	40%
8	0%	15%	60%	25%

What follows is a discussion of the responses to the questionnaire. Each question is discussed individually and then a conclusion, based on the responses, is made.

Question 1: There seems to be a trend of increasing aggression in children.

Of the respondents sixty percent chose response C, and thirty percent chose response D. This resulted in ninety percent of the respondents feeling that there had been an increase of aggression.

Ten percent felt that there had not really been an increase of aggression.

Question 2: I have observed aggression during formal lessons. Sixty percent of the respondents chose response B, that is that they had not really observed aggression during formal lessons. Forty percent felt that they observed it in this situation 'quite a lot'.

Question 3: I have observed aggression on the playground. Eighty-five percent of the respondents had observed aggression on the playground, with fifteen percent of them indicating that it was extremely prevalent.

Question 4: I have observed aggression while pupils are changing classes for subject teaching. Of the respondents, eighty-six percent had observed aggression in this situation.

Question 5: I have observed aggression after school when children are waiting for extra-mural activities. In this situation sixty percent of the respondents felt that aggression occurred, while thirty five percent felt that it did not really occur.

Question 6: I think that aggression is more prevalent in boys than in girls. Sixty-five percent responded that aggression seemed more prevalent in boys. Thirty-five

percent felt that this was not really the case. Many felt that aggression was not limited to boys, and that girls were also involved in acts of aggression.

Question 7: Children are expressing their aggression physically.

Forty-five percent of the respondents chose response C that this occurred 'quite a lot'. Forty percent felt that this was 'very much so' the case.

Question 8: Children are expressing their aggression verbally.

Sixty percent felt that verbal expression of aggression happened 'quite a lot' and a further twenty five percent indicated that this was 'very much so' a way of expression.

Question 9: Some of the teachers made additional comments about aggression in children. What follows is some of the comments which they made.

"The desire to succeed at all costs has made children more aggressive. They are not allowed to fail", was one response.

Another teacher commented, "Having been away from the class for two years, it is sad to see the increase in aggression. There seems to be more retaliation and some children find it very difficult to restrain themselves from hitting out very often for very petty things."

That aggression was related to the environment

was a further response with "a happy living and working space resulting in passive, caring behaviour".

The comments "I feel the increased aggression is an expression of inner turmoil" and "Aggressive children seem to be unhappy children" suggest an emotional state as being a part of aggression. One teacher felt that "A good hiding when really necessary can do the world of good".

1.2.2.3 Conclusion

From the above analysis of the responses the following conclusion can be drawn.

There seems to be an increase of aggression in primary school children. They are expressing their aggression both physically and verbally. Situations where there is no adult control results in greater numbers of aggressive incidents. Although aggression appeared more prevalent in boys than in girls, girls were also expressing more aggression.

The above exploration of the problem verified for the researcher that the problem of which she had become aware, did exist and was also being experienced by other teachers.

1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

To investigate the problem, the following question may be posed:

- Why has there been an increase of aggression in children?

This generates the following questions:

- (i) - What has caused this possible increase of aggression?
- (ii) - In what types of school situations are children aggressive?
- (iii) - How does the life-world of the aggressive child manifest itself?

1.4 AIM OF RESEARCH

1.4.1 Specific Aim

The specific aim of this dissertation is to try and establish why there has been an increase of aggression in a considerable number of school children. Problems which could be related to this problem will be investigated.

1.4.2 General Aim

The general aim is to gain further insight into aggression in children. This may lead to a greater understanding of causal factors, and so result in possible preventative approaches.

"Since the child cannot be observed in a vacuum" (Vrey 1987: 6) the child's environment will come into focus.

Thus ideas for community involvement in helping to reduce negative aggression may come to the fore.

1.5 DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS

The concepts of this research project are defined herewith. The definition interprets the concept as it is employed in relation to this research project.

1.5.1 Aggression

According to the Oxford Dictionary (1983:18) aggression can be described as quarrelsome behaviour, unprovoked hostility, and the actions of someone who is disposed to attack.

Scott (1975:1) defines aggression as 'fighting' and "means the act of initiating an attack".

"An act which injures or irritates another person and whose goal response is injury to another object/subject" is how Eron, Walder and Lefkowitz (1971:4) describe aggression.

For the purpose of this dissertation, the term aggression will refer to fighting and hostile behaviour which occurs on both a verbal and physical level.

1.5.2 The Primary School Child

When referring to a primary school child, a child between the age of six and twelve is being described. At the age

of six, the child is entering the primary school for the first time. According to Vrey (1987:85) the child is in need of educational support in order to fulfil his self-actualisation. The school provides the child with an ordered, adult formal system.

1.5.3 Life-world

A life-world is described by Van Rensburg, Kilian and Landman (1979:295) as "the world in which people conduct both a way of life and a mode of being". It is a life reality (Van Rensburg et al 1979:295) which is unique to each individual and is the "Gestalt of the individual person's meaningful relationships (Vrey 1987:15). A person's life-world thus consists of everything, "including all the people, object, ideas, systems, forces, attitudes and self, to which one has attributed meaning and therefore understands" (Vrey 1987:15).

1.5.4 Relationships

According to Van Rensburg et al (1979:34) mutuality and the involvement of human beings with one another is denoted by the term relationship. Through dynamic interaction with his life-world, which includes people, objects, ideas and the individual himself, a network of relationships is formed (Vrey 1987:14). If the child experiences problems in his relationships, it may result in undesirable behaviour such as aggression (Jacobs 1987:6).

1.5.5 Unstructured environments

The literature does not provide any formal definition of an unstructured environment. According to the researcher, an unstructured environment can be described as an environment lacking organisation and adult control. In this environment, the child is responsible for finding ways of occupying his/her own time. The environment makes no specific demands on the child nor does it set any limits. An example of an unstructured environment is the school playground.

1.6 RESEARCH METHOD

The researcher will make use of the ex post facto method in order to investigate the problem. By observing existing conditions the researcher will search back through the data, where she had no control over the independent variable, for possible and reasonable causes (Leedy 1985:93). The research will be idiographic in nature and thus deal with the child-in-totality.

1.7 RESEARCH REPORT

The dissertation has been organised into the following chapters:

- Chapter 2: A literature review of aggression.
- Chapter 3: Aggression in primary school children.
- Chapter 4: Research design.
- Chapter 5: Empirical research.
- Chapter 6: Conclusion and recommendations.

CHAPTER 2

A LITERATURE REVIEW OF AGGRESSION

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In William Golding's novel, *Lord of the Flies*, we read about a group of school boys stranded on an island after an aeroplane crash. Coming from a formal English background, the boys initially approach their new experience methodically and with control. But after a short while an innate instinct surfaces which replaces the sense of honour and order with hostility and aggression. This novel by William Golding focuses on human nature where aggression is innate. But this is merely one aetiological hypothesis related to aggression.

In this chapter the various perspectives and hypotheses concerning aggression, the role the environment plays and the definition of aggression are explored.

2.2 PERSPECTIVES ON AGGRESSION

2.2.1 The inherited theory

The view that aggression is biological in nature is one of the oldest explanations for this behaviour. This aetiological approach views aggression in terms of the "organisms chances for survival" (Megargee and Hokanson, 1970:5).

The world in which we live is a hostile place full of threats, so self-preservation requires that the organism has the potential within it for aggressive action (Mackal 1979:100). Storr (1969:14) raises the question of whether there is an internal need which leads to aggression, that is, if all forms of threat were removed, would aggression manifest itself?

According to Lorenz (1966:17) an inherited fighting instinct is the source of aggression. This is prevalent in both man and beast. During the course of evolution, this instinct developed as it had important benefits. One such example is that fighting leads to the dispersal of the population, and so the natural resources are more greatly utilised. Mating is closely related to this, as aggression ensures that the strongest genes are passed on (Lorenz 1966:16). When one thinks of non-human species, for example, fighting kudus with horns interlocked or the male baboon who leads the pack, one sees how aggression is part of successfully obtaining a mate. A young man who is assertive, drives a flashy car and is accumulating material goods, is possibly expressing his instinct for natural selection.

Darwin postulated in his theory (1950:71) that since the context of natural selection also applied to man's evolution, it must also be part of our "inherited biological nature" (Baron and Byrne 1991:396). Further more, sociobiologists contend that over time the increasing levels of aggression within males will be favoured by the principles of natural selection (Baron

and Byrne 1991:396).

A place in which to live and to nurture young, is important to both man and animal. The security of this domain is of constant concern (Geen and O'Neal 1976:177). This leads to the need to protect our physical space, and so aggression in the form of territorial behaviour is expressed. The person engages in actions "in order to stake out and identify his or her property" (Baron and Byrne 1991:564). Geen and O'Neal state that the invasion of private property frequently results in acts of violence (1976:177).

In conclusion, man can be seen as part of the natural cycle where aggression is an instinct ensuring the survival of the fittest.

2.2.2 The psychoanalytic perspective

2.2.2.1 The instinct theory

The psychoanalytic or instinct theory, had Sigmund Freud as one of its early supporters (1933: 117). Freud's early emphasis had initially been on the presence of a life force, Eros, which was man's source of motivation (1947:55). The occurrence of World War One influenced his thinking, resulting in Freud postulating the presence of another set of forces, namely Thanatos, or the death instinct, (1964:107), and that all aggression originates mainly from this powerful death wish.

Destruction and the return of the individual to an inanimate state is the primary function of the death drive (1964:107). This destructive energy is inborn and is in conflict with the life drives. Aggression which is projected towards the environment and others, is thus a manifestation of the conflict between these drives (Eron et al. 1971:19). One could conclude that acts of aggression and violence should be considered normal. This could possibly be the case were it not for inhibitory forces, developed through interaction with others, which block aggression (Megaree and Hokanson 1970:11). In this way, aggression which "opposes the programme of civilisation" can be "channelled and civilised" (Epanchin and Paul 1987:11). Society's disapproval also helps to regulate severely aggressive behaviour like murder, suicide and violence (Meyer, Moore and Viljoen 1990: 50).

Psychoanalysts and psychotherapists have long debated whether man is naturally aggressive or becomes aggressive due to frustration (Storr 1969:1). Most psychoanalysts accept that infants differ in temperament, for example, a baby may be quiet or difficult (Storr 1969:2). As these differences are inborn, Storr (1969:2) states that infants thus "inevitably entertain destructive fantasies". A baby biting his mother during feeding is a manifestation of aggression, namely oral-aggressive behaviour according to Freud (1964:99).

According to Melanie Klein, one of Freud's successors,

(1952:205) aggression is operative in every baby from birth and possibly even prenatally. The continual conflict between love and hate is viewed by her as an "integral part of mental life even in favourable circumstances" (Storr 1969:9).

As psychoanalysts are concerned about the process of nurturing rather than nature (Storr 1969:2), they view environmental frustration as inevitable. If one thinks of a mother and a small baby, it is virtually impossible for the mother to meet all the baby's needs immediately and without delay. This failure on the parents part results in frustrated rage. Parents should thus try to provide a "perfect environment" (Storr 1969:2) for their children in order to counteract this inborn aggression. But a perfect environment remains an ideal. Many children experience neglect, abuse and personal stress. These early experiences can have an effect on the child's developing personality. Freud, in his theories, concentrates on the first three stages of development, namely the oral, anal and phallic stages, as he believes that personality characteristics are "permanently fixed during this period" (Meyer, Moore and Viljoen, 1990:59). Thus a child whose environment is less than care-giving, can become hyper-aggressive as a result of a "dysfunctional ego" (Epanchin and Paul 1987:118) which is unable to satisfy the environmental demands. Instead of developing social skills and self-control, the ego's psychic energy is expended on coping with environmental stressors (Epanchin and Paul 1987:118).

This deficit in age appropriate skills thus affects the developing personality as these children's perceptions and reactions differ from those of well adjusted children.

According to Epanchin and Paul (1987:118) the primary emotion experienced by aggressive children is fear and sadness. The aggression is secondary. By trying to protect themselves from their own feelings they react defensively and so a vicious cycle develops. The faulty ego reacts defensively for protection, but as their aggressive behaviour is anti-social and antagonistic by nature, the reaction of other people supports their fears and doubts. This enables the person to delude himself that his behaviour was justified.

A child of parents who fail to provide a secure environment and who becomes ensnared in this cycle of defensive behaviour will, according to psychoanalysts, ultimately have to be subjected to psycho-analysis.

From the above discussion the conclusion can be made that the psychoanalytical perspective views aggression as innate to man's nature. The need for the death instinct to be expressed, as well as the environmental stresses which arise, results in the overt expression of aggression.

2.2.2.2 The catharsis theory

The concept of catharsis dates back to the time of Aristotle who was born in 384 B.C. (Radice 1981:14). The Oxford Dictionary describes catharsis as "an outlet for strong emotion". According to Aristotle, members of an audience watching a Greek tragedy, would be able to purge themselves of similar emotions by identifying with and experiencing the emotions which were being portrayed on stage (Radice 1981:39).

The notion of aggression catharsis was postulated by Sigmund Freud, and suggests that the "expression of aggression will result in a reduction of subsequent overt aggression" (Megargee and Hokanson 1970:75). The origin of aggression, violence and destructive behaviour can, according to Freud, be attributed to the death instinct. The aggression can either be directed towards the source of the anger or a substitute target. If overt aggression is totally inhibited either in a direct or displaced form, the person may become more aggressive or turn it inwards which may result in masochism or depression (Freud 1964:105).

When we become angry emotional arousal occurs, that is, the level of adrenalin is increased, the heart rate increases and other physiological changes occur. According to Lorenz (1966:45) hostile drives can be lowered by expressing aggression. This leads to the reduction of physiological and internal tension. One can compare man to a dam full of water. When the dam is full, there is tension within the dam and on the dam

wall. By opening the sluices the tension can be released. Similarly the acting out of aggression will reduce inner tension and excitement.

In terms of the optimal catharsis, the greatest reduction will result from the direct expression of aggression. But this is not always a viable solution. Feelings of aggression should preferably be exercised in a socially acceptable way. Such an example, according to Freud, could be the choice of a profession which allows either literal or symbolic destruction such as being a butcher or an art critic (1964:110).

Symbolic experiences may offer partial satisfaction. Viewing aggressive films, plays or athletic contests may be cathartic (Singer and Singer 1981:78). Bandura and the behaviourists feel that by observing someone else perform the action, catharsis can also be experienced (1973:58). The idea of viewing aggression as being cathartic has been a source of much debate in the respect that, does the viewing of violence offer some release for the aggressive drives we experience or could it increase acts of aggression and violence in society?

Techniques for reducing aggression arose from the catharsis theory. Attacking an inanimate object, watching scenes of violence and verbal aggression were used, as these were considered "safe" aggressive actions (Bandura 1973:253). Although these resulted in catharsis, the reduction was thought to be temporary and the question of increasing aggression arose again.

The overt expression of aggression allows us to 'blow-off-steam' and does reduce tension. Although the effect is cathartic, man's cognition plays an important part in arousal. So feelings of anger may reappear when one encounters a similar situation or merely thinks about what irritated you. For this reason Baron and Byrne (1991:428) point out that "catharsis may be less effective than we think at producing long term reductions in aggression".

2.2.3 The social learning theory

The social learning theorist's view of aggression can be regarded as a more positive perspective of man. Man is not viewed as being born with a repertoire of behavioural responses but rather that the origin and maintenance of aggressive behaviour (Epanchin and Paul 1987:120) is learned behaviour. Just as we learn other forms of complex social behaviour so aggression is also learned (Bandura 1973:40). If the behaviour can be learned then it must also be possible to control or unlearn it.

Children acquire aggressive responses in various ways. They can learn them through direct experience or by observing others (Bandura 1973:44). Models can come in the form of family members, peers, other people, fictitious characters and models presented in the mass media (Epanchin and Paul 1987:120). Children are more likely to model the behaviour presented by high status individuals and the behaviour of people who are either rewarded or go unpunished for their aggressive

behaviour (Bandura 1973:411). Although children do not spontaneously copy aggressive behaviour, the prospect of a reward is often persuasive. If no aversive consequences will result and a reward can be obtained, children learn to become aggressive (Epanchin and Paul 1987:120). Children can also learn through observation and practice that they can get what they want by harming and overpowering others.

From the above discussion we can see how aggressive behaviour can be encouraged and maintained by positive reinforcement either in the form of social rewards or by observing others gain rewards. According to Liebert and Spiegler (1982:498), just as reward leads to the imitation of modelled behaviour, so punishment can lead to behaviour which is opposite to the model's in order to avoid punishment. This is called counter-imitation.

Azrin and Holz (1966:380-447) give the following definition of punishment. "Punishment is the reduction of the future probability of a specific response as a result of the immediate delivery of a stimulus for that response". Thus punishment for aggressive behaviour will result in children feeling anxious about giving expression to their aggression. This anxiety will act as an inhibitor to future aggression (Eron et al. 1971:21). Studies have been done to support this view of aggression. One such study on nursery school children demonstrated that children who were punished for aggressive behaviour showed less aggression during later play sessions than children who had not been punished (Eron et al. 1971:23).

However, the effect of punishment has also been questioned. Punishment may also contribute to aggressive behaviour. Azrin and Holz (1966:381) state that it may cause frustration which will increase the aggressive need while at the same time providing the child with a model to be copied. When punishment is delayed and inconsistent, any possibility of it being beneficial is defeated. By taking an aggressive stance, the parent not only supplies the child with an aggressive model but demonstrates that aggressive behaviour requires an aggressive response.

Not only do children learn aggressive responses, but they also learn who can be considered as appropriate targets. Examples are minority groups and any person seen as being different. In addition, they learn about when aggressive retaliation is justified and in which situations aggression may be appropriate or inappropriate (Baron and Byrne 1991:399).

Although aggression is learned, the potential for a person to act aggressively will depend on factors such as his past experience, the presence of reinforcers, how appropriate the behaviour is and the eventual outcome of his behaviour (Baron and Byrne 1991:400). For this reason, the perspective that aggression is learned is more positive than thinking of man as being a slave to his instincts. Behavioural therapists, on the basis of this perspective, have been effective in changing aggressive behaviour through behaviour modification and by increasing the individual's response repertoire (Epanchin and Paul 1987:400).

2.2.4 The frustration-aggression theory

The frustration-aggression theory was initially postulated by John Dollard, Neal Miller and their team (1939:1). The initial theory was that aggression always originates from frustration and frustration always results in aggression. Scott (1975:33) writes that because frustration feels like anger it is often associated with aggression, but does not necessarily result in acts of aggression. Views such as Scott's resulted in the theory of frustration-aggression being modified, as many other contributing factors play a role, so that frustration does not always result in an aggressive response.

Berkowitz's proposed revision (1989:59-73) postulated that the unpleasant experiences associated with frustration may lead to aggression, but that cognitive processes often modify this tendency towards aggression. Scott (1975:34) suggests that frustration is only likely to result in aggression when "the individual is in the habit of being aggressive".

Frustration according to Dollard and Miller (1939:11) can be defined as "a condition which exists when a goal-response suffers interference". From this definition we can conclude that if an individual's goal-directed behaviour is blocked in some way, then frustration will result. Scott (1975:32) states that frustration also results when an individual is unable to adapt to a situation. The "goodness of fit" model of Chess and Thomas (1984:21) illustrates how

dissonance can lead to aggression. A good fit according to Chess and Thomas results when the capacity, motivation and behaviour of the individual satisfies the demands and expectations of the environment. When the characteristics of the individual and the demands of the environment are not in accordance with each other, then this poor fit will lead to maladaptive development. It is possible that the frustration experienced by the individual, because of the poorness of the fit, might lead to anger and aggressive responses.

When an individual experiences frustration, feelings such as anger, annoyance and irritation accompany it. These negative feelings may then facilitate aggression. According to Dollard and Miller (1939:12) the more an individual feels frustrated the more easily is anger induced which results in more aggression.

Whether this frustration will result in overt acts of aggression will depend on the strength of the instigator of the frustration. For example, a group of students may feel frustrated when a lecturer is late for a class. They feel annoyed but are unlikely to resort to overt acts of aggression such as striking or swearing at the lecturer. Cognitive processes will usually make the individual assess his frustration and situation and, instead of causing injury to the source of the frustration, will lead to other types of behaviour which are more socially acceptable (Scott 1975:34). The individual may dream up a plan of revenge directed at the object (Megargee and Hokanson

1970:25) or merely react with resignation and despair in an attempt to overcome the frustration (Baron and Byrne 1991:404). The aggression may also be displaced and directed towards the self, possibly resulting in acts such as suicide and masochism (Freud 1964:105).

Acts of aggression are also inhibited by the anticipation of punishment. However, if the power of the instigator is high, feelings of frustration may overcome any anticipation of punishment (Dollard and Miller 1939:19).

Frustration can thus be viewed as a cause of aggression, but not as the only cause. It is merely one of a number of factors which possibly result in aggressive behaviour.

2.2.5 The social cognition theory

The child, on route to adulthood, is continually orientating himself in his life-world (Vrey 1987:30). Assigning meaning to relations with people, objects and actions is essential if the child is to understand and be involved in his world in a meaningful way. As adults, we continue to assign meaning. These meanings may, however, change as significance attribution has both a cognitive and affective component (Vrey 1987:32).

Since we are continually in contact with other people in our life-world, we are going to encounter provocative actions by others. The meaning attributed

to the causes behind these actions will determine how we will react (Baron and Byrne 1991:405). When an incident occurs, for example someone pushes you, cognitive processes occur in order to assign meaning to this act. If the act is perceived as intentional, the typical response will be one of anger and reciprocation (Epanchin and Paul 1987:121). However, if the act is concluded to be unintentional, for example, the person tripped, we are likely to behave less aggressively, even overlook the incident as the circumstances were perceived to be beyond the person's control (Baron and Byrne 1991:118). In this case, cognition inhibited aggression. Thus the interpretation of the situation determined the emotional reaction.

Researchers in this field hypothesise that developmental lags or deficits in social cognition causes a great deal of deviant behaviour (Epanchin and Paul 1987:121). The meaning assigned to the behaviour of others, determines the individual's own behaviour. Thus developing the ability to correctly assign meaning to another's intentions and to integrate that information into our own behaviour (Epanchin and Paul 1987:121) is essential as it inhibits defensive aggressive reactions.

2.3 THE ROLE OF THE ENVIRONMENT

From the discussion of the various perspectives of aggression, it is evident that the extent to which the individual will react is related to his experience and perception of his world as well as innate characteristics. But the physical and social

environment can also contribute to aggressive behaviour.

2.3.1 The physical environment

An issue under the spotlight in recent years is that of over population. According to Baron and Byrne (1991:528) the present growth rate is less than two percent per year. Although this figure seems small, the world population grows faster all the time as numbers increase. The continually increasing population has resulted in urbanisation world-wide because of the tendency for people in the rural areas to migrate to the cities in search of a better life (Baron and Byrne 1991:531).

Although people are adaptable, overcrowding and being in close proximity with others all the time puts a great deal of stress on the individual. The individual is subjected to more interaction than would normally be desired (Jordaan and Jordaan 1986:699), and negative feelings are aroused. Feelings of fear, anxiety and anger arise as the individual feels a weakened sense of control over his privacy and personal space. Geen and O'Neal (1976:177) states that there is a strong relationship between territorial intrusion and aggression.

In high density areas there is a greater chance of physical contact with others. According to Geen and O'Neal (1976:380) aggressive "cues" from other people become more apparent when one feels crowded. These cues can include eye contact, threatening gestures and

the invasion of personal space. The individual may feel there is interference of his personal goals, frustration of movement as well as arousal because of the presence of others and so aggressive responses are enhanced (Scott 1975:109). Withdrawal, breakdown of social support and a decline in psychological health (Baron and Byrne 1991:556) are also seen as resulting from continual exposure to overcrowding.

Large cities produce a great deal of noise, and although people do adapt, according to Mathews and Canon (1975:571-577) people are less likely to engage in helping behaviour in noisy conditions, while Donnerstien and Wilson (1976:774-881) state that noise instigates aggressive behaviour.

That other human beings are a part of our environment is inevitable. Different people as well as different cultures have learned to adapt in different ways. The Asian culture's adaptive behaviour has been better than those of Western cultures (Baron and Byrne 1991:558), as the Asian custom is one of seeking harmony with the environment, whereas Westerners still tend to respond more to the feelings aroused by high density.

Being part of a crowd has another affect on the individual's tendency towards aggression in that the individual experiences a loss of identity as well as a feeling of anonymity. This can facilitate aggression in the form of collective violence and mob behaviour (Geen and O'Neal 1976:181). According to Zimbardo (Geen and O'Neal 1976:181) this process is called

"deindividuation". He states that, in a crowded situation, the individual experiences a loss of "self-awareness, self-observation and self-evaluation". In addition to this, the individual becomes less sensitive to social norms. With the lack of the inhibiting force exerted by social norms and a sense of anonymity, aggression increases. The individual feels less responsible for his anti-social behaviour as the other group members are viewed as sharing the responsibility for the negative consequences. The group also offers protection in that being anonymous makes it harder to identify the individual for disciplining.

Thus, not only does the high density of people arouse feelings of aggression, but it can also make the individual feel a loss of identity resulting in counternormative behaviour such as aggression.

2.3.2 The social environment

The social setting as well as the ideals of the society can also be responsible for aggressive behaviour.

Wide discrepancies often occur between cultural ideals regarding aggression. For example, ideals such as fighting, individual bravery and being a warrior was, and still is, for many Zulu people an accepted standard of behaviour. The first settlers in South Africa, on meeting the Zulus, considered them to be barbaric and uncivilised. But is this not merely an indication of the subjective nature of aggression? What is regarded as aggressive to one person may be normal to another.

According to Scott (1975:98) the behaviour of the individual never coincides exactly with the cultural ideal. Some individuals may adhere strictly to the ideal, whereas others may be more lenient in their interpretation and expression. Another factor is that the cultural ideal may not always be consistent. For a child, the behaviour being taught, can thus often seem conflicting. For example, a child may learn that one needs to be aggressive in order to succeed in life and get ahead. Life then becomes a competition in which people according to Baron and Byrne (1991:191) try to "maximise their own outcomes often at the expense of others". In order to compete for resources such as jobs, food and status, which are often in short supply, people adopt aggressive stances and feelings such as animosity, hatred and even prejudice can result (Baron and Byrne 1991:191) from this competition.

Seeing a group of children picking on another child who is different from them is a common occurrence. The child may only be different in that he comes from another school or neighbourhood. This example illustrates how people divide their world into groups of 'us' and 'them' (Scott 1975:89). Their own group is the In group and the other is the Out group. The division of groups can be based on factors such as age, gender, religion, race and so on. People view their own group more positively and the other group more negatively (Baron and Byrne 1991:194). This results in groups behaving aggressively towards each other and may result in conflict.

Thus the way in which man interacts socially will influence the behaviour responses of other people. Aggressive behaviour arouses negative feelings in others and can lead to unpleasant interactions.

2.4 DEFINING AGGRESSION

The difficulty with giving an exact definition of aggression can be attributed to the many different behaviours which are included under the heading of aggression. The various perspectives of aggression try to establish the cause of aggression. But depending on the researcher's school of thought, aggression can be viewed as catharsis, a response to frustration, an instinct innate to man or a result of man's physical and social environment. Thus the possible origins of aggression are many.

However, a common thread which can be traced in most of the research dealing with aggression is that aggression is generally accepted as "an act whose goal response is injury to an organism" (Storr 1969:x). Aggression is also intentional, that is, it is the "intentional infliction of some form of harm on others" (Baron and Byrne 1991:394). This injury may be physical or psychological in nature. Physical assaults, such as biting and kicking, and verbal insults, such as making threats and name-calling (Epanchin and Paul 1987:111), are ways in which injury may be inflicted. Aggression is considered a form of anti-social behaviour (Louw 1991:289) as it interferes with "another person's pleasure or achievements" (Epanchin and Paul 1987:111). For this reason, devious behaviour, such as annoying or pestering another person, is also aggressive. It is this type of aggression which will be the focus of this dissertation. (Refer to 2.5).

The above description is brief and a more detailed exploration of the nature of aggression, with specific reference to children, will be dealt with in the following chapter. For the purpose of clarity, the classification of aggression in terms of the American Psychiatric Association's Diagnostic Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders DSM III-R is discussed briefly below.

The DSM III is a multi-axial classification system which allows for objectivity and is concerned with the child as a "whole" (Knopf 1984:35). The DSM III classifies continual aggressive and anti-social behaviour as a conduct disorder. This continual aggression, however, is not the type of aggression the researcher is referring to in this dissertation, nor will the children used in the idiographic study meet the criteria specified by the DSM III for this classification.

According to the DSM III a fundamental feature of a Conduct Disorder is "the repetitive and persistent pattern of conduct in which the basic rights of others or the major age-appropriate societal norms or rules are violated" (1983:45). The presence or absence of social bonds and the presence or absence of aggressive behaviour allows for the differentiation of four specific sub-types (Wicks-Nelson and Israel 1984:257) namely, the under socialised aggressive; undersocialised non-aggressive, socialised aggressive and socialised non-aggressive.

The socialised types have social attachments with others although their behaviour is anti-social (Epanchin and Paul 1987:111). Showing concern for friends is evident (Wicks-Nelson and Israel 1984:257) but callous and manipulative behaviour may be directed at persons with whom they have no attachment (DSM III 1983:45).

The undersocialised types are characterised by the lack of social attachments. Although superficial relationships may exist, a "failure to establish a normal degree of affection, empathy and a bond with others" (DSM III 1983:45) is characteristic. Their anti-social behaviour is according to Epanchin and Paul (1987:112), more "callous, isolated and egocentric". There is usually a lack of concern for others and feelings of guilt and contrition are generally absent (DSM III 1983:45).

The aggressive types are characterised by the fact that they have a recurrent and enduring pattern of behaviour which violates the right of others. This violation may be in the form of physical violence against people, for example raping or mugging, or theft outside the home which "involves confrontation with the victim" (DSM III 1983:46).

The non-aggressive types are described by the DSM III (1983:46) as being characterised by "the chronic violation of age-appropriate rules". Truancy, running away, vandalism and recurrent lying are distinctive forms of behaviour. One of the differences between the aggressive and non-aggressive types is the absence of physical violence against others in the behaviour of the non-aggressive types (Wicks-Nelson and Israel 1984: 257).

Features common to all four sub-types are: blaming others; perceiving others as angry and hostile (Epanchin and Paul 1987:111); and feelings of mistrust and being unfairly treated. These children experience difficulty both in the home and in their communities (Wicks-Nelson and Israel 1984:257). The DSM III (1983:46) also associates the features of poor academic achievement, irritability, temper outbursts, early abuse of substances and promiscuous behaviour with children classified as

having a conduct disorder. A low self-esteem is usual, although the child appears 'tough'.

2.5 CONCLUSION

Aggressive behaviour is a common feature of man's interaction with his world and other people. No single cause is evident for its development and the various perspectives provide us with aetiological angles from which to reflect on this phenomenon of daily life. The individual's subjective opinion also makes it difficult to demarcate clearly what is regarded as acceptable and unacceptable behaviour.

From the literature survey, the researcher decided that no one theory can be viewed as offering a comprehensive definition of aggression. For this reason, the researcher formulated an eclectic definition of aggression for the purpose of this dissertation. Thus, when using the term aggression, the researcher refers to "an inborn instinct which is expressed as anti-social behaviour, such as punching, hitting and verbal aggression, as a result of man's interaction with his physical and social environment".

Although aggressive responses and behaviour are characteristic to human nature, continual aggression which violates the rights of others will negatively affect the child's potential for meaningful self-actualisation.

CHAPTER 3

AGGRESSION IN PRIMARY SCHOOL CHILDREN

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter various theories concerning the nature of aggression were discussed. This chapter focuses on how aggression manifests itself and is expressed by children. To understand how aggression develops in children the primary school child needs to be described in terms of how he relates to people, objects, ideas and himself (Vrey 1987:59).

3.2 THE PRIMARY SCHOOL CHILD

The primary school years cover the age-range from six to twelve years. During this time the child is in his "middle childhood" years (Louw 1991:311). When the child enters primary school he is moving away from his home into the wider community of his school and peer group. This unknown world requires that it be explored by the child if independence which culminates in adulthood is to be achieved (Vrey 1987:85). The world of the school makes demands on the child physically, socially and intellectually. A child enters this world full of possibilities. Certain expectations are held by the child and parents regarding the school. When these expectations are not met the child experiences feelings of inferiority, inadequacy and frustration.

Educational support is essential for the fulfilment of a child's self-actualisation (Vrey 1987:85). The educator assists in directing the child's involvement with his world and so guides

him in his search for meaning (Vrey 1987:86) thus enabling the child to form relations.

Although every child is unique, certain developmental tasks must be mastered during the middle childhood years (Louw 1991:311). The mastery of these tasks is made possible by maturation, learning and interaction with fellow human beings.

The following developmental tasks should be mastered by the primary school child:

- * refining of motor skills;
- * consolidation of sex-role identity;
- * development of concrete operational thought;
- * mastery of the basic scholastic skills;
- * extension of social participation;
- * formation of a self-concept;
- * development of pre-conventional morality.

(Louw 1991:312 and Vrey 1987:83-92)

3.2.1 Motor skills

The primary school child is able to develop new skills as he gains greater muscular control of the body. Co-ordination and balance improve and there is also an increase in strength (Louw 1991:314).

Jumping, skipping, running, climbing etc are enjoyed by the child and his peer group. Drawing, painting and writing become possible for the primary school child as his skills become more refined and social participation is promoted by various sporting activities. Efficiency

of these skills is important for the child's acceptance by and inclusion in the peer group.

3.2.2 Sex-role identity

The sex-role identity according to Seward and Seward (1980:90) is established between the ages of two and three years. During the primary school years children tend to play with children of the same sex and involve themselves in activities which are regarded as typical of their gender (Louw 1991:492) e.g. a boy will eat like a boy, wear boy's clothes and plays with boy toys such as guns and cars.

3.2.3 Cognitive development

The primary school years, according to Piaget (1972:59) are the period of concrete operational thought. "Internalised mental actions" are called operations (Piaget 1972:56) and are reversible. These operations are considered "concrete" as they use objects as their basis and not abstract hypotheses. Thus the child can think logically about concrete problems but is still unable to solve hypothetical problems. The primary school child has "a concept of number, can classify, is capable of seriation, understands conservation and has a good understanding of transition" (Louw 1991:326) and so is capable of logical problem solving.

Because a primary school child's thinking is in the concrete operational stage, conflicts and their solutions are also seen in concrete terms. They are not objective

yet and see them only from one point of view. According to Carlson-Paige and Levin (1992:36) children often find it hard to think about the "conflict (beginning), negotiation (middle) and solution (end) in any logically interconnected way". It is the environment which provides the child with information about interaction and conflict resolution, and so assists them in deciding on how to resolve their own conflicts.

3.2.4 Mastery of the basic scholastic skills

A large portion of a child's day is spent in the classroom where a great deal of emphasis is placed on teaching reading, writing and arithmetic. Although children acquire these skills at different tempos (Vrey 1987:89) they will have been mastered by most children at the end of the primary school years.

3.2.5 Social development

During the middle childhood years there is a move away from egocentricity to developing an awareness of others and their feelings. Thus the child is more sensitive to the needs of others and takes their feelings into account (Louw 1991:360).

The primary school child tends to interact more with children of the same age and sex. He now plays with others and is capable of sharing and playing according to rules (Vrey 1987:89).

As the child interacts with his peers, it gives him an

opportunity to apply what he "sees and hears about conflict and actively transform it into something that has meaning for him" (Carlson-Paige & Levin 1992:36).

3.2.6 Formation of a self-concept

The primary school years are regarded by Newman and Newman (Louw 1991:370) as critical in the development of the self-concept. Self-care habits are developed and a positive attitude towards his appearance develops (Vrey 1987:90). With this comes greater autonomy and so the child starts to define himself in psychological terms (Louw 1991:370). A concept of who they are, that is, the real self, and who they would like to be, the ideal self, develops (Oosthuizen, Petrick and Wiechers 1985:10 OSV 401-P). The image the child forms is based on how he describes himself in terms of success, his ability to do things and his needs (Vrey 1987:90). It is important for the child to experience acceptance by his parents, teachers and peers as this is linked to his own sense of self-acceptance. The development of a positive and realistic self-concept at this stage is important for meaningful self-actualisation in later years.

3.2.7 Moral development

From a young age children learn what is considered to be good or bad, acceptable or unacceptable forms of behaviour. The approval or disapproval of an act by parents and educators helps the child to establish a set of values and ethical norms (Vrey 1987:90). This influences his behaviour and results in whether he is

accepted by his peer group and wider community.

Piaget believes that the child's level of cognitive awareness is linked to his level of moral development (1968:16).

Although Kohlberg (1985:4) expanded on Piaget's theory, the essence of the primary school child's level of moral development is similar. The two theories postulate that rules are regarded as "unchangeable, sacred and extensions of a higher authority (Louw 1991:342) and obeyed in order to avoid punishment. Motives and mitigating circumstances are not taken into account.

At approximately the tenth year, motives are considered and punishment is not seen as inevitable. Children also start to obey rules out of self-interest and for the gratification of personal needs (Kohlberg 1985:49).

Although the child's moral development is still incomplete at the end of the middle childhood years, a set of norms and values will have been established and even though these are likely to develop further and undergo changes, this, according to Vrey (1987:90) is indicative of self-actualisation.

3.3 AGGRESSION IN CHILDREN

When parents and teachers speak about aggressive behaviour in children, they do not necessarily mean the same thing. As discussed in Chapter 2, there has been difficulty in finding a

uniform definition for aggression.

According to Parens (1987:6), although different forms of aggression exist, there is one feature common to them all, and that is "they are an attempt to control, act upon, and master ourselves and our environment, including the people within it". Low (1991:289) describes them as "any negative activity which brings about antagonism in the child's relationship with his environment".

Most of the literature points to the fact that there are two major forms of aggression namely non-destructive aggression and hostile destructive aggression. Low (1991:289) finds the difference between the two resides in the underlying motive. When a child behaves aggressively one should question whether the goal was to be hurtful to another or whether the intention was that of personal protection.

Non-destructive aggression and hostile destructive aggression are discussed separately below, so that the differences between the two can be clarified.

3.3.1 Non-destructive aggression and its development

It is suggested by the available research and evidence, that non-destructive aggression is present at birth.

It is the output of an inherent system whose function is that of adaptation and the attainment of goals and desires. This is observable in "assertive, non-hostile, self-protective, goal-driving and mastery behaviour" (Parens 1987:7).

Non-destructive aggression is evident from the first few months in a newborn as the infant tries to attain some control and assert himself upon the environment (Parens 1987:8). It also motivates competitiveness, self-determination and serves "to secure and protect our needs, property and rights". This relates to other researchers' use of the term "instrumental aggression" (Epanchin and Paul 1987:112). According to Louw (1991:289) it also involves acquiring or retrieving an object for example a toy or a privilege. Grabbing, pushing and shoving are part of instrumental aggression. Here the aggression is secondary to the goal (Pepler and Rubin 1991:204).

Young children are involved in exploratory behaviours where they are trying to attain some level of independence and control, for example the infant attempting to grasp the object catching his interest; the child attempting to ride a bike. Non-destructive aggression provides the momentum for this type of behaviour which does not involve anger and has no purpose to destroy or harm (Parens 1987:9).

Thus we can see that aggression expressed in this manner is important for adaptation and learning. Parens (1987:16) sees it as "highly desirable and necessary for achievement and survival".

3.3.2 Hostile aggression and its development

Hostile aggression is not inborn, but triggered by the "experience of excessive displeasure" (Parens 1987:7).

Pain and distress are unpleasant experiences for children. According to Parens (1987:10) when these experiences happen in excess they will result in acts of hostility. The goal of this behaviour is to hurt (Epanchin and Paul 1987:112). Even if, for example, a child attempts to push a peer, yet fails in his attempt, hostile aggression was still expressed. Thus hostile aggression encompasses hurtful behaviours such as hate, rage, pestering, bullying and torturing (Parens 1987:7 and Epanchin and Paul 1987:111).

According to Parens (1987:8) although the experience of pain or distress can trigger a rage reaction in infants, they are still unable to have cognitive thoughts involving hurtful intention. Intentionally hurtful behaviour only becomes evident from about one year of age (Parens 1987:13). When hostility is generated the child may lash out at the source of his pain or displace these feelings, for example smash a sibling's sandcastle, instead of hitting the sibling.

When the hostile act is premeditated and an element of pleasure is involved, it is as a result of a painful experience which has been stored in the psyche (Parens 1987:14). When at a later stage circumstances arise which are easier for the child to cope with, this hostility may be acted on.

Painful experiences are unavoidable and so all children will experience feelings of hostility. But within a caring parental relationship, the development of excessive hostility and its mobilisation can be prevented

(Parens 1987:18).

Thus we can see how both non-destructive and destructive aggression are part of every child's life. They both influence the child's emotional well-being, the developing personality, social development and general mental health. The manner in which this aggression is handled is associated with their personal well-being and acceptance by their peer group. Extreme hostility, unfortunately, results in pain and can lead to the destruction of the individual and those close to him.

3.4 AGGRESSION AT SCHOOL

Within the school situation children are continually expressing their aggression in conflict situations. This aggression may be non-destructive or hostile destructive aggression, as previously discussed. From the recent literature and research on aggression a common trend appears, namely that the levels of aggression children use with each other seems to be on the increase and that it is disturbing for the adults who work with them.

In the South African context, children are being exposed to more violence than ever before. The number of violent crimes is continually on the rise, and these crimes are often broadcast in full-colour by the media. Many South African children live in poverty and experience violence which is a direct result of this. The children who live in townships have been exposed to violence to such an extent that it is seen as just part of daily life. Not only that, the model set by adult society is that resolution can be obtained through violence, for example: the continual conflict amongst hostel dwellers, the aggressive stance of the

Afrikaner Weerstand Beweging and the continual outbursts on the field by the South African rugby team to name but a few.

According to Carlson-Paige and Levin (1992:35) children do not only view "entertainment violence" on television, but play with toys linked to shows such as "Master's of the Universe", "G.I. Joe" and "Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles". They see the function of these toys as violent, as it "encourages children to replicate in their play the violence they see on shows". Teachers experience this influence by the media directly in their pupil's play in that fighting is viewed as fun and it is seen as acceptable to beat-up someone. Not only that, these toys are brought along to school and used in "play" during lunch breaks.

3.5 PUPIL AGGRESSION AND THE TEACHER

According to Murray (1992:25) children who engage in aggressive behaviour are the first to be noticed by the teacher. This type of behaviour is not what teachers like as it tends to disrupt the environment they are trying to construct within their classroom.

Carlson-Paige and Levin (1992:36) have noticed the trend of more "structured, traditional, curriculum activities like worksheets and teacher-led lessons" replacing free play. They concluded that this was possibly happening as teachers were attempting to find alternatives which reduced the amount of conflict and aggression prevalent when children are allowed to interact freely.

Furthermore, it seems as if teachers may have difficulty distinguishing between playfighting and aggression and so will "interfere with playfighting and attempt to direct it" (Connor

1989:214). It was suggested by Pellegrini (1989:257) that playfighting may "play a positive role in the development of boys' social competence" and so is a necessary part of play.

Thus the role of the teacher is a demanding one. Trying to distinguish between hostile acts of aggression, attempts by pupils to re-establish meaningful contact (Murray 1992:26) and playfighting can be a difficult task. But correct identification of anger is essential as the emotional growth of our children is an important concern.

3.6 UNSTRUCTURED ENVIRONMENTS

Acts of aggression do occasionally take place in the classroom, but more often than not, angry and resentful feelings are suppressed as the presence of the teacher tends to inhibit children's aggressive behaviour.

Teasing remarks, verbal aggression and subtle forms of bullying seem to be the way in which aggression is expressed in the classroom. Children the researcher spoke to found comments made about them, for example "stupid" and "dummy" upsetting. Deliberate acts such as bumping an individual's table, knocking their pencil boxes down, kicking anothers' suitcase were all examples mentioned by children. But because of the situation and presence of the teacher these acts of aggression and retaliation remain controlled.

However, on the playground, corridors and sports fields, acts of aggression can pass unmonitored to a large extent.

Bullying often happens in unstructured environments when one person or a group "picks on, harasses and pesters another" (Olweus 1988:424).

According to research, bullying is more prevalent in the primary school grades and decreases towards and through high school (Olweus 1988:416). The perpetrators are often older children picking on younger children. Olweus (1988:421) reported that it is often believed that bullying "takes place on the way to and from school rather than at school". This has been proved untrue by recent studies which showed that the school is the place where the most bullying occurs (Olweus 1988:421).

Research by Olweus in 1983 (1988:420) showed that very little was done by teachers to stop bullying, and that parents of both the bully and the victim were mostly unaware of the problem.

Confrontation also results from name-calling or verbal abuse. Mooney, Creeser and Blatchford (1991:111) found that insults about an individual's family was viewed by children as a "particularly serious form of teasing". During the investigation children mentioned retaliation as the most frequent strategy for coping and this often resulted in fights. What starts as fun by calling each other names can quickly escalate to more serious aggression.

Unstructured environments are the territory of the peer group. In the classroom situation the teacher is the one who constructs groups, for example, according to ability or interest. But outside the classroom, children choose their own peer group. Research by Rauste von Wright (1989:473) showed boys were involved in more peer group fights than girls. When a fight

occurred between peers, the other boys in the group often responded in an aggressive manner. Physical aggression was seen as "clever or smart" by boys, whereas only a small number of girls "thought fighting to be valued by their peers" (Rauste von Wright 1989:482). Furthermore girls seem to experience more internal conflicts when it comes to the expression of aggression and so "analyse the function of aggressive behaviour in a more differentiated manner than boys" (Rauste von Wright 1989:471).

Pellegrini (1989:245) researched Rough-and-Tumble play and aggression. Here gender was also found to have an influence, namely, that boys engaged in more Rough-and-Tumble and aggression than girls do. Boys engage in Rough-and-Tumble for fun and to "interact co-operatively with their peers" (Pellegrini 1989:257). However, aggressive boys had difficulty in Rough-and-Tumble play, as they would respond to it with aggression, as the meaning they attributed to it was that its intention was that of aggression.

Although Rough-and-Tumble play and aggression are different forms of behaviour, because Rough-and-Tumble takes place mostly in unstructured environments, for example the soft grassy playground (Pellegrini 1989:251) aggression could thus also be expressed more readily in these environments.

3.7 SIGNIFICANT RELATIONSHIPS FOR THE PRIMARY SCHOOL CHILD

No child functions in isolation, but has his needs met within a network of relationships that constitute his life-world (Vrey 1987:14). Research has revealed the significance of relationships for the healthy self-actualization of the child. Problematic behaviour such as aggression is symptomatic of relationship problems (Jacobs 1987:11) and results in negative

experiences for the child which adversely affects self-actualisation.

The following relationships are of significance for the primary school child:

- * relationship with parents
- * relationship with peers
- * relationship with teachers
- * relationship with objects and ideas
- * relationship with self.

(Jacobs 1987:9)

According to the Relationship Theory, the above relationships are going to be discussed. This is of importance as the Relationship Theory is going to determine the sequence of the empirical research (Figure 2 page 75).

3.7.1 Relationship with parents

When a child is born, it is the parent-child relationship which is the primary relationship during these vulnerable early years. Although the primary school child spends more time away from home than in the early years, it is the family which still offers security and is a pivotal point in his life (Louw 1991:348).

The first relationship for the child is the one formed with the mother figure. Unconditional love, consistent care, affection and acceptance make this relationship a positive experience, and so enable the child to venture and form further relationships. This parent relationship

is thus a "vital anchorage point for its relations with other people" (Vrey 1987:23). Although the parent-child relationship is a frame of reference for the child when he forms later relationships (Du Toit and Jacobs 1989:31), it is the "way the relationship with the parents is experienced which will influence the ability to realize developmental tasks (Raath and Jacobs 1993:63).

Parents are also individuals who have had unique life experiences. These experiences may, however, have had a lasting effect on their personality and so influence their behaviour as parents (Louw 1991:350). The quality of interaction between parent and child is also affected by the parenting style employed by the parent. Being, for example, too permissive or authoritarian could have an affect on the child's development (Louw 1991:352).

According to Raath and Jacobs (1993:64) experiencing a sense of security and love at home enables the child to adapt to the peer group situation, build further relationships and successfully handle less pleasant situations. Rejection, estrangement and a lack of parental love, inhibits the child's exploration of his life-world and results in a negative behaviour pattern.

In order to develop a positive self-esteem, the child needs to experience "total or nearly total acceptance", have "clearly defined and enforced limits", yet there needs to be some latitude within these limits (Raath and Jacobs 1993:65).

According to Sommers (Vrey 1987:26) "maladjustment among children is preceded by unsatisfactory relations between the parents at home". This sentiment is also emphasized by Vrey (1987:131) who states, "the child who is not accepted by his parents cannot accept himself".

It is thus apparent that the child's self-actualisation and emancipation is directly associated with the quality of the parent-child relationship.

3.7.2 Relationship with peers

Through the primary school years, the child's relationship with his peers becomes more intense until in adolescence it is stronger than the parent-child relationship (Vrey 1987:24).

Children desire to be part of a peer group to satisfy their need for friendship, affection and general fellowship (Louw 1991:361). Learning to form and maintain friendships is an important role of the peer group. It is also like a home away from home where the child can practice and refine his social skills. The child learns to compete with his equals, and to be a team player in work and play (Raath and Jacobs 1993:68).

Being accepted by the peer group adds to the child's sense of importance and is necessary for the development of a positive self-concept (Raath and Jacobs 1993:67). This sense of belonging supports the image he has of himself as being an individual of dignity and worth (Vrey 1987:104). Furthermore, while in the company of his

equals, he is provided with an opportunity to evaluate his self-identity more realistically (Vrey 1987:104).

Thus peer relationships contribute to the child's social development and play an essential role in the process of maturing and becoming independent (Raath and Jacobs 1993:68). Rejection by the peer group is a traumatic experience and is seen to have serious implications for the emotional adjustment of the child, and could contribute to future difficulties in peer relations.

3.7.3 Relationship with teachers

While at primary school, the child spends a great deal of time with the class teacher. Whether the child will feel at ease and adjust to the school situation will depend on the teacher's acceptance of him (Raath and Jacobs 1993:70).

The teacher's role is not only limited to the learning experience. Teachers are also role models with whom the child willingly identifies (Vrey 1987:116) and are ultimately influential in nearly every aspect of the child's development (Louw 1991:338). The adult support provided by the teacher is essential if the child is to realize his full potential (Vrey 1987:205). Research studies substantiate this view, by demonstrating that children tend to improve their performance when the teacher believes that they are capable of better achievement (Vrey 1987:117).

The teacher by respecting the child as a person, builds

on the concept the child has of himself (Vrey 1987:116 and 207). From the studies of Lang (1960), Vrey (1987:116) concluded that a positive correlation exists between "the child's self-perception and his perception of the teacher's attitude towards him".

No rapport will develop between the child and teacher if the child feels that the teacher does not accept and like him (Raath and Jacobs 1993:70). Furthermore, if a child experiences his relationship with the teacher negatively, his evaluation of future teachers could be influenced and so impair the relationships (Du Toit and Jacobs 1989:31). Poor relations with teachers will thus ultimately affect the developmental process.

3.7.4 Relationship with objects and ideas

The child comes into contact with objects and ideas as he explores his life-world. By assigning meaning to them, relations are formed (Vrey 1987:24). In order to assign meaning, the child needs to be mentally involved in the activity.

Initially the relations are characterised by the child's knowledge of the object or idea, and its usefulness to him (Vrey 1987:25). However, an affective component is added to the meaning assigned as the child experiences success or failure and satisfaction or dissatisfaction in his involvement with these relations.

Because of the cognitive dimension which is intrinsic to the relationship with objects and ideas, language plays

a vital role (Vrey 1987:116). If the child does not know or understand the language, assigning meaning may become a negative experience for the child.

A child who has difficulty attributing meaning to objects and ideas may develop a negative self-concept of himself in terms of this relation (Raath and Jacobs 1993:55). The child may then feel unmotivated and possibly try to limit or even withdraw from involvement in these relations. This may, at a later stage, influence all the other aspects of development.

3.7.5 Relationship with self

"A child is not born with an awareness of his identity" (Raath and Jacobs 1993:10), but through continual interaction with significant people in his life a self-concept is formed. The primary school child enters the school situation with an established self-concept. This self-concept which is dynamic is the result of his relations with himself and is "an integrated structure of perceptions, ideas and attitudes which the individual has formed about himself" (Vrey 1987:112). The school situation affords the child the opportunity to develop and expand his conceptions of himself, as he gets to know himself in a variety of new relationships (Vrey 1987:113).

The process of acquiring an identity is a life-long process which occurs mostly at a subconscious level (Vrey 1987:49). By giving meaning to his relationships the child forms his own identity (Raath and Jacobs 1993:12).

The child evaluates subjectively his level of success in these relationships. The process of evaluation will determine whether the image the child has of himself is positive or negative.

The self-concept assigns meaning to all incoming information and associates it to the idea the individual has of himself (Vrey 1987:13). Similarly, the self-concept can be seen as a "moderator-variable of the personality" (Raath and Jacobs 1993:30). An individual will employ a pattern of behaviour which is aligned with the idea he has of himself, and ensures the expected behaviour towards himself. In this way the self-concept's stability is maintained (Vrey 1987:113).

The child's experience of success and failure influence the self-concept. The self-concept is never static but oscillates between positive and negative poles (Raath and Jacobs 1993:32). A balance between the positive and negative aspects will result in a realistic-positive self-concept. When the negative aspects become overbearing, an unrealistic negative self-concept will result and so the self-concept will lose its dynamic character (Raath and Jacobs 1993:33).

The way the child perceives himself will influence the way meaning is assigned to certain experiences. The mentally healthy child will be able to assimilate new information about himself and organize it into the self-structure. The child with a negative self-concept will feel threatened and either ignore or distort the incoming information (Jacobs 1987:4). Defensive behaviour, guilt

reactions and distrust of others may thus manifest themselves and so adversely affect the individual's self-actualisation.

3.8 CONCLUSION

Within the school situation children are continually expressing their aggression. Although the aggression may be non-destructive or hostile, it is expressed during interaction with others. This often results in confrontation, especially in the case of boys. Research shows that primary school children are still bound to concrete thinking and so are unable to resolve disputes in a logical way. Unstructured environments, like the playground are ideal settings for aggression to be expressed as children assign different meanings to the intention of some forms of play. Because the teacher is not controlling these situations, aggression can result in unhappiness not only for the victim of aggression but also, increasingly, for the aggressor who is further rejected and isolated by the peer group.

During the literature survey, it became apparent to the researcher that the problem of aggression is a universal phenomenon. All children are involved in relationships with significant others. Problems experienced in these relationships may result in problem behaviour which will impair the child's self-actualisation.

The South African situation, however, is also unique as we are undergoing many social changes. These changes are accompanied by feelings of uncertainty, insecurity as well as violence which may possibly be a contributing factor to the increased aggression in our schools.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH DESIGN

4.1 GENERAL AIM

This research project is primarily aimed at gaining further insight into aggression in children. Teachers who participated in the Pilot study (Chapter 1) and recent research all seem to point to the fact that aggression in children is on the increase. But in order to provide assistance to educators and the children themselves, a greater understanding of how these children experience their life-world is needed.

4.2 HYPOTHESIS

By implementing the Relationship Theory, the researcher intends to gain a better understanding of aggression in primary school children.

This implies the following:

- * Problematic relationships exist for the child which have resulted in aggression

By exploring the relationships of the child, further insight into the life-world of the child may be gained (refer to page 11 point iii), as well as possible causes which may have resulted in aggression (refer to page 11 point i).

- * The meaning the child is attributing to the problematic relationship will be negative and unrealistic

The type of meaning the child assigns to his/her relationships will form part of the child's life-world and will ultimately influence self-actualisation. Thus the type of meaning the child has assigned is important to consider as it offers insight into the life-world of the child (refer to page 11 point iii).

- * The increase in aggression must have resulted from changes in society

The researcher's exploration of the problem (refer to pages 4 - 10) and the literature survey (refer to chapter 3), point to the fact that aggression seems to be more prevalent today than in previous years. In order to understand the reason for this, the researcher feels that it is necessary to focus upon changes in society (refer to page 11 point i).

- * Unstructured environments offer the child the freedom in which to express this aggression.

From the exploration of the problem (refer to pages 4-10) and the literature survey (refer to pages 47-51) acts of aggression seem more prevalent in unstructured environments such as the playground. Attention will thus be given to the type of school situations in which children are aggressive (refer to page 11 point ii).

4.3 SPECIFIC AIMS

In order to test the validity of the problems posed, it is necessary to assess children who are aggressive in the school environment so that greater insight and understanding of aggression and the child's significant relationships may be

gained. Although providing therapy is not included in this study, therapy will be given in order to help the child initiate more adaptive behaviour patterns.

4.4 METHOD OF RESEARCH

4.4.1 Research approach

Use will be made of an idiographic method of research as the researcher is concerned with the child-in-totality, and his experience of aggression in the real life situation. Fox (1969:427) says that "the basic rationale for the close study is that there are processes and interventions such as aspects of personality and social functioning which cannot be studied except as they interact and operate within the individual." Although no two individuals have the same life-world, as it is constituted by his own experience, involvement and unique meanings he assigns to his experiences (Vrey 1987:16) the "probability is that if we learn how these processes interact in some few individuals, we shall learn much about the processes in the abstract and ultimately learn all there is to know about them" (Fox 1969:427).

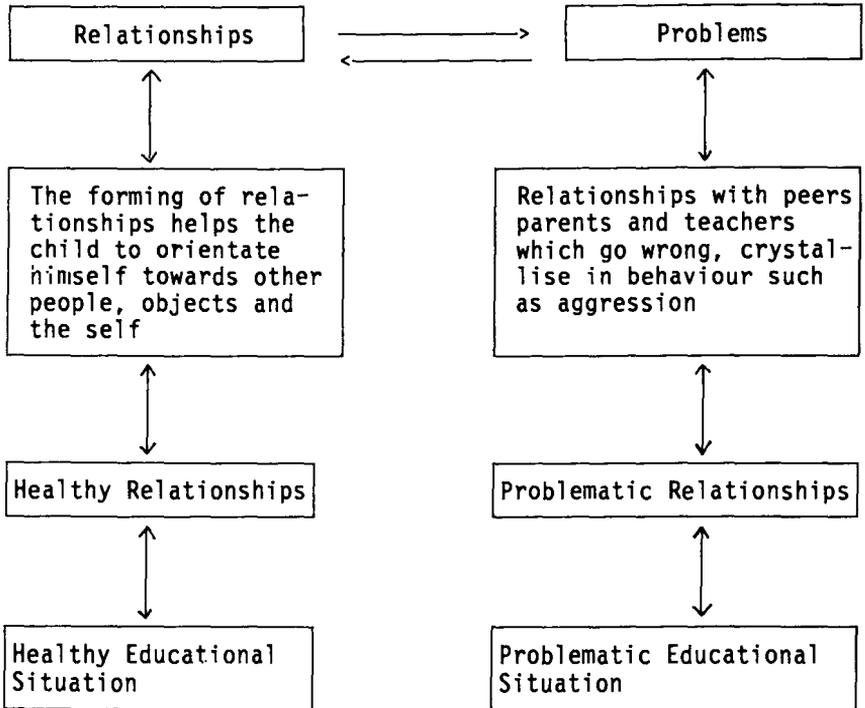
The model for research and diagnosis based in The Relationship Theory will be the approach used for this idiographic study.

A child cannot function in isolation, so he forms relationships to satisfy his basic need for involvement with other people and situations. The quality of these relationships is determined by the emotions experienced

and behaviour manifested as a result of interaction within these relationships (Jacobs 1987:5).

Jacobs (1987:6) illustrates this idea in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1



4.4.2 Subjects for research

Four English medium primary schools will be approached for their assistance in obtaining pupils for research purposes. Of the referrals received four pupils will be randomly selected, one from each school. The children chosen will range from Grade One to Standard Four and will include two boys and two girls. As children of all races are present in our schools, race will not be taken into account. The children should, however, all manifest the behaviour problem of aggression.

Permission will be obtained from the parents to work with their children and therapy will be provided after school hours.

4.5 THE SELECTION OF MEDIA AND TECHNIQUES

The children in this research project exhibit aggressive behaviour. This behaviour is a result of the meaning they have assigned to significant relationships. For this reason, media and techniques have been selected which will facilitate an understanding of the child as an individual, as well as the relationships which have been formed with parents, peers, teachers, school and with the self.

4.5.1 Projective media

Projective media will be used as they are useful in gaining information from the child, about himself, as well as the nature of unconscious emotional conflicts

(Epanchin and Paul 1987:86). The word projection derived from the Latin word "proicere" literally means "to throw forward" (Wiechers in Jacobs, Oosthuizen and Petrick 1985:128). It is assumed that given a neutral stimulus, the child will project his unique feelings, perceptions (Epanchin and Paul 1987:88) and private needs (Jacobs et al. OSV 402-Q 1985:129) upon it. As the stimuli are vague it is more difficult for the child to choose what he thinks is the expected socially desirable response.

4.5.1.1 Drawings

Projective drawings are widely used as a diagnostic technique. Most children enjoy drawing and like to talk about their pictures. This situation is non-threatening and is a useful way of establishing a good rapport between the child and therapist.

Klepsch and Logie (1982:6) state that "a drawing captures symbolically on paper some of the subject's thoughts and feelings" and "makes a portion of the inner self visible". Children are not always able to express their thoughts and feelings verbally, and so drawings are means of communication. Drawings are universal and relevant to all cultures.

Although elements of drawings are similar, every drawing is unique, an imprint of the inner self (Klepsch and Logie 1982:6). As drawings are a reflection of the individual, they provide us with a great deal of information.

A series of five drawings will be used for this research project.

They will be as set out in the table below.

Table 2

Sequence of drawings	Instruction
Drawing 1	Draw a person
Drawing 2	Draw yourself when you are angry
Drawing 3	Draw your immediate family
Drawing 4	Draw your family when something has happened that made you feel angry
Drawing 5	This is a fantasy/make-believe picture. You are feeling very angry/cross. You can do something that no-one can see and will never know about. What would you do? Remember that you are feeling angry.

The purpose of these drawings is to try and establish:

- * how the child sees himself and feels when he is angry;

- * some situations which precipitate the child's anger;
- * some insight into conflict resolution.

Non-directive interviews will follow the completion of each drawing, in order to try and establish the meaning which the child has assigned to his/her drawings.

Some questions will be predetermined, for example "How old is the person?" but the interview will mostly be conducted without any preconceived ideas or notions on the part of the researcher. Working from an external frame of reference, the researcher will allow the child to take the lead (Jacobs et al. OSV 403-R 1985:3). By relating appropriately and empathetically with the child a great deal of useful and relevant information can be elicited.

The word angry will be used, as the word aggressive does not fall within the framework of most primary school children's vocabulary. Anger often results from frustration, hurt or attempts at manipulating a situation, to name but a few examples, and is expressed overtly as aggression. Thus using the word angry does not, in the opinion of the researcher, confuse the issue as a new concept is not being introduced.

The drawings will be interpreted both quantitatively and qualitatively. The following characteristics of drawings have been identified by Klepsch and Logie (1982) and Van Niekerk (1986) as indicators of aggression:

- * size - large figures pressing out against the sides of the page
- * sequence - from controlled to uncontrolled drawing
- * lines - heavy, hard lines
- excessive shading
- * dissociation - when the child's verbal description shows he is unaware of the aggressive person he has drawn
- * kinaesthetic feeling - e.g. when hands are on hips, feet are wide apart, a cigarette in the mouth, they tend to give the feeling of aggression
- * aggressive characters- soldiers
- people with weapons
- individuals in combat
- * gross asymmetry of limbs
- * hair - heavily shaded and emphasised
- * mouth - an emphasized mouth
- harsh expression
- a straight horizontal line representing a mouth
- the presence of teeth
- * eyes - dark, large, emphasized or threatening
- * long arms
- * hands - large and heavily shaded
- sharp and pointed

- * fingers
 - dark lines or stripes which represent fingers
 - fingers drawn without hands
- * toes
 - when they are drawn when the figure is not intended to be naked
 - if the toes are surrounded by a line

A study by Welch, Flannigan and Rave in 1971 (Klepsch and Logie 1982:142) showed that:

- * more aggression was demonstrated in the drawings of boys than girls
- * that the amount of aggression expressed in drawings increased as the age of the child increased, and that this applied to the drawings of both girls and boys.

4.5.1.2 Sentence completion

The hypothesis underlying sentence completion is that "people reveal their general personality as well as specific problem areas when filling in the missing part" (Jacobs et al. OSV 402-Q 1985:131).

Sentence completion is a semi-structured projective technique which gives the child an opportunity to express and project himself.

A part of the subject's life-world is revealed by each sentence. It provides information about the child's relationships as well as his manner of involvement. That

is, either affective or cognitive.

As the relationship theory is directing the approach of this study, sentences related to the child's feelings concerning his significant relationships are included.

The older children will complete the sentences on their own, while the younger children will answer them orally, and the researcher will record their responses.

INCOMPLETE SENTENCES

INSTRUCTIONS: Finish the following sentences as fast as you can. Write down the first thing you think of.

- 1) I often wish I could _____
- 2) My greatest fear is _____
- 3) My father always _____
- 4) I feel like giving up when _____
- 5) I get so angry _____
- 6) My classmates _____
- 7) Most fathers _____
- 8) I am ashamed that _____
- 9) If I think a class is too hard for me, _____

- 10) My greatest wish is _____
- 11) Most boys _____
- 12) School is _____
- 13) Most mothers _____
- 14) Taking orders _____
- 15) Most girls _____

- 16) If I can't get what I want, I _____

- 17) When I am criticised, I _____
- 18) People think I am _____
- 19) When I get really angry _____
- 20) I'd like most to be _____
- 21) I feel guilty about _____
- 22) I wish that my father _____
- 23) When I am punished I _____
- 24) I lose my temper when _____
- 25) I am afraid of _____
- 26) Sometimes I feel that my teacher _____
- 27) If I were a king, I would _____
- 28) I wish that my mother _____
- 29) I feel like running away when _____

The sentences (numbers 5, 8, 14, 16, 17, 20, 23, 24, 25, 29) include issues dealing with anger, guilt, criticism and punishment as the researcher believes that they will elicit responses related to aggression. The remaining sentences pertain to the child's significant relationships.

In the interpretation, the sentences will be grouped according to the relationship to which they relate, in order to establish whether the child's experience of it is positive, neutral or negative. (This is set out in Table 3). Establishing the nature of the child's involvement, which will be either cognitive or affective, as well as his/her self-actualisation is essential.

Table 3

Relationships	Relevant sentence numbers
Relationship with parents	3, 7, 13, 22, 28
Relationship with peers	6, 11, 15
Relationship with teachers	26
Relationship with objects and ideas	9, 12
Relationship with the self	4, 18, 20, 27

4.5.1.3 Children's Apperception Test (CAT)

The CAT is a projective/expressive media which provides the child with an opportunity to project that which is applicable to himself onto the animals in the pictures. The series of 10 pictures are "designed to elicit developmentally significant content" (Epanchin and Paul 1987:93) and "facilitate understanding of a child's relationship to his most important figures and drives" (Bellack & Bellack 1974:1).

As the children in the research project come from different cultures, the "CAT is suitable as it has been found, in research studies, to be relatively culture-free" (Bellack & Bellack 1974:1). Since these are animal pictures rather than human figures, children from all race groups are able to identify with the animals which are depicted.

Although the CAT is designed for use with children between the ages of three and ten years old, it will also be used, in this research project, for the one older child. The CAT will give him/her an opportunity for projection, and as with the other subjects' stories, the interpretation will be qualitative.

Every subject will be instructed to make up their own story about each picture. The therapist will give guidelines such as that the story should tell us:

- * what is happening now;
- * what happened before;
- * what will happen in the future;
- * what the animals are thinking, feeling and doing.

The child's stories about cards two, three and seven will be important for the interpretation, as the stimulus worth of these cards is specifically aggression. The theme of the story, the figure of identification, the needs and drives of the hero and significant conflicts will give us insight into the child's aggression, fear of aggression and manner of dealing with it.

4.5.2 Interviews

An interview will be conducted with the child's parents and teachers respectively. As the researcher wants to obtain specific information, a directive interview will be used. Specific, structured questions will be set up before-hand. The researcher will not adhere strictly to the structured questions but will also construct questions based on the information provided by the

parents and teachers.

The interview with the parents will yield information about the parent's perception and understanding of the presenting problems; the child's current functioning and family relationship.

The interview with the teacher will yield information about the teacher's perception and understanding of the child's aggressive behaviour; the child's current functioning within the school situation and his relationship with his peers and teacher.

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- 1) Describe your relationship with (name)
- 2) When did you first become aware of the problem of aggression?
- 3) Describe (names) behaviour?
- 4) When does this aggressive behaviour occur? eg at home, in the classroom, before/during/after break etc.
- 5) What have you done to try and discourage/stop this behaviour? Were you successful?
- 6) What do you think is the reason for this aggression?

4.6 SEQUENCE OF RESEARCH

The model for idiographic diagnosis and research presented by Jacobs and Vrey (1982:56) will determine the sequence of the research. This model is set out in Figure 2.

Figure 2:

MODEL FOR IDIOGRAPHIC DIAGNOSIS AND RESEARCH

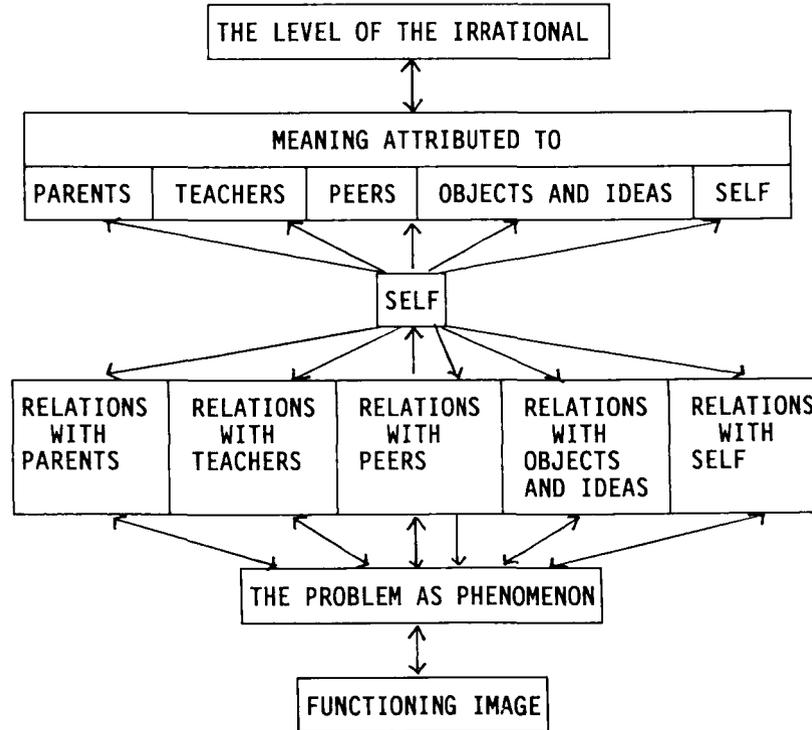
LEVEL 5
IRRATIONAL IMAGE

LEVEL 4
PERSON IMAGE

LEVEL 3
RELATIONAL
IMAGE

LEVEL 2
PHENOMENAL
IMAGE

LEVEL 1
FUNCTIONAL
IMAGE



In accordance with this model, the sequence of research is as follows:

4.6.1 Functional image (Level 1)

The functional image is the manifestation of the problem, namely the reason for the child becoming conspicuous (Jacobs & Vrey 1982:51). Poor scholastic achievement, concentration problems, reading problems and truancy, as well as behavioural manifestations such as lying, stealing, aggression, withdrawn demeanour are all seen as the functional image of the child. It can be seen as the "complaint" which the parent or teacher has concerning the child.

In this investigation, the functional image of all the subjects, will be that they manifest the behaviour of aggression at school. The teacher will be the person who is experiencing and witnessing this aggression on a regular basis, thus the information gained from the interview with the teacher will assist the researcher in arriving at a functional image for each child.

Although the parent is not involved with the child in the school situation, information provided by them can further expand the functional image of the child.

4.6.2 The phenomenal image (Level 2)

To further analyse the functional image, the researcher will try to penetrate the nature and essences of the problem (Jacobs & Vrey 1982:51). The researcher will

select and apply various expressive and projective media in order to explore the problem.

After the exploration of the problem as a phenomenon, the researcher will be in the position to postulate a number of hypotheses based on the results of the tests. Jacobs and Vrey (1982:52) state that these hypotheses then provide the direction for the therapeutic process.

In this research project the media, which have been selected and previously discussed, are sentence completion, drawings and the Children's Apperception Test. These exploratory media will be applied during three sessions. All the sessions will be done on an individual basis.

The researcher will then analyse the results and information provided by the media, in order to gain insight into the nature of the problem. A number of hypotheses will then be postulated for each subject.

4.6.3 Relational image (Level 3)

After the analysis of the problem as a phenomenon the emphasis will be focused on the relational image of the child (Jacobs & Vrey 1982:52).

The focus is specifically on the child's relationships with his parents, teachers, peers, objects and ideas and the self. Determining the quality of these relationships is important, namely:

- how is the child involved in the relationship?
- how does he experience the relationship?
- what meaning has he assigned to the relationship?

The hypotheses which were postulated on the results of assessments conducted at Level 2, will now focus on specific problematic relationships.

The researcher will thus at Level 3, form her own impression and ideas concerning the important relationships in the child's life-world and those that are problematic for the individual by describing all the relationships. A relational image for each subject will on the basis of the test results and hypotheses, be constructed. The relational image is thus the researcher's understanding of the child and his relationships, and it will give the researcher an indication of possible causes of the functional image (Jacobs 1987:9).

4.6.4 Person image (Level 4)

Kokot (1988:4) views the person image as "an understanding of the child from the child's personal, unique point of view." It is the way the child perceives and attributes meaning to his relationships and in so doing determines the extent of his involvement with and experience of these relationships (Jacobs & Vrey 1982:52). The person image, according to Jacobs and Vrey (1982:52) is thus an integrated, meaningful whole consisting of all the child's relationships.

Through interaction with each subject, the researcher will not only determine whether the meaning assigned to the relationships is cognitive or emotive, but also the manner in which meaning is assigned. The researcher will establish whether the meaning assigned to relationships is positive or negative, rational or irrational.

An example of how the researcher will explore the person image, will be by discussing/interviewing the child about his drawings. This is essential in establishing the meaning the child has assigned to his relationships. By applying the above, the researcher will be able to illuminate a more precise understanding of the child's aggression.

4.6.5 Irrational image (Level 5)

Although level 5 does not pertain to the research for this dissertation, it will be discussed briefly as it appears on the model of diagnosis (page 54).

The self-concept and self-actualization of the individual are dynamic. The self-concept is like a pendulum in continual motion between two poles, namely a high and low pole. When the child's intrapsychic dialogue mobilises the self-concept beyond the limits of the low pole (Jacobs 1987:10) the level of the irrational is entered. The child who finds himself at this level, is unable to attribute rational meaning to relationships, and this may result in pathological behaviour (Jacobs & Vrey 1982:52). As this behaviour falls beyond the scope of the educational psychologist, it necessitates referral to a

clinical psychologist or psychiatrist.

4.7 CONCLUSION

From the above discussion on the research design, the usefulness of The Relationship Theory as the approach to be implemented for the empirical research clearly emerges. It provides both the framework for the implementation and interpretation of the research project. By employing the projective media, namely; drawings, sentence completion and the CAT, the researcher will attempt to penetrate to the essences of the presenting problem of aggression.

CHAPTER 5

EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter five focuses on the

- * functional image
- * phenomenal image
- * relational image and
- * person image

of each child selected for the research project. Each case study will be discussed individually during which the information gained from the projective media will be explored.

5.2 PUPIL ONE: JOHN

5.2.1 Background information

John is a blonde ten-year old boy who is fairly tall for his age. He is slightly overweight. John is presently in the Aid class and will mainstream into Standard Two in January 1995. He has been identified as a learning disabled pupil and it was for this reason that he was placed in the Aid class. Before being admitted into the Aid class, he was tested and was found to be of average intelligence (OSAI:104). He attended occupational therapy and has made good scholastic progress. However, his reading is still weak and he has a short attention span. He was on Ritalin for a short period of time, but

his mother stopped the medication as she felt that it affected his appetite and made him lethargic.

John was an only child for many years, but he now has a baby brother who is nine months old. He lives with his mother, brother and mother's boyfriend whom he calls his stepfather. He has never had any contact with his biological father and seems happy to accept his mother's boyfriend as a father figure. His mother has never been married. His stepfather has two children from a previous marriage and John identifies with the boy when he comes to visit at weekends.

5.2.2 Functional image

John was referred as he is, according to his teacher, "severely aggressive and displays anti-social behaviour". The teacher reports that his behaviour improves slightly when she counsels him and employs positive reinforcement, but that the change in behaviour is short-lived.

When John becomes aggressive it always results in physical behaviour such as hitting, kicking and boxing. He apparently swears a lot as well. His teacher feels that he is sensitive to criticism and this often results in fights. She reported that he especially seems to be more aggressive after reading lessons which he finds difficult. Because John is a large pupil, his acts of aggression have resulted in physical injury to others.

During the interview with John's mother, it became apparent that she did not perceive her son's aggression

to be a problem to the same extent as the school did. She reported that from an early age she had encouraged John to be independent and to look after himself. She felt that it was important that John should be able to stand up for himself and not allow himself to be bullied.

She reported that John was a loving child at home who enjoyed being given responsibilities such as looking after his baby brother while she made supper. She did not find him to be a difficult child at all, but that he was on occasion troublesome at bedtime when he would question her authority. At home she did not find him to be aggressive.

5.2.3 Phenomenal Image

Because John was referred for the problem of aggression, the phenomenal image is thus the same as the functional image. The phenomenon which is to be explored by the projective media is aggression.

5.2.4 Relational Image

5.2.4.1 Relations with Parents

John seems to have a close relationship with his mother and experiences it positively which is possibly due to the fact that she was a single parent for the first seven years of his life. Because of the circumstances in which John's mother found herself, it is possible that John was forced into becoming independent and "adult" sooner than was necessary. Possibly, by being protective of her son,

John's mother has encouraged aggressive behaviour by transferring the meaning that you should not allow yourself to be pushed around.

Because of the absence of a father figure, John has possibly not had a role model to form a sound male sex-role identity. The media, such as television and magazines, could have had an influence on John in the absence of first hand experience of a father figure. Even now that John has a "stepfather", it is still his mother who deals with parenting activities such as discipline.

In summary, John has a close and positive relationship with his mother, but because she is a single parent, it is possible that John has assigned certain meanings which may have resulted in aggressive behaviour.

5.2.4.2 Relations with peers

As John's relationship with his peers is confrontational and aggressive by nature, the meaning he has assigned to these relationships will be negative. It appears as if he has had difficulty in developing a close relationship and having a "best friend" which may result in feelings of isolation and exclusion from his peer group. When John interacts with his peers, the behaviour which he employs results in a negative experience. It is thus the opinion of the researcher that John's involvement, experiences and the meaning he assigns to peer relations, will be negative.

5.2.4.3 Relations with teachers

It appears that John has established a good relationship with his class teacher. The relationship seems to be positive and John interacts well with her and accepts her authority.

This could be as a result of the scholastic progress he has made and the encouragement he has received from his teacher. However, because his teacher is involved in disciplining him for his aggressiveness, it does result in negative experiences of this relationship.

5.2.4.4 Relations with objects and ideas

As a result of having made promising scholastic progress in the Aid Class, John's experience with objects and ideas over the last two years will have been positive. It is possible that his identity as a reader is still negative as he continues to experience difficulty in this area. It is the researcher's opinion, that this relationship will have moved from being negative to positive as a result of experiencing success over the last two years resulting in a positive scholar identity.

5.2.4.5 Relations with self

Although John conveys confidence and a happy-go-lucky attitude, it is more than likely a cover-up for the uncertainty and pain that he experiences due to negative relationships. He appears tough and tends to swear when expressing himself, but this is his way of portraying

someone who is able to be independent and look after himself such as an action hero. The researcher is of the opinion that John does not know how to behave in a different way to the way he behaves at present.

As discussed above, John's identity as a son and pupil seems to be positive, but his identity as a friend is negative. It is very likely that John's self-concept is negative due to the difficulties he is experiencing, but he seems to convey a great deal of ego-strength which could possibly inhibit the formation of a totally negative self-concept.

5.2.5 Projective media

The aim of using projective media was to expose the essences of the person image and to penetrate the self-dialogue.

5.2.5.1 Drawings

Drawing 1

John's Draw-a-person was almost a cartoon-like character. His drawing is somewhat immature for his age and indicates a poor body image. The small drawing positioned in the top half of the page indicates futile striving, a lack of insight and feelings of uncertainty and inferiority. (Van Niekerk 1986:149 and Klepsch and Logie 1982:43). The feeling of the drawing is that of febleness, rather than a strong character.

Important indicators:

- * the small dotted eyes do not give any feeling of expression
- * the mouth gives the impression of forced friendliness and an attempt at acceptance (Van Niekerk 1986:154)
- * there is no real indication of clothing which points to an infantile and egocentric emotional status (Van Niekerk 1986:152).

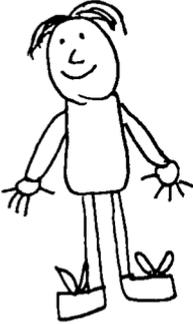
Specific aggression indicators

The one indicator which points to feelings of infantile aggression is the way the fingers are depicted as straight dark lines (Van Niekerk 1986:156).

John continually tried to avoid the task of drawing by telling the researcher stories. This was possibly a way of masking his negative feelings about drawing.

John's answering of questions based on his drawing included several examples of violence namely, a hand was blown off, shouting and hitting. His choice of being a Tyrannosaurus Rex expressed his feelings of aggression and the need to be in power through physical strength and even violence. John's answers also pointed to selfishness, materialism and ego-centricity.

Drawing 1



Martin

DRAW A PERSON: JOHN

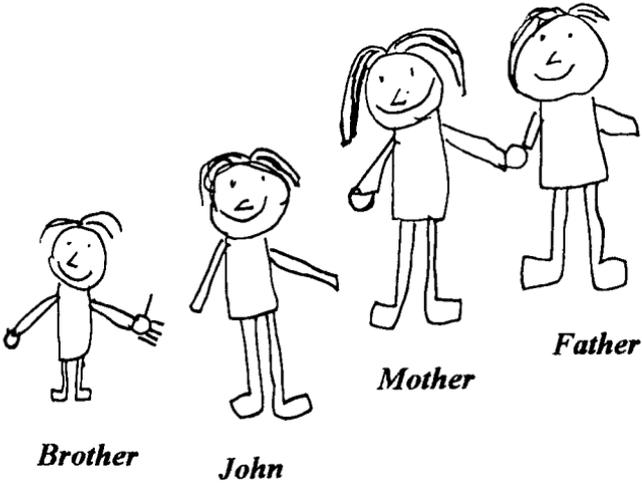
1. Give him/her a name. Martin
2. How old is he/she? Eight years old.
3. Would you like to be him/her? Yes.
4. How does he/she feel at the moment? He is happy - yes, he is a nice kind of guy.
5. What makes him/her:
 - * happy - when he has lots of toys
 - * angry - when his mother shouts at him if he cannot play TV games
 - * sad - when his brother gets hurt - his hand was blown off.
6. What is the worst thing he/she ever did? Let his brother fall from the bed.
7. If Martin had to live alone on an island, but could take one person along, who would he/she take with him/her? Why? Me. I would be a good friend.
8. If Martin could change into an animal, what animal would he/she choose to be? Why? A T.Rex - the king of the dinosaurs (roared)
9. Suppose he/she could have a magic wand and change other people into animals, what would he/she change the following people into? Why?
 - * mother - pig - she's angry and stuff
 - * father - elephant - dads are like elephants
 - * brother) - he doesn't have brothers and sisters
 - * sister)
10. Does the teacher like him/her? Why? Yes - he's a nice guy
11. Is he/she cleverer than the other children in the class? No - the same.

Drawing 2

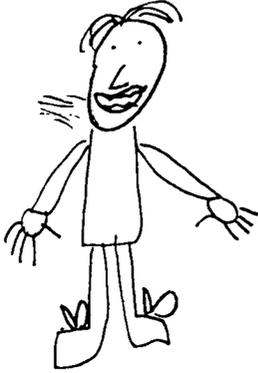


John

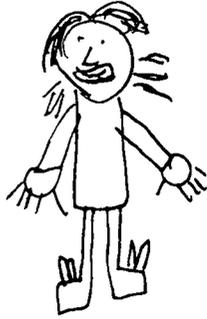
Drawing 3



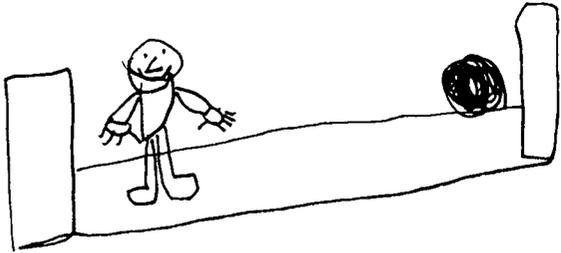
Drawing 4



Mother



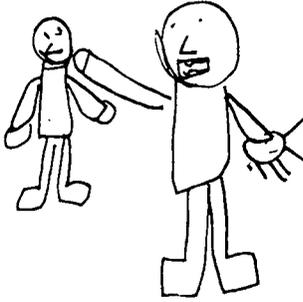
John



John

Drawing 5

Peer



John

Drawing 2

When asked what made him angry in his second drawing, John said that it was because he was not allowed to go to play at his friend's house. He said that he hated his mum for this and was also angry with his friend's mum.

Drawing 3

The overall impression of the family drawing is that of a fairly happy family. There is some family interaction but John possibly feels left out as he omitted hands on himself which are the contact organs.

He commented that his family is happy and that his brother smiles and laughs a lot. He said that he feels unhappy when his dad or brother has an accident, like the time he was to look after his baby brother and he fell off the couch. John became quiet after commenting on this and it is obviously a source of guilt for him.

Drawing 4

The source of the family confrontation was as a result of John playing basket ball in the house. This resulted in shouting between him and his mum. He then went to his room and slammed the door. "I feel really angry but also sad - I don't like being shouted at" he commented.

It is evident that John's mother is the disciplinarian in the home and that he experiences difficulty in accepting her authority.

Drawing 5

John responded quickly to this task by drawing immediately. He said "I'd sock him, and feel very happy. I'd feel real good. If I hit someone I'd break his jaw. I can play rough".

John responds quickly in an aggressive manner to confrontational situations involving his peers. Physical violence is his way of dealing with these situations, and he seems to gain a sense of achievement and possibly enjoyment from his physical prowess. He drew himself larger than the other child, indicating the importance of physical strength.

5.2.5.2 Children's apperception test

John's Protocol

CAT

CARD 1

The chicks are hungry. They had woken up and are now eating breakfast. The mother hen is looking for food.

CARD 2

They are having a tug-of-war. The little bear asked them to play tug-of-war. They are his big brothers. This brother will win because he looks the strongest. The bears feel strong Grrrr!

CARD 3

This is a king lion. Before he was poor, but he married a king's daughter. The king died - he was killed by a terrible man. Then he became king. This mouse will come out. The lion will hit the mouse with his walking stick. The guards will take his dead body away.

CARD 4

They are happy because they are going shopping. They are bouncing up and down. The baby is in the pouch and the big brother is riding his bike. He likes this. They will go home and the mother will make a big dinner for the father and family.

CARD 5

The mummy, daddy and two brothers have gone to bed. They had watched TV - a funny programme with Bill Cosby. The bears are very tired and having nice dreams. The mother and father came to bed too.

CARD 6

The mother and father are talking to each other. The baby is sleeping on his own - and having nice dreams - having a toy train, a bike, a mechanical man. If he had those things he would have lots of fun.

CARD 7

The tiger is very, very hungry. He jumps for the monkey. The monkey climbs the tree. The tiger misses. He will still catch the monkey and eat him for lunch. I think the monkey has a disease and the tiger will die if he eats him.

CARD 8

The mother and father are talking about their sister and her son. The son was naughty and the sister is saying to him to stop being naughty or "I will put you over my knee". The monkey says he is sorry.

CARD 9

A baby bunny is in his own room. He is looking around at all his toys. "It's time to go to bed" says his mum. He wants to stay up. His parents tell him to go to sleep but he watches TV in his bed.

CARD 10

The little brother dog was naughty and the sister is hitting him. He is crying - like dogs do - 000000 (howled). "I'm sorry, I'm sorry. I'll have a bath". He didn't want to bath - like me.

Some common themes come to the fore from John's protocol:

- the mother figure is seen as the provider who cares for her family
- scenes of happy domesticity
- the need for material goods, such as toys, as they will bring happiness
- the need for oral gratification
- the questioning and disobeying of the authority figure.

Specific indicators of aggression

CARD 2

John saw this card as a game and the two other bears as being siblings. Physical strength determined who the winner was. John's response could indicate sibling rivalry.

CARD 3

John's response to this card is marked by violence and death. The lion is seen as a dangerous power and the cane as an instrument of aggression. The mouse seems to have been killed without any indication of provocation and the lion shows no remorse. The lion is taken as the identification figure.

CARD 7

John responded to the aggression elicited by the picture. Although the tiger catches the monkey and eats him, the twist at the end hints at the punishment of aggressive acts. This was possibly a defense mechanism employed by John to almost justify exposing his feelings of aggression.

5.2.5.3 Sentence Completion

John's INCOMPLETE SENTENCES

INSTRUCTIONS: Finish the following sentences as fast as you can. Write down the first thing you think of.

- 1) I often wish I could get a mountain bike.

- 2) My greatest fear is Freddy Kruger - he gave me nightmares.
- 3) My father always works late.
- 4) I feel like giving up when something is hard eg reading.
- 5) I get so angry I could scream and hit.
- 6) My classmates are friendly.
- 7) Most fathers always come home early - I wish my dad would come home early.
- 8) I am ashamed that I didn't watch my baby brother carefully and he fell off the couch.
- 9) If I think a class is too hard for me, I give up.
- 10) My greatest wish is to be rich.
- 11) Most boys fight.
- 12) School is fun.
- 13) Most mothers work.
- 14) Taking orders makes me angry.
- 15) Most girls play with other girls.
- 16) If I can't get what I want, I beg and beg until I get it.
- 17) When I am criticised, I feel sad - I'd tear them apart.
- 18) People think I am smart.
- 19) When I get really angry just "sock" the person.
- 20) I'd like most to be Jean Claude von Damme.
- 21) I feel guilty about calling my teacher a name.
- 22) I wish that my father could be rich.
- 23) When I am punished, I feel very, very sad.
- 24) I lose my temper when someone calls me a name - I go and punch them.
- 25) I am afraid of my step-brother; he's tough.
- 26) Sometimes I feel that my teacher is kind.
- 27) If I were a king, I would marry a beautiful girl.

- 28) I wish that my mother was working. She needs the money to buy things.
- 29) I feel like running away when my dad shouts at me.

Relationship structures

John's relationship with his parents is neutral. His perception is that of them working which is possibly related to their financial status. He considers his peers "friendly", yet fighting is also part of this relationship. His teacher and the school are perceived positively, yet his relationship with objects and ideas is negative as he seems to lack perseverance when the school work is difficult.

Responses related to aggression

From John's responses, it becomes apparent that his involvement with his life-world is predominantly on an affective level. He responds to situations in which he feels threatened with physical retaliation. For example; scream, hit, fight, "sock", tear apart are words he uses to describe his responses. The identification figure he chooses in sentence number 21 is Jean Claude von Damme, an action hero who solves his problems with physical violence. It seems that John reacts quickly to negative situations in the way he perceives will solve the problem. He is sensitive to anything he perceives as criticism, probably due to his poor self-concept.

5.2.6 Person Image

John sees his mother as the provider and caring parent. He sees her working as being part of her provider identity. He experiences her authority negatively and is unable to accept it and becomes very angry. He feels rebellious and wants his own way which results in feelings of aggression. He dislikes it when his parents shout and would ultimately like to be in control of the family situation. John continually expressed the need for material things as he thinks this will bring him the happiness that he is missing in his relationships.

The meaning John has assigned to his teacher is positive although he seems to be defensive about his scholastic achievement. He realises that reading is difficult for him and this leads to feelings of frustration and insecurity. He is scared of failure and so tries to avoid difficult tasks.

John experiences aggression and rejection in his relationships with his peers. He thinks that people think he is "smart" based on his physical strength and ability to be tough. He thinks that his peers are continually wanting to fight him and so interprets the actions of his peers negatively. He only has one problem-solving technique for confrontational situations and that is physical retaliation. At times he seems to have some moral conscience about his actions, but more often than not, he views his actions as justifiable.

John likes to think that he is a "Jean Claude von Damme" action hero, but it is a defense mechanism for his feelings of insecurity, inferiority and uncertainty. Beneath his tough exterior, is a negative self-concept. He is unsure of his ability in the classroom situation and longs to be part of his peer group. He is needy for love, acceptance and true nurturing so that he can be himself. At this stage, he perceives his image as a way of being accepted but does not have the insight yet to realise that it is leading to further rejection and alienation.

5.3 PUPIL TWO: SUE

5.3.1 Background information

Sue is an attractive brown haired eight-year old girl. She is presently in Grade Two after repeating Grade One due to emotional immaturity. She seems to be able to satisfy the academic requirements for Grade Two and the teacher does not feel that she is experiencing any scholastic difficulties. When tested two years ago, she was found to have an intelligence which fell in the average range (OSAI:108).

Sue is an only child who lives with her unmarried mother. Sue had contact with her biological father, but since he has been involved in a new relationship the contact has not been maintained. According to her mother, Sue found this lack of contact initially upsetting, but has come to terms with the situation.

5.3.2 Functional image

Sue was referred as she has, according to her teacher, "an aggressive attitude towards her peers most of the time". The teacher reports that this behaviour occurs frequently and does not seem to be precipitated by any specific incident. The aggression takes the form of name-calling and teasing and sometimes leads to physical aggression such as hitting and pushing.

Sue always blames the other child for starting the fight and cannot accept any blame for her part in the incident.

According to the teacher most incidents happen during break, but that Sue does become aggressive in class if, for example, someone is in her way or bumps her desk.

Sue's mother reported that incidents of aggression occur when Sue's friends come to play at their home. She feels that Sue is bossy and unable to share and play fairly which results in fights. Sue inevitably cries and never feels that it is her fault. Her mother then reprimands her and sends her to her room to think about her behaviour.

5.3.3 Phenomenal Image

The phenomenal and functional image are the same as Sue was referred for the problem of aggression. The projective media will thus explore the phenomenon of aggression.

5.3.4 Relational Image

5.3.4.1 Relations with parents

Sue and her mother seem to have a close loving relationship. Sue's experience of this relationship is positive and she identifies with her mother and desires to be like her. Sue's mother appears confident and has a forceful manner which Sue emulates.

Sue seems to be given a great deal of material things, e.g. dolls and toys, and it is possible that her mother spoils her. Being an only child, she has possibly never really needed to learn to share and accommodate others. According to her mum she gets her own way at home and always provides reasons why she should get what she wants. This lack of compromise on Sue's part could result in difficulty when interacting with others.

It is possible that Sue feels rejected by her Dad's absence in her life. Promised visits which never materialise may have resulted in hurt which is now being expressed as aggression.

5.3.4.2 Relations with peers

Because Sue interacts aggressively with her peers, the meaning she has assigned to these relationships will be negative. She seems to have "on-off" relationships depending on the extent to which she is allowed to dominate her peers. It appears that as soon as she can't have her own way, she reacts aggressively and the

friendship is terminated. This may well result in feelings of isolation and rejection as well as increased aggression.

In the home situation when Sue's mother intervenes and sends her to her room, this may result in feelings that her peers are always right and that her mother favours them. In addition, Sue is not given an opportunity to acquire skills for conflict resolution.

5.3.4.3 Relations with teachers

It seems as if Sue interacts better with adults than her peers. She is well-liked by her teacher who sees her as a child who really has personality. However, this relationship may be experienced negatively by Sue as her teacher is involved in reprimanding her for her aggressive behaviour. She may also experience her relationships with other teachers negatively as she encounters them when they are on playground duty in the situation where she behaves aggressively.

5.3.4.4 Relations with objects and ideas

Sue repeated Grade One as she was emotionally immature. She is able to satisfy the academic requirements of Grade Two and her teacher and mother are pleased with her academic progress.

As she is doing well and receives positive reinforcement in the form of praise and good work stamps, this will have resulted in a positive scholar identity.

5.3.4.5 Relations with self

Sue is a confident and well-spoken pupil who communicates well with adults. She seems to place importance on physical appearance. She is aware that she experiences difficulty interacting with her peers and is unable to perceive herself as part of the problem. Because of Sue's ego-strength it does not appear that her overall self-concept is negative at present. She does, however, seem anxious about why she is not well-liked by her peers. These negative feelings will probably increase and affect the dynamics of the self-concept if Sue does not acquire the necessary skills for social interaction.

5.3.5 Projective Media

Various projective media were used to determine the essences of the person image and to penetrate the self-dialogue.

5.3.5.1 Drawings

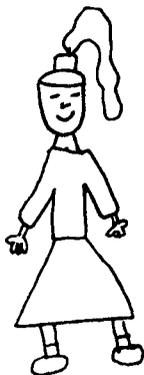
Drawing 1

Sue's Draw-a-person is stylised which is common in the schematic phase. The drawing is well-proportioned and indicates a good understanding of body image. The drawing is quite small and positioned in the middle of the page, possibly indicating tension, insecurity, uncertainty and feelings of inferiority (Van Niekerk 1986:149).

There are no specific indicators of aggression in this drawing. The wide upturned mouth, however, gives the impression of forced friendliness and an attempt at acceptance (Van Niekerk 1986:154).

Drawing 1

Jane



DRAW A PERSON: QUESTIONS

1. Give him/her a name. Jane
2. How old is he/she? 8 years old.
3. What makes him/her:
 - * happy - Because it was her birthday yesterday
 - * angry - when she can't wear a dress she wants to wear
 - * sad - when people don't want to play with her and when her mum sends her to bed early
4. What is the worst thing he/she ever did? Be horrible to other children.
5. If Jane could change into an animal, what animal would he/she choose to be? Why? A butterfly - so she could fly and look pretty
6. Suppose he/she could have a magic wand and change other people into animals, what would he/she change the following people into? Why?
 - * mother - A pony - because ponies are beautiful
 - * father - A bulldog - he likes being tough
7. Do the other children like Jane? Why? No, because she always fights.
8. Does the teacher like him/her? Why? Yes - she is pretty.
9. Is he/she cleverer than the other children in the class? No - the same as everyone.
10. One day his/her parents were angry with each other and had a fight. Why? What happened? They were fighting about who wanted to go out and who wanted to stay at home.
11. One evening, Jane cried when he/she went to bed. Why? Because her mother and father went to the fun fair and she couldn't go. Too many people were going and they would lose her.

12. Then he/she fell asleep and had a dream. What was the dream about? She dreamt that she fell through a deep hole and couldn't get out.
13. He/she woke up in the night and felt scared. Why? She had called for help and no one heard.
14. If he/she could have three wishes, what would they be?
 - * To be beautiful
 - * Get an Ultra-hair Barbie
 - * Be nice to people.

Sue's answering of questions based on her drawing expressed:

- * feelings of rejection by her peer group and possibly her parents
- * a sense of helplessness

Drawing 2

When asked what made her feel like she did in her second drawing, Sue replied that it was when she had been horrible to other people and vice versa. She said that this often happened when she wanted her own way.

Drawing 3

Sue included her father in the family drawing, but her positioning of herself next to her mother indicates that this is the parent with whom she identifies. The order in which she drew the figures was from left to right.

Sue commented that the family was happy because of the dog whom they spoil. She proceeded to say why each individual felt happy. The father was happy because "I love him and my mum loves him".

She did not indicate that this love was reciprocated. Her mother was happy because she had a daughter and not a son. Sue was happy because "my mum spoils me and takes me for milkshakes".

Drawing 4

The source of her anger at home was as a result of Sue not getting her own way. She said that she had wanted a sweet and her mother had refused to give her one. This made her furious and so she went to her room to sulk. This indicates Sue's need to get what she wants all the time as well as her difficulty in accepting her mother's authority.

Drawing 5

Sue was hesitant when given the instruction for the last drawing. She said that "People don't like you when you behave like this". She then enquired whether she would really be invisible and the researcher told her that this was a "make-believe" picture. She then responded by drawing immediately as she explained that she often wants to behave like this but is not allowed to.

Her drawing depicted Sue stamping her feet, shouting and slapping a boy "so that he cried". It seems as if this is how Sue deals with her aggression in confrontational situations, but that she has been reprimanded so often that she must not behave in this manner that she now experiences feelings of guilt. She realises that people won't like her when she behaves like this, but she has not yet developed alternative strategies for controlling her aggression.

Drawing 2



Sue

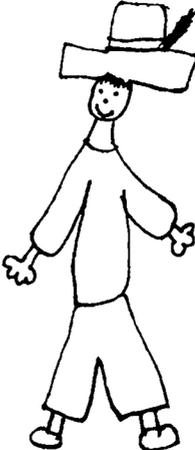
Sue



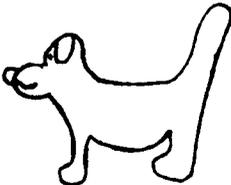
Mother



Father

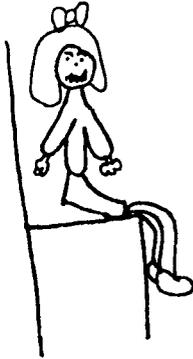


Dog



Drawing 4

Sue



Mother



Sue stamping her feet



Sue shouting

Sue hitting a boy



5.3.5.2 Children's Apperception Test

Sue's Protocol

CAT

CARD 1

There was once a chicken, and she laid three eggs. After a few weeks they hatched. As they got older they started eating. She gave them porridge. The one didn't have a scarf - the others did. The mother served them and they wanted seconds. They brushed their teeth, watched TV and went to bed.

CARD 2

There was once a daddy bear, mother bear and baby bear. Baby bear wanted to play a game. They will fight and pull daddy bear. Mummy and I will pull together. The parents got tired and went inside. The baby had no-one to play with him.

CARD 3

There was once a grumpy old lion. The mouse came out of his house.

"What are you doing?" asked lion.

"Fetching cheese. Mind your own business!" said mouse.

"I was only asking" said lion.

CARD 4

There was a kangaroo mother and her child.

Mum said, "Why don't you give your little sister a ride?"

The baby was scared and the child said, "Don't be afraid, I

won't trip you".

"Don't worry" said mum, "You can travel with me".

CARD 5

There was a mother - she was in the kitchen. The baby cried. She rocked them and put them in their cot. The one is sleeping. The one who is awake is scared. He can't sleep - it's dark in the room. By accident the floor creaked. He became more scared.

CARD 6

There was a hole (cave) and three bears - a mum, dad and baby. The baby was a girl. They told the baby to sleep on the leaves while they slept at the hole to keep them warm. Baby woke up - she wanted to play but mummy would get cross if she woke her up. She imagined things out of the shadows. She felt happy because she could realise things. Mummy turned and daddy tucked his nose into mummy's fur because it was cold.

CARD 7

There was a tiger - he didn't like monkeys. They always chirped. This fat monkey screamed when the tiger was asleep in the leaves. The tiger growled and stuck out his nails. He chased the monkey. Monkeys can climb and swing so the tiger didn't catch him. The tiger hid behind a rock and pretended to be a rock. The monkey jumped onto the rock which was really the tiger. He got a fright and hid in the hole in the tree.

CARD 8

Monkey and his son - they invited people over. The son acted like a hooligan jumping all over. The friends whispered to each other - "This child acts like a hooligan. I think we should leave straight away. We can't leave, we just got here".

The father heard this and called his son over.

"Now you listen to me. Stop acting like a hooligan!"

The monkey said that he was trying to have fun.

"Go to your room if you want fun".

He felt sad and left out. He went to his room and read a book about being good and listening to your parents.

CARD 9

There was once a mother and father rabbit. They had a dark room. The baby wanted to sleep on the couch.

"You have to sleep on your bed" said mum.

"I want to sleep on the couch so I'm next to you".

"No, you go to your room and you'll stay in your room till tomorrow if you don't go now".

He went to his bed. He felt sad. He lay on his bed and cried. The tears ran down his cheeks. He heard a noise at the door. He went to see. He felt cold and saw nothing. He went to the lounge and told his mother.

"I left the windows open for fresh air", she said.

CARD 10

There was once a mother and girl dog. The mother lived with the girl doggie. She was being naughty. She took her on her lap and smacked her hairy little bottom. The puppy felt sore.

"Next time daddy will smack you with his paw".

"I'm sorry".

"It's okay. Now go to your room and you say sorry to your daddy when he comes home".

Some common themes come to the fore from Sue's protocol:

- identification with the mother figure
- exclusion from the parent relationship and feelings of rejection related to this
- discipline model employed by parents.

Specific indicators of aggression

CARD 2

Sue initially identified the rope-pulling as a game but then as a fight. She identified with the little bear co-operating with the mother. No winner is identified and the story ends with a sense of loneliness.

CARD 3

The lion is seen as old and submissive. This could be a defensive process as the pipe and cane are ignored as well as the lion as an aggressive creature. The mouse is seen as assertive and seems to be the figure of identification.

CARD 4

Although this card is not designed to elicit aggression, it is interesting to note that Sue identified the elder sibling as possibly acting in a vindictive manner towards the baby kangaroo by saying "Don't be afraid, I won't trip you".

CARD 7

The aggression in this picture was identified by Sue but she dealt with these feelings by having the monkey outsmart the tiger. The story suggested latent rather than overt aggression on the part of the tiger.

5.3.5.3 Sentence Completion

Sue's INCOMPLETE SENTENCES

INSTRUCTIONS: Finish the following sentences as fast as you can. Write down the first thing you think of.

- 1) I often wish I could be a bird so I could fly.
- 2) My greatest fear is shadows.
- 3) My father always will love me.
- 4) I feel like giving up when we play a game and people ask me to be on.
- 5) I get so angry when people tease me about the way my mum does my hair or I dress.
- 6) My classmates are kind and generous.
- 7) Most fathers don't want their children.
- 8) I am ashamed that I cheated when playing.
- 9) If I think a class is too hard for me, I ask the teacher.
- 10) My greatest wish is mummy buying me an Ultra-Hair Barbie.
- 11) Most boys like soccer.
- 12) School is fun.
- 13) Most mothers adopt babies.
- 14) Taking orders is not nice for me.

- 15) Most girls like netball.
- 16) If I can't get what I want, I get cross eg I say "I'm not playing".
- 17) When I am criticised, I ignore them and feel sad but I don't show them.
- 18) People think I am nice because my mum gets compliments about me.
- 19) When I get really angry I could shout and hit.
- 20) I'd like most to be myself.
- 21) I feel guilty about being horrible to people.
- 22) I wish that my father would not get cross at me.
- 23) When I am punished, I am upset.
- 24) I lose my temper when people annoy me.
- 25) I am afraid of the principal's office.
- 26) Sometimes I feel that my teacher likes me in some way.
- 27) If I were a king, I would spend my money on food and clothes.
- 28) I wish that my mother didn't work, then I could cuddle her.
- 29) I feel like running away when I get upset.

Relationship structures

Sue's responses related to her relationship with her parents are neutral overall. Her choice of words, however, gives the feeling that she has a need to be loved (sentences 3 and 28). Two of the responses related to her peers were concrete, e.g. they play soccer and netball, while the remaining response was positive. The relationships with the teacher and objects and ideas are indicated as positive. Her relationship with the self is positive.

Responses related to aggression

From Sue's responses, it becomes apparent that her involvement with her life-world is predominantly on an affective level. She gets upset, cross and feels guilty to name a few examples. Her responses show that she is sensitive to criticism and that she does not know how to respond to situations in which she feels angry, gets teased or criticised. That Sue feels uncertain about whether she is a "nice" person or well-liked comes to the fore.

5.3.6 Person Image

Sue sees her mother as a loving and caring parent. Her mother provides her with many material things and Sue sees her mother as spoiling her. She identifies with her mother and would like to be like her. It seems as if Sue has been used to getting her own way and when her mother refuses her something, she resents her authority. Sue would ultimately like to be in control of this relationship.

She feels rejected by her father and harbours feelings of aggression towards him as a result of this. She sees him as a threat to her relationship with her mother as their relationship would result in her exclusion.

She interacts well with adults and is manipulative and endearing in these relationships. She sees her teacher as approachable but is uncertain about this relationship and whether she is accepted by her teacher.

Her relationships with her peers are experienced positively by Sue if she is allowed to dominate the situation. As soon as she encounters resistance, the relationship becomes problematic for Sue. She then acts aggressively to try and take control. This results in her experiencing her peers negatively.

Sue presents as a confident girl, but underneath she is uncertain and feels insecure. She is unsure as to whether she is accepted and liked by other people especially her peers. She experiences guilt about her behaviour as she is continually told to think about what she has done wrong, without ever being encouraged to consider alternative forms of behaviour. Sue has many positive attributes, but her negative experiences are resulting in dents in her self-concept. If these negative experiences are allowed to continue unchecked, the negative feelings about herself will surpass the positive, and result in a negative self-concept.

5.4 PUPIL THREE: MARK

5.4.1 Background information

Mark is a twelve-year old boy who is fairly tall for his age and on the brink of adolescence. He is in Standard 4, but repeated Standard 2 when he moved to his present school from a school in the Coloured community. His present average for Standard 4 is fifty-two percent. No intelligence quotient is available.

Mark has a younger sister who is six years old. His father is deceased and his mother remarried a few years later. Her second husband apparently treated Mark and his sister as if they were his own. However, since Mark's mother and her husband divorced approximately nine months ago, he has not made many attempts to see the children. This has been hard for Mark to understand.

5.4.2 Functional Image

Mark was referred by his teacher for "extreme aggression". This behaviour involved bullying and instigating fights on the playground. Parents of other pupils have apparently reported that their children were fearful of coming to school because of Mark. His teacher felt that his parents' divorce may have some part to play in his behaviour. She reported that he had changed from being a well-mannered child with a sense of humour.

During the interview with Mark's mother, her distress was apparent. She felt that she did not understand her son any longer. She thought he was angry with her because of the divorce even though she had explained her reasons to him. He had been happy at school in previous years but complained about going to school now. Mark's mother could not think why he was being aggressive at school. She also commented that she was unable to reach out to Mark and comfort him, and could not bring herself to hug or touch Mark.

5.4.3 Phenomenal Image

The phenomenal image and functional image are identical as the referral problem focuses on the phenomenon of aggression.

5.4.4 Relational Image

5.4.4.1 Relations with parents

Mark's relationship with his mother seems to have broken down. Although his mother can see his need for comfort, she is unable to reach out to Mark. As a result, Mark is probably experiencing this relationship negatively. It is possible that he is resentful and angry with his mother because of the loss of his second father figure and may not yet have come to terms with the divorce. Mark may also be experiencing feelings of rejection as a result of these changes in his home circumstances.

As Mark is probably feeling alienated in the home situation, he is unable to share and discuss his present feelings with a parent, and so his feelings of aggression do not dissipate.

5.4.4.2 Relations with peers

Because of the change in Mark's behaviour, the once positive relationship with his peers will probably be assigned negative meaning now. His aggressive and bullying behaviour will result in feelings of alienation and rejection. It is possible that Mark is

overcompensating for his loss of control in the home situation by trying to control his peer group, even if he achieves this through negative means. This displaced anger is only resulting in further unhappiness.

5.4.4.3 Relations with teachers

As Mark is in the senior primary phase at school, he is not exposed to only one teacher with whom he can establish a close relationship, but to many subject teachers. Mark is seen as aggressive, sullen and difficult by his teachers which will influence their interaction with him. As he is always in trouble, he will be experiencing this relationship negatively.

5.4.4.4 Relations with objects and ideas

Mark's scholastic progress has deteriorated slightly (the overall average has dropped by 6%) since Standard 3. This could be due to the increased difficulty of the work. This relationship may not necessarily be negative as he has always achieved at approximately this level. But, if he is in the habit of comparing himself with his peers, then he may see himself as less clever and so experience this relationship negatively.

5.4.4.5 Relations with self

In the first meeting with Mark, the researcher found it difficult to communicate with him as he was defensive and pretended that everything was fine. He conveyed the image of toughness, possibly because big boys should not

show weakness, yet there was an underlying sense of unhappiness. Mark's self-concept is possibly negative as a result of negative feedback from his interactions with other people. He is possibly confused by his feelings of aggression and lack of control in his life, and does not understand this emerging self which is making his life unpleasant.

5.4.5 Projective media

The various projective media will now be discussed in order to achieve a clearer understanding of Mark's person image.

5.4.5.1 Drawings

Drawing 1

The first impression created by this drawing is that of a powerful, strong and aggressive person. The facial features create an almost evil expression. The drawing is large and could indicate feelings of frustration and the need to react aggressively to compensate for feelings of personal unfulfilment (Van Niekerk 1986:150). It is also possible that Mark perceives himself as strong and powerful which is a positive image.

Important indicators

- * the position of the feet could be indicative of a problematic situation (Van Niekerk 1986:151).
- * the sketch-like lines may indicate anxiety and life-uncertainty (Van Niekerk 1986:150).

- * eyes without pupils are often symptomatic of egocentricity and emotional immaturity (Van Niekerk 1986:154).

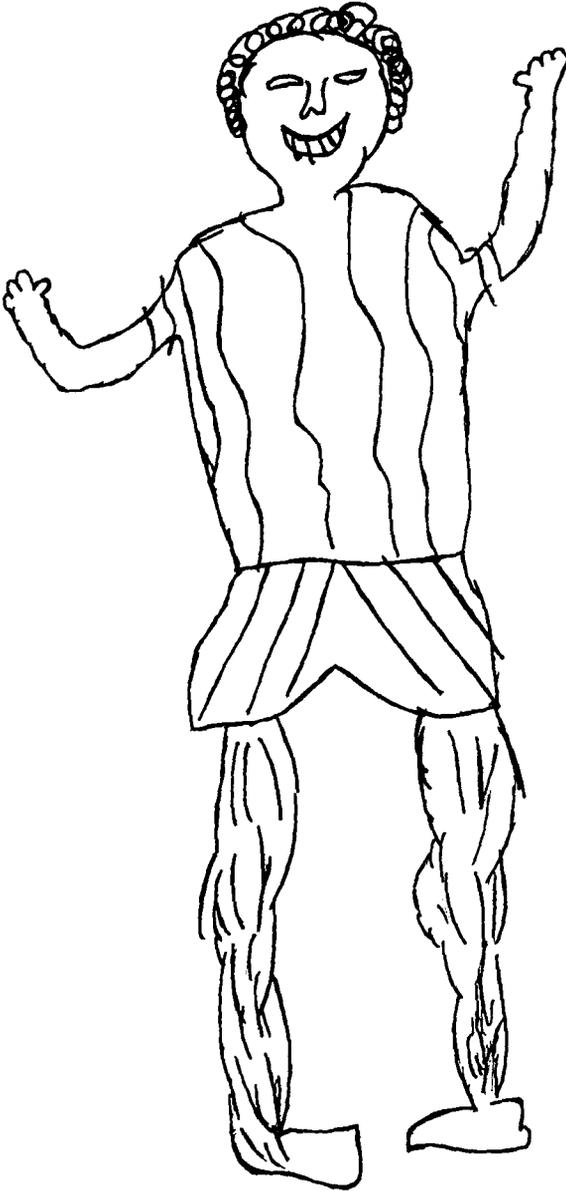
Specific indicators of aggression

- * the mouth with teeth and the harsh expression (Klepsch and Logie 1982:22)
- * the overall effect of the drawing (Klepsch and Logie 1982:42)
- * dissociation: Mark's verbal description of his drawing indicates that he is unaware of the aggressive person he has depicted (Klepsch and Logie 1982:22-23).

Mark's answering of questions based on his drawing reveals a need for his family to return to what it was previously and that the change has made him insecure. He seems to harbour guilt that he may have been the cause of the break-up. He also appears to be sensitive to criticism and wishes that he could escape from his present situation.

Drawing 2

In his second drawing, Mark drew himself in his school uniform, possibly indicating that this is where he expresses his aggressive feelings. He said he felt like this when "someone pushed me or something" and he then feels like "throwing things around and shoving things". His response reveals how he reacts with physical aggression to situations at school when he feels threatened.



DRAW A PERSON: QUESTIONS

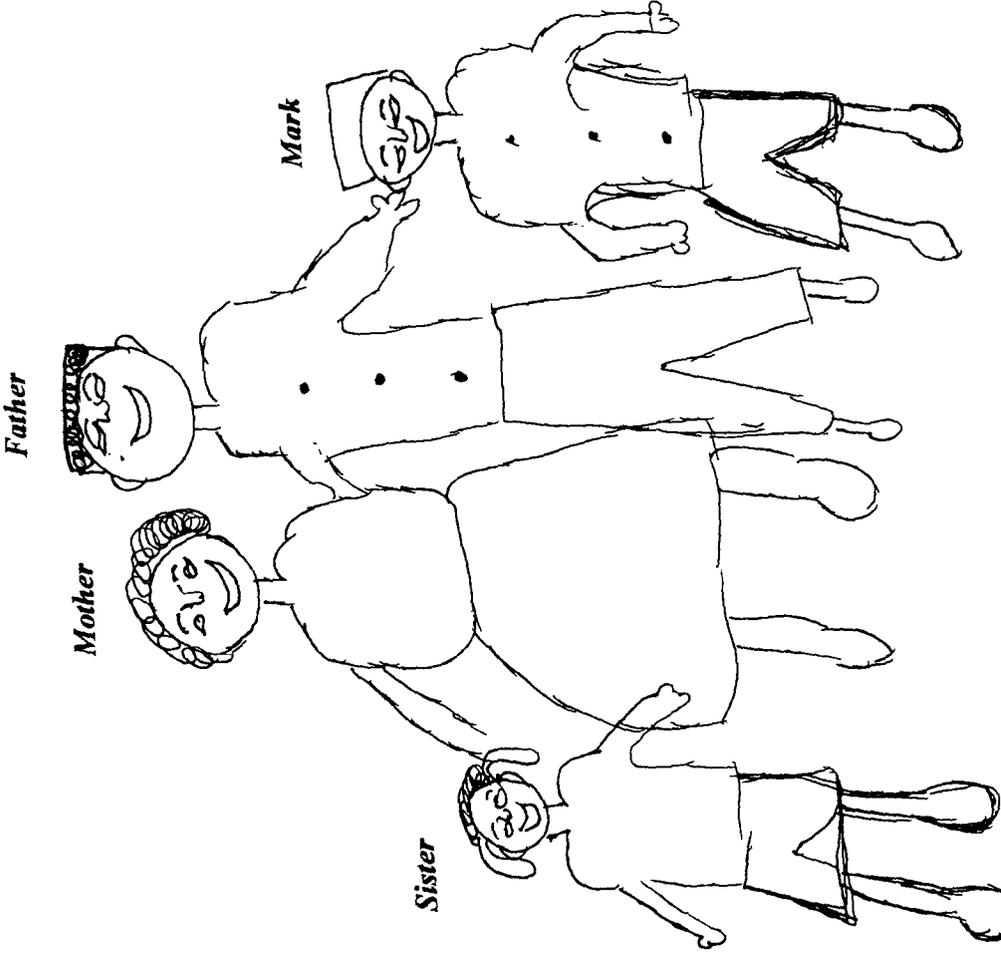
1. Give him/her a name. Romeo
2. How old is he/she? 12 years old.
3. How does he/she feel at the moment? Happy because he is
in a photo.
4. What makes him/her:
 - * happy - Because his photo is being taken
 - * angry - if he had hurt someone or someone had done something to him or someone he knows
 - * sad - maybe if someone hit him or shouted at him
5. What is the worst thing he/she ever did? Stole money or something.
6. If Romeo could change into an animal, what animal would he/she choose to be? Why? An eagle - he could fly all over the world and see what it looks like.
7. Suppose he/she could have a magic wand and change other people into animals, what would he/she change the following people into? Why?
 - * mother - Also an eagle, then they could go together
 - * father - Also a bird
8. Is he/she cleverer than the other children in the class?
Yes - because he gets higher marks
9. Is he/she cleverer than his/her brothers and sisters?
Yes.
10. One day his/her parents were angry with each other and had a fight. Why? What happened? They were fighting because Romeo had done something - stole money maybe.
11. One evening, Romeo cried when he/she went to bed. Why?
Because his parents were fighting.

12. Then he/she fell asleep and had a dream. What was the dream about? That they would stop fighting and be a proper family again.
13. He/she woke up in the night and felt scared. Why? He was alone.
14. If he/she could have three wishes, what would they be?
 - * That everything would stay the same
 - * To be one family and never break up
 - * To all be healthy

Mark



Drawing 3



Drawing 4



Mom

Mark

Drawing 3

The overall impression of Mark's family drawing is that of a happy family. He has shown the closeness of the family by drawing outstretched arms indicating closeness and interaction between family members. He positioned himself next to his "Dad" illustrating his need for a father.

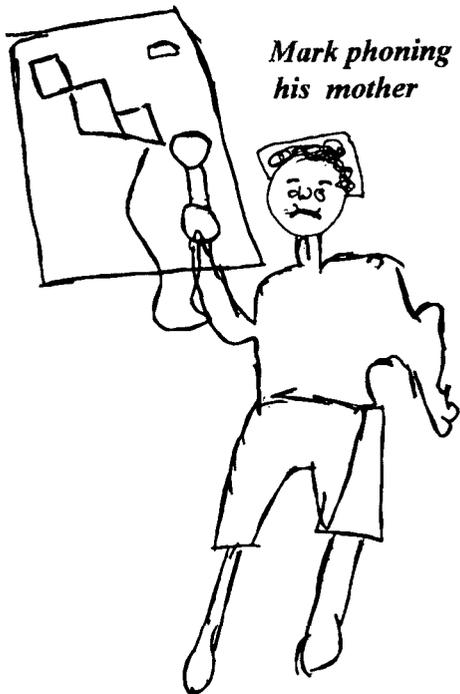
He commented that the family were happy as "they do all sorts of things together like going on picnics and watching movies".

In view of his parents being divorced, this drawing may reveal Mark's wish for a reconciliation or that he has never accepted the divorce. It could also be that this is how Mark experienced his family situation before the divorce and how he wishes it to be.

Drawing 4

The fourth drawing depicts Mark and his mother as the protagonists, probably as she is a single parent now and the disciplinarian. His stance in the picture reveals how he stands up to his mother and questions her authority. He commented that these situations arise when he has to help around the home e.g. clean the pool. He feels his mother asks him to do too much and this results in arguments. He then goes to his room, slams the door and lies on his bed. The mother figure is large in comparison to Mark, possibly indicating how he recognises her as a strong parent figure.

Drawing 5



*Mark phoning
his mother*

Mark



Peer



Drawing 5

He commented that if it was a teacher who had made him feel aggressive, he would phone his mother so they could solve the problem. Mark thought a while, and then commented that if it was really bad, then he would harm the teacher physically. If it was a fellow pupil, he would fight him.

From the above, it is apparent that Mark perceives his mother as someone who can assist him in his difficulties. He also views physical retaliation as a way to deal with conflict situations.

5.4.5.2 Children's Apperception Test

Mark's Protocol

CAT

CARD 1

First they were brushing their teeth, now they are eating breakfast. The mother is going to start dishing up. They are feeling quite happy because they are going to get breakfast. They are banging on the table for their food.

CARD 2

They had a fight and agreed whoever wins the tug-of-war will get whatever they argued over. They are feeling angry because they are anxious to win. The guy with the little boy will win.

CARD 3

The king is waiting for one of his servants to come. I think he didn't get breakfast or lunch, now he is waiting anxiously. He doesn't want to smoke any more, he is just so angry.

CARD 4

The kangaroo is going shopping and taking her kids along. One is in her sack, the other is riding his bike. They are in a rush and she has her shopping items. She has to hold onto her hat because she is going so fast. They are quite excited about going shopping. The little baby is excited to see what is going on.

CARD 5

The empty room of a person who has made his bed and gone to work. There are two teddy bears in the cot. The room is quite clean and the windows are closed. The bears are scared or lonely as there is no-one there besides themselves. They are going to get out and run to the neighbours where someone can look after them.

CARD 6

A bear is in a cave - he is very cold and lonely. The wind is blowing. It is dark in the cave. He is very, very lonely. I think he will find a new home for himself and get a friend.

CARD 7

In the jungle - the tiger is very angry and he is attacking the monkey as he wants to eat it up. The monkey is scared and running away. He is afraid the

tiger is happy as he is going to get lunch. The monkey will climb to get out of the tiger's reach. The tiger will be happy when he gets his lunch.

CARD 8

There is a family having tea. The mother is on a chair with the son. She tells him to go to bed as it is late. He is unhappy. The couple on the couch are having a conversation. The mother is normal and the baby is cross because he has to go to bed. The couple are gossiping about these two (points to mother and son monkey), that she is nasty sending the child to bed.

CARD 9

Here is a room with a rabbit. He is scared and anxious. The door opens and he thinks it is a ghost. He is going to climb under the bed. I think he is going to run away.

CARD 10

These two dogs are going to the bathroom - to play there - pull the towels down and so on. They are happy because they are going to enjoy themselves in the bathroom. The mother will spank him because he was naughty. The baby will feel cross and sorry.

The following themes came to the fore from Mark's protocol:

- the need for oral gratification
- the need for affection and care
- fear of the dark
- fear of loneliness and rejection

- possibly resents authority of mother figure.

It was significant that the two larger bears in Card 6, which are often seen as parental figures (Bellack and Bellack 1974:4), were omitted possibly indicating Mark's isolation within the family.

Specific cards related to aggression

CARD 2

Mark interpreted this card as a fight where the tug-of-war is the way of resolving the problem. Mark recognises the aggression present in the picture and the result is the "winner takes all". It is significant that he chose a form of physical aggression as the conclusion for his problem solving.

CARD 3

The lion's aggression is identified by Mark as overwhelming, to the extent that the lion is unable to focus on anything else. His anger is almost debilitating which could be attributed to the fact that the character of the mouse is ignored. It is possible that Mark's aggression also overwhelms him and results in the inability to comprehend what is happening in his environment.

CARD 7

Mark responded to the aggression depicted in this card. The tiger's pleasure in catching and eating the monkey could indicate Mark's need for oral gratification or how

it results in pleasure for him. No punishment followed the killing of the monkey, possibly indicating a weak super-ego (Bellack and Bellack 1974:9).

Mark's responses to these cards reveal that the outcome in his stories is uncontrolled aggression and that he is able to translate his need for aggression into reality.

5.4.5.3 Sentence Completion

Mark's INCOMPLETE SENTENCES

INSTRUCTIONS: Finish the following sentences as fast as you can. Write down the first thing you think of.

- 1) I often wish I could fly.
- 2) My greatest fear is nothing.
- 3) My father always cleans the lawn.
- 4) I feel like giving up when I can't win.
- 5) I get so angry I could hit someone.
- 6) My classmates are great.
- 7) Most fathers shout and hit.
- 8) I am ashamed that I may not go to school if I didn't have the money to go.
- 9) If I think a class is too hard for me, I feel like going to another class or school.
- 10) My greatest wish is that I can play hockey.
- 11) Most boys are cool but some aren't.
- 12) School is quite nice but a little hard.
- 13) Most mothers are nice and kind.

- 14) Taking orders from older people is the right thing to do.
- 15) Most girls are quiet and shy.
- 16) If I can't get what I want, I just do without it and feel grateful I have got something.
- 17) When I am criticised, I will get angry and talk to that person.
- 18) People think I am an okay boy.
- 19) When I get really angry I could get vicious.
- 20) I'd like most to be a manager of a company.
- 21) I feel guilty about a crime I did when I was small.
- 22) I wish that my father would stay the way he is.
- 23) When I am punished, I sit in my room with no TV.
- 24) I lose my temper when someone teases me about my mother.
- 25) I am afraid of nothing.
- 26) Sometimes I feel that my teacher may hit me.
- 27) If I were a king, I would give money to the less fortunate.
- 28) I wish that my mother would stay the way she is.
- 29) I feel like running away when if I was abused.

Relationship structures

The responses related to his relationship with his parents are positive overall. Mark's need for constancy in this relationship is apparent.

Mark experiences the school environment and teachers as negative. He seems concerned about achievement at school and experiences the school work as difficult. He experiences the discipline and inhibiting nature of the

school as negative.

He completed the sentences related to his peer group with positive responses. However, he seems sensitive to teasing or verbal attacks on his family which could possibly indicate that he is the victim of such incidences in the school situation. There was also an indication that one behaves in a certain way as it is what society expects of you as well as an awareness of one's responsibility towards your fellow man.

Mark's relationship with himself is negative. He has a poor self-concept and is concerned about his failure to do well. He becomes angry when he feels people are criticising him, yet his use of the words in the sentence "People think I am an okay boy" indicates that Mark feels he is accepted positively by other people.

Mark is involved in his world both cognitively and affectively and so the meaning he attaches to his experiences has both a cognitive and affective dimension. There is, however, the tendency towards being too emotional which could affect his self-actualisation if this had to become his manner of functioning.

A conflict area for Mark is that of fears, as he omitted sentences 2 and 26, and then completed them with the word "nothing". The researcher thinks that he is either unable to recognise his fears or cannot bring himself to express them, which may result in a free-floating anxiety.

Responses related to aggression

His responses to the questions related to aggression reveal that Mark's feelings of aggression have the tendency to result in overt forms of expression such as physical behaviour.

5.4.6 Person image

Mark sees his mother as caring and dependable, yet at the same time is experiencing feelings of isolation within the family unit. He needs to have his mother express her feelings for him in ways in which he can know that she loves and cares for him.

He identified strongly with his step-father and his need to be part of a family is so great that he is in a state of denial that there has been a change in the family as a result of the divorce. This was indicated by the fact that he continued to tell the researcher that no divorce had occurred.

Mark is resentful of his mother's authority as a parent and feels obliged to obey her as it is the acceptable way to behave. However, when he gives in to his true feelings about this issue, it results in conflict.

The meaning Mark has assigned to his school situation is negative. Initially, he tried to pretend that everything was going well at school but later admitted that this was not the case. Because he is often in trouble, he experiences his teachers negatively. His achievement at

school has resulted in feelings of inadequacy, and he is scared of failure. Mark sees escaping from situations as a way of avoiding the reality.

His relations with his peers are experienced both positively and negatively depending on Mark's behaviour. He is sensitive to criticism and teasing, and behaves aggressively to try and control the situation. He seems to have a low tolerance level and has difficulty interpreting accurately what he perceives as aggression in others.

Mark has a positive self-concept even though his experiences at present are predominantly negative. His home situation has made him feel unsure and confused, and he is dealing with this through aggression. He is fighting for control of circumstances which are changing, as change makes him feel insecure. He feels angry, but by behaving aggressively he is actually losing control of who he is, and alienating himself further. He is needy for love and acceptance, and needs to come to the understanding that he is loved for who he is and that change is a growth point and need not be experienced negatively.

5.5 PUPIL FOUR: NOMNINI

5.5.1 Background information

Nomnini is a pretty nine-year old girl who chatted enthusiastically to the researcher. She is repeating

Grade Two as she had not mastered all the necessary skills. Her present Grade Two teacher reported that she is a competent pupil when she applies herself. She was tested last year when it appeared that she would need to repeat Grade Two, and her intelligence quotient was found to be in the average range (OSAIS:101).

She is the middle child and only daughter of a complete family. Her father is clearly the head of the family and takes the lead in situations concerning his family.

5.5.2 Functional Image

Nomnini was referred for aggressive and attention-seeking behaviour. This behaviour was initially limited to the playground where Nomnini would, for example, slap other children and tell stories to make the other pupils scared by intimidating them.

Her teacher reported that she is also behaving aggressively in the classroom, and will without any visible provocation hit other pupils. She is also challenging the teacher's authority and when the teacher tries to counsel her, she comments that the teacher is picking on her because she is black. She does not respond when the teacher praises her work.

Nomnini's father could not understand how the school had a problem with his child, as she was not a problem at home. She is apparently co-operative and helpful around the home.

5.5.3 Phenomenal Image

The functional image and phenomenal image are identical as the phenomenon of aggression has already been identified as the area of exploration.

5.5.4 Relational Image

5.5.4.1 Relations with parents.

From the parent interview it would seem as if this is a relationship which Nomnini experiences positively. Being in a complete family, she has a role model from which to form a sex-role identity. Her father reported that they experienced no difficulties with Nomnini's behaviour at home, and that the problem of aggression only occurred in the school situation.

5.5.4.2 Relations with teachers

The relationship with her class teacher seems to be experienced negatively by both individuals. Because the teacher is a figure of authority and involved in reprimanding Nomnini, this seems to increase aggression in Nomnini and increase the negativity of the relationship.

5.5.4.3 Relations with peers

As Nomnini's behaviour affects her peers negatively, it is unlikely that these relations will be experienced positively by her. Their rejection of her in a social

environment such as the playground, could possibly fuel further feelings of aggression.

5.5.4.4 Relations with objects and ideas

Her teacher reported that Nomnini is a capable scholar, but does not always apply herself to her school tasks. She felt that Nomnini was unmotivated. In view of the fact that Nomnini is repeating Grade Two, it would seem that she has a negative perception of herself as a scholar.

5.5.4.5 Relations with self

As a result of the many negative relations, it would seem likely that Nomnini's perception and experience of herself would be negative. Her aggressive and defiant behaviour may result from the feelings of uncertainty and insecurity which she experiences in the school environment. If a racial element is the basis of her aggression, then this may result in the perception of being different and lead to feelings of dislike and intolerance towards others, which would alienate her further.

5.5.5 Projective media

The projective media will be discussed to try and illuminate the essences of the person image.

5.5.5.1 Drawings

Drawing 1

This is a fairly small drawing which is positioned in the top half of the page, possibly indicating futile striving, a lack of insight and feelings of uncertainty and inferiority (Van Niekerk 1986:149 and Klepsch and Logie 1982:43).

Important indicators:

- * the small dotted eyes do not give any feeling of expression
- * the nose is omitted, possibly reflecting anxiety and feelings of inadequacy (Koppitz 1969:43)
- * the mouth gives the impression of forced friendliness and an attempt at acceptance (Van Niekerk 1986:154).

No specific indicators of aggression are present in this drawing.

The religious answers to many of the questions are significant. It could be that Nomnini is very religious, which is often typical of junior primary school children. It may be that Nomnini sees Jesus as forgiving and that is why Jesus loves her, irrespective of her behaviour. Her three wishes are cognitively concrete like most of her responses about her drawing.

Drawing 1



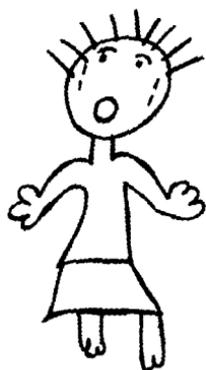
Aimee

DRAW A PERSON: QUESTIONS

1. Give him/her a name. Aimee
2. How old is he/she? 5 years old.
3. Would you like to be him/her? Yes, she's so important.
4. What is he/she thinking about? Love, the love of Jesus who cares for you.
5. How does he/she feel at the moment? Happy, because she knows Jesus loves her.
6. What makes him/her:
 - * happy - praying
 - * angry - when a devil gets in her heart
 - * sad - when she is lonely off.
7. What is the worst thing he/she ever did? She took money without asking.
8. If Aimee had to live alone on an island, but could take one person along, who would he/she take with him/her? Why? Jesus, because he will always love her.
9. If Aimee could change into an animal, what animal would he/she choose to be? Why? A cheetah, because it runs fast.
10. Suppose he/she could have a magic wand and change other people into animals, what would he/she change the following people into? Why?
 - * mother - frog - a frog can jump
 - * father - hippo - it sleeps all day
 - * brother - ostrich - he has a long neck
11. If nobody else could see, what would Aimee like to do most? To sing, because she sings God's songs.
12. Do other children like Aimee? Why? Yes, because she is kind.

13. Does the teacher like him/her? Why? Yes, because she does nice work and has manners.
14. Is he/she cleverer than the other children in the class? No, she is not the cleverest.
15. Is he/she cleverer than his/her brothers and sisters? No, the same.
16. Does his/her father love him/her more than the brothers and sisters. Loves all of them.
17. Does his/her mother love him/her more than the brothers and sisters? She loves all of them.
18. If he/she had a whole day to do just what he/she wanted, what would he/she do? Draw.
19. One day his/her parents were angry with each other and had a fight. Why? What happened? Maybe Aimee's mother loves her the most.
20. One evening, Aimee cried when he/she went to bed. Why? They didn't want to listen to her when she said stop fighting.
21. Then he/she fell asleep and had a dream. What was the dream about? That she went to Cape Town with her grandparents.
22. He/she woke up in the night and felt scared. Why? She thought robbers were in the house.
23. If he/she could have three wishes, what would they be?
- * To be rich
 - * To have money
 - * That they lived happily

Drawing 2



Nomnini



Father



Mother



Brother



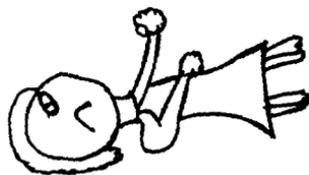
Nommini



Brother



Nommini



Peer

Drawing 2

Nomnini drew this picture quickly and began to cry when the researcher asked her about her drawing. She responded that she was angry with a boy in her class who took her things without asking. When she tells the teacher, the teacher says "Goodbye, go to sleep". She added that the teacher doesn't like tattle-tales. She continued, "Sometimes I pull my hair, and don't eat anything. I shout Get out! Get away! I feel bad inside and hurt. Sometimes I hit myself. I don't know what to do, kill myself?"

The above demonstrates how Nomnini is unable to control her aggression and then reveals how she directs it at herself. She obviously lacks the skills to resolve confrontational issues.

Drawing 3

Nomnini's comment on her family drawing was that they were happy because they do things together. She started her drawing with her youngest brother and worked her way up the family according to age. The people are almost identical other than the hairstyle and trousers. Bare feet and toes are also present in all the family members, possibly indicating aggression in the family as the family are clothed (Van Niekerk 1986:156). It could also literally mean that the family walk around the house with bare feet.

Drawing 4

Nomnini refused on numerous occasions to draw a family picture where confrontation is involved. She commented

that she wouldn't draw it as her family is always happy and loving.

She was so emphatic in her refusal, this instruction was obviously threatening for Nomnini and a source of conflict.

Drawing 5

In this drawing Nomnini chose another girl as the opponent. She said she would fight anyone when she felt hurt and angry, and that she would win. She showed delight at winning and then added "but a fight is not good; it is not good to be a winner". This may well indicate a moral conscience or that she feels guilty about expressing her true feelings.

5.5.5.2 Children's Apperception Test

Nomnini's Protocol

CARD 1

They are eating lunch. They are happy. One is not excited (long pause).

TESTER: WHY?

Because he doesn't like the food. He will go back home (points to one chick) because he doesn't like the food. He was visiting.

CARD 2

These bears are pulling the rope. Playing pulling the rope. They are happy because they are not fighting. The little bear helps his father. He is so happy he

pulls very strong. Mother bear is not so excited because they are two against her. It's not fair!

CARD 3

The lion king is not so glad. He wants food. The little mouse is hiding because the lion will eat him. He roars very loudly so they are scared. He looks very hungry. He can't wait. He thinks of a plan - how he can catch his enemy. He won't catch the mouse because he can't fit in the hole.

CARD 4

The mother went shopping with her two children. One was riding in her pocket, the other on his bike. She went jumping and hopping through the wood carrying her basket. They were happy. Mother kangaroo also had her hat on.

CARD 5

Two little bears were in bed at night. They were scared. So they couldn't sleep. They were very little to go out on their own through the woods. Their parents will shout at them, "Why do you go out without me!" So they stay in bed until their mother and father come back.

CARD 6

Three little bears were looking for food because they were hungry. They wanted to hunt. The little bear goes underground. He doesn't find anything. It was dark in the big hole. They couldn't see anything. They were sad because they were hungry. They won't

find food.

CARD 7

A tiger hunted and saw a monkey. He jumped at the monkey. The monkey jumped up and down and the tiger roared. He is going to jump on the monkey and eat it for lunch.

CARD 8

The father monkey pointed at his child and he shouted at him. The child was sad and the father was happy. The mother whispered to her cousin, "That father is greedy and jealous". They drank tea.

TESTER: Why was the father greedy and jealous?

He was jealous of the child. The father wanted something so the child couldn't get it. The child feels sad and unhappy.

CARD 9

The little rabbit is lonely because he has no friends. She wants to go to her mother but the mother is gone. So she stays in bed on her own.

CARD 10

The mother dog smacks the puppy because he was very naughty. The mother was cross and the child was happy. It was funny what he did. He had climbed in the toilet and messed up the whole bathroom.

The following themes come to the fore:

- the need for oral gratification

- loneliness
- poor relationships with parents, e.g. shouting, smacking, jealousy.

Specific indicators of aggression.

CARD 2

The tug-of-war is seen as a game, but the outcome leads to dissatisfaction, as the mother figure is not a good sport. The little bear identifies with the father figure. It is possible that Nomnini cooperates more with her father, and that the parent-child relationship is not entirely harmonious.

CARD 3

The lion is recognised as a dangerous power and the situation is one of enmity thus substantiating the lion's aggression. However, the mouse's circumstances save him.

CARD 7

Nomnini does not display a fear of aggression as she responds easily to the stimulus value of this card, namely, that the tiger is the aggressor and eats the monkey.

5.5.5.3 Sentence Completion

Nomnini's INCOMPLETE SENTENCES

INSTRUCTIONS: Finish the following sentences as fast as you can. Write down the first thing you think of.

- 1) I often wish I could have a fairy godmother.
- 2) My greatest fear is ghosts.
- 3) My father always cares about us.
- 4) I feel like giving up when I am tired and don't like the work.
- 5) I get so angry I can hit and shout.
- 6) My classmates fight with me.
- 7) Most fathers shout.
- 8) I am ashamed that I get sick.
- 9) If I think a class is too hard for me, I just give it to the teacher and sit down.
- 10) My greatest wish is that I can be a fairy.
- 11) Most boys hit girls.
- 12) School is not good.
- 13) Most mothers complain.
- 14) Taking orders - I don't do it.
- 15) Most girls are jealous.
- 16) If I can't get what I want, I ask for it again.
- 17) When I am criticised, I feel hurt, but I am trying my best.
- 18) People think I am kind.
- 19) When I get really angry I won't talk but just sit.
- 20) I'd like most to be a teacher.
- 21) I feel guilty about myself.
- 22) I wish that my father could be a king.
- 23) When I am punished, I get angry.
- 24) I lose my temper when I am very angry.
- 25) I am afraid of ghosts.

- 26) Sometimes I feel that my teacher is not good to me.
27) If I were a king, I would care for them.
28) I wish that my mother could be a queen.
29) I feel like running away when I am angry.

Relationship structures

Nomnini's relationship with her father seems positive although there seems to be negative aspects to her relationship with her parents (sentences 7 and 12). Her responses indicate negative relationships with her peers, teacher, and objects and ideas. As these relationships all occur at school, it would appear that the school situation is experienced negatively. The responses related to her relationship with the self indicate that she recognises positive qualities in herself, e.g. kind and caring, yet she lacks the ability to persevere with difficult tasks.

Nomnini was unable to complete these sentences in one session, as she burst into tears at sentence number six and so was unable to continue. When asked why she was crying, she proceeded to explain how the teacher only liked the white children and how the white children received many stars in their books. When the researcher asked her if her behaviour was not possibly the reason for her not getting on with her teacher and not her colour, she shouted at the researcher for taking the teacher's side and stormed out of the session.

She completed the sentences in the second session but tried to reject the task by raising the racial issue

again. As soon as the researcher asked her to reflect on anything she could be doing to contribute to the problem, she would revert to blaming the teacher and her white peers. She even accused the researcher of not siding with her because of the researcher's race.

It is important to note that almost half of Nomnini's class are children from other race groups.

Responses related to aggression

From Nomnini's responses, it becomes apparent that her involvement with her life-world is predominantly on an affective level. The school situation is experienced negatively and aggression is very much part of her life-world. Words associated with this statement are e.g. hit, shout, jealous, fight, angry.

5.5.6 Person Image

Nomnini's relationship with her parents is experienced negatively. She is defensive and tries not to say too much, but from the projective media, it seems as if verbal aggression by the parents, in the form of shouting, is very much part of her home life. She identifies more with her father and her mother's role seems to be considerably minor to that of her husband's. Nomnini is also needy for both physical love and care as well as material goods.

The meaning Nomnini has assigned to her teacher and school is negative. Scholastic achievement does not

appear to be a main contributor to this, but rather the way in which she interprets her interaction with the teacher. The teacher, from her perspective, is also to blame if she does not do well.

Nomnini experiences aggression and rejection in her relationships with her peers which has resulted in a negative peer relationship. She thinks that she is kind but is unable to make a connection between her behaviour and her poor peer relationships. She tries to direct the blame at her peers and is unable to accept any blame herself. She is confrontational and behaves aggressively both physically and verbally. She seems to have some concept of morally correct behaviour but is unable to apply it in her interactions with others.

Nomnini has a negative self-concept and experiences feelings of insecurity, inferiority and uncertainty. She is experiencing rejection from both her teacher and peers and by directing the blame at them, she is able to protect herself from the truth. This defense mechanism, makes it difficult for her to gain insight into her behaviour and how her thinking has an irrational basis.

5.6 CONCLUSION

The results of the four children investigated indicate the universality and individuality of the feelings experienced by the children. The children's reasons for behaving aggressively were individual to each child, yet a resemblance between the four children was evident, namely that the outcome of their behaviour resulted in parallel feelings, e.g. feelings of rejection,

alienation, inferiority and often a negative self-concept.

In view of this, the need for providing support for these children, as well as developing strategies for behaviour modification and skills for dealing with confrontational situations, is highlighted.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The reason for this study arose from the identification of increased aggression in primary school children. Chapter One gives a brief overview of aggression and how the researcher established that the problem for research was not purely an unfounded perception, but that it was definitely a problem for teachers in the primary school.

The aim of this chapter is to indicate whether answers have been provided to the initial statement of the problem.

It will include:

- conclusions arrived at by the researcher
- defects in the investigation which may have influenced the research and subsequent results
- recommendations based on the research findings.

6.2 FINDINGS FROM THE LITERATURE STUDY

6.2.1 The phenomenon of aggression

Chapter Two of the literature study focused on the various perspectives on aggression. It highlighted the fact that aggression has been a field of interest for psychologists for many years and that no consensus has

been reached as to why man is aggressive.

It becomes apparent that irrespective of the theory one supports, aggression has an affect on man's interaction with others and that this may result in a negative attribution of meaning.

The primary school child's cognitive development is in the concrete operational stage thus limiting them to concrete solutions. They also experience difficulty in gaining insight into the effects of their behaviour and need support if a positive self-concept is to be encouraged.

The literature survey also reveals how aggression in primary school children is becoming a cause for concern for school teachers in many countries. Non-destructive aggression is essential if children are to develop autonomy, but hostile aggression results in pain for all involved. For the primary school child this results in feelings of inferiority, rejection and alienation from the peer group.

In the absence of an adult, children seem to express their aggression more readily. The playground thus becomes the ideal breeding ground for such acts as children no longer feel the need to suppress their aggression as the chance of punishment seems remote. As children are involved in play, misinterpretation of rougher acts of play tends to result in outbursts of aggression.

6.2.2 The model for the sequence of research

The Relationship Model as set out in Chapter Four determined the approach taken in the research project. The functional (level 1) and phenomenal (level 2) image were identical, as the reason why the child had become conspicuous was that they were aggressive. The relational image (level 3) revealed the quality and nature of the child's relationships as understood by the researcher.

Once the projective media had been implemented, the researcher was able to determine a Person image (level 4) in which the nature and quality of the important relationships in the child's life are revealed as seen from the child's perspective.

6.3 CONCLUSION

From the empirical investigation the following findings are suggested with regard to the hypotheses as stated in Chapter 4:

6.3.1 Problematic relationships exist for the child, which have resulted in aggression

- * As the Relationship theory focuses on the relationships that the individual has established, attention was brought to the fact that all the children had faulty relationships which were resulting in aggression. Although the faulty relationship varied from child-to-child as well as the cause of it, the resulting aggression resulted in similar feelings

for each child, namely feelings of insecurity, inferiority, rejection and alienation.

- * The outcome of aggression in all cases resulted in negative relationships with the peer group. The playground is the territory of the peer group, and as the children transgressed the code of the peer group with their aggression, the outcome was rejection by the peer group.
- * The importance of a positive parent-child relationship was high-lighted. Each child experienced difficulties in this fundamental relationship. The parent-child relationship needs to be secure and consistent for the child, as without this, they have no base from which to venture into their life-world with confidence. Instead, they employ aggression as a defense mechanism for their insecurities.
- * The cause of the aggression did not originate from the school environment, but in all cases resulted in a problematic educational situation.

6.3.2 The meaning the child is attributing to the problematic relationships will be negative and unrealistic

- * The problematic relationships were experienced negatively by all the children. These negative experiences resulted in the assigning of negative meaning. The assigned meaning was often unrealistic due to the cyclic nature of the negative relationships, being that, aggression results in

problematic relationships which, in turn, leads to further aggression. These continual negative experiences make it difficult for the child in the concrete-operational phase to be realistic as they lose sight of the role which their behaviour plays in fostering poor relationships.

6.3.3 The increase in aggression must have resulted from changes in society

The nature of society is dynamic, and so changes are always occurring. Over the last twenty to thirty years the role of technology has changed dramatically as well as attitudes about individual freedom.

In the light of the information provided by the four case studies, it is the researcher's opinion that the following changes are contributing to the problem of aggression.

6.3.3.1 Single parent families

The number of single parent families has increased considerably which is often through choice now, as attitudes towards marriage have changed. The result is usually a family with only a mother as a parent as seen in Case studies One and Two. No matter how hard the parent tries, it is not the same as having a loving home with both a mother and father. Over-indulgence and leniency often form part of the parent's manner of dealing with parenting tasks. This results in socialising problems for the child as selfishness and

uncompromising behaviour do not facilitate good peer relationships. Aggression is often the next strategy employed by the child in dealing with conflicts outside of the home environment.

The single parent realises that to survive in society you have to be assertive and make a stand for what you believe is yours. This attitude is often conveyed to the child who is unable to distinguish the fine line between assertiveness and aggressive behaviour.

6.3.3.2 The absence of appropriate role models

In the process of self-actualisation, children are always looking for a figure of identification or role model. The absence of such a figure in the family situation leads the child to look for a role model in his life-world. This is especially true for boys in the absence of a father figure. This was particularly apparent in Case Study One.

The media world offers the child a varied selection of role models. The primary school child is easily drawn into this fantasy world which they are continually exposed to, especially on television. Unfortunately the advent of "children's" television has led to the advent of many action hero-type characters who are aggressive and violent. Imitating these role models has changed the nature of children's play and the outcome has been the presence of more aggressive behaviour in unstructured environments such as the play ground.

6.3.3.3 Divorce

Divorce is a prevalent factor in today's society, and we assume that children overcome the pain and hurt involved. However, it is the researcher's opinion that this may take a great deal longer than we think. In Case Study Three the child was still in denial after nine months.

If the child is not supported over a period of time after the divorce, aggression may well be a consequence thereof.

The child experiences confusing and conflicting feelings such as anger, pain, guilt and insecurity. Aggression is the way in which the child then attempts to control his changing life-world.

6.3.3.4 Parenting skills

The concept of parenting has changed considerably over the years. The time of "children should be seen and not heard" has been replaced by personal freedom for children. Some parents interpret this as "one should allow one's child to do as he/she pleases". In Case Studies One and Two both parents experienced difficulties with this.

However, without the setting of limits, children feel insecure and become anxious to venture. Aggression results as the child is unsure of himself and what is expected of him. This uncertainty results in painful experiences for the child as the correct social skills

have not always been reinforced and so the child reacts in a defensive/aggressive manner.

6.3.3.5 Political attitudes

The political change in South Africa has resulted in children from all race groups attending school together for the first time. Racial tolerance was not propagated by the system of apartheid, but instead has resulted in attitudes of prejudice, resentment and a lack of understanding of our fellow South African. This leads to the formation of negative stereotypes of other race groups, which rapidly results in aggression in a conflict situation. In Case Study Four it was apparent how these perceptions have resulted in aggressive behaviour and unrealistic reasoning.

6.4 POSSIBLE DEFECTS IN THE RESEARCH PROJECT

The researcher chose the method of idiographic research in order to study aggression as it manifests within the individual. The question, however, is whether a sample group of four children is large enough.

In retrospect, it possibly may have been more productive to have employed a nomothetic method of research as this would have resulted in a significant amount of data. A questionnaire on aggression could have been standardised to some extent, which would have lead to objective rather than subjective results.

However, before the onset of the research project, the researcher did not have a sound understanding of aggression, but on

completion of the project, has greater knowledge and insight with which to implement a successful nomothetic research project.

6.5 RECOMMENDATIONS

It became evident in this research project that aggression is clearly part of the school environment, and it is the opinion of the researcher that it will possibly increase rather than decrease for a period due to the changes in the environment and education situation.

In view of this, aggression cannot be ignored, but more effective methods of dealing with it need to be developed.

The following recommendations need to be considered:

- * A programme can be developed to implement in schools which would teach pupils how to deal with conflict situations as well as effective ways of finding resolutions.
- * A programme which would train and educate teachers about the nature of aggression and how to implement controls, would be beneficial.
- * Effective parent training is essential as parents need to recognise their role in developing aggression in their children, as well as how to deal with it.
- * Although techniques exist, a programme focusing on aggression and gaining self-control which could be implemented in a therapeutic situation, would be worthwhile.

6.6 FINAL WORD

Although this dissertation deals with aggression in children, the role of the adult in supporting and guiding the child is clearly evident. The child needs to be accompanied by a loving and accepting adult if self-actualisation is to be attained.

Kahlil Gibran (1979:20) wrote, "You are the bows from which your children as living arrows are sent forth". As archers then, let us seek a path for our children where aggression will not hinder their personal growth.

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