

VILNIUS UNIVERSITY

Asta Zbarauskaitė

***ADOLESCENTS WHO LIVE IN FOSTER CARE INSTITUTIONS IDENTITY
EXPERIENCE:
BIOGRAPHICAL NARRATIVE INTERPRETATIVE ANALYSIS***

Summary of the Doctoral Dissertation

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VILNIAUS UNIVERSITETAS

Asta Zbarauskaitė

***GLOBOS NAMUOSE GYVENANČIŲ PAAUGLIŲ
TAPATUMO IŠGYVENIMAS:
BIOGRAFINIO PASAKOJIMO INTERPRETACINĖ ANALIZĖ***

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INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is the phase of intense change and challenges. On the one hand, changes in physical, cognitive as well as emotional - social areas are going on, on the other hand, society is changing its requirements for the young people. According to the psychodynamic paradigm, we refer in our work to, the core of all these changes in adolescence is the identity formation. Most authors of this trend (Erikson, 2004; Blos, 1962) agree that early relationships with significant people are of paramount importance for the identity formation and become the basis for its formation. Therefore, it is really important to understanding how the difficulties in these early relationships correlate to the formation of identity in adolescence.

However, the identity is understood in quite different ways. Particular attention was paid to J.Marcia works, which extended the identity theory of E.H.Erikson. J.Marcia empirically validated the identity concept of E.H.Erikson and has distinguished four identity conditions, based on the approach to the crisis and a commitment to the roles. Nevertheless, lately it has been emphasized that the identity is a dynamic, self-defining system, developing in interpersonal relationships and rooted in the emotional experience (Bosma, Kunnen, 2001) and that the identity formation during adolescence is closely related to the separation - individuation process, when "I "aspects in the relation to the important people are reassessed, the integration of the experiences is going on by analyzing own history, at the same time with the help of the defense mechanisms creating the optimal emotional distance and enforcing the continuity of the ego. Thus, interpersonal relationships were recognized being the core for the identity formation in adolescence, and as a result, in the empirical studies particular attention was paid to the development of the identity formation at this particular age when the circumstances of the relationships are complicated (Hoops, 1990; Mosek, Adler, 2001). The studies analyzing in-depth, subjective aspects of the identity experience could reveal the correlation of the interpersonal relationships history and identity formation in adolescence.

The children and adolescents living in foster-care homes have often experienced quite a few losses, and the situation in the early relationships are very complicated. Accommodated in the foster-care homes, they change the surroundings, the relationships with the siblings are often destroyed, the communication with friends is lost, but at the

same time the environment of the child could become more structured and allows for a different shape, trust-based relationship with other important adults. Nevertheless, part of the children settled in the institutional foster-care homes do not always have the opportunity to build long-term and stable relationship, and early difficulties in interpersonal relationships aggravate trust for others. Thus, as the quantitative surveys revealed, during the formation of the identity in adolescence, these young people face with difficulties, i.e. the behavioral and emotional troubles can be observed (Kreppner, Rutter, Castle and others, 2007; Samašonok, Žukauskienė, Gudonis, 2006), the self-image differentiation and social adaptation is more aggravated compared to the young people living in families (Mosek, Adler, 2001). However, young people living in foster-care homes have different interpersonal experience due to the age, when they were placed in the foster-care homes, loss of biological parents (some children's parents are alive and the contact can be maintained, the other's – passed away), the different type of foster-care homes they live (some of them live in family-type foster-care homes and have one main guardian, while some – in the institutions where employees constantly change) often differ. Therefore, analysing the identity, it is important to consider the above aspects, and for better understanding of how the identity is experienced in such situations, an in-depth qualitative study, according to G.Gudaitė (2007), enabling to disclose how a person actively constructs his/her subjective reality, how the realities differ and how they are formed given the social interactions. In order to analyse the experiences of identity of adolescents who live under foster-care, it is important to choose the methods, enabling to reveal the dynamic aspects of the identity, the social context as well as past, present, and future prospects which becomes possible due to our chosen method of biographical narrative interpretive method.

The relevancy of the research. In recent decades, the development of the children and adolescents living under foster-care have become the issue receiving much of attention from the psychologists both: practitioners and academics, politicians and the media. This interest is not accidental, because interpersonal relations are increasingly recognized as essential in the process of development and the experienced difficulties have long-term consequences. As we mentioned earlier, most researches of the adolescents who lived in foster-care homes indicated the difficulties in the formation of the identity. Therefore, the deeper understanding of the identity experience of the young people, taking into

account the context of interpersonal relations, can be very useful in bringing new insights about adolescent under foster-care identity development, helping young people better understand themselves and planning the mental work as well as the necessary interventions.

The scientific newness. As the main theory for this thesis we have chosen a very fresh theory of mentalization, combining the main aspects of attachment theory and object relations theory, which allowed to operationalise the in-depth psychodynamic process when analysing the data of the research. Thus, this work examined the adolescent's identity as a dynamic system whose evolution is closely linked to interpersonal experiences, emotions and internal structures of personality, and firstly, the ego. Going deeper into the entire life experience of the adolescent, the in-depth identity expressions of the adolescents living in foster-care were revealed: separation-individuation, emotion differentiation and the ego continuity, correlation between the experience of interpersonal relations and their quality. It is this interpersonal relationship context, based on our chosen mentalization theory, is linked to identity formation in adolescence, but in more details how complicated conditions of such relationships are related to identity experience has not been studied. Therefore, to supplement the field, we performed this methodologically innovative study: in order to analyze the peculiarities of identity experience of the young people who live in foster-care homes we carried out a qualitative research (biographical narrative interpretative analysis). It was this type of analysis, which enabled a new look and analysis of the young people living in under foster-care experiences, taking into account both emotional experience and the interpersonal relationship context, and complemented the data of the performed research in framework of the psychodynamic paradigm (in the field of trauma and development).

Practical implication. This paper reveals the importance of interpersonal relations for the identity formation during adolescence. Therefore, it can highlighted that for the children placed in foster-care homes is important to have a stable structure as well as to facilitate connection with key people (if possible), as well as making a new secure relationship, which may become a protective factor. In this work we also analyze the identity experience during adolescence, when early interpersonal circumstances were complicated, and three types of identity experience revealed. Taking into account the types of identity experience can be particularly useful in planning psychological

interventions, understanding of the transference and countertransference issues and assisting young people to explore own important inner aspects in a safe environment.

The aim of the study. To analyse identity, expressed in biographical narratives, experience of adolescents who live in foster care.

Research questions:

1. How in biographical narratives reveals experience of separation-individuation process?
2. How emotional aspect of childhood experiences is integrated in life story narratives?
3. How is ego continuity established and revealed in life story narrative?

Defended statements.

1. Identity is a dynamic system, which defines the personality and is conditioned by the interpersonal relationships. Therefore, in order to analyze the identity, it is necessary to have the research methods, disclosing its in-depth aspects in the context of the interpersonal relations.
2. Despite the fact that young people living in foster-care homes have a specific (often traumatic) experience in the interpersonal relations, it is far from being uniform. Therefore, we believe that the identity experience of these young people is also different and this has been revealed in the analysis of the biographical life-story narratives.

METHODS

The Respondents

6 adolescents from the foster-care system have participated in the research: 3 girls and 3 boys. A mixed purposeful sampling has been used for the selection of the participants (Patton, 1990):

- all participants were 15 - 16 years old;
- no one has been diagnosed of mental retardation;
- two participants (1 girl, 1 boy) came to foster-care home under the age of 1, two (1 girl, 1 boy) were settled at the age of 2-3 and two (1 girl, 1 boy) - at the age of 11;

- two participants (1 girl, 1 boy) were from family-type foster care, four (2 girls, 2 boys) - from institutional foster care system.

All names used in the discussion were changed for confidentiality purposes.

The Research Methods

Biographical narrative interpretative method (Wengraf 2004, 2008)

A semi-structured interview consisting of two parts was used for data gathering.

The first part contained only one question with minimum intervention from the researcher's side allowed, i.e. only for the purposes of the participant support and encouragement. The main question was:

“I would like you to tell me your life story, all the events and experiences that were important to you. Start wherever you like. I'll listen first, I won't interrupt, I'll take some notes and ask questions after a brake. So please, tell me your life story, all the events and experiences, which were important to you.”

The second part of the interview included the questions asked on the grounds of the information received during the first interview, which led to a particular incident narrative.

Document analysis. The objective fact data from the participants' life was gathered from the files available in their foster-care institutions. We collected the information related to the participants' birth, parental or other important relatives' death, illnesses, reported abuse, available court documents (e.g. about imprisonment), parent living conditions as well as the participants' contacts with their biological relatives and other important people.

Traumatic events questionnaire. The questionnaire is used to obtain additional information about possible experiences of any traumatic events, which could also be related to the intra-psychic processes of the identity formation. The questionnaire was created by the authors of this thesis and contains 14 possible events of traumatic character, which could be related to experiencing identity. The participants (adolescents) completed the questionnaire by themselves and after filling it in the indicated events were discussed with the interviewees. The information obtained from both the questionnaire and document analysis was included in the lived life (objective fact) data set.

The Research Procedure

The first appointment, which lasted up to one hour, was aimed at establishing the contact with the adolescents living in the foster-care homes as well as introducing them with the research.

During the second appointment the in-depth biographical interviews, ranging from 1 up to 3,5 hours in length, were carried out. One hour after the interview was dedicated to a detailed observation and description of the interviewer's reactions.

The third appointment took place in a week after the second interview. During this last appointment we analysed the participants' documents available in their foster-care homes as well as had traumatic life events questionnaires filled in, collected more accurate information on the facts of participants' lives where it was necessary. All participants were provided with the possibility to contact the interviewers by phone or e-mail. The total time dedicated to a single participant during the entire research took up to 5 hours.

Data analysis and interpretation

All life-stories narrated by the participants were transcribed, i.e. recorded on paper from the dictaphone. Further data analysis and interpretation was carried out in accordance with the principles set by Wengraf T. (2004, 2008).

The first direction of data analysis – the analysis of the lived life

1. Using the interview material and information obtained from the analysis of documentation objective *biographical data chronology* was created. For example, born in 1991, was placed in specialized infant foster-care home until became one year old, from the age one until five lived in a family-type foster-care home, etc. Then participants' lives were divided into 7 - 10 life phases characteristic of important turning points and major changes.
2. In order to decrease the subjectivity of research data interpretations, case study groups consisting of 4 - 5 people were organized. Each case-study was based on two main principles: 1) *phase by phase* and 2) *the unknown future*. During the first phase some information about the selected participant was presented (the first phase of biographical chronology, for example: the girl was born in a Gypsy family with two

older boys of four and two years old. At that time the father and mother were officially unemployed. Other life stages are unknown.) After providing the available data about one life stage, the case study group was asked to raise the hypothesis: "How the participant was able to survive this phase? And if this is true, what further shift this could make for the participant's life? Subsequently, the second phase of life was presented and once again different hypotheses were raised, noting which hypothesis fell away and which were repeated and endorsed. After completing the analysis of all research participant's life stages, the case-study group was asked to imagine ways in which the participant, after having lived the appropriate life, will tell his autobiographical story and present himself. After the work with the study-group was over, the obtained information was analyzed and summarized.

The second direction of data analysis – the analysis of the narrated life-story

3. The sequence of the text structure created, i.e. the succession of the segments in which life-story was narrated. The whole text of the interview was broken down into segments. The segment was distinguished when there was a change in interview participant, subject or the type of narrative (description, message, narrative, argumentation, evaluation). The life-story narrative contained from 7 to 10 segments.
4. Using the above sequence of the text segments *thematic field analysis* was performed. The same way as for the biographical data chronology, case-study groups were arranged (from 4 to 5 participants) for the analysis of the narrated life - story in accordance with the above-mentioned two principles, namely, phase by phase and the unknown future. The case-study group were presented one by one the segments of the participant narrated life-story and were asked to raise hypothesis: "What does the participant possibly feel when he has chosen to tell this particular episode of his life in this particular way?" All raised hypothesis were put down and after presenting the next segment of the narrated life-story it was noted which of them proved to be true and which fell away. After the work with the study-group, on the grounds of the raised hypothesis, the summary of the narrated life-story interpretation.

The correlation between the lived life and the narrated life-story

5. The comparison of the lived life with the narrated life-story of each participant was carried out. The trends and correlation were looked as they help to reveal the peculiarities of the identity formation of each participant. In this phase when

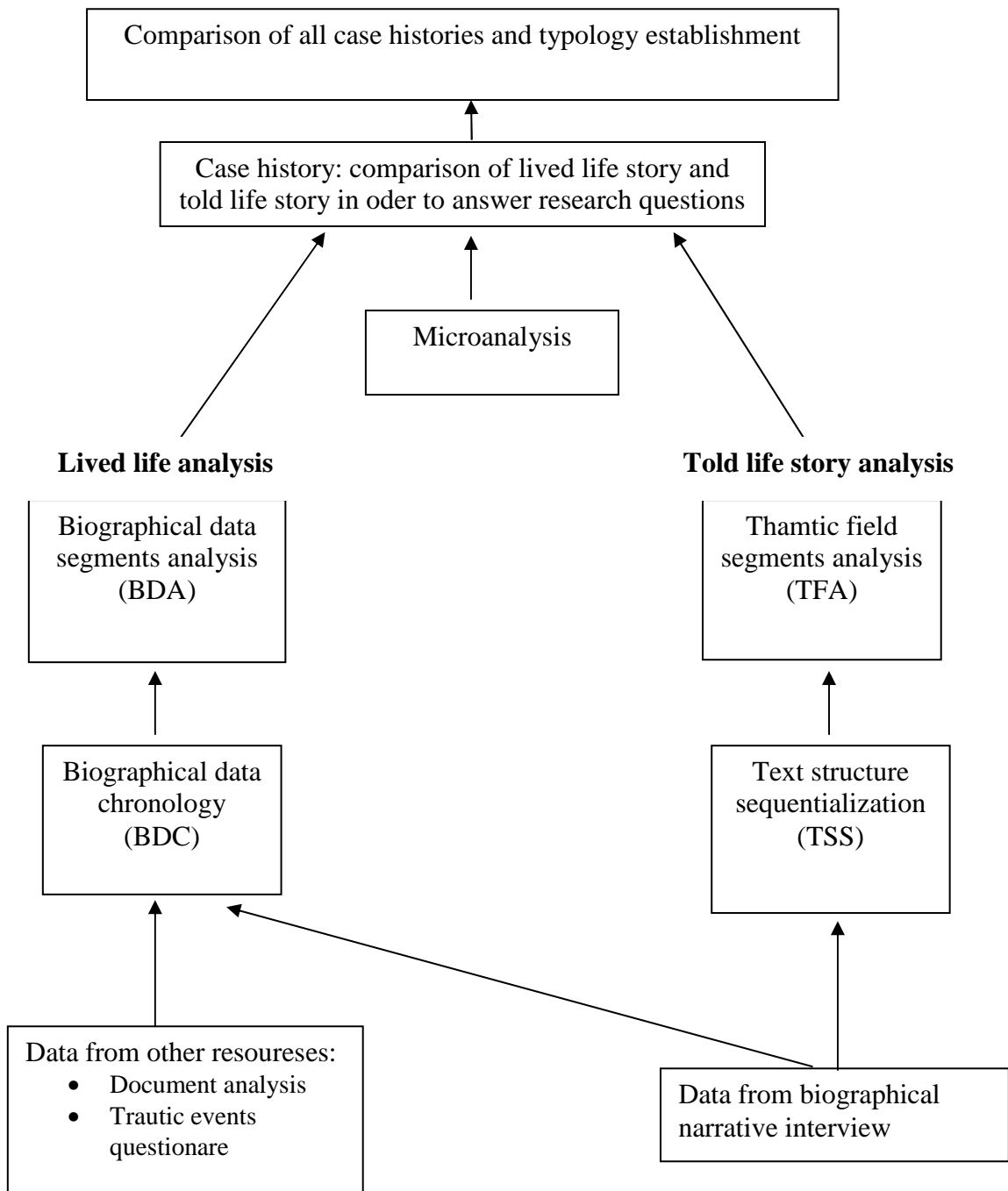
accomplishing the analysis of the cases, we returned to the original transcription, records as well as the notes/remarks of the researcher in order to understand the trends of identity formation of each participant as precisely as possible.

The construction of the history of each separate case

6. On this basis of the previously accomplished analysis and comparison, each case of the participant was described separately in order to answer to the questions of research as broadly as possible.

The comparison of the cases to find the answers to the questions raised by the research

7. All case-studies of the participants were compared with each other looking for both similarities and differences to detect the identity formation trends of the adolescents living in the foster-cares homes and find the answers brought by the research.



RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

On the grounds of the biographical interpretational analysis and in consideration of the three main criteria, which were the individuation and separation process, differentiation of emotions and continuation of ego consolidation, we distinguished three main types of identity experience and raised the hypothesis about different dynamics of identity formation.

Identity based on inner conflict: fight against injustice and offence

This particular type of experiencing identity could be ascribed to two participants of the research: Auksè and Eglè. The participants with this type of experiencing identity perceived the suffered losses and their life-story narratives showed the ongoing inner conflicts among their desire to belong and fear of losing important people to them. These participants particularly emphasized their aspirations to confront the suffered injustice and desire to prove their self-worth. Their narratives also revealed their good ability to differentiate own emotions as well as the awareness of their ambivalence in regard to other people. The events in the past were acknowledged as important, having relation with the future life with the expectations to exercise their skills and be accepted by other people.

Auksè, a 15-year-old, had been living in a family-type foster-care home since she was 8 months old and had no knowledge of her biological parents. Despite the fact that the girl was placed in a foster-care home, she called her primary guardian, with whom she always lived since her placement, as “mother.”

Auksè’s life-story narrative was coherent which indicated the establishing continuity of ego. However, she constantly questioned herself whether she would be accepted by other people. In the very beginning of her life-story narrative, she expressed doubts about its authenticity “... I was told so, then most probably I have to believe this.” The constant fear of loss continually encouraged the girl to fight and try to protect what was important for her, while at the same time belittling her own needs: "I leave my guardian on her own because sometimes she needs to take a rest from all of us, even from me" and emphasized, "for other [children] she is not everything what they have." Auksè was especially afraid of protesting and taking risks to express her anger within her family, as for her, this was directly connected with family loss, which she angrily

revealed when talking about her classmates, "their behavior destroys their families." Thus, despite the fact, that the girl was well aware of her needs, the fear of rejection led to social isolation and made the process of separation and individuation more difficult. Nevertheless, Auksè surely differentiated both her positive and negative emotions that indicated a well-developed reflective function.

Eglè, a 15-year-old girl, had been living in the institutional foster-care home since she was eleven. The girl was the eldest child in the family and had three younger brothers. The parental rights for Eglè's parents had been limited due to heavy drinking and child abuse. The girl was often responsible for her younger brothers and used to protect them when the fighting sprung up. Her life-story narrative was also consistent with the main focus being the loss of her family. The girl also pointed out that she had been putting all her efforts in order her mother (killed a year ago) "would see what I really am."

Despite of the experienced losses, the girls identified themselves with the important people to them - the guardian or biological mother. The girls had been experiencing loss and the narrated life-story revealed their ability to grieve for the suffered bereavement. However, doubts and fear of loss as well as grief complicated the understanding of own needs and the ongoing process of separation-individuation. Both girls were able to reflect their emotions, which they proved while narrating painful events from their life-stories and revealing their experienced emotions: anger, guilt and despair. The life-story narratives were consistent and coherent - events were related to each another, which evidenced a relatively well-established continuity of the ego. However, the fear of losing family and important people (the case of Auksè) or true-life bereavement (Eglè life-story) caused doubts as to possible long-term stability.

Identity experience based on idealization and devaluation: fantasy as an important way to bare reality.

Two cases could be attributed to the above type of the identity experience: Ben's and Edgar's. This particular type of experiencing identity is characteristic of presenting the narrator's "I" as special and experiencing many adventures, subdividing the experiences into good and bad, pleasant and unpleasant, being correlative with the dominating splitting defense mechanism and emphasizing future as a possible escape

from the current appalling situation. In this type of identity experience a big role is played by dreams and fantasies, which in the life-story narratives have revealed longing as well as helped maintaining a positive sense of identity.

Ben, a 16-year-old, had been living in a foster-care home together with his one year older sister since he was two and could not remember his biological parents as had not been visited by them (both parents had passed away.)

Meanwhile Edgar, who was 15, had been living in a foster-care home with his two years younger brother since he was eleven. Despite the fact, that the boys were placed in foster-care homes at different age, in reference to the analysis of the available documents, their life-stories were similar in the volatility of having stable and warm relations with the important people. Only when he became six, Ben started spending his summer holidays with his oldest sister. While Edgar lived with his mother who repeatedly went to jail for drug use as well as forgery of money, thus, most of the time she was away from home. As Edgar's father was not interested in his children at all, the boy and his brother spent their lives on the streets.

In his narrative, Ben had repeatedly stressed: "I did not understand how come I got here [nursing home]." Further on he stated he kept thinking it was a "kindergarten." While telling his life-story, the boy mainly focused on his dream to stay with his sister, also mentioned painful events, such as his mother's death, sister's departure. Nevertheless, the narrative tone was always uplifted which showed the downgraded importance.

Edgar started narrating his life-story from the age of eight when his life with his mother, in the boy's understanding, started taking a turn for the worse. While telling about his mother's drug addiction, he used to mention that despite her drug addiction and abuse, mom protected the children. He also avoided the negative narrative description of his mother's behavior, constantly pointing out that she tried to straighten out. The core and most oppressive event, in Edgar's view, was his placement in this foster-care home – a really "cruel" matter - life in the foster-care home – “because there is no freedom.”

According to J.M.Knox (2003), avoidance of negative emotions and fantasies, supporting a positive sense of identity become part of the inner representations. The inconsistent care from parents' and relatives' side causes pain and fear as well as continually enforces experiencing own powerlessness. Therefore, such dreams and

fantasies, also experiencing own omnipotence allow to gain some control and get protection from unbearable experience of rejection in reality, which, in turn, leads to the splitting of inner representations. Thus, the process of separation - individuation is aggravated and experienced as the aspiration to withdraw from the current situation (mainly foster-care homes). The boys' narratives were characterized by inconsistencies in the life-stories, undervaluing the importance of the past and highlighting the future as the possibility to fulfill all dreams, which indicated evasive attachment.

Identity experience based on fragmentation: isolated subjectivity

This particular type of experiencing identity could be ascribed to two participants of the research - Brigita and Andrius who although agreed to participate in the research, very often did not know what to tell about themselves. Their narratives were inconsistent and represented memories - accidental. From the given narratives it was possible to notice that participants refrained from emotional involvement and failed to differentiate their emotions. In these cases, the narrative of life-stories did not perform its function of integration and it could be assumed that due to the dominating defense mechanism of dissociation, the ego continuity was not established.

Brigita, a 16-year-old, was the fifth child in the family of seven children. The girl was accommodated in the foster-care home after her mother in the face of other children had killed their younger brother. The girl did not have one single permanent guardian in the foster-care home, the educators kept changing. Upon request to tell her life-story, Brigita could not tell anything for quite a long time: she laughed and repeated that did not remember anything. Then, finally, defined, "there is everything we need most in our foster-care home." In the second part of the interview she did not name her needs either as well as described the emotions of other people as funny. Own inner world was strange and incomprehensible for her. According to P.Fonagy and others (2002), when the relationships with close people become frightening, the development of the reflective function fails.

Andrius, a 15-year-old boy, the fourth child in the family of five children, was settled in a family-type foster-care home at the age of two. Up to the age of seven his older brothers and sisters as well as some adults in both his biological family and foster-

care home abused the boy. His life-story narrative was inconsistent, did not have the chronological order and after telling one event he used to repeat that he had nothing more to tell. In his life-story narrative Andrius avoided describing his negative experiences and provided memories in a random order. It seemed that the story and self-analysis scared him and were unacceptable – the true self was so hidden.

In such cases the integrative function of memory is destroyed and memories remain isolated from each other. Personal life-story no longer performs the function of the identity consolidation. In this particular case, the process of individuation - separation process was especially difficult, since there were no self-perceived needs. The defense mechanism of dissociation on the one hand protects the true self from the unbearable pain, but on the other hand, does not allow establishing the continuity of ego and life-story becomes a medley of separate, competing with each other memories (Waites, 1997).

CONCLUSIONS

1. Interpersonal relationships are extremely related to the identity experience during adolescence and can become a factor either increasing the risks or protective. On the grounds of the biographical narratives of interpretational analysis live teen biographical stories of interpretational analysis we revealed three types of identity experience based on 1) the inner conflict, 2) idealization and devaluation, and 3) fragmentation. These types evidenced the different dynamics of identity experience during adolescence depending on the quality of interpersonal relations, especially in the early phases.

2. *The experience of identity, based on the inner conflict: confrontation with injustice and suffered harm.* Despite the complicated circumstances in the early relationships, the young people had the opportunity to establish a stable, long-term relationship with one important adult and the disappointment of close people or the realization of suffered loss went gradually, still, the fear of loss could significantly activate attachment behavior, and could stimulate the formation of ambivalent attachment.

- The analysis of the separation-individuation process experience revealed the young people's awareness of their ambivalence with regard to important for them

people. They pursued the autonomy and wanted to prove their worth by confronting the painful experiences and forsook their needs in order to preserve important relationships, which prolonged finding the boundaries of inner representations.

- The adolescents differentiated both negative and positive emotions and were able to verbalize them. The perceived and experienced loss followed by the experience of anger, sadness, guilt and shame have unfolded in the narrated life-stories of the young people. We can suggest that these adolescents have a well-developed reflective function and use of mature defense mechanisms, which allowed to analyze their experiences anew as well as to integrate the traumatic experiences.
- The narrative of their life stories was consistent: consistency between time and cause was prominent. The young people also analyzed their past, linking them with their present experiences, and planned their future questioning their abilities and needs, i.e. revealed the embedded ego continuity. However, due to the suffered losses, the young people had doubts and fears associated with their future, which also poses a threat to the stability of the ego continuity.

3. The experience of identity, based on idealization and devaluation: fantasies and dreams as a way to cope with the reality. The early interpersonal relation conditions of these cases were aggravated, mainly related to the lack of reflection and satisfaction of emotional children needs, which enabled the assumptions about the formation of avoiding attachment.

- The young people hardly consciously differentiated their needs, emphasizing only the desire to escape from the foster-care homes. The fantasies of omnipotence and invulnerability unfolded, protecting from the experience of helplessness and a sense of longing, which allowed to make an assumption about the existence of several incompatible inner self-representations. Thus, the separation process is more expressed by physical withdrawal from unacceptable environment they did not accept, but the boundaries of inner representations were not embedded, thus, the real process of individuation-separation can be complicated.

- The weak differentiation of emotional experience - most of the evaluations were "good" or "bad" - revealed the splitting defense mechanism at work. The life-story was presented as an adventure and the negative experiences, although shown, however, evaluated only in a positive way or by undervaluing its importance in order to maintain a positive sense of the identity.
- The narratives were fast, lacked consistency, the underestimation of the importance of the experience or idealization could be observed. The emphasis on the future as a possible escape from the current situation evidenced the lack of the ego continuity, supported by acting out.

4. *The experience of identity based on fragmentation: isolated subjectivity.* Due to long-term abuse, the early interpersonal context was extremely complicated for the cases ascribed to this type of identity experience, and it can be hypothesized about the formation of dezorganized attachment.

- In these cases, life-story narratives lack of solid self-representation, own needs and emotions either are not understood, or they have been avoided to disclose. The roles, expressed views often were inconsistent, changed quickly, which indicated that the boundaries of inner representations were not embedded, suggesting that the separation-individuation process was not in progress.
- The life-story narratives lack of painful experiences, which turned out only during the analysis of the objective facts gathered from document analysis. Besides, the facts due to the defense mechanism of dissociation most often are not linked to the emotional experiences, suggesting the disturbed development of the reflective function.
- The memories presented in random order, without giving them a meaningful place in the life-story, which also suggested that the life-story did not carry out integrative function and the ego continuity had not been embedded. The traumatic experiences were not integrated, which protects from experiencing the pain, however, became an obstacle to the integration of the identity.

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RESUME

ĮVADAS

Darbo aktualumas. Lietuvoje pastaraisiais metais vis daugiau dėmesio pradėta skirti paaugliams gyvenantiems globos namuose. Keliami klausimai, kaip jaunuoliai turintys sudėtingą gyvenimo patirtį tampa savarankiškais, kokios yra jiems teikiamos pagalbos, tiek susirandant profesiją, tiek mezgant pastovius ryšius pagalbos, galimybės. Atsiranda vis daugiau atliekamų tyrimų, analizuojančių šių jaunuolių adaptacijos sunkumus (Samašonok, 2009; Žukauskienė, Kaffemanienė, Tamelytė, 2008, Gudonis, Samašonok, 2006;) ir pagalbos galimybes (Goštautas, Pakrošnis, Čepukienė, 2007). Tačiau taip pat svarbu skirti dėmesį ir vidinių išgyvenimų, atskleidžiančių psichikos struktūrų dinamiką, analizei.

Taigi paauglystė - tai intensyvių pokyčių laikotarpis. Viena vertus, vyksta fizinės, pažintinės, o taip pat emocinės - socialinės sričių pokyčiai, o kita vertus, kinta ir visuomenės keliami reikalavimai jaunuoliams. Remiantis psichodinamine paradigma, pagrindinė paauglystės užduotis yra tapatumo formavimasis. Daugelis šios krypties autorių (Erikson, 2004; Blos, 1962) sutinka, kad tapatumo formavimuisi itin didelę reikšmę turi ankstyvieji santykiai su reikšmingais žmonėmis, kurie tampa jo formavimosi pagrindu. Todėl išties aktualu suvokti, kaip sunkumai šiuose ankstyvuosiuose santykiuose susiję su tapatumo formavimosi paauglystėje.

Tačiau tapatumas suprantamas gana įvairiai. Itin daug dėmesio sulaukė J. Marcia darbai, praplečiantys E. H. Erikson tapatumo teoriją. J. Marcia empiriškai pagrindė E. H. Erikson tapatumo sąvoką bei išskyrė keturias tapatumo būsenas, kurios remiasi požiūriu į krizę ir įsipareigojimu vaidmenims. Tačiau pastaruoju metu akcentuojama, kad tapatumas – tai dinaminė save apibrėžianti sistema, besivystanti tarpasmeniniuose santykiuose, kurios šaknys glūdi emociniuose išgyvenimuose (Bosma, Kunnen, 2001), o tapatumo formavimasis paauglystėje yra glaudžiai susijęs su atsiskyrimo ir individuacijos procesu, kuomet iš naujo peržiūrimi „aš“ aspektai santykyje su svarbiais žmonėmis, vyksta patyrimo integracija: kuomet analizuojama sava istorija, kuriant optimalią emocinę distanciją psichologinių gynybos mechanizmų pagalba bei ego tęstinumo įtvirtinimas. Taigi tarpasmeniniai santykiai yra tapatumo formavimosi pagrindas paauglystėje, todėl empiriniuose tyrimuose itin didelis dėmesys pradėtas skirti

tapatumo raidai, kuomet šių santykių aplinkybės yra komplikotos (Hoopes, 1990; Vaičiulienė, 1999; Mosek, Adler, 2001). O tyrimai analizuojantys gelminius subjektyvius tapatumo išgyvenimo aspektus padėtų atskiesti tarpasmeninių santykių istorijos ir tapatumo formavimosi paauglystėje sąsajas.

Vaikai ir paaugliai gyvenantys globos namuose dažnai yra patyrę ne vieną netektį, o ankstyvųjų santykių aplinkybės itin komplikotos. Apgyvendinti globos namuose jie pakeičia aplinką, neretai suardomi santykiai su broliais ir seserimis, nutrūksta bendravimas su draugais, tačiau tuo pat metu jų aplinka turėtų tapti labiau struktūruota ir prognozuojama bei sudaroma galimybė formuoti kitoki, pasitikėjimu grįsta santykį su svarbiais suaugusiais. Nepaisant to, dalis vaikų apsigyvenę globos įstaigose ne visada turi galimybę kurti ilgalaikį ir pastovų ryšį, o ankstyvųjų tarpasmeninių santykių sunkumai dažnai neleidžia pasitikėti kitais. Taigi, paauglystėje formuojantis tapatumui, šie jaunuoliai susiduria su sunkumais, kuriuos atskleidžia kiekybiniai tyrimai: pastebimi išryškėjantys elgesio ir emociniai sunkumai (Kreppner, Rutter, Castle ir kt., 2007; Samašonok, Žukauskienė, Gudonis, 2006), prastesnė, nei šeimose gyvenančių jaunuolių, savęs vaizdo diferenciacija ir socialinė adaptacija (Mosek, Adler, 2001). Tačiau jaunuoliai gyvenantys globos namuose turi skirtingą tarpasmeninių santykių patirtį: dažnai skiriasi jų amžius, kuomet buvo apgyvendinti globos namuose, biologinių tėvų netektis (vienų tėvai yra gyvi ir kontaktas gali būti palaikomas, kitų - mirę), o taip pat skiriasi ir gyvenimo globos namuose sąlygos (vieni gyvena šeimyniniuose globos namuose ir turi vieną pagrindinį globėją, kiti- instituciniuose, kuriuose darbuotojai dažnai keičiasi). Todėl analizuojant tapatumą svarbu atsižvelgti į šiuos aspektus, o siekiant geriau suprasti, kaip tokiose situacijose išgyvenamas tapatumas galėtų padėti gelminis kokybinis tyrimas, leidžiantis atskleisti, anot G. Gudaitės (2007), kaip asmuo aktyviai konstruoja savo subjektyvią realybę, kaip realybės skiriasi bei kaip jos formuojasi atsižvelgiant į socialines sąveikas. Todėl siekiant analizuoti globos namuose gyvenančių paauglių tapatumo išgyvenimus svarbu pasirinkti metodus leidžiančius atskleisti tapatumo dinamiškus aspektus, socialinį kontekstą bei tiek praeities, dabarties, tiek ateities perspektyvas.

Tyrimo tikslas: išanalizuoti globos namuose gyvenančių paauglių tapatumo išgyvenimą, atsiskleidžiantį biografiniuose pasakojimuose.

Tyrimo klausimai:

1. Kaip pasakojimuose atsiskleidžia atsiskyrimo ir individuacijos išgyvenimas?
2. Kaip gyvenimo istorijos pasakojimuose atsiskleidžia emocijų diferenciacija?
3. Kaip gyvenimo istorijų pasakojimuose atsiskleidžia ego tęstinumo įtvirtinimas?

Mokslinis naujumas. Šios disertacijos pagrindu pasirinkta itin nauja mentalizacijos teorija, apjungianti prieraišumo ir objektų ryšių teorijų pagrindinius aspektus. Analizuojant tyrimo duomenis, buvo siekiama struktūruotai atskleisti gelminius psichodinaminius procesus. Taigi šiame darbe paauglio tapatumas analizuojamas kaip dinaminė sistema, kurios raida glaudžiai susijusi su tarpasmeninių santykių patyrimu, emocijomis bei vidinėmis asmenybės struktūromis. Gilinantis į paauglio viso gyvenimo patyrimą, atskleidžiamos globos namuose gyvenančių paauglių gelminės tapatumo raiškos: atsiskyrimo-individuacijos, emocijų diferenciacijos ir ego tęstinumo, sąsajos su tarpasmeninių santykių patyrimu ir jų kokybe.

Taigi, remiantis mentalizacijos teorija, tarpasmeninių santykių kontekstas yra susijęs su tapatumo formavimusi paauglystėje, tačiau išsamiau, kaip komplikotos šių santykių aplinkybės siejasi su tapatumo išgyvenimu nebuvo tyrinėta. Todėl siekdami papildyti šią sritį atlikome metodologiniu požiūriu naują, kokybinį tyrimą: biografinio pasakojimo interpretacinę analizę. Tokia analizė leido naujai pažvelgti ir analizuoti globos namuose gyvenančių jaunuolių tapatumo išgyvenimą, atsižvelgiant tiek į emocinius aspektus, tiek į tarpasmeninių santykių kontekstą. Taip pat pastarasis tyrimas leido plėtoti psichodinaminę traumos ir raidos analizę tiek teoriniu, tiek empiriniu požiūriu.

Praktinė vertė. Šiame darbe atskleidžiama tarpasmeninių santykių svarba tapatumo formavimuisi paauglystėje. Todėl galima akcentuoti, kad vaikus apgyvendinus globos namuose svarbu ne tik jiems suteikti pastovią struktūrą, tačiau sudaryti sąlygas ryšio su svarbiais žmonėmis palaikymui (jei tai įmanoma) bei naujo saugaus santykio užmezgimui, kas gali tapti apsauginiu veiksniumi.

Taip pat darbe analizuojamas tapatumo išgyvenimas paauglystėje, kuomet ankstyvųjų tarpasmeninių santykių aplinkybės buvo komplikotos bei atskleidžiami trys tapatumo išgyvenimo tipai. Atsižvelgimas į tapatumo išgyvenimo tipus gali būti itin naudingas planuojant psichologines intervencijas, suprantant perkėlimo ir kontrperkėlimo aspektus bei padedant jaunuoliams saugioje aplinkoje tyrinėti svarbius savo aspektus.

Ginami teiginiai

- Tapatumas – tai asmenybę apibrėžianti, dinaminė, tarpasmeniniuose santykiuose besiformuojanti sistema. Todėl tapatumo analizei reikalingi tyrimo metodai, atskleidžiantys gelminius jo aspektus tarpasmeninių santykių kontekste.
- Nepaisant to, kad globos namuose gyvenantys jaunuoliai turi ypatingą (dažnai traumuojančią) tarpasmeninių santykių patirtį, tačiau ji anaipol nėra vienoda. Todėl galime manyti, jog šių jaunuolių tapatumo išgyvenimas taip pat skiriasi ir tai atsiskleidžia biografinių pasakojimų analizėje

METODIKA

Tiriamieji. Tyrime dalyvavo 6 dalyviai: 3 merginos ir 3 vaikinai, gyvenantys globos namuose. Tyrimo dalyvių amžius- 15- 16 metų. Siekiant išsaugoti konfidencialumą tyrimo dalyvių vardai rezultatų analizėje pakeisti.

Naudotos metodikos.

Autobiografinio pasakojimo interpretacinis metodas (Wengraf, 2004).

Duomenų rinkimui atliekamas pusiau struktūrinantis interviu, kurį sudaro dvi dalys.

Pirmoje dalyje užduodamas atviras klausimas, prašant papasakoti savo gyvenimo istoriją, bei stengiamasi kuo mažiau įtakoti pasakojimą. Antroje interviu dalyje užduodami papildomi klausimai, remiantis jau pateiktu gyvenimo istorijos pasakojimu bei skatinama atskleisti pirminius įvykių patyrimus.

Dokumentų analizė. Tai dokumentų, esančių globos namuose apie tyrimo dalyvius: gimimo datos, mirties liudijimai, ataskaitų apie gyvenimą biologinėje šeimoje analizė, teismo sprendimų išrašai. Šios analizės tikslas – surinkti papildomus objektyvius duomenis apie tyrimo dalyvių nugyventą gyvenimą.

Trauminių gyvenimo įvykių anketa. Anketa naudojama siekiant gauti papildomą informaciją apie galimus atskirų trauminių įvykių išgyvenimus, kurie taip pat gali būti susiję su intrapsichiniais procesais formuojantis tapatumui. Anketa sudaro 14 galinčių traumuoti įvykių, kurie galėjo būti susiję su tapatumo išgyvenimu. Šią anketa pildė patys tyrimo dalyviai (paaugliai), o ją užpildžius pažymėti įvykiai aptariami su interviuotoju.

Ši anketos informacija, kaip ir dokumentų analizės metu gauta informacija, yra įtraukiama į nugyvento gyvenimo (objektyvių biografinių faktų) duomenų grupę.

Tyrimo eiga. Su globos namuose gyvenančiais paaugliais sutikusiais dalyvauti tyrime, buvo susitinkama tris kartus. Sutikus tyrimo dalyviams, visi interviu buvo įrašomi į diktofoną. *Pirmas susitikimas* skirtas pokalbiui su globos namų administracija, taip pat kontakto su tyrimo dalyviais užmezgimui, tyrimo pristatymui ir sutikimo dalyvauti tyrime gavimui. *Antro susitikimo* metu buvo atliekamas dviejų dalių giluminis autobiografinis interviu (trukmė nuo 1 val. iki 3 val.). *Trečią kartą* atvykus į globos namus po savaitės buvo atliekama dokumentų analizė ir tuo pačiu pasiteiraujama tyrimo dalyvių, ar neiškilo per tą laiką klausimų. Visiems tyrimo dalyviams buvo suteikiama galimybė su tyrėju susisiekti telefonu arba elektroniniu paštu.

Duomenų interpretacija. Visų tyrimo dalyvių duomenys pradžioje buvo analizuojami atskirai dviem analizės būdais: nugyvento gyvenimo bei papasakotos gyvenimo istorijos analizė. Vėliau siekiant atsakyti į tyrime keliamus klausimus remiantis šių dviejų krypčių analize buvo nagrinėjami atskiri tapatumo išgyvenimo aspektai: atsiskyrimas ir individuacija, emocijų diferenciacija ir ego tęstinumo įtvirtinimas. Galiausiai, visų tyrimo dalyvių atvejų istorijos palyginamos tarpusavyje bei išskiriami tapatumo išgyvenimo tipai.

REZULTATAI

Remiantis globos namuose gyvenančių paauglių biografinių pasakojimų interpretacine analize buvo atskleisti trys tapatumo išgyvenimo tipai: tapatumo išgyvenimas, pagrįstas vidiniu konfliktu, tapatumo išgyvenimas, pagrįstas idealizacija ir nuvertinimu, ir tapatumo išgyvenimas, pagrįstas fragmentacija. Šie tipai atskleidžia skirtingą tapatumo išgyvenimo paauglystėje dinamiką, susijusią su tarpasmeninių santykių, ypač ankstyvųjų, kokybe. Todėl galima manyti, jog tarpasmeniniai santykiai yra itin susiję su tapatumo išgyvenimu paauglystėje ir gali tapti tiek riziką didinančiu, tiek apsauginiu veiksniu.

Tapatumo išgyvenimas, pagrįstas vidiniu konfliktu: konfrontacija su neteisybe ir patirta skriauda. Nepaisant sudėtingų ankstyvųjų santykių aplinkybių, jaunuoliai turėjo galimybę užmegzti pastovų, ilgalaikį santykį su vienu svarbiu suaugusiu, o nusivylimas artimais žmonėmis ar patirtos netekties įsisąmoninimas vyko palaipsniui, tačiau netekties

baimė galėjo itin aktyvuoti prieraišumo elgesį, todėl keliame prielaidas apie ambivalentiško prieraišumo formavimąsi. Atsiskyrimo- individualizacijos proceso išgyvenimo analizė atskleidė, kad jaunuoliai, suvokia savo ambivalenciją svarbių žmonių atžvilgiu, o autonomijos siekia konfrontuodami su skausmingu patyrimu bei norėdami įrodyti savo vertę, atsisako savo poreikių, siekdami išlaikyti turimus svarbius santykius, kas prailgina vidinių reprezentacijų ribų įgijimą. Šie paaugliai gerai diferencijavo tiek neigiamas, tiek teigiamas savo emocijas ir gebėjo jas verbalizuoti. Šių jaunuolių gyvenimo istorijos pasakojimuose atsiskleidė suvokiama ir išgyventa netektis bei su ja susiję pykčio, liūdesio, kaltės, gėdos išgyvenimai. Todėl galime manyti, jog tai atskleidė gerai išvystytą refleksijos funkciją bei naudojamus brandžius gynybos mechanizmus, kas leido iš naujo analizuoti savo patyrimą bei integruoti skausmingą patirtį. Gyvenimo istorijos pasakojimai buvo nuoseklūs: pastebimas tiek laiko, tiek priežastinis nuoseklumas. Taip pat jaunuoliai analizavo savo praeitį, siedami su dabartiniais savo išgyvenimais, o ateitį planavo analizuodami savo gebėjimus ir poreikius, t. y. atskleidė įtvirtintą ego tęstinumą. Tačiau dėl patirtų netekčių jaunuoliai turėjo abejonių ir baimių, siejamų su ateitimi, kas taip pat kelia grėsmę ego tęstinumo stabilumui.

Tapatumo išgyvenimas, pagrįstas idealizacija ir nuvertinimu: fantazijos ir svajonės kaip būdas atlaikyti realybę. Šių atvejų ankstyvųjų tarpasmeninių santykių aplinkybės buvo apsunkintos, daugiausia susijusios su emocinių vaikų poreikių atspindėjimo ir patenkinimo stoka, kas leido kelti prielaidas apie vengiančio prieraišumo formavimąsi. Jaunuoliai sunkiai sąmoningai diferencijavo savo poreikius, akcentuodami tik troškimą ištrūkti iš globos namų. Atskleidė fantazijos apie savo visagalybę ir nepažeidžiamumą, saugančios nuo bejėgiškumo išgyvenimo ir ilgesio jausmo, kas leido kelti prielaidas apie keletą tarpusavyje nesuderinamų savęs vidinių reprezentacijų egzistavimą. Taigi atsiskyrimo procesas daugiau išreiškiamas kaip fizinis pasitraukimas iš jiems nepriimtinos aplinkos, tačiau nėra įtvirtinamos vidinių reprezentacijų ribos, todėl realus atsiskyrimo-individualizacijos procesas gali būti komplikuoatas. Silpna patyrimo emocinė diferenciacija – daugiausia vertinimai „gerai“, arba „blogai“ – atskleidė naudojamą skėlimo gynybos mechanizmą. Gyvenimo istorija pristatoma kaip nuotykis, o pasakojimuose neigiamas patyrimas, nors ir parodomas, tačiau vertinamas teigiamai arba jo svarba nuvertinama siekiant išlaikyti pozityvų tapatumo jausmą. Pasakojimai buvo greiti, stokojo nuoseklumo, pastebimi patyrimo svarbos nuvertinimas arba idealizavimas.

Ateities, kaip galimybės pabėgti iš dabartinės situacijos, akcentavimas atskleidė realaus ego tęstinumo įtvirtinimo stoką, palaikomą išveikos pagalba.

Tapatumo išgyvenimas, pagrįstas fragmentacija: izoliuotas subjektyvumas. Šiam tapatumo išgyvenimo tipui priskirtų tyrimo dalyvių atvejų ankstyvųjų tarpasmeninių santykių aplinkybės buvo itin komplikotos. Dėl patiriamo ilgalaikio smurto galima kelti prielaidas apie dezorgaznizuoto prieraišumo formavimąsi. Šiais atvejais gyvenimo istorijos pasakojimuose neatsiskleidė vieninga savęs reprezentacija. Savi poreikiai ir emocijos arba nėra suvokiami, arba juos buvo vengiama atskleisti. Tuo tarpu prisiimami vaidmenys, išreiškiami požiūriai dažnai buvo prieštaringi, greitai kito, kas rodo, jog nėra įtvirtinamos vidinių reprezentacijų ribos. Todėl galima manyti, jog šiais atvejais atsiskyrimo-individuacijos procesas nevyksta. Gyvenimo istorijos pasakojimuose nėra pateikiami itin skausmingi išgyvenimai, jie atsiskleidžia tik analizuojant nugyventą gyvenimo istoriją (faktai iš dokumentų analizės). Savos emocijos nėra diferencijuojamos, o pateiktas patyrimas nėra siejamas su emociniais išgyvenimais, kas leidžia kelti prielaidą dėl disociacijos gynybos mechanizmo naudojimo bei sutrikdytos refleksijos funkcijos raidos. Prisiminimai pateikiami atsitiktinai, nesuteikiant jiems prasmingos vietos gyvenimo istorijoje. Todėl galima manyti, jog gyvenimo istorijos pasakojimas neapjungia patyrimo, trauminis patyrimas nėra integruojamas, ego tęstinumas nėra įtvirtinamas bei palaikoma fragmentacija. Taigi fragmentacija apsaugo nuo nepakeliamo emocinio skausmo išgyvenimo, tačiau tampa kliūtimi formuojantis integruotam tapatumui.

STRAIPSNIAI DISERTACIJOS TEMA

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ABOUT DOCTORAL STUDENT

Asta Zbarauskaitė studied psychology in Vilnius University from 1995. In 1999 she gained Bachelor's degree in psychology, in 2001 – Master's degree in educational psychology. From 2005 until 2009 she studied for PhD in Vilnius University Department of General Psychology.

During 2005 - 2009 she taught the courses in general as well as educational psychology in Vilnius University. From 2001 until 2007 Asta studied analytical psychotherapy in "The Centre of Practical Psychology Studies." During 2003 - 2006 she worked in a non-governmental foster-care home as well as a private medical clinic, from 2008 acquired the license to train foster carers and started participating in the programs and projects of foster carer training.

Research interests: clinical and developmental psychology, psychodynamic theory and qualitative research methodology.

TRUMPOS ŽINIOS APIE DOKTORANTĘ

Asta Zbarauskaitė Vilniaus universitete studijavo psichologiją nuo 1995 m. 1999 m. įgijo psichologijos bakalauro, o 2001 m. – pedagoginės psichologijos magistro laipsnį. 2005–2009 m. Vilniaus universiteto Bendrosios psichologijos katedros doktorantė.

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