

**Exploring the impact of Millennials' use of social media on their attachment
experiences, and its possible implications for psychotherapy
– A thematic analysis**

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requirements for the degree of Master of Psychotherapy

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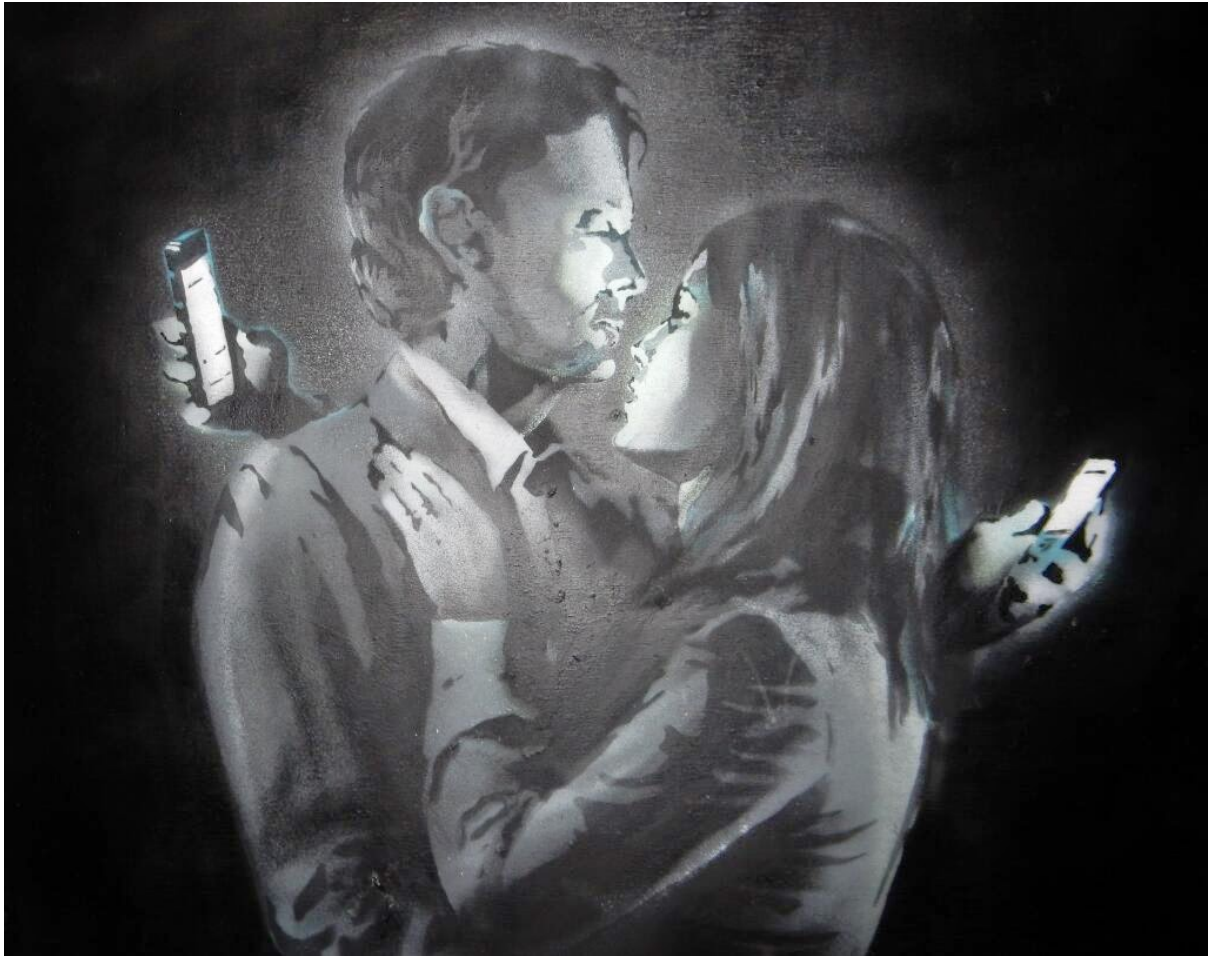


Figure 1. Street art linked to street artist Banksy, painted on a stone wall on Clement Street in Bristol, United Kingdom.

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Abstract

Attachment is an innate human need which is initially met from secure attachment relationships between children and parents/caregivers, and also their community relationships. Where parents buffer or gate-keep the outside world and provide a secure base for their children to be creative and play – a transitional space. This dissertation was an interpretivist study, employing the qualitative method of thematic analysis, with the intention of providing further understanding about the impact of the Millennial generation's attachment experiences in relation to their digital social media use. Additionally, what implications this might have in the psychotherapeutic clinical situation (especially with older generation therapists), as well as in the broader societal context.

This study concentrated on those limited literature sources that considered the actual accounts and first-hand attachment experiences and social media use of the Millennial generation, and where the thematic analysis identified the central theme of 'Attachment Experiences' interlinked with the themes of Parenting, Millennial Generation, Technology, and Psychotherapeutic Reflections. The discussion of the findings highlighted that Millennials, who have had secure attachments, appear to use social media as a tool that supports and strengthens their 'offline' attachments in a healthy and creative cyclic flow. Whereas, insecure attachments appear to be more linear, where attachment hunger results in these Millennials using social media in an effort to feel '*attachment-satiated*', yet the empty calories of online relating leave them wanting and unfulfilled. The study identified Millennial attachment styles and changes in possible ways to consider what this might mean for future generations, the way attachment needs are met, and what this might mean for the psychotherapeutic process (both in theory and practice).

Key words: Social media, Millennial Generation, Attachment, Psychotherapy, Psychoanalysis

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Attestation of Authorship

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.



Brigitte Viljoen

31st March 2017

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I would like to acknowledge that this dissertation would not have been possible without the help of several individuals who contributed and extended their valuable assistance in the preparation and completion of this study. My thanks to my supervisor Joanne Emmens, who has remained encouraging and supportive of me, and maintained a belief in me which has given me strength throughout the whole dissertation process. Additionally, I would like to thank Garjana Kosanke for her insights and willingness to be a 'listening ear'. Furthermore, I would like to acknowledge and thank Dr Peter Slater, Dr Brian Rodgers and Brigitte Puls for their suggestions and advice regarding elements of my dissertation, particularly in the beginning of my research process. I would also like to acknowledge the huge influence Dr Gordon Neufeld has had on my perceptions and understanding of attachment theory.

I wish to express my love and appreciation to my family who have provided encouragement, faith and various forms of support for me, in order for me to complete this dissertation. A special acknowledgment to my late mother, from whom I received a sense of a secure attachment – something that has provided me immense resilience in rocky times. A special thanks and appreciation to Dr Charles and Ria Sanders for their continuous understanding, support, encouragement and belief in me and my studies. Thank you, as well, to my dear friend Renee Olivier for her ongoing and gentle support. Thank you to my colleague Adina Dumitrache for her care and 'groundedness', especially, at this time of dissertation writing. With gratitude and many thanks to my good friend Julie Foxley who graciously agreed to proof-read my dissertation, all the way from the UK, thanks to the wonders of technology.

Intellectual Property Rights

I wish to acknowledge the use of an image (Figure 1) which is said to have been created by the famous street artist of this era, *Banksy*, and was painted on a stone wall on Clement Street in Bristol, United Kingdom. It features a man and a woman in a close embrace yet both are distracted and looking at their cell phones over the other's shoulder. As this is classified as street art, there is no copyright or intellectual property rights associated with this piece.

I wish to acknowledge the use of an image (Figure 6) of Freud and a young patient in a therapy session texting each other in place of face-to-face engagement. I contacted the author of the article it was written by Hannah (2005). The author's marketing department advised that the originator of the image was Russell Wedges, however, when directed to his website link it states "under construction", thus unavailable to be reached for copyright permission. As such, I wish to acknowledge the use of this image created by Russell Wedges.

Research Structure

CHAPTER ONE

Chapter One presents a summary of the research and includes a brief explanation of the context of the study. Furthermore, it discusses the key areas of concern, aim and scope and significance for this research.

CHAPTER TWO

Chapter Two is a brief literature review summary and discussed the perspectives of other authors regarding this research area. Additionally, included in this chapter are definitions of key terms and the description of the search strategy for the literature.

CHAPTER THREE

Chapter Three is an explanation for the first part of the research design and discussed methodology. The chapter presents the research process and addresses the philosophy of the study. Additionally, the methodology chapter provides an explanation of the ontological and epistemological perspectives. Also included in this chapter were discussion of ethical considerations and supervision.

CHAPTER FOUR

Chapter Four discusses the second part of the research design which is the method of analysis of the data. This chapter describes the phases involved in this research method.

CHAPTER FIVE

Chapter Five constitutes the findings of the research and a deeper analysis of themes from the research process, thus explaining the meaning and interpretation of each element in further detail.

CHAPTER SIX

Chapter Six presents a discussion of the research results, in terms of the research aims and research question. This chapter also consider the implications of the findings within the clinical situation and wider society.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Chapter Seven provides a conclusion to the study and summarises the level of success of research aims and addressing of the research question. This chapter also includes a discussion of limitations of the study, as well as the proposal of further research in the future within this area of research.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Chapter Eight presents a list of references in the required APA 6th referencing standard.

CHAPTER NINE

Chapter Nine presents the appendices as referenced throughout the research document.

Writing Style

While the study is predominantly written in the time-honoured tradition of writing dissertations in the third person (Wolcott, 2001), I diverged from this tradition within segments of the dissertation, using first person pronoun and active voice, to highlight the interpretive nature of this qualitative research project. Throughout the dissertation APA 6th referencing has been used as required.

Definitions and Clarifications of Terms

I wish to define those key terms which are central to this dissertation, namely; **Millennials** -

The term **Millennials** is usually considered to apply to individuals who reached adulthood around the turn of the 21st century. The precise delineation varies from one source to another, however. Howe and Strauss (1991) define the Millennial cohort as consisting of individuals born between 1982 and 2004. **Digital natives** are considered the "... "native speakers" of the digital language of computers, video games and the Internet" (Prensky, 2001, p. 1) and **Digital Immigrants** are considered "those...who were not born into the digital world but have, at some later point in our lives, become fascinated by and adopted many aspects of the new technology" (Prensky, 2001, p. 1-2). **Digital Social Media** – Digital technology tools which operate communication of many sources to many receivers, such as websites and applications that enable users to create and share content or to participate in virtual social networking (Obar & Wildman (2015); and according to Ainsworth (1969):

attachment refers to an affectional tie that one person (or animal) forms to another specific individual...Once formed, whether to the mother or to some other person, an attachment tends to endure...This implies the formation of intra-organismic structures, presumably neurophysiological in nature, which provide the person with a continuing propensity to direct his attachment behaviors toward specific objects of attachment (p. 2-3).

To clarify the terms of **therapist, psychotherapist, psychologist and psychoanalyst** - these maybe used intermittently to reflect a broad range of psychological professionals in the broad field of psychoanalysis, psychology and psychotherapy.

Ethical Considerations

In the process of actioning this research, I endeavoured to take into account ethical considerations. I have collected secondary data from literature, thus I did not engage with participants directly. I believe I have acknowledged the works of other authors and I have endeavoured to maintain a high academic standard throughout the discussions and analysis.

Supervision

The supervisor for my dissertation has been Joanne Emmens, from AUT University. Joanne had been my supervisor and manager previously and I was familiar with her supervisory style. We have historically worked well together. We have followed the supervisor-researcher protocol and procedures and have been able to meet when required, at milestones throughout the dissertation.

Research question:

Through the landscape of social media relating, what are the attachment experiences of Millennials and does this impact the psychotherapy clinical situation?

Chapter 1 - Introduction

1.1. Context of study

I have approached this study from the discipline of Psychotherapy perspective, and through my cultural background of a European and African lens. This study has taken place in Auckland, Aotearoa New Zealand, 2017.

For as long as I can remember, I have had a curiosity not only in the individual psychology of human beings, but also the sociological, and how we communicate and engage with each other and how we make meaning together. Possibly a combination of my childhood experiences, being influenced by nature, and seeing how animals attach and bond with each other plus my familial attachments have all given me an intuitive sense of us all being creatures of attachment. My psychotherapy studies developed my academic understanding of attachment theory. Furthermore, while I was attending a presentation by Dr Gordon Neufeld (who is a developmental psychologist who focuses on attachment) in 2015, I had a 'light bulb/eureka' moment, around my curiosity for attachment and wondering whether social media was impacting attachment experiences, especially from those who have been born into the digital revolution.

1.2. Key point of concern

Over the last five years or so, I have heard many times how the digital revolution is developing technology and creating change within our lives, and there is nothing we (lay people) can do about it – 'better fit in or get left behind'. Perhaps as I grew-up in a pre-digital age, or perhaps it was something else, that left me feeling confused and frustrated. I

wondered what this might mean for us humans and our innate needs of attachment to other humans, especially for young people such as the Millennial generation. I thought about our current societal sense of loss of autonomy and agency, then I discovered it was something even more innate and more core to us as human beings that was stirring an unsettling curiosity in me – that of attachment!

From literature I have read (Cundy, 2015; Neufeld & Mate, 2013; Common Sense Media, 2012; Diaz, Evans & Gallagher, 2011) and presentations I have attended (Neufeld, 2015), as well as my observations of both adult's and children's ways of relating to each other around me, I believed there to be a poverty of knowledge and understanding of this area and, yet, I have a sense this was a very important topic and requires urgent attention.

Prensky (2001) reflects that:

a really big discontinuity has taken place. One might even call it a '*singularity*' - an event which changes things so fundamentally that there is absolutely no going back. This so-called singularity is the arrival and rapid dissemination of digital technology in the last decades of the 20th century. There is a fundamental difference between young people today and their parents, whose own childhoods were lived in the predigital age. In some cases this can deepen the gulf between the generations, creating miscommunication, mistrust and insecure attachment (p. 1).

Digital technology, specifically types of digital relating and communication such as social media, have been changing so rapidly – a digital revolution - that research was still new to this area and my research aim was to disclose meaning of the impact of digital communicating and the unfolding of human development and attachment – especially for Millennials. Technology seems so integral in our way of relating to each other, especially for digital natives such as Millennials. Yet people seem busier, more stressed, less caring of others and somehow unavailable. My observations have often included seeing people sitting at a restaurant table not

talking to each other and both deeply consumed by their cell phones, or parents fetching their children from school and not engaging with the child that has enthusiastically come out to greet them, but rather being more concerned with their activity on their cell phone.

The key concern of this study was around attachment experiences, specifically for Millennials, as they are the first true ‘digital natives’ born into the digital revolution. As humans have evolved over thousands of years, so have their tools and ways of living, however, one thing that has remained constant is the intimate attachments between caregivers and their infants. However, my interest in this topic has been illuminated by my experience (from digital immigrant perspective) that something feels to have changed in the way Millennials relate and connect with others, compared with previous generations. I observed more and more people around me, who were looking down at their devices either while with their loved ones who were on their own devices, or when parents are with children and more engaged with those in the ether than with their children in front of them – leaving me with a disturbing concern. I have had a felt sense of something being disconnected or lost however it was not clear, to me, what it was at the time.

Cundy’s (2015) statement that:

counsellors, psychotherapists and psychoanalysts are well placed to observe this cultural transition. Technology has crept almost unnoticed into our private lives and into our professional world. The stories our clients and patients recount about themselves are replete with references to digital media: from linking up via chat rooms and social networking...their lives and ours are intimately bound up with the World Wide Web and communication (or miscommunication) through the ether (p. xv),

encapsulates, to some extent, the key concern for me pursuing this study. This study was concerned with the subjective and interpretive understanding, through a psychotherapy lens, of Millennial’s attachment experiences through the landscape of social media use. In line with

Prensky (2001) there seems to be a cultural chasm between the Millennial generation and those generations before them, leading me to wonder how Millennials might present in therapy and what psychopathologies, ways of communicating, relating and ways of attaching might present, in the clinical work. What has changed and what remains the same?

1.3. Aim and Scope

1.3.1 Aim

In considering a quote by Carter (2000) that “the trouble with evolution...is that it cannot keep pace with human ingenuity” (p. 97), I reflected on Neufeld’s (2015) comment that anthropologists suggest that society needs two hundred years to incorporate new developments into a culture, so as not to be toxic to society. The digital revolution has developed so rapidly that research in this area, for example technology such as social media, is new. My research aim was to disclose meaning of the impact of social media and attachment experiences for Millennials, through establishing core themes using the thematic analysis method. The primary focus of the study was to explore, interpret and make meaning of Millennial’s attachment experiences and to benefit the psychotherapy profession by increasing understanding of the topic that could then widen the lens of the phenomenon being studied. With the aim of broadening the therapists’ lens of these issues and how they might work with patients who display attachment issues interlinked with social media use and relationship challenges, especially if the client is a ‘*digital native*’ and the therapist is a ‘digital immigrant’.

In summary, the aims included 1) understanding more about Millennials’ attachment experiences, forms of relating to others and links to their social media use, 2) broadening the understanding of the impact of digital communicating (for clients and psychotherapists) in the

psychotherapeutic clinical situation, 3) developing a broader societal context of the impact of digital communicating (via social media) and the unfolding of human development and attachment – especially for Millennials, and what that means for us as human beings, and our future 4) adding to the body of knowledge regarding the relationship between attachment and social media use, and 5) completing this research as a required component to acquire my Masters in Psychotherapy qualification.

1.3.2. Scope

The scope of practice for this study was centred specifically on the Millennial generation as they were recognised as the first of the digital native generations to be full immersed in the digital revolution of technology, with pre-digital (digital immigrant) parents. The focus was on social media, as the technology, as it appears that mass communication between people (especially Millennials) seems to occur through this media, as opposed to more intimate one-on-one communications. However, this is all encompassed by the main consideration of human's innate need for attachment, and attachment experiences of Millennials specifically.

As stated by Bowlby "attachment behaviour does not disappear with childhood but persists throughout life. Either old or new figures are selected and proximity and/or communication maintained with them" (Bowlby, 1969, p. 350). The concept of attachment has remained relevant today, as when Bowlby wrote about it. The pre-eminent need for attachment to others has not changed, however, the tools and ways of connecting and communicating have. Stadter's (2013) comment that "we need to study not only what technology can do *for* us but also what it does *to* us" (p. 3), further supported this study, in exploring and analysing the impact of social media on attachment experiences, specifically for Millennials.

1.3.3. Inclusion and Exclusion criteria

The inclusion criteria of literature, for the thematic analysis component of this research, included 1) literature that was written in English, 2) available via library databases, and/or online literature, that is 'downloadable' - due to the thematic analysis being conducted electronically thus requiring electronic versions of the literature, 4) required the key words relevant to the research question; namely, 'Millennials' 'social media' 'attachment' 'psychotherapy' 'psychoanalysis'.

Exclusion criteria for this data set were the exclusion of 1) any literature that was not in English, 2) any literature that was not in 'downloadable' electronic format, and 3) any literature published more than seven years ago, as technology is changing so rapidly any longer time than that, the information would be obsolete.

1.4. Significance of Study

As highlighted by Turkle (2011) "technology proposes itself as the architect of our intimacies" (p. 1). As such, this study has aimed to widen the lens on how technology, and in particular social media, would inevitably form a part of the therapeutic encounter, with therapists and their patients, especially if patients are digital natives, such as Millennials. Taking into consideration the patient's attachment experiences and how it might impact in therapy and treatment. This study was also a sociological endeavour as it was exploring how humans (especially the younger generations, such as Millennials) were changing the way they communicate to a larger degree and how this has impacted human neurologically, psychologically and socially, and what this might mean for our future.

1.5. Overview of Study

Bowlby (1980) stated that “intimate attachments to other human beings are the hub around which a person’s life revolves, not only when he is an infant ... but throughout his adolescence and his years of maturity as well, and on into old age” (p. 442).

Krech, Crutchfield and Ballachey (1962) stated that “the language of a people mirrors their culture, that it can be regarded as the crystallised thought of a people” (p. 293). In this sense, the development of the online digital culture and community, the ways of interacting and related attachment experiences, reflected an essence of what was explored in this study – a developing and fast-evolving online culture to which digital natives belong. In line with the context of qualitative research where “language is a tool for communicating people’s experiences, perspectives and practices; that such things can be ‘read off’ people’s words; language reflects reality...[and where]...the factors and social processes that underpin particular phenomena” (Clarke, Braun & Hayfield, 2015, p. 227) are studied, led to the research question for this study:

Through the landscape of social media relating, what are the attachment experiences of Millennials and does this impact the psychotherapy clinical situation?

Chapter Two – Brief Literature Review Summary

2.1. Explanation on Topic Choice

I have been particularly drawn to attachment theory as “our physical and psychological security depends utterly on our connections with other people” (Holmes, 2001, p. 1). Infants can become securely attached or insecurely attached. There are 3 main categories of insecure attachment: avoidant, ambivalent and disorganised. “Secure attachment in childhood is reflected in adult life by the ways in which people talk about their lives, their past and in particular their relationships and associated mental pain. (Holmes, 2001, p. 7). “Attachment patterns in childhood have far-reaching effects on relationship skills and their mental representations in adult life” (Holmes, 2001, p. 7).

Turkle (2011) described the, all too common, dynamics of social media relating, that:

we build a following on Facebook or MySpace and wonder to what degree our followers are friends. We recreate ourselves as online personae and give ourselves new bodies, homes, jobs, and romances. Yet, suddenly, in the half-light of virtual community, we may feel utterly alone. As we distribute ourselves, we may abandon ourselves. Sometimes people experience no sense of having communicated after hours of connection (p. 11).

This led me to question if the ways of relating via digital technology, specifically social media, have changed and continue to change something or impact in some way their experiences of attachment and, subsequently, their sense of self. I was curious to understand and make meaning of the exponential growth and use of social media and how it has become central in Millennial’s lives? Does this impact our innate humanness and, if so, how? Is something of our humanness being lost? Additionally, from a clinical perspective, what does this mean for

psychotherapy? Are the digital communication technology changes, which are occurring, impacting the clinical situation? And if so, how?

2.2. Outline of Literature on Topic

I reviewed the literature in regards to the research question, to ascertain the potential depth and quality of data available to support this study. Initially I had Dr Neufeld's view on theory of attachment fresh in my mind, as I had attended his presentations in (Neufeld, 2015). One presentation, in particular, stayed clearly with me which was "Raising children in a digital world" (Neufeld, 2015). This stimulated my thinking and left me with questions that then assisted me in formulating my research question and what I wished to research. For example, Neufeld and Mate (2013) stated that "technological innovations should be understood, not in terms of their content but in terms of how they change society. When we create a new technology, we are changing ourselves in fundamental ways" (p. 295). As such I had some prior knowledge of literature written by him, as well as attending presentations conducted by him, therefore, I acknowledge I had "initial analytic interests" in his reading material which I then later read more extensively, in relation to this study.

To provide a framework and a broader thinking around the concept of attachment and attachment theory, in terms of my research question, I reviewed literature from some key authors associated with the concepts of attachment theory, such as Holmes (2001) and Bowlby (1969). Bowlby (1969) stated that for "the satisfactory development of attachment... there is [an] urgent need to be able to distinguish favourable development from unfavourable and also to know what conditions promote the one or the other" (p. 331). This statement seems as relevant now as when Bowlby wrote it, yet now my wondering about "the conditions" and the

meaning thereof, in our contemporary times of the digital era, especially through the landscape of social media relating and connection.

As part of my research curiosity, I shared a similar wondering to Cundy (2015) who considered that some people may willingly accept or oppose the emergent digital culture, and wonders “whether attachment played a part in our eagerness to embrace technology” (p. 18). Furthermore, Carlino (2011) suggests “today’s human being is not the same as the one Freud studied more than one hundred years ago” (p. 7). Whereas, Turkle (2011) suggested that on “social-networking sites such as Facebook, we think we will be presenting ourselves, but our profile ends up as somebody else— often the fantasy of who we want to be. Distinctions blur” (p. 153). The enmeshment and merging of the real and the virtual worlds, seemed to suggest a merging or lack of distinction between real and virtual relating, and a curiosity around how Millennials (as the first digital natives) experienced their relational attachments, and the impact that might have on their sense of self.

Akhtar (2011) considered a quote from Palfrey and Gasser (2008) who “maintain[ed] that online social networks can teach participants *'what it means to be friends, to develop identities, to experiment with status and to interpret social cues'* (p. 26)”. Balick (2014) comments that “the primary motivation that lies at the bottom of people's social networking use is relational in nature (p. xxiv). “Social media and other social technologies ... have become the new technologies of our intimacies” (Balick, 2014, p. xxviii). Therefore, in reviewing the data corpus or range of literature, my interest and research question was validated. Therefore, I began my literature search.

2.3. Literature Search

The literature search began with the data collection, using the key search words central to my research question, of 'Attachment', 'Millennial(s)' and 'Social Media', through electronic databases; namely, the Auckland University of Technology Library Catalogue (AUT Catalogue), Google Scholar and Psychoanalytic Electronic Publishing (PEP).

Initially, this first search proved very limited, especially in terms of psychosocial and psychoanalytic contexts. However, literature that did come up in numerous amounts was of a commercial nature, specifically from the marketing and branding areas of the industry, or how to recruit or work with Millennials in business. This literature seemed the opposite of what I was searching for, the tone of this literature seemed to objectify the Millennial generation, somewhat alien and disconnected, as if to be used and manipulated. Marketing literature aimed at studying Millennials seemed more interested in gaining information on them, so as to use and capitalise on this commercially and on Millennials as consumers. Additionally, other literature related to psychology and mental health, in terms of Millennials and social media use, tended to be more quantitative research of large groups of participants (ranging from children to young adults). Therefore, these tended not to focus on the qualitative and meaning-making criteria, which through my psychotherapy lens, was the perspective being taken in this study.

When the keyword 'psychotherapy' was added, literature firstly referenced Millennials and secondly psychotherapy. It was challenging to locate literature that encompassed all the keywords. I did come across articles discussing the use of psychotherapy treatment via digital technology and psychotherapist etiquette online. I then added another keyword 'psychoanalysis' and the AUT Library search engine seemed to pick the keyword 'social' more than any other (14 results), and subsequently no literature directly related to my keywords was

found. In Google Scholar, 481 results were found when using the keywords: 'Attachment', 'Millennials', 'Social Media', 'Psychotherapy', and 'Psychoanalysis'. These results lacked the literature sources relevant to my inclusion criteria. On PEP, no documents were found that matched the search criteria.

At this stage of the literature search process, it became evident that there was a gap in the literature as there appeared to be limited literature on the combination of criteria, as included in this research.

Balick (2014) stated that:

technological divides that cross generational thresholds have always provoked concerns in the older generation, and online social networking is no different. It is through research, however, and not knee-jerk emotional reactions to what we do not understand, that will lead us towards a clearer understanding of what is actually going on (p. 7).

Therefore, in noting Balick's (2014) comments, the aims and scope of this study was intended to offer a fresh and varied perspective on the topic of Millennial's attachment experiences through the landscape of social media use, thus aiming to expand the understanding on this phenomenon. The initial aim was to include several key journals and several books, as part of the data set. However, as I searched through the journal literature it became evident that not all aspects of the research question were covered in any of the journals I found using my keyword searches. For example, journal articles covered Millennials and social media but not attachment, or social media and parent-child attachment, or social media and therapy. Due to the scope of this dissertation and the time constraints, the focus became quite narrow.

Firstly, I drew on Dr Neufeld's presentation (2015) which I had previously attended, and the postscript chapters he had included in his latest edition (Neufeld & Mate, 2013) which incorporated all the aspects of the research question and inclusion criteria. In addition, I did find a book (Cundy, 2015) via Google Search using the key search words (which became part of the subsequent data set study). This book addressed all aspects key to my research question. Interestingly, Dr Slater who is a lecturer at AUT University, also recommended this book to me (P. Slater, personal communication, February 22, 2016), in relation to this study. This turned out to be a key piece of literature, edited by an attachment-psychotherapist, spanning nine chapters covering various aspects. Based on my inclusion and exclusion criteria I focused on Chapter One: Attachment, self-experience, and communication technology: love in the age of the Internet, Chapter Five: Surviving as a psychotherapist in the twenty-first century and Chapter Nine: It takes a village: co-creation of community in the digital age.

In my search for literature, I looked at the references from the chapters to expand my search beyond what the search engines were identifying. I found this particularly helpful. While some references did not meet my inclusion and exclusion criteria as part of the data set for this study (for example, no literature published in the last seven years), I was able to find insightful information that guided my thinking. Further to the references, I concluded Turkle (2011), who has been frequently referenced throughout various literature as a main authority on young people and social media, met the inclusion and exclusion criteria thus became part of the data set for this study. Another reference in Cundy (2015) which was identified as literature that meet the inclusion and exclusion criteria was Akhtar (2011). Scharff (2013) provided interesting insights into psychoanalysis in the digital era of twenty-first century, however, it was not suitable in forming part of the data set, as it did not reference Millennials specifically nor attachment.

In addition to the above literature sourced for this study, I also included Neufeld and Mate, (2013) chapter six which is a postscript for the digital age. As Dr Neufeld is an attachment developmental psychologist who references all the key criteria, in relation to this study. Turkle (2011) had interviewed many young people whom she referenced in her book, which provided a great source of information on the experiences of Millennials in relation to their attachments and social media, specifically, in terms of this study. Cundy (2015), from an attachment psychoanalytic psychotherapist perspective, seemed to focus more on the relational dynamics between Millennials and social media, as well as, psychotherapists perspectives thereof.

2.4 Summary

The process of the literature review reflected my engagement with the literature relevant to the research question. Furthermore, finding, reading and interpreting the literature developed my continuously deepening understanding of the relevant literature to this topic. Consequently, I established the data set as a result of the literature searches, and became more intimately familiar with this literature by reading and re-reading the entire data set. This process highlighted patterns, for me as the researcher and I also noticed that several of the authors quoted or referred to Turkle (2011), which seemed to form a strong foundation from the substantial research she had documented in this area. It was also interesting to analyse how these authors wrote about technology (specifically social media use), ‘digital natives’ and their attachment experiences and considerations of the impact on therapy, through their particular lens.

Chapter Three – Methodology

This study aligns with the context of qualitative research paradigm, in that it considered “the factors and social processes that underpin particular phenomena” (Clarke, Braun & Hayfield, 2015, p. 227).

3.1. Philosophy - Interpretivism

Interpretivism is the philosophical position where “interpretive researchers assume that access to reality (given or socially constructed) is only through social constructions such as language, consciousness, shared meanings, and instruments” (Myers, 2008, p.38). Bowlby (1993) was of the view that attachment theory meant acknowledging the impact of the patient’s social context and of real events, as part of their relational milieu, on their being. Attachment theory was a core concept of this research and compliments the interpretive philosophy, as our reality is determined by meanings in relation to time, context, culture and is value-bound. Cundy (2015) considered that attachment theory focused on the impact of the external world on internal reality. In this research, I aimed to explore how the external world of social media relating impacts the internal world of the human primeval need for attachment. From the theoretical perspective that, as humans, we tend to feel good about ourselves in relation to the level we feel part of a network of significant others (such as family and friends) and valued within that group, therefore a secure attachment bond is linked with psychological security (Bowlby, 1988). Keeping in mind that “attachment patterns in childhood have far-reaching effects on relationship skills and their mental representations in adult life” (Holmes, 2001, p. 7).

I was drawn to the interpretive philosophy as it endeavours to return to “the things themselves” (Husserl, cited in Farber, 1943, p. 568). In a parallel process, as the researcher, I aimed to return

to focus on our humanness, as I wondered about us as human beings possibly moving away from our humanness as we progress through this ever-changing digital revolution. Through the interpretive paradigm, I sought to understand the human experience - of Millennial's ways of relating and attachment impacted from social media use - and the meanings that are linked to their experiences in both real and virtual reality. The interpretive paradigm seemed to compliment this complex research topic as it "is used to group together diverse approaches, including social constructionism, phenomenology...; approaches that reject the objectivist view that meaning resides within the world independently of consciousness" (Collins, 2010, p.38).

Cundy (2015) adeptly stated that:

Attachment theory bridges the two realms of external and internal reality: Bowlby insisted we recognise the impact of actual events and the imprint of the social, historical, political, and relational matrix on the minds of our patients. His classical theory drew on findings from other disciplines that threw light on human experience, including Darwin's evolutionary perspective...and he incorporated these insights into psychoanalytic thinking. Influenced by cybernetics, Bowlby formulated an understanding of the conscious and unconscious mind informed by control theory and information processing, and attachment theory has since integrated aspects of linguistics, trauma studies, and neuroscience (p. xv-xvi).

3.2. Methodology

"A methodology refers to a theoretically-informed framework for research" (Clarke, Braun & Hayfield, 2015, p. 223). In explaining the theoretically-informed framework of this study, it was useful to consider Balick's (2014) statement that "relational psychoanalysis... is considered a development of the object relations tradition, as hinted at in Freud's late writings and developed by Klein, Fairbairn, Winnicott, and others (Mitchell & Greenberg, 1983)" (p. xxiii). Which Mitchell & Black (1995) expanded on, purporting that object relations theory reflected the new focus where the "fundamental motivational push in human experience is not

gratification and tension reduction, using others as a means toward that end, but connections with others as an end in itself” (p. 115). These quotes supported my methodology, where the framework of psychoanalysis and attachment theory meets the interpretive philosophy, in relation to human experiences, connections and attachments, in this study. As such, my “paradigmatic positioning” and “theoretical stance or methodology” (Grant & Giddings, 2002, p. 12) can be seen to reflect how I proceeded and the outcome of this research process.

Schermer (2001) reflects the overall methodology of this study by stating that:

while psychoanalysis, like the humanities, is introspective, intersubjective, and interpretive, it is consilient with the natural sciences, ... First and foremost, the constant aim of psychoanalysis is to contribute to an understanding of human experience that is an integral part of a scientific world view ... Moreover, ..., psychoanalysis often taps neuroscience ... for insights that might link it to biology. Psychoanalytic interpretations, while they do not themselves meet the criteria for scientific proof, both incorporate and supplement the “story” of human nature and evolution as understood by the sciences (p. 22-23).

While the positivistic approach might argue that the interpretive methodology, as a qualitative paradigm, is “soft research” (Grant & Giddings, 2002, p. 16), I chose an interpretive methodology as it was a suitable fit with my research into lived experience, of Millennials in particular, which is markedly variable.

Due to the interpretive nature of my thematic analysis, the methodology of this research was interpretivist and was linked with qualitative research methods where, as the researcher, I was concerned with making meaning from my interpretations of the human experiences and social interactions of those being studied. As highlighted by Schermer (2001), “interpretation is the process of uncovering and elucidating meanings...[and]... takes on special significance in psychoanalysis as a means of “making the unconscious conscious” (p. 6-7).

3.3. Ontology

“Ontology refers to our most basic beliefs about what kind of being a human is and the nature of reality” (Grant & Giddings, 2002, p. 12). My choice of research design was a result of adopting the subjectivism (constructivism) ontology. The rationale for choosing this ontology was that it emphasised that social phenomena and their meanings are continually being achieved as a result of the people in it. “According to Derry (1999) and McMahon (1997), culture and context in understanding what occurs in society and knowledge construction based on this understanding are emphasized in social constructivism” (Amineh & Davatgari, 2015, p. 13). Social constructivism integrated and complimented the overall philosophy of this study, in conjunction with the concepts of attachment theory, with a psychotherapeutic lens, which is referenced. Boudry and Buekens (2011) suggested Freudian analysis is a relevant example of social constructivism, as a philosophical approach, in action. Balick (2014) supports the ontology in this research by stating that:

both relational psychoanalysis and contemporary qualitative psychosocial research methodologies require a degree of reflexivity from the clinician or researcher. For both disciplines, this reflexivity acknowledges the subjectivity of the analyst or researcher in the hope that biases will be honestly apprehended while also acknowledging that the presence of a human subject (p. xxviii - xxix).

The issue of reliability in this study was acknowledged, as the positivist methodology criticises interpretivist approach for being overly subjective, in terms of the interpretative nature of the thematic analysis, coding qualitative information and categorising patterned meanings within the data set. However, as the researcher, when I interpreted the data (using thematic analysis) I, in effect, became the measurement instrument of the interpretivist research. Thus by acknowledging the subjectivity I brought to the research process, reliability can be preserved. I, considered thematic analysis a suitable method which enabled me to capture the complexities

of meaning (underlying ideas, patterns, and assumptions) within the literature I had chosen to research.

3.4. Epistemology

Grant and Giddings (2002) proposed that “an epistemology ... defines the nature of the relationship between enquirer and known, what counts as knowledge, and on what basis we can make knowledge claims” (p. 12). Furthermore, Braun and Clarke (2006) suggested “epistemology guides what you can say about your data, and informs how you theorise meaning” (p. 85). This research was conducted from an interpretivist philosophical position which included the central epistemological aims of both modern attachment theory and modern psychoanalysis, as the principle concern was with internal mechanisms responsible for the discrepancy between actual and psychic reality” (Fonagy, 2001, p. 159). My assumption was “that access to reality (given or socially constructed) is only through social constructions such as language, consciousness, shared meanings, and instruments” (Myers, 2008, p. 38).

Within the philosophy of interpretivism, this epistemological study considered the personal experiences written about in the data set, linked with my interpretations as the researcher. As such I acknowledged my feelings and senses as an acceptable source of knowledge. However, my subjectivity as the researcher can be considered a disadvantage, as Babbie (2010) stated that “reliability is a concern every time a single observer is the source of data, because we have no certain guard against the impact of that observer’s subjectivity” (p. 158). As my research followed a subjective approach, I acknowledged that it could potentially effect the level of reliability (Wilson, 2010).

I propose that the validity of my research is justified as it was completed within the University approved time scale and I have used interpretivism as a methodology which was appropriate in conjunction with the characteristics of my study. Additionally, the thematic analysis of literature, as the method of data collection, seemed the most suitable method within the time scale for this study. An advantage of an interpretivist approach was that, as qualitative paradigm, the research was more in-depth, thus suggesting a high level of validity. I endeavoured to minimise potential limitations in this research by being specific in my aim and scope.

3.5. Summary

My research design was exploratory, as opposed to conclusive, as my aim was to explore particular aspects (namely, Millennial's attachment experiences through their social media use and the impact thereof) of my research area and my aspiration was to open up avenues of exploration for further discussion. Therefore, it has not been my intention to provide definitive and conclusive findings to my research question, it is more a widening the lens of the phenomena and generating insights about the situation. Thus the application of an exploratory research design compliments the interpretivist philosophy, by using a qualitative approach in exploring the research question.

Chapter Four – Method: Thematic Analysis

4.1. Introduction

For this study, qualitative data analysis was chosen as it is interpretative and uses coding, which tends to be a variety of non-quantifiable aspects, such as activities or meanings. Thematic analysis is a qualitative method that groups data together to represent themes, which are then allocated meaningful labels, with the purpose of getting a deeper understanding of the data. Monette, Sullivan and DeJong (2005) and Polonsky and Waller (2005) highlighted how quantitative data collection methods were “unable to express human feelings and emotions” (Walliman, 2005, p. 85), yet “qualitative methods are often regarded as providing rich data about real life people and situations and being more able to make sense of behaviour and to understand behaviour within its wider context” (de Vaus, 2002, p. 5).

This concept fitted in very well with this research question and method, as the aim was the understanding of Millennial’s attachment experiences through the landscape of their social media use. This was aimed at looking at behaviour, feelings and situations. As the researcher, I acknowledged that qualitative methods do not apply standard research procedures which produce exact results (as with quantitative research), as the researcher had a key role in the qualitative research methods and the same results cannot be repeatedly produced. Therefore, this study was qualitative as the focus was on non-quantifiable elements and my interpretations of them. The qualitative data collection method aligned with the overall study and the aim of the research.

Secondary data collections methods (such as, inter alia, published books, journals) were significant in this research as I applied thematic analysis research methods of categorising common themes, patterns and relationships in relation to codes captured from the literature. I endeavoured to increase the levels of research validity and reliability by considering, inter alia, the more recent publications significant to my research question, and quality of discussions.

According to de Vaus (2002), “qualitative methods are often regarded as providing rich data about real life people and situations and being more able to make sense of behaviour and to understand behaviour within its wider context” (p. 5). As such, using qualitative research in order to explore and gain a “detailed understanding of the issue” (Creswell, 2013, p. 48), has given me the scope to employ qualitative methods, namely, review of literature (texts from books, articles and presentations) combined with the thematic analysis of the data set used from literature sources, with the aim of showing various sides of the issue and, thus, “develop a far more thorough understanding of [the] data” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 88). I have then been able to disclose an interpretive set of meanings and collate this information, after a process of reviewing, refining and exploring the data, as various meanings come to light, as a fluid and alive process. I, then, identified themes of interest with the intended outcome of the study being to provide both further understanding about Millennials attachment experiences in relating via social media – being born into the digital culture and fully immersed in it, its’ impact in the psychotherapeutic clinical situation, as well as in the broader societal context.

4.2. Thematic Analysis

As stated by Clarke, Braun and Hayfield (2015), thematic analysis was an established method of qualitative analysis, which operated within a qualitative paradigm (Kidder & Fine, 1987).

Clarke, Braun and Hayfield (2015) highlight the value of “researcher subjectivity” (p. 223) in qualitative research methods of analysis as it formed part of my interpretation, as the researcher, of the deeper meanings in the data. As a qualitative research, the thematic analysis was a method that “provide[d a flexible and] an accessible, systematic and rigorous approach to coding and theme development” (Clarke, Braun & Hayfield, 2015, p. 223). This “entail[ed] insight into patterns of meaning (themes) across a data set... [thus allowing me as the researcher] to make sense of inherent collective or shared meanings and experiences” (Braun & Clarke, 2012, p. 57). Therefore, thematic analysis had the potential to “provide a rich and detailed, yet complex, account of data” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 78).

Thematic analysis was chosen as a suitable method of analysis, as it identified patterns of meaning across the data set, in response to the research question and so considers what Balick (2014) reports that “...an interpretative approach...aims to access not just what can be witnessed and collected with hard quantitative data, but also allows access to the dynamics that operate under the level of consciousness” (p. 5).

4.3. Process of Thematic Analysis

Once I had identified my data set, I began my thematic analysis through the rigorous process of coding in **six phases** as identified by Braun and Clarke (2006) to create established, meaningful patterns.

Phases of Thematic Analysis

Phase		Description
1	Familiarising yourself with the data	Read through the data set numerous times to become familiar with the content that was to be coded, as this helped to maximise the researcher's understanding of their analysis.
2	Generating initial codes	Following data familiarisation, the data was coded by applying brief verbal descriptions to small portions of data, thereby de-contextualising the data within the literature.
3	Searching for themes	This was where themes developed by organising items relating to similar topics into categories, which identified broader patterns of meaning (potential themes).
4	Reviewing themes	This phase involved reviewing the viability of each potential theme against the data set (and evaluating its current meaning), by refining potential themes through a trial-and-error process.
5	Defining and naming themes	Defined each theme sufficiently so as to be clear what each theme was. Then a detailed analysis of each theme was developed, in light of the bigger picture of the data set, and a thematic map was developed.
6	Producing the report	At this phase, the name of each theme is finalised and the descriptions of each theme was written. This was followed by producing the report which involved writing up the analysis and the results of the analysis.

Table 1. Phase of Thematic Analysis, adapted from Braun and Clark (2006, p. 87)

4.3.1. Phase 1 - Familiarisation with the Data

The first phase of thematic analysis was familiarisation with the whole data set, where I engaged with the data set to the extent that I read and re-read the literature, at least twice, as well as making my own notes on what I read. Thus becoming immersed and familiar with the

content that I was to code, as this helped to maximise my understanding of my analysis. I continued to read critically – observing various aspects as I went, such as the author’s position on the subject matter, what potential patterns seem to be developing and ear-marking potential data items of interest, whilst being curious about the meanings in the data and how it might be relevant to my research question (Clarke, Braun & Hayfield, 2015). For example, Neufeld and Mate (2013) seemed to take a strong developmental attachment approach where the focus seemed to be on parent and child attachments. Whereas, Turkle (2011) for example, seemed more focused on various types of technology (including social media and robots) and their impact on humans of all ages, including young adults.

After reading and re-reading the data set, I identified the chapters that were relevant to my inclusion and exclusion criteria; namely, Turkle (2011) chapters 8, 9, 10 and 14, Neufeld and Mate (2013) chapters 19 and 20, Cundy (2015) chapters 1, 5 and 9 and Akhtar (2011) 2, 3, 4, 5 and 10, were the composition of the data set.

4.3.2. Phase 2 - Generating Initial Codes

The initial coding was done electronically, where I acquired the electronic version of these books, and transferred the relevant chapters into Microsoft Word documents. Firstly, each Microsoft Word document represented each one of the four books which met the inclusion and exclusion criteria relevant to the research question. “Codes identify and provide a label for a feature of the data that is potentially relevant to the research question” (Braun & Clarke, 2012, p. 61). I took data extracts, no more than three sentences and generated codeable moments or meaning units, by identifying and numbering each of them. I coded the data by applying brief verbal descriptions to small portions of data (Figure 2). The entire data set was coded and I

had four Microsoft Word documents of codeable moments upon completion. In line with Braun and Clarke (2006), my initial coding was wide and inclusive as I wanted to be open to what themes may come up at a later stage in the research process.

I had considered a more manual process of printing out all the initial codes, putting them all on a flat surface and synthesising them this way. I reflected, with my supervisor, on my codeable moments and my sense of overwhelm and the sheer number of them and how I would best go about synthesising the initial codes. My supervisor provided me with verification during this process. I discussed this and my initial codes with my supervisor, and it had become clear that the overwhelming number of codeable moments would be more manageable for me electronically, using a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet rather than manually.

I then, created a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet document creating a column with all the initial codes in columns defined by the book from which they were generated. The font of each column of initial codes was a different colour to show a visually easy distinction between them thus coding was easily identifiable according to which book it originated. This was useful for me to keep in mind, as it assisted me in continually being able to hold the context of the books and authors in mind. In line with Braun and Clarke's (2006) to "code extracts of data inclusively" (p. 89), attempts were made to ensure the context of the codes was not lost by reading and re-reading the data set. This was a lengthy and time-consuming process. I then began to look for and consider potential latent (implicit) themes in the data, as I identified codeable moments from the data set (Clarke, Braun & Hayfield, 2015). Every codeable moment has at least one initial code applied, and others have more than one. I created tabs of which were each labelled, generated initial codes and I greyed-out each codeable moment as I

coded it, so I would easily be able to determine my progress. If a codeable moment did not fit into the existing generated codes, I would create a new one, that would be labelled so as to reflect its' meaning. Thus "organising...data into meaningful groups" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 88).

Within this research, I employed both deductive and inductive approaches at different stages of the research process. My initial coding was more inductive, as it was "strongly linked to the data themselves...[and was]...a process of coding the data without trying to fit it into a pre-existing coding frame, or the researcher's analytic preconceptions" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 83). Therefore, this initial coding of the thematic analysis could be described as semantic as the codes provided a succinct description of the content of the data, reflecting the "explicit or surface meanings of the data, and the researcher/analyst is not looking for anything beyond what a participant has said or what has been written" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 84). However, I acknowledge that due to my theoretical interest in this area, from an attachment theory perspective and a psychotherapeutic lens, this study could be described as being more explicitly analyst driven. As such, as the first and second order themes were developed, the deductive approach became more dominant where "a more ... detailed analysis of some aspect of the data" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 84) was explored, in response to coding for an explicit research question which is informed by a theoretical approach. As this process of coding and creating themes progressed, a more latent level of coding was applied where the codes and themes were developed through my interpretation and the analysis of the data was not merely descriptive but was already theorised (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Therefore, as the final themes were defined, I used quotes direct from the data set to describe my interpretation of the essence of each theme, from my attachment theory interest and through a psychotherapeutic lens. Thus identifying the "meanings that [lay] beneath the semantic surface of the data" (Braun & Clarke,

2012, p. 61) which reflected the “assumptions, frameworks or world-views that underpin semantic meanings (Braun & Clarke, 2012, p. 225). The generating of these initial codes then became the “building blocks of [my] analysis” (Braun & Clarke, 2012, p. 61).

In total I had generated 2598 initial codes across the data set so as to “capture both the diversity, and the patterns, within the data” (Braun & Clarke, 2012, p. 63). I then organised and collated all the initial codes to reduce the number of initial codes, some were similar and so were combined, others were grouped together within the same context, and some codes stood firmly in their own right. I then created new tabs, within the same word document, each a synthesis of the initial codes which then reduced to 674 initial codes. I had a ‘Miscellaneous’ initial code; for when I encountered codeable moments that I could not place at that time. After I had coded the entire data set, and felt even more familiar with the overall content and context in the data set and was able to go back to the Miscellaneous’ code and re-assign these codeable moments into other existing applicable initial codes.

4.3.3. Phase 3 - Searching for Themes

A theme “captures something important about the data in relation to the research question, and represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 82). Searching for themes from the initial codes was an active process, where I created potential themes in terms of my research question, and through a psychotherapeutic and attachment theory lens.

Once I had synthesised my initial codes to 674 (Figure 3), I began to look for similarities and overlaps between the data, i.e. “clustering codes that that seem to share some unifying feature together, so that they reflect and describe a coherent and meaningful pattern in the data” (Braun

& Clarke, 2012, p. 63). Therefore, this was where themes began to develop by organising the initial codes relating to similar topics into categories, thus creating broader patterns of meaning (potential themes). I found the computer useful here in allowing for visual representations and the flexibility in re-ordering the clusters of categories ('cutting and pasting'). This allowed me to map the central patterns and analyse the feasibility of each potential theme (Clarke, Braun & Hayfield, 2015). Additionally, Braun and Clarke (2006) considered "'measured' prevalence" (p. 82) to be an important part of theme development, by analysing how often potential themes appeared throughout the data set. Throughout this phase of the thematic analysis, I kept in mind Clarke, Braun and Hayfield's (2015) recommendation that:

the key criteria for determining whether a potential theme is in fact a theme is whether it both identifies a coherent aspect of the data and tells you something about it, relevant to your research question. A theme needs to be underpinned by a central organizing concept – or, more simply put, a key analytic point (p. 236).

The interpretative nature of this thematic analysis required, me as the researcher, to be flexible in deciding what themes were created (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In a new Microsoft Excel spreadsheet, I had the first tab with the complete list of initial codes. I then looked for unifying features in the codes, and colour-coded them as I established themes, so each first order theme was a different colour. Firstly, to easily identify which theme the code had been placed in and, secondly, to confirm when the code had been assigned to a potential theme cluster (Braun & Clarke, 2012).

In searching for themes, it was important for me to keep my research question in mind when developing themes and that the themes fit within the methodological framework of my overall study. I began exploring the patterns and correlations between themes and how they will "work together" to provide a meaningful and coherent interpretation of the data (Braun & Clarke,

2012). According to Clarke, Braun and Hayfield (2015), “reflecting on relationships between themes also helps determine the boundaries of each theme – what each includes and excludes” (p. 236).

First Order Themes

At this point, I had identified the eleven first order themes (Figure 4) in relation to the coded data and in terms of my research question. These were, initially, 1) Online Communities 2) Time and Space 3) Online Life and Social Media 4) Impact of the Internet/Online Social Media 5) Reflection 6) Internet 7) Connection and Attachment 8) Psychological 9) Millennials 10) Older Generations and 11) Real Life. When I returned to the initial codes spreadsheet to reflect on these first order themes (which I found helped me to consider the viability of each theme thus far) and reviewed my eleven first order themes, I realised as a novice researcher that I had, too quickly, categorised codes away. As a result I expanded my themes by three more as I had realised I had missed key prevalent themes central to the study. Therefore, I added the additional themes of 12) Human Development 13) Parents and Children and 14) Technology, along with their codes into the first order spreadsheet.

Codes were sorted and categorised in phase three as I searched for potential themes. At this stage, I found it useful to draw a thematic map of the first order themes (Figure 3), look for relationships between codes and between themes. While complex in terms of the relationships between the themes, it was a useful way “to document the analytic thoughts and ideas developed during coding, and to get a sense of the overall analysis” (Clarke, Braun & Hayfield, 2015, p. 238). However, these “ideas were refined considerably as theme development

progressed with some themes discarded, and others retained and refined” (Clarke, Braun & Hayfield, 2015, p. 238).

4.3.4. Phase 4 - Review Potential Themes

This phase involved reviewing the viability of each potential theme against the data set (and evaluating its current meaning), by refining potential themes through a recursive process of trial-and-error (Braun & Clarke, 2012). With the view that “each [theme] has a clear, distinct ‘essence’ – or central organizing concept” (Clarke, Braun & Hayfield, 2015, p. 231). This involved re-reading the entire data set (which included the codes and themes) to ascertain if these themes were adequately matched with the meanings outlined in the coded data, and with the research question (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

While considering the inter-relatedness of the first order themes, I became aware of the complexity of the relationships and influences from the data set. I felt I had a sense of what many of the young people, interviewed by the authors of the data set, had described in relation to their lives in the midst of this digital revolution – so many layers, so many interwoven connections and consequences.

Second Order Themes

At this point, I did a final re-read of entire data set to determine whether the first order themes meaningfully capture important aspects of the data, and “the overall tone of the data, in relation to [my] research question” (Braun & Clarke, 2012, p. 66). I was aware, while doing the final re-read, that the number of potential themes in the first order themes (which included the

necessity to include the additional three themes) was too big. So, I reviewed the coded data extracts from each theme and looked to see if some of potential themes could be collapsed to form a more comprehensive coherent pattern. Additionally, what assisted me in this process was referencing my research question to ensure it remained relevant to the aims of the study.

I then reviewed my themes by developing Second Order Themes by grouping First Order Themes that had similar meanings. I collapsed the themes 'Time and Space', 'Online Life and Social Media', 'Impact of Internet and Online Social Media', 'Internet', 'Online Communities' and 'Technology', to refine the second order for them to be labelled 1)'Technology'. Combined these themes captured how technology, specifically elements of the Internet such as, inter alia, Social Media impact on people, in particular Millennials. I merged the themes 'Parents and Children' and 'Older Generations' together, to form a second order theme of 2)'Parents and Children' as the older generations tended to be the parents of digital natives, so it seemed a logical grouping. The themes 3)'Human Development', 4)'Real Life' and 5)'Millennials' remained as themes in their own right. I renamed the theme 'Psychological' to 6)'Therapy' as this seemed to be more inclusive of a bigger range of meanings in this area. The themes 7)'Connection and Attachment' and 8)'Reflection' remained unchanged.

After reviewing the whole data set, I realised I had left out a key theme which didn't adequately fit into any of the existing themes, at this point, so I created an additional second order theme of 9) Social Media Connections, to highlight the particular type of relating through these media (Figure 4). Therefore, my second order themes were condensed to nine themes; namely 1)'Impact of Internet and Online Social Media', 2)'Parents and Children', 3)'Human Development', 4)'Real Life', 5)'Millennials', 6)'Therapy', 7)'Connection and Attachment', 8)'Reflection' and 9) Social Media Connections (Figure 2).

1st Order Themes to 2nd Order Themes

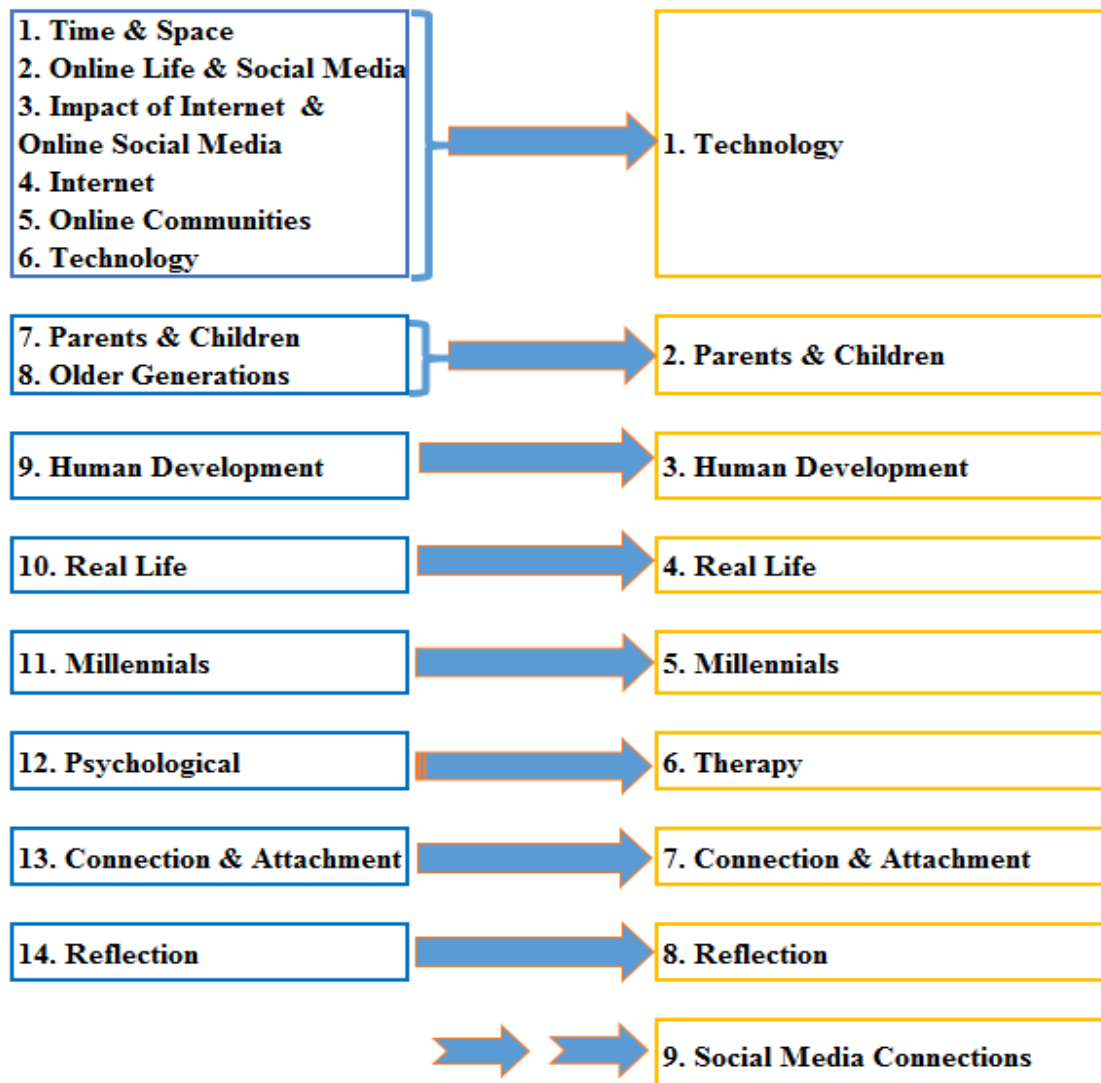


Figure 2. 1st Order themes to 2nd Order themes

Third Order Themes

According to Clarke, Braun and Hayfield (2015), in reviewing and refining my potential themes, I considered their recommendations of having:

Overarching themes [which] tend to be used to organize and structure an analysis...[and]... capture an idea underpinning a number of themes...; Themes [which] report in detail on meaning related to a central organizing concept; and Sub-themes [which] capture and develop an important facet of the central organizing concept of a theme (p. 236).

At this stage, as themes were reviewed and refined further, it became evident to me that there was an overarching theme (Braun & Clarke, 2006). I noticed how ‘Attachment Experiences’ was a theme that was central to all the other themes and interlinked throughout the data set, as well as, being central to my research question. Therefore, I determined the overarching theme was ‘Attachment Experiences’. I established that the second order themes of ‘Attachment in relation to Social Media’ and ‘Connection and Attachment’ as these were within the same consideration of ways to connect and relate, through the tools of the Internet and Social Media, and the cyclic impact again on ‘Connection and Attachment’ – both in real and digital life. The themes of ‘Real Life’ and ‘Parents and Children’ were combined into the third order theme of ‘Parenting’. The reasoning for this was the implication that parents tend to be ‘digital immigrants and are associated more with the ‘real world’ and the community and society within it.

I combined the themes of ‘Millennials’ and ‘Human Development’, as while human development is part of all humans, for this research I particularly focused on Millennials. Consequently, I refined the third order of them as ‘Millennial Generation’ as I felt this was more inclusive of all elements relevant to Millennials. Second order themes ‘Reflection’ and ‘Therapy’ were collapsed into the third order theme of ‘Psychotherapeutic Reflections and Implications’ as I felt this better encapsulated the scope of the theme, and its’ relevance to the research question. The fifth theme remained under the label of ‘Technology’ from the second order themes (Figure 3).

2nd Order Themes to 3rd Order Themes

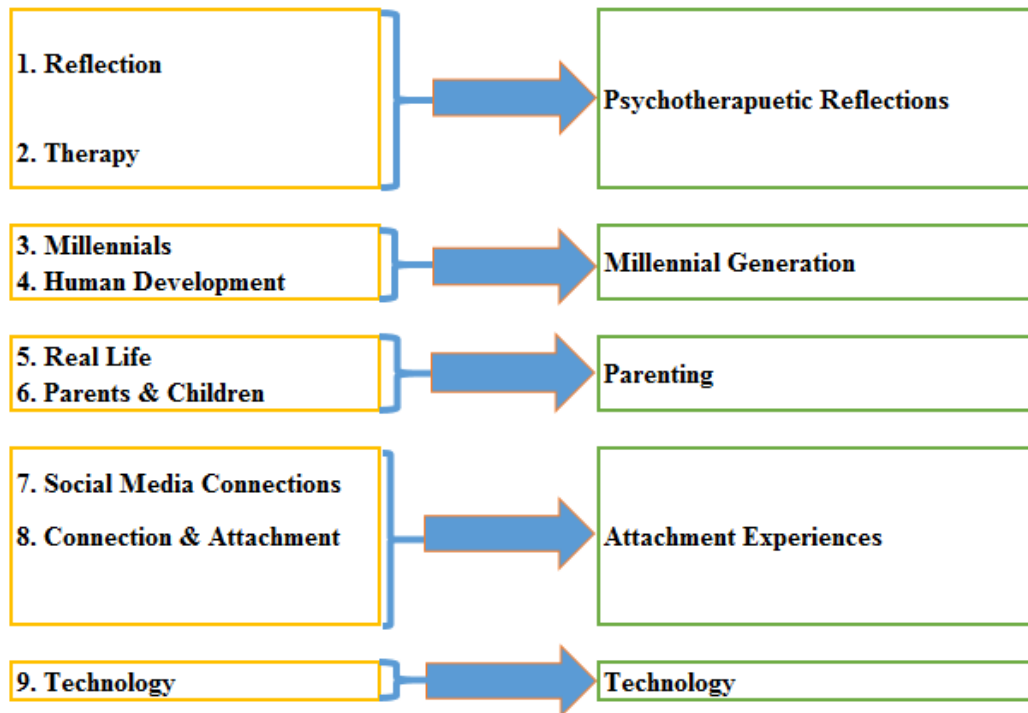


Figure 3. 2nd Order themes to 3rd Order themes

As a result, my five third order themes were; 1) 'Parenting', 2) 'Millennial Generation', 3) 'Psychotherapeutic Reflections' and 4) 'Technology', and 5) 'Attachment Experiences' as my overarching theme (Figure 3). Within the 'Parenting' theme, I considered the subthemes of 'Secure and Insecure Attachments', 'Real World' and 'Digital World Attaching and Relating', and 'Culture'. In terms of the overarching theme of 'Attachment Experiences', the subthemes of 'real' and 'digital' attachments seemed important to differentiate. As both were the result of needs seeking to be met, in different ways and with different outcomes. Under 'Parenting' the subthemes of 'Gatekeeping/buffering' and 'Community' were established as these appeared to form a key role, for Millennials. Under the theme of 'Technology', the subthemes of 'Social Media' and 'Impact of Millennials' attachment experiences and was of relating as a result of

social media' were used to expand the complexity and depth of this theme. The theme of 'Psychotherapeutic Reflections' remained the same, with no subthemes.

At this point in phase four of the thematic analysis, only minor changes were being made to the potential themes. The development of the thematic map, at this phase, provided the visual confirmation of the flow and coherent patterns, in relation to the data and the research question, and how the themes tell a story of the research.

4.3.5. Phase 5 - Defining and Naming Themes

This phase of the thematic analysis was concerned with defining each theme sufficiently to clarify and develop a detailed analysis of each theme, in light of the bigger picture of the data set. In determining a useful name for each theme, I considered quotes directly from the data extracts to capture the essence and tone of the research and link the data more directly with the themes.

Definitions of the themes were a brief description of each theme, with an explanation for the name of each theme and "the essence of each theme... [i.e.]...what is unique and specific about each theme" (Braun & Clark, 2012, p. 66). Thus providing a summary of "the scope of each theme and how the themes relate together" (Clarke, Braun & Hayfield, 2015, p. 240). This phase was where the "analytic narrative" was developed, the "deep analytic work involved in thematic analysis, the crucial shaping up of analysis into its fine-grained detail" (Braun & Clarke, 2012, p. 67). In addition, "writing theme definitions also helps [the researcher] to think about the organization and flow of analysis within each theme, effectively providing a road map for writing up [the] results" (Clarke, Braun & Hayfield, 2015, p. 240). After the initial

labels were assigned to the themes, I then felt it would be more descriptive to use significant quotes from the data to express the deeper meaning of the theme (Braun & Clarke, 2012, p. 69)

The first theme was the overarching theme, which had previously been labelled 'Attachment Experiences', however, within this phase of the thematic analysis, a more apt theme name was given using a contextually accurate quote from the data. Therefore, the overarching theme name was "Our primary and dominant need is togetherness" (Neufeld & Mate, 2013, p. 269). Within the 'Attachment Experiences' theme, the subtheme of 'Secure and Insecure Attachments' was labelled with the quote "Communicating and connecting, whether on- or offline, is necessary for our wellbeing because we are social beings", 'Real World and Digital World Attaching and Relating' was labelled with the quote "Retreating from real to virtual relationships", and 'Culture' with the label quote of "Mass culture is global". The theme of 'Parenting' was labelled with the quote "Those who are nurtured best, survive best", and the subtheme of 'Gatekeeping/Buffering' reflected in the quote "The most significant responsibilities for parents concerns acting as buffers between the child and society" and the subtheme of 'Community' reflected the quote "The 'vessel' which is the community". The theme of 'Millennial Generation' reflected the quote of "Tethered selves", and Theme Five was 'Technology', with the quoted label of "Particularly compelling lure of the Internet for adolescents and young adults" to reflect the theme, with "Anthropomorphism" as the subtheme for social media and "We are consum'd with that which we were nourish'd to reflect the subtheme of 'Impact of Millennials' Attachment Experiences and ways of relating as a result of Social Media'. The theme of 'Psychotherapeutic Reflections' has been labelled with the quote "Counsellors, psychotherapists and psychoanalysts are well placed to observe this cultural transition". These quotes, used as labels for the themes and subthemes, seemed to capture the essence of the theme and subthemes.

4.3.6. Phase 6 - Producing the report

At this phase, I had finalised the name of each theme and written its description. This was followed by producing the report which involved writing up the thematic analysis and the results of the analysis. Clarke, Braun and Hayfield (2015) stated that “themes provide the organizing framework for the analysis, but analytic conclusions are drawn across themes” (p. 231). The quotes used as definitions for the themes from the thematic analysis, will be expanded in the following chapter, where the “analytic write-up contains two elements: data excerpts and analytic commentary” (Clarke, Braun & Hayfield, 2015, p. 241), and the main analytic claims are demonstrated, by providing a convincing analysis, in relation to the research question.

4.4. Summary of Thematic Analysis

To maintain coherency to the overall theoretical structure and analysis in this study, I consistently applied the theoretical concepts from methodology through to thematic analysis (Clarke, Braun & Hayfield, 2015). For me, attachment theory was the building blocks of my research and my underlying philosophy. Thus, from a theoretically driven position of attachment theory and psychotherapeutic lens, I employed an interpretivist philosophical position which correlated with the attachment and psychoanalytic thinking. This carried through into the six-phase thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006), ending with the analytic narrative.

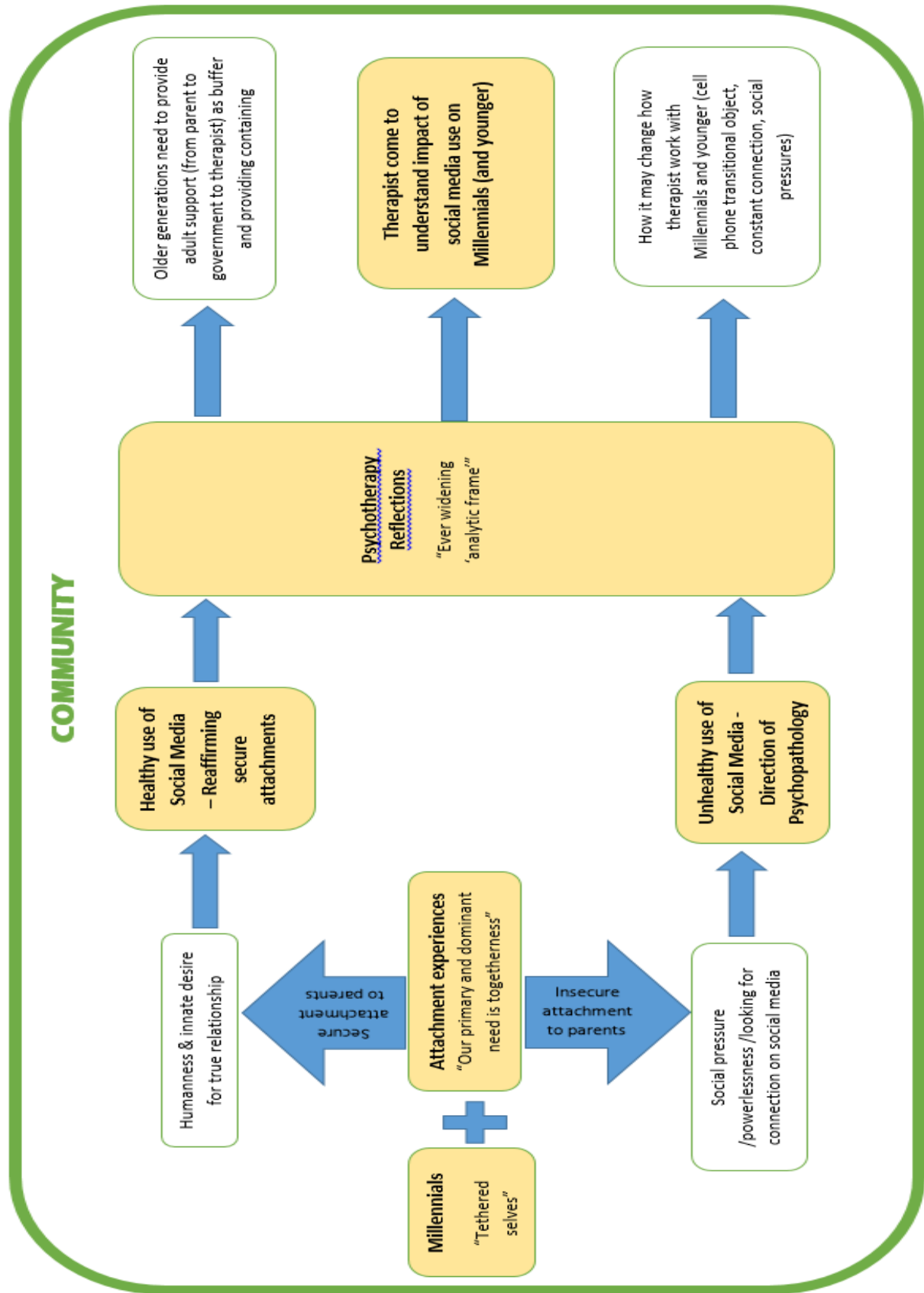


Figure 4. Thematic map (all five themes)

Chapter Five – Findings

5.1. Introduction

The thematic analysis produced 674 initial codes, which were condensed into fourteen first order themes, then further condensed into nine second order themes, resulting in four main themes (namely, ‘Parenting’, ‘Millennial Generation’, ‘Technology’ and ‘Psychotherapeutic Reflections’) and the fifth overarching theme of ‘Attachment Experiences’. These have been illustrated by the thematic map (Figure 4). The thematic map represents an exploration and understanding of the phenomena of attachment experiences of Millennials through their online relating via social media, and what implications this might have for the clinical situation. As this was a thematic analysis which was an analysis of the data from the literature, the data has been quoted as per the author, which included citing other authors and has been presented as such. Below is a detailed outline of my exploration and interpretation of each of the themes. I used quotes, directly from the data set, as the labels of the themes which, I felt, captured the essence of the theme. At the same time, it returned to the original data yet represents my interpretation of the theme.

5.2. Overarching Theme - *“Our primary and dominant need is togetherness”*

The overarching theme was concerned with the theme of ‘Attachment Experiences’ and, as such, could be categorised into the three subthemes of ‘Secure and Insecure Attachments’, ‘Real World and Digital World Attaching and Relating’ and of ‘Culture’.

Attachment is an innate need in all humans where “...our primary and dominant need is togetherness” (Neufeld & Mate, 2013, p. 269) and connection which is the basis for the survival

of the human species. “Bowlby asserted that, unlike animals that run away to a place of safety when alarmed (a tree, burrow, or den), the human, when alarmed, runs to a “person of safety”: the attachment figure” (Cundy, 2015, p. 138).

The thematic network of this theme illustrated the overarching theme; of Attachment Experiences (in real and virtual life), incorporating the second order themes of Attachment and Connection, and Attachment in relation to Social Media. Through my interpretation of this central theme, I considered Attachment Experiences, specifically in terms of the research question, and linked it to the other themes of 1) Millennial Generation, 2) Parenting, 3) Technology and 4) Psychotherapeutic Reflections.

It was interesting to note that while our preeminent (most basic) need for attachment to significant others, remains core to humans, Cundy (2015) suggested:

in some respects, the twenty-first century human being is not the same as that studied by Bowlby in the middle of the past century. Bowlby was influenced by the cybernetics of his day: how the brain processes information, prioritising some knowledge provided by our senses, defensively excluding other data that is too painful to confront and integrate. Since then, sophisticated technology has instigated an evolutionary leap. It has changed the social landscape, providing new methods of communication, new forms of language, and new metaphors for thinking about ourselves (p. 4).

Additionally, Neufeld and Mate (2013) stated that “attachment is the key to explaining the shape the digital revolution has assumed” (p. 268). Analysing the complete data set, my interpretation was that attachment and the need for attachment and connection to others appears to be the driver in Millennial’s use and need of social media. Therefore, this overarching theme forms part of key inquiry in this research question. This theme highlights that whether we interact with others in person, phone or another form of media, that attachment, more than any

other element, influences human communication and relating (Neufeld & Mate, 2013). Subsequently, central to this theme is the idea that social media relating and connection are tools used to meet the innate need for connection and attachment with others. Therefore, while “the technology may be new ... the dynamics are as old as humankind” (Neufeld & Mate, 2013, p. 270). What I noticed, however, across the data set, is a difference in the way and type of connections and attachments made in past generations and real life attachment experiences as opposed to Millennial generation’s and virtual life attachment experiences. In past generations “the home was the container for the family” (Neufeld & Mate, 2013, p. 271) in that humans have lived in various constellations of family and larger community groups involving culturally varying inter-dependence on each other, and yet now “the digital revolution has become, for all intents and purposes, a phenomenon of social connectivity” (Neufeld & Mate, 2013, p. 271-272).

Cundy (2015) exemplifies my consideration of the impact of attachment experiences, within the social media milieu setting, as a central theme when stating “that digital technology is shaping our relationship to reality and self-experience” (p. 5) which have historically been in the ‘real’ world, yet exponentially increasing social media relating cannot be ignored as a strong determinant in attachment experiences. It would appear that, although the preeminent human drive for attachment is still present, the ‘who’ and ‘how’ has changed, through online social media. Additionally, the (Cundy, 2015) “modern neuroscience points to the role of attachment in structuring brain architecture, stating that humans “... have evolved elaborate neural networks for interacting with others ... These systems of attaching, predicting, and communicating are all functions of the social brain” (as cited in Cozolino, 2006, p. 21). In considering this point of view, it led me to wonder if the neural networks of the social brains of our youth are evolving and, if so, what does this mean for the role of attachment and relating

with others – whether online or in real life? I considered this theme in terms of two distinctions; of real life attachment experiences and virtual or digital life attachment experiences, of Millennials specifically, and the understanding that, for some, this boundary becomes blurred. Furthermore, I considered how Millennials secure or insecure attachment styles are experienced through the landscape of social media use.

5.2.1. Subtheme – *“Communicating and connecting, whether on- or offline, is necessary for our wellbeing because we are social beings”*

In consideration for this subtheme of secure and insecure attachment, Cundy (2015) viewed that “having secure attachment in relating to others implies trust, warmth, and openness, a greater capacity to nurture and be nurtured, along with more autonomy—we explore further and more comfortably from a secure base. Cundy (2015) referenced Winnicott (1965) who proposed that these nurturing maternal functions are crucial in providing the context for “indwelling” (p. 6), where the “integration of the infant's mind and body, psyche and soma” results in the self being “experienced as an embodied entity” (p. 6). Furthermore, Cundy (2015) stated that “with insecure attachment, arising when an early significant relationship has been insufficiently secure and containing (and not remedied by later secure relationship), connecting with others will be more of a challenge” (p. 194). Cundy (2015) referenced Winnicott (1965) further, stating that “an infant who is not securely held...grows with the sense of himself as lifeless, fragmented, disembodied, or depersonalised. He is not safely contained within a psychic skin” (p. 6-7).

A telling statement by Turkle (2011) suggests that “these days, insecure in our relationships and anxious about intimacy, we look to technology for ways to be in relationships and protect

ourselves from them at the same time” (p. xii). Cundy (2015) suggests people’s attachment styles influence how they use communication technology and social media thus influencing, and most likely reinforcing, their attachment experiences. For example, insecurely attached (anxious) people could use social media as a way of clinging to attachment figures, thus wanting to feel closely connected at all times (Cundy, 2015). Whereas, another style of insecurely attached people (avoidant) could use social media, for instance, as a means of keeping more distant connection from others, in order to feel more comforted. It would appear that securely attached people use social media as a tool to enhance their ‘real’ attachment relationships, which are grounded in “traditions, rituals and taboos that historically evolved to protect family and intergenerational attachments [which] do not govern the digital world” (Neufeld & Mate, 2013, p. 273). This highlighting, that “the virtual world both enables and obstructs a variety of ways of relating” (Cundy, 2015) (as cited in Balick, 2012, p. 122).

Cundy (2015) referenced Balick (2013) by suggesting that:

communicating and connecting, whether on- or offline, is necessary for our wellbeing because we are social beings—created socially, developing socially, finding our self-expression socially. Whether we are seeking and finding that which nourishes, sustains, and enriches us online, or sourcing that which maintains and exacerbates our problematic attachment styles, our dissociations, our uncomfortable internal object relations and internal working models, the opportunities are there through social networking sites and media, chat rooms, and other Internet-based spaces for relating, and we will use them. We might find these opportunities somewhat compulsive...because that which is never entirely satisfying can be seductive, delivering a tantalising taste of what is more deeply desired (Cundy, 2015, p. 195).

5.2.2. Subtheme – “*Retreating from real to virtual relationships*”

In consideration of this subtheme, of real world and digital world attaching and relating, Akhtar’s (2011) reflected on real world attaching and relating, have stated that:

familiarity grew out of spontaneous contacts in neighbourhoods and on porches...I see risks to development from our digital culture. I see more difficulty for children and families to relate to one another with intimacy and familiarity coming from a serious interest in personal and family narrative, and a sharing of and working through of a range of human emotions. Familiarity and intimacy require personal face-to-face exchange in real time (p. 40).

This reflection of 'real world' attachment experiences, of times gone by, suggested to me that for secure attachment to be developed and maintained face-to-face intimacy is essential and it raises concerns that, without enough of this 'real time' interactions with loved ones, secure attachment experiences could be jeopardised. It would seem Akhtar's (2011) perspective, is one of deep concern for social media "relationships" and experiences of attachment online.

Akhtar's (2011) suggested that:

the quick pleasures of cyberspace entertainment, and virtual 'friendships' do not replace reliable people where serious and heartfelt sentiments can be shared. An added pain might be the lack of conscious awareness of their longings for relatedness which is central to many adolescents' depression. Some may have been retreating from real to virtual relationships for most of their lives (p. 41).

Millennial social media connections seem to be constantly 'on tap' or omnipresent and the tantalising allure and attachment-reward from this connectedness, is not bound by reality and space. It is as if, a higher priority has been given to the social media relationships as opposed to face-to-face 'offline' relationships.

The manner in which these relationships are maintained or tended to, points perhaps to the potential for managing 'window dressing' on social media and profiles. Where there was more scope for presenting the self as 'who one wishes to be' while being able to obscure parts of the self that may not feel comfortable. It seems social media created the sense that there is more scope for playing with reality.

Turkle (2011) reflected:

we build a following on Facebook or MySpace and wonder to what degree our followers are friends... Yet, suddenly, in the half-light of virtual community, we may feel utterly alone. As we distribute ourselves, we may abandon ourselves.... In all of this, there is a nagging question: Does virtual intimacy degrade our experience of the other kind and, indeed, of all encounters, of any kind? (p.11).

It would appear that the use of social media, in particular for Millennials, has been an attempt to meet innate attachment needs that have not been met in real life, described by Neufeld and Mate (2013) as “fruitless pursuits and empty connections” (p. 274). Neufeld and Mate (2013) used the analogy of consuming “empty food”, in reference to the use of social media, where paradoxically one’s innate attachment-hunger appears to be answered by social media, yet it would not adequately fulfill the need, resulting in a continued persistent desire for proximity and intimacy – and so consumption increases. Facebook was an example where it ‘almost works’ and so feeds this attachment hunger yet would be insatiable, thus becoming addictive (Neufeld & Mate, 2013). In the analysis of the data set, it would seem that online life and social media relating was considered to be fundamentally a cognitive phenomenon, where the False Self resided in the head. In effect, developing a dissociation, where online life and social media relating seemed to lead to a sense of a disembodied sense of self. Thus providing a defence from vulnerability and intimacy, resulting in a ‘pseudo-intimacy’ and ‘relational-light’ interactions (Neufeld & Mate, 2013).

As stated by Cundy (2015) that while our attachment styles are likely to influence how we connect with others, particularly Millennials as the first of the digital natives, through social media relating, there is also “the opportunity to play, to explore, to try things out, and experience our social being in a virtual “in between”—Winnicott's “transitional” or “potential space” (Winnicott, 1971), or Buber's “das Zwischenmenschliche” (Buber, 1965, p. 195-196).

This particular zone of private and public online worlds; seems to be a transitional space offered, in this case, to Millennials by the virtual environment, and was described by Turkle (2011), as where the screen of a device creates a sense of protection and seeming distance, as one could be sitting alone, yet through a click of a button could be instantly connected with many people online, giving the sense of being connected and together with others. This relational space seems to create the illusion of privacy, which seems to provide the space to play – where people can fantasise about the other in the online ether, and re-create their own identities as well. This online transitional space was suggested by Turkle (2011) to be both enticing and a perilous habit of the mind.

5.2.3. Subtheme - “*Mass culture is global*”

The subtheme of ‘Culture’ had been identified as a part of the development and influence of ‘Attachment Experiences’ as the overarching theme, whether through real world or virtual environments. Cundy (2015) stated that Carlino, a psychoanalyst, who stated that “socio-cultural changes and technological innovations that settle into and circulate within society affect both reality and people's subjectivity” (as cited in Carlino, 2011, p. 1).

The online world of the internet and social media relating have created new ways of “communicating, working, playing, living, and loving” (Cundy, 2015, p. 18) and this appears to have resulted in a “mass culture [that] is global” (Cundy, 2015, p. 25).

Cundy (2015) explained that:

we are primarily such social creatures, we human beings, that we roll, sloosh, wallow, and emerge within our connections with others, whether they are on- or offline. We have the capacity to thrive within the social milieu, whatever milieu it is, as long as we are able to engage with others wholeheartedly (p. 195).

However, while Cundy stated the above, it seems the online culture has developed an important link to attachment experiences, and for Millennials it seems significantly impactful. As identified by Turkle (2011), “a college junior contemplating the multitudes he can contact on the Net says, *‘I feel that I am part of a larger thing, the Net, the Web. The world. It becomes a thing to me, a thing I am part of. And the people, too, I stop seeing them as individuals, really. They are part of this larger thing’*” (p. 168).

It seems that the digital media culture ‘flatlines’ or minimises the cultures and traditions of many in the real world, and online encourages ‘sameness’. Additionally, the digital media culture appears to have reinforced insecure attachment experiences, where Millennials for example, “as a culture ... do not seem to understand how to wait, how to work through pain, and few people seem to understand the concept of loss any more” (Cundy, 2015, p. 50).

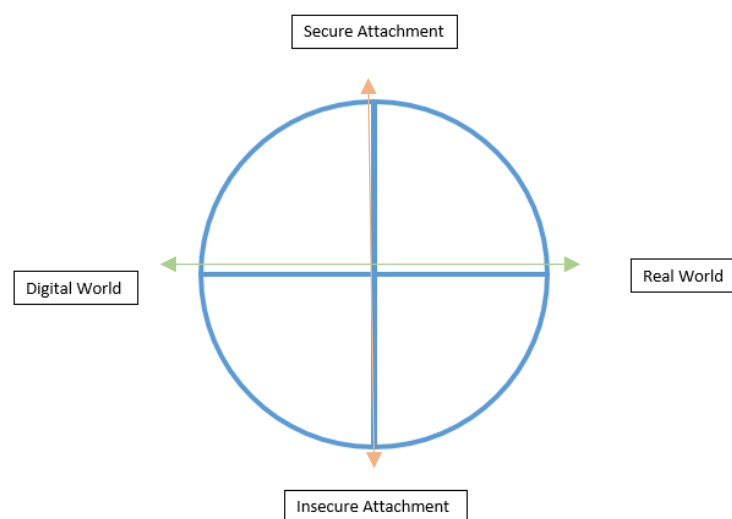


Figure 5. Diagram of the over-arching theme of ‘Attachment experiences’ on a vertical and horizontal continuum, with culture representing the blue circle containing the other elements.

5.3. Theme Two – “*Those who are nurtured best, survive best*”

Cundy (2015) stated that “most parents manage to keep their offspring alive, but not all manage to raise stable, resilient, emotionally healthy children” (p. 3). As referenced by Cundy (2015) “those who are nurtured best, survive best” (as cited in Cozolino, 2006, p. 14).

In the data set, as authors discussed Millennials specifically, and youth in general, there was a general sense of referring to the parents of these youths in a ‘negative’ light. There seemed to be a sense that the parents were “helicopter parents”, anxious parents, demanding/clingy parents, too involved parents, or parents self-involved on their own devices and not connecting with their children, or parents who had no idea about the way their children were engaging online. Cundy (2015) refers to:

some parents ... cannot tolerate their children having independence or any privacy of mind. They fear being abandoned, as if attachment roles have reversed. They might try to curtail the young person's developmentally healthy desire for autonomy by instilling their own anxiety about the outside world. They might closely monitor his use of the Internet and chat rooms in the guise of protecting him from harm. These are ‘*helicopter parents*’, hovering nearby and monitoring the young person's world for signs of danger. They might insist upon being a Facebook ‘*friend*’, having access to the social life of their child, or maintain frequent intrusive contact via mobile phone while they are apart (p. 14).

Another example came from Akhtar (2011) who expressed that “it is rather disturbing to observe mothers (fathers and nannies too!) ignoring the demands of their young children because the adult is seemingly engrossed in an electronic device” (p. 121). Turkle (2011) comments that “parents want their children to answer their phones, but adolescents need to separate... [to which adolescents remarked] ...my parents are upsetting me. I feel trapped and less independent” (p. 174).

However, Turkle (2011) highlighted that “parents say that they, too, feel trapped. For if you know your child is carrying a cell phone, it is frightening to call or text and get no response” (p. 174). It would seem that with the advent of cell phones, the ability to be in continuous connections with others has meant that, during the adolescent stage of development where they tend to move more towards individuation and separation, the cell phone maintains the ethereal umbilical cord to parents. Traditionally, “the child internalizes the adults in his or her world before crossing the threshold of independence” (Turkle, 2011, p. 173). However, overwhelmingly authors in the data set referred to ‘today’s children’ as “tethered children [who] know they have a parent on tap - a text or a call away ...[and]...parents can be brought along in an intermediate space, such as ... the cell phone, where everyone important is on speed dial” (Turkle, 2011, p. 173).

It would seem that if Millennials who have not separated and individuated from their parents; due to technology such as cell phones keeping them connected, then they have not had “the experience of being alone with only him- or herself to count on” (Turkle, 2011, p. 173). Millennial’s innate drive to separate and individuate in the adolescent stage appears to be active, however, the demands for continued connectivity by their parents frustrates this process of striving for autonomy (parent-child enmeshment), thus suggesting the term ‘helicopter parents’ for parents who typically fit into this description (Akhtar, 2011). This is further complicated by “a technology-enabled social contract [that] demands continual peer presence” (Turkle, 2011, p. 174), where peers are no longer separate from each other.

This was considered to impact and change the “traditional views of adolescent development take autonomy and strong personal boundaries as reliable signs of a successfully maturing self” (Turkle, 2011, p. 174).

Cundy (2015) highlighted the generational divide between Millennials and younger ‘digital natives’ and their parents of older generations (pre-Internet), who are often referred to as ‘digital immigrants’, as they are likely to be unfamiliar with the online language and culture. This created a shift where parents were no longer the experts (the ones that children went to for answers and support), as a result of age and experience. Cundy (2015) stated that:

Prensky described today's young people as ‘*digital natives*’ (Prensky, 2001); they have been born into a world where digital technologies inform most aspects of their lives, from education and leisure to social relationships. Young people are indigenous to the Internet world with its language, customs, and culture. In comparison, their parents are “digital immigrants”; they have had to learn an alien culture and few of them are as fluent in the language or can find their way around cyberspace as efficiently as their teenage children (p. 14).

With parents being of an older generation, in this case specifically in terms of Millennials, it seems, from the literature, that parents projected their assumptions of what their adolescents are doing online. Not, themselves, being familiar with the online culture and peer group pressures of online relating of their children, thus leading their own fantasies are being projected onto the Millennials (Cundy, 2015). As a result, of this ‘tethering to devices’, it could be said that there is a fine balance in boundaries between parents and their children, where each have sincere care and concern for one another and a relational intimacy, and with extended family members, as well as, being autonomous and giving each other enough space to explore and pursue their own personal interests.

Cundy (2015) suggested “parents might struggle to impose appropriate boundaries on their child's use of the Internet and computer games, either intruding too much into the child's private world or leaving him unprotected in a potentially dangerous environment” (p. 22). In addition, Akhtar (2011) commented that “since young people love their media and do not want to be restricted, the apparent confusion makes it even harder for parents and caregivers to adopt and enforce sensible rules and policies that might promote healthy media use” (p. 27).

Neufeld and Mate (2013) stated that “the best immunisation against using digital devices for social connection is a well-satisfied and well-satiated child (p. 285)...[and]... once children are more fully developed in their capacity for relationships... this makes social networking less enticing and addictive” (p. 286).

Neufeld and Mate (2013) suggested that “family time has dropped by a third in the last decade, even though it was consistent for decades before that” (p. 279), which appears to indicate something has significantly impacted on family attachments and relationships. I propose Neufeld and Mate’s (2013) suggestion refers to the digital revolution, in particular social media relating in front of a screen and not face-to-face. Turkle (2011) confers that “we have found ways of spending more time with friends and family in which we hardly give them any attention at all. We are overwhelmed across the generations. Teenagers complain that parents don’t look up from their phones at dinner and that they bring their phones to school sporting events” (p. 164).

Cundy (2015) raised an interesting point that “screen compulsivity may also be the result of a particular kind of neglect” (p. 49). Which Cundy (2015) considered might be a form of neglect that perhaps goes unobserved by the parent or attachment figure, thus making it difficult to define or know the effects and implication thereof. I interpreted the author’s opinions on the ‘parental generations’ as out of touch with online and technological advances and that there is a gap between them and their children, in understanding their children’s technological/ virtual environments and subsequently not knowing how to ‘gate-keep’ or buffer as the care-givers of their children.

5.3.1. Subtheme - *“The most significant responsibilities for parents is to act as buffers between the child and society”*

Throughout the data set references were made in regards to parents as their child’s gatekeeper or buffer to society, in different ways. Therefore, I considered the importance of highlighting this as a subtheme, within the theme of Parenting.

Neufeld and Mate (2013) reflected that if “Jean-Jacques Rousseau said that one of the most significant responsibilities for parents is to act as buffers between the child and society. If this was true in the 18th century, how much more is it true today? Today’s parents have become agents of society, rather than buffers to society” (p. 284). Parents seem at a loss how to “gate-keep” online relationships. In the past “parents once acted as ‘gate-keepers’, protecting their daughters when they began dating” (Cundy, 2015, p. 16). However, now days, “young people have easy access to these technologies outside of their parents’ control” (Akhtar, 2011, p. 26).

Furthermore, Akhtar (2011) suggested parents are struggling with their digital native children's challenges and agree to give their children unlimited access to social networks, as parents seem unsure of what to do. Other parents allow their children access to online social networks as it removes responsibility from them to interact with their children.

Thus it would seem that one of two avenues were followed; where parents have secure attachments with their children and these parents were able to be a buffer their children in both the real and virtual worlds. However, those whose parents who had insecure attachments with their children, provided no buffer from the real nor virtual arenas. To add to this, it was suggested in the data, that some parents themselves were attached to their devices (such as cell phones) and online activities which meant they were not relating with and connecting to their children. In order to be able to provide the conditions for their children to be securely attached, requires the parental generation to have personal face-to-face exchange in real time with their children, as highlighted in Cundy (2015) "parents, grandparents, child-minders, and other caregivers might need to put away their digital devices sometimes in order to provide the conditions for a generation of securely attached children" (p. 25).

Cundy (2015) referenced Winnicott (1965) in relation to "the maternal functions" requires for the infant to be securely held and nurtured, in order for the "infant's mind and body, psyche and soma" to become integrated and for the infant to come "to inhabit his own skin" (p. 6). When this does not happen, the "infant ... grows with the sense of himself as lifeless, fragmented, disembodied, or depersonalised. He is not safely contained within a psychic skin" (p. 6-7).

The reference in the literature to ‘maternal function’ and the call to “parents, grandparents, child-minders, and other care-givers” (Cundy, 2015, p. 25), suggested to me the underlying concern (from the authors) that older generations charged with providing the psychological containment and secure attachment to their Millennial children was waning. The secure attachment with a parent provides the relational landscape for seeking a secure attachment relationship with “other family members [, community] and then peers as the child engages with reliable others beyond mother” (Akhtar, 2011, p. 39). “The unavailable parent may force the child into premature adulthood or into a desperate effort to avoid growing up through a Peter Pan-like existence” (Akhtar, 2011, p. 39). As a result, of insecure attachment, the infant learns coping strategies which can lead to either avoidant or ambivalent attachment (Cundy, 2015).

Older generations (digital immigrants, if you will) seem to have been quick to point the finger at the Millennial generation for their ‘ills’, ways of being and differences and, also, blaming technology for any negative impact on their children, perceived or otherwise. Yet, these authors seem to be suggesting that how Millennials have been parented, via secure or insecure attachment, seems to dictate how they use social media and how they relate to others on- and off-line. Neufeld and Mate (2013) suggested that the developments of secure attachment experiences, in childhood, with caregivers leads to a healthy development of trust and self-esteem, with the child not needing to seek out attachment elsewhere, such as on social media.

5.3.2. Subtheme – “*The ‘vessel’ which is the community*”

It would seem that, often, in the data set the result of online mass communication via social media was referred to as a virtual community. Additionally there were, often, references to the real world community. Both of which are greatly influenced by parenting and associated levels

of gate-keeping or buffering. This led me to consider 'Community' as a subtheme of the 'Parenting' theme.

Attachment can be seen, not only in terms of "understanding human development and relating in terms of the dyad, namely, self-other" (Cundy, 2015, p. 179) but, as I also observed, throughout the data set, something that repeatedly came-up was a sense of community, specifically in terms of Millennials online, the seeking out of community attachments via social media which were lacking in their real worlds. Cundy (2015) stated:

that, although we speak of attachment, of relating, and perhaps above all of the transmuting aspects of the right kind of relationship, we do not always think and debate enough about the deep significance of community...[which] leaves me wondering about the role of the overarching 'container', the 'vessel' which is the community within which we live, or hope to live (p. 179).

Cundy (2015) put forward that "the importance of community; belonging to a community, being 'known' and being useful to others confers dignity and builds self-respect" (p. 102). It would seem in the real world, the community appears to be the container for intimate attachments, in a supportive sense. Cundy (2015) referenced Bowlby's (1988) opinion regarding our preeminent need for attachment with others and 'being-in-relationship', that a community is a "special kind of social group, a network of interrelatedness, ... essential to human wellbeing, providing [social] context, enrichment, and holding" (p. 179).

Ultimately, the survival and thriving of humankind is dependent on community (Cundy, 2015). It would seem that communities, whether online or in real life, refer to groups of people connected together by some form of interactions, which could include a range of people from work colleagues, to friends and family, to share interests, and so on (Cundy, 2015).

Cundy (2015) stated:

‘There is no such thing as an infant’, and he elaborated: ‘...meaning, of course, that whenever one finds an infant one finds maternal care, and without maternal care there would be no infant’(as cited in Winnicott, 1960, p. 586)...in order to acknowledge the significance of the wider community, that ‘it takes a village to raise a child’ ...We need community in which to relate with each other, including the very particular relating involved in raising children. It takes a ‘village’ of one kind or another for us to be truly in-relationship (p. 180-181.)

Additionally, Cundy (2015) “that ‘*a single human brain does not exist in nature*’ (as cited in Cozolino, 2006, p. 11), and that the natural environment of our species is no longer a geographical but a relational landscape” (p. 3). Cundy (2015) expanded on this, highlighting that “social network sites enable communication across geographical space and time zones, maintaining emotional connections with loved ones - a virtual community” (p. 6).

The literature in the data set suggested that the, once available, real community which provided a social network of engagement and support in previous generations, “often absent or insufficiently present in our increasingly secular and fragmented world” (Cundy, 2015, p. 185) is now missing for so many. It seems that, inter alia, Millennials took up social media relating, to fill a need where online social networking became the “chat over the garden fence” (Cundy, 2015, p. 189), or the opportunity to connect with others or, “whether for good or ill” (Cundy, 2015, p. 182), even to come “together for a common cause or purpose which enables “wider community cohesion” (Cundy, 2015, p. 182). For example:

Tumblr is a site used largely by teenagers for the purposes of sharing photographs and other information, and shared interest groups tend to emerge ... a ‘*community*’ of self-harmers, young people for whom dissociation has become a way to manage unbearable feelings. By posting photos of their bodily wounds on Tumblr's self-harm spaces, they cannot viscerally experience the real pain in the eyes, or hurt in the mind of the other—they are exacerbating and representing the dissociations which are being created and depicted there. The images, and the distress behind them, are shocking. This raises questions such as: does this community help because it provides context and human contact and a sense of ‘*being-like*’, or does it hinder because it makes a norm of that which is profoundly self-destructive, encouraging competition that escalates self-harming behaviours and perpetuates trauma? (Cundy, 2015, p. 194).

The theme throughout the data set suggested that where secure attachment relationships are provided early on, social media can provide opportunities for off-line intimate relationships to be supplemented – “a global village” (Cundy, 2015, p. 22). Additionally, if those who for some reason are unable to access real life communities, they may benefit from online social media relating, if they “can negotiate the challenges of interacting in the virtual space” (Cundy, 2015, p. 183), then they could ‘co-create’ healthy online relationships to compliment the offline interactions. This global community of online engagement has the potential to initiate the development of meaningful interactions and a sense of group participation (Cundy, 2015). So then how come things go wrong?

It would seem that in the twenty-first century, our real life communities are more fragmented than before, and social isolation is more common, so as humans our deep need for a social environment with interconnected relationships (lacking in real life – i.e. insecure attachment relationships) has been met by online social media and social networking sites.

However, psychopathology can develop as a result of insecure attachment experiences where, for example, “we neglect our real offline community, or we lose, or fail to develop, the impetus and skills needed to socialise effectively” (Cundy, 2015, p. 183). Akhtar (2011), as a digital immigrant, “wondered if the [Millennials] might not be attempting to create the kind of virtual network that we had had available literally on our doorsteps, with abundant life going on in all of its tumult, vividness, and ‘multiplicity’” (p. 53). Neufeld and Mate (2013) suggested that “while technology has extended our reach, it has disrupted our roots” (p. 295).

Turkle (2011) summarised the lure of online ‘global village’ by describing how:

we have moved away, often far away, from the communities of our birth. We struggle to raise children without the support of extended families. Many have left behind the religious and civic associations that once bound us together... [as such] ...those who have lost a sense of physical connection, connectivity suggests that you make your own page, your own place. When you are there, you are by definition where you belong, among officially friended friends (p. 157).

Cundy (2015) suggested that online social media connectivity could allow those with insecure attachment styles, who “feel shameful...for asking for help or reassurance in the ‘real world’” (p. 190), the opportunity to “seek emotional support” (p. 190) on social media.

It would appear from the data set that in the past communities would generally have been intergenerational and linked to and supported by parents, in relation to their children. These tended to instil the family and larger cultural values. However, as Millennials have gone more and more on social media, for longer and longer periods of time, seeking out online communities, it would seem these online communities are mainly peer-oriented.

Millennials are seeking their connections, their attachments and their safety from each other online, in their own virtual community. Therefore, lacking the intergenerational influence and cultural values from the ‘real world’ community attachments, an online cultural seems to have overridden individual values, traditions and family attachments. It seems even those Millennials who had secure attachment styles, were being drawn into the online social media culture and lure. But who is in charge? Who is the buffer/gate-keeper? Cundy (2015) stated:

that is neither healthy nor helpful for the majority of our social interactions throughout life to take place online: family life, schooling, socialising, and so on must take place normally and predominantly in the real world, entailing interactions between real embodied people in order for online interactions to enhance and extend, rather than distort, our development as social beings (p. 193-194).

The discussion throughout the data set left me with the sense that somehow parents have disconnected from their children and/or their children have disconnected from their parents and community and found temporary nourishment online in social media connection and virtual community. It seems groups of people are physically sharing a communal space and all are looking down absorbed in their devices and virtual connections, “each is tethered to a mobile device and to the people and places to which that device serves as a portal” (Turkle, 2011, p. 155). Seemingly we, and especially Millennials, are “Alone Together...[as] networked, we are together, but so lessened are our expectations of each other that we can feel utterly alone.”

(Turkle, 2011, p. 154). Cundy (2015) goes on to question “might social networking provide us merely with an illusion of community, a panacea for loneliness, and thereby reduce our impetus to engage more fully in offline community?” (p. 183).

It is as if the computer and the communication technology, such as social media, have become the perfect mother, ever ready to soothe and comfort. For Millennials, “who have lost a sense of physical connection, connectivity suggests that you make your own page, your own place. When you are there, you are by definition where you belong, among officially friended friends” (Turkle, 2011, p. 157).

5.4. Theme Three - “*Tethered selves*”

The theme of ‘Millennial Generation’ was developed to highlight the key focus of the research question and the quote used, as the label for this theme, suggested the essence of how the authors in the data set, viewed digital natives such as the millennial generation.

In order to reflect on aspects of the Millennial’s story, Turkle (2011) suggested, from a more reflective stance, that “adolescents have always balanced connection and disconnection; we

need to acknowledge the familiarity of our needs and the novelty of our circumstances” (p. 156). While Akhtar (2011) suggested “the tool changes the user... [and] ... cyberspace seems to be changing the way in which we communicate, think, and maybe even feel, in both subtle and dramatic ways” (p. 54). Cundy (2015), from a more attachment-focused perspective, and considered that “our social brains, without personal boundaries, may be shaped by constant communication, often of a fairly superficial content” (p. 25). Neufeld and Mate (2013) continued along the developmental lines, suggesting “if children ingest more information than they can digest, their attentional mechanisms become stressed and as a result fail to develop properly” (p. 291).

Furthermore, Neufeld and Mate (2013) stated that “we must give them a chance to mature so that they can become the masters of these new tools, not their slaves” (p. 295). While authors acknowledge the positives of communication technology generally, and social media specifically, it would appear that; there is the concern that Millennials (and now the younger digital generations that follow) are less interactive and connected with the family they live with, have a smaller social group of friends in the real world, which seems to be impacting various important developmental stages in their lives. Cundy (2015) consequently, warns that “where there have been failures in creating secure attachment, psychopathology flourishes” (p. 25).

It seems Millennials feel more alive when connected and disoriented and alone when they leave their screen and, at the same time, describe the online world of social media “a new type of *craziness*” (Turkle, 2011, p.272-273). “Today, [Millennial’s] machine dream is to be never alone but always in control. This can’t happen when one is face-to-face with a person. But it can be accomplished ... by slipping through the portals of a digital life” (Turkle, 2011, p.156-

157). Akhar (2011) appears to have a similar view, suggesting “that for some [Millennials] - frightened of the intensity and responsibility of real relationships - the distance built into online relationships may protect against the anxiety of closeness” (p. 40), and where “the cell phone buffers this moment” (Turkle, 2011, p.173). This quote jumped out at me, as it would seem the cell phone has become the buffer or gate-keeper in place of the parents being the buffer between their children and society, as a large proportion of Millennials online social media activity occurs via the cell phone.

Social media, Turkle (2011) noted, seemed to give young people (especially adolescents) the opportunity to experiment with their identity on line – a “sense of a free space, what Erik Erikson called the moratorium. This is a time, relatively consequence free, for doing what adolescents need to do: fall in and out of love with people and ideas. Real life does not always provide this kind of space, but the Internet does” (p. 152). Millennials using digital communication technology to connect with friends are enhancing their feelings of connectedness and social wellbeing. Through online social media, Millennial’s social identity and reputation are shaped by friends and observed by ‘onlookers’/ third parties (Turkle, 2011).

Neufeld and Mate (2013) proposed that social media:

directly titillate the attachment-reward centres of our children’s brains, rendering them uninterested in the kind of interaction that could lead to true fulfilment and satiation. Even the kind of self-presentation they are doing on Facebook fires these same attachment-reward circuits. These attachment fixations spoil the appetite for the interactions that could truly nurture and satiate...[and that]...these attachment fixes can become more appealing than real life, and for many young people they have (p. 279).

Turkle (2011) highlighted a Millennial’s comment and then Turkle’s response, “I have a lot of people on my contact list. If one friend doesn’t ‘get it,’ I call another. This marks a turn to a

hyper-other-directedness...This young woman's contact or buddy list has become something like a list of 'spare parts' for her fragile adolescent self" (p. 176-177). It seems Millennials, as a generation, are less autonomous not only from their parents but from peers as well. As such, the demand of online social pressure for 'copresence' and constantly available (Turkle, 2011), results in a situation where "the tethered self becomes accustomed to its support" (Turkle, 2011, p. 174).

It appears the traditional views of human development have been, inadvertently, challenged by Millennials who have not developed autonomy and personal boundaries in the 'healthy' traditional ways. Instead, Millennials are avoiding separation via continuous social media connections, where the drive for peer attachments has been so strong that it led to the pursuit of proximity. This constant social media online culture pressure to be 'constantly on' and available, has left some young Millennials with the only "escape [of] the demands of the always-on culture...[being to]...use their parents' accounts so that their friends won't know that they are online" (Turkle, 2011, p. 164).

Millennials that Turkle (2011) interviewed expressed their fantasy of going back to a time before the digital revolution, even though they themselves had never experienced that era. Turkle (2011) discussed how young people (such as Millennials) don't seem to feel a need to deal with more than part of a person online and seem to be absorbed in their technological media, with little attention given to those around them, "purpose-driven" (p. 293), with no apparent deeper meaning and detached. Further to this line of thinking Neufeld and Mate (2013) stated that "social networking sites as well as digital technology itself, dictate the nature of the connection, favouring superficial contact over emotional and psychological

intimacy...What is shared is often contrived and shallow” (p. 273). There is the sense that in seeking these superficial social media connections, the aim is more about “making a favourable impression” (Neufeld & Mate, 2013, p. 273) rather than the genuine intimacy and vulnerability of true connection, thus “technology entices and rewards those with superficial attachments: the immature, the undeveloped and the peer-oriented” (Neufeld & Mate, 2013, p. 273).

Neufeld and Mate (2013) proposed that “digital intimacy spoils the appetite for what a child truly needs” (p. 278) therefore, suggesting that “the basic problem is that digital intimacy is ...a pseudo-intimacy” (p. 276). A statement by Turkle (2011) suggested that “the self that treats a person as a thing is vulnerable to seeing itself as one” (p. 168) seems to somehow ring true, for those (especially Millennials) caught up in the labyrinth of what it is to be human and real and virtual.

The sense I, as the researcher, interpreted from the data set is the mixed feelings that digital natives, such as Millennials, have about social media and other digital technology. On the one hand, they seem to resent the demands and pressure of online life and social media relating, where even Millennials with secure attachment styles buy into the online lure due to the social and peer pressure to conform even though tiring and overwhelming, they seem to have a defeatist sense and feel powerless to change the ‘norm’. On the other hand, young people seem to prefer written communication via technology, especially social media and have an immense resistance to talking on the phone. Young people seem to consider their digital devices and the social media therein, as a “place of hope and sweetness” (Akhtar, 2011, p. 53).

5.5. Theme Four - “*Particularly compelling lure of the Internet for adolescents and young adults*”

The theme of ‘Technology’ was identified as a huge part of the research question, in understanding how these tools have impacted digital natives, such as Millennials, and their ways of relating and attachment experiences.

It would seem that Millennials, as the first of the digital natives, have found that online connection through social media, in particular, was a “compelling lure” (Akhtar, 2011, p. 53) further suggests that “perhaps there is yet another reason for its lure: the need for a global village” (Akhtar, 2011, p. 53). Further to this, it seemed the rapture and allure that technological connectivity could ease our deepest fears of loneliness, loss and death – yet it disrupts our attachments to our most innate sustenance of face-to-face human connection. It would seem that the tension and drive to seek out the innate need for attachment and the new tools, namely social media, as a means to getting attachment fixes, especially for young people such as Millennials, can be more enticing than real life. Neufeld and Mate (2013) shared that “technology entices and rewards those with superficial attachments: the immature, the undeveloped and the peer-oriented” (p. 273) where “peer orientation has not only become the driving force of the digital revolution and its instruments, but also its ultimate outcome” (p. 274).

Cundy (2015) stated that “technology has also changed the pace of life...there is little space for quiet reflection ...into the restorative inner world, or intimate human connection. We have become used to accessing information instantly... We are over-stimulated, primed for instant gratification” (p. 24).

Cundy's (2015) statement above further indicated how social media technology seemed to have impacted and changed, not only the external environment, but individuals' internal way of being as well.

Cundy (2015) stated "attachment is related to spatial and emotional distance" (p. 3). It was suggested that in the process of secure attachment development, the tolerance for separation develops. However, communication technologies, such as social media, seem void of time and space. Cundy (2015) continued that "cyberspace has not just altered, but eroded, many boundaries... [where]...our social brains, without personal boundaries, may be shaped by constant communication, often of a fairly superficial content" (p. 22). Which, according to Turkle (2011), resulted in being "networked, [where] we are together, but so lessened are our expectations of each other that we can feel utterly alone" (p. 154).

Turkle (2011) suggested that "these are the unsettling isolations of the tethered self...tethered to the network through our mobile devices, we approach a new state of the self, itself... It can experience the physical and virtual in near simultaneity. And it is able to make more time by multitasking, our twenty-first-century alchemy" (p. 154). However, Turkle (2011) then takes this a step further, by suggesting that "we have moved from multitasking to multi-living [in virtual online worlds and relationships]. You need mobile communication to get to the notion of the life mix" (p. 160). Added to this sense of fairly superficial content, was the use of emoticons, what Cundy (2015) refers to as "approximations of non-verbal gestures" (p. 192), in the absence of the non-verbal communication normally present in face-to-face or vocal interactions.

As a result, the quality of the interactions seem to lack a substance, and appear more shallow than offline interactions. Cundy (2015) also suggested that “many exchanges can become over-intensified through the lack of the usual non-verbal mediating cues and responses, or the usual negotiated, or imposed, social group boundaries (fascinating material here for further research and thought)” (p. 191).

5.5.1. Subtheme - “*Anthropomorphism*”

As a core component of technology, social media has been identified as a subtheme, specifically in relation to the research question and the extent that the data set references this area.

“It seems that we have a great capacity for anthropomorphism” (Cundy, 2015, p. 10), where technology becomes an extension of the human and “we project parts of ourselves on to them, such as our need for love and affection” (Cundy, 2015, p. 10).

Akhtar (2011) noted that:

cyberspace extends the body as a kind of prosthetic device, pointing out that we automatically accept such prosthetics in the form of mechanical devices in the physical world. So we might consider the unconscious meanings of such devices and their relational implications (p. 59).

In the data set, there was the sense that technology is making humans better, as if humans can keep up with the machines they have created. Rather it would seem the pull of technology binds humans in a vicious cycle of need and demand, resulting in digitally enmeshed attachments.

Resulting in a lack of a developed sense of self, as if detached from the self, for instance in Millennials, who seem to have a referenced self in terms of attachment to technology, rather than that of significant human attachment figures. It appears that there is the disturbing concern that human beings are losing their humanness through digital communication, where the subtleties of human interactions become lost in the more analog nature of social media relating.

Further to this point, Akhtar (2011) reflects on a thought-provoking perspective:

if cyberspace supplants physical space, it also can provide a way of overcoming the anomie of modern life...however, [if] our most fundamental sense of individual and personal identity is somatically based, what does the incursion of cyberspace do to our sense of self? (p. 58).

It would appear that Millennials tended to use the Smartphone as a transitional object for the connectivity it holds and the attachment fixes it represents, in the digital world thus impacting on real life attachments. As well as, the symbiotic relationship which seems to have developed between the Smartphone and users – where the Smartphone provides the instant access and means to direct or redirect attachment needs to other, via the Smartphone. This was exemplified throughout the data, where authors had directly quoted young people who expressed the high level of stress they experienced when they did not have their Smartphone with them.

As Cundy (2015) explains “the real world of real people begins to feel unreal, while the virtually real world of ethereal people begins to feel more significant, elaborated, and compelling” (p. 23). This suggested the potential possibility of the blurring between the real and virtual worlds, as humans have invited technology more into their lives and more ‘humanness’ into technology.

It is important to note, that the authors identified how social media are tools which can encourage prosocial, as well as, neutral and antisocial interactions. Prosocial interactions would include, for example, specific chat rooms where people seeking help and support could potentially receive a 'healing experience', or there can be a 'continuity of attachment' for those who are physically not present in their community (Cundy, 2015).

5.5.2. Subtheme - "*We are consum'd with that which we were nourish'd by*"

As a continuation from the previous subtheme of social media, the 'Impact of Millennials' attachment experiences and ways of relating as a result of social media', formed an important component of the study and the research question, under the theme of 'Technology'.

Turkle (2011) reflected on the shift away from more face-to-face real world relating and attaching to a more online and virtual world, she commented:

face-to-face conversation unfolds slowly. It teaches patience. When we communicate on our digital devices, we learn different habits. As we ramp up the volume and velocity of online connections, we start to expect faster answers. To get these, we ask one another simpler questions; we dumb down our communications, even on the most important matters...Shakespeare might have said, '*We are consum'd with that which we were nourish'd by*' (p. 207).

Cundy (2015) referenced a phenomenon in Japan, Hikikomori, where young people choose to disengage from the real world, and appear to get lost in the virtual world and the parents feel powerless to know how to intervene.

The situation appears so desperate that avatar counsellors have been used in the endeavour to reach these young people, who have not been able "to tolerate the give-and-take of ordinary

human contact will conduct relationships online” (p. 17). Cundy (2015) suggested this phenomenon is likely to spread to the Western world in due course.

Neufeld and Mate (2013) seemed to support Cundy’s (2015) view that, especially, young people’s cravings are only getting worse and the preoccupations become more urgent and obsessive. “When we eat empty food, the consumption of food increases” (Neufeld & Mate, 2013, p. 274). Neufeld and Mate (2013) were of the opinion that “this tells the story of social networking” (p. 274). Throughout the data set, the authors seemed to put forward concerns, as well as, evidenced information suggesting that the internet in general, and social media in particular could impede creativity, could result in hardened empathy and emotional dysregulation, as well as, the concern for body and mind dissociation – especially in the case of digital natives.

5.6. Theme Five – “*Ever widening ‘analytic frame’*”

The final theme, in this study, was that of ‘Psychotherapy Reflections’ as this theme seems to form an essential part of the study and research question. As pointed out by Akhtar (2011) therapists, in the midst of the digital revolution, have been:

forced to wonder about and address the effect of the numerous uses of the Internet by patients and its use and/or intrusion into the therapeutic relationship...[and consider that the]...ever widening ‘analytic frame’ must make room for cyberspace and the multiple meanings contained therein (p. 112).

While Cundy (2015) reflected on Bowlby’s (1988) and Wallin’s (2007) view of the importance of establishing a secure base and therapeutic alliance, as a beginning point to therapy, Akhtar (2011) considered the impact of cyberspace on therapy more specifically. It appeared that

however the authors addressed the issue of therapy, in relation to digital natives and cyberspace, the acknowledgment was made that the clinical situation was being impacted by the results of the digital revolution. Further to this, Cundy (2015) highlighted how “the impact of ... social network sites on the sense of self as it develops in relationship with our attachment figures, and throughout life” (p. 1).

Throughout the data set many aspects of therapy were raised, such as how digital technology could be an aid for helping those in need of mental health therapies, who might not be physically able to attend therapy in person, or for those who would otherwise avoid face-to-face therapy altogether. There was also the concern and wondering about various psychopathologies which could develop through various cyberspace behaviours and relationships.

It appears that as the online culture is in the process of superseding people’s cultures and family traditions, the sense of an instantaneous culture and instant gratification is becoming the norm. This then raised the question is pathology changing? Furthermore, are attachment styles and/or theory changing? There seemed to be an indication of psychopathology being generationally dynamic, as the ideas of natural maturation and psychopathology were changing in this digital era. The authors highlighted that clinicians have been seeing an increased degree of patients who present a sense of disembodiment and seem to lack basic social skills.

Additionally, there was a curiosity by the authors about how cyberspace and online relating impacts the therapist’s role today and they also reviewed the implications of using digital devices in therapy. The authors highlighted the potential for cultural and generational gaps,

between digital native patient and digital immigrant therapist, might be so large that patients would not bring ‘alien’ material (i.e. in relation to technology) to therapy, as they might anticipate the therapist would not understand. This was further explained, by suggesting that therapists could learn a lot of their patient’s internal objects, relational style, defences and fantasies from how they use technology.

Cundy (2015) provided a quote from a Facebook user, which exemplifies how social media can be viewed, where on Facebook:

we give out support, comfort, encouragement & love to people who need those, and can ask for them in return...It's much harder to actually ask for emotional support & words of cheer in front of people. We get self-conscious/shy/ashamed even (ridiculously), but society despises openness in suffering. We are expected to maintain decorum & be “brave” or risk heavy criticism if we fail to keep up appearances... If one can't afford “therapy” or “counselling”, fb can be a lifeline—metaphorically & even literally (Facebook user, 2014) (p.189-190).

Turkle (2011) identified how many digital natives found the use of online confessional sites helpful for them, in that they were able to release something with the result that they do not feel so bad. This then was considered a form of therapy, however, it is important to note, Turkle’s (2011) confirmation of the value of therapy, which seeks new ways to approach old conflicts and developing the capacity to slow down and reflect. Turkle (2011) adeptly noted that it is “‘easier’ to feel constantly hungry than to acknowledge that your mother did not nurture you” (p. 282-283).

Furthermore, the author’s response was suggestive of therapy providing an extensive and reflective emphasis on the humanness of talking therapies in the face-to-face clinical situation, which was considered in the re-shaping of patients’ attachment experiences and lives online and in the real world.

5.7. Summary

The five themes, identified through the method of thematic analysis, were the over-arching theme of ‘Attachment Experiences’ – with the subthemes of ‘Secure and Insecure Attachments’, ‘Real World and Digital World Attaching and Relating’ and ‘Culture’, ‘Parenting’ – with the subthemes of ‘Gatekeeping/Buffering’ and ‘Community’, ‘Millennial Generation’, ‘Technology’ – with the subthemes of ‘Social Media’ and ‘Impact of Millennials’ Attachment Experiences and ways of relating as a result of Social Media’ and ‘Psychotherapy Reflections’. These themes then raise questions and wonderings about the possible implications, in relation to the research question of this study.

Chapter Six – Discussion

6.1. Introduction

In reflecting on my research aim, namely, to disclose meaning of the impact of social media and attachment experiences for Millennials, through establishing core themes using a qualitative thematic analysis method, five themes were identified. These five themes were; namely, an overarching theme labelled ‘Attachment Experiences’ with the subthemes of ‘Secure and Insecure Attachments’, ‘Real World and Digital World Attaching and Relating’ and ‘Culture’. The second theme was labelled ‘Parenting’, with the subthemes of ‘Gatekeeping/Buffering’ and ‘Community’; and the third theme was labelled ‘Millennial Generation’. The fourth theme was labelled ‘Technology’, with the subtheme of ‘Social Media’; and the fifth theme was labelled ‘Psychotherapeutic Reflections’.

This thematic analysis determined each of the five themes identified were distinct, yet together these themes have highlighted key concepts and the analysis thereof, in relation to the research question.

In considering the overarching theme of ‘Attachment Experiences’, Bowlby (1969) stated:

that attachment behaviour does not disappear with childhood but persists throughout life. Either old or new figures are selected and proximity and/or communication maintained with them. Whereas the outcome of behaviour continues much as before, means of achieving it become increasingly diverse (p. 350).

The digital revolution and, in particular the recent surge in social media use, has offered new ways of relating through an expansive virtual world, “in which, the way we make meaning of our relationships can be explored” (Balick, 2014, p. xxxiii).

Furthermore, Balick (2014) purported:

in much the same way that the social brain hypothesis suggests that our brains have grown due to the demands of social complexity rather than environmental factors (Dunbar, 1998), we might also suggest that technology is developing in a similar fashion: an outsourced brain being developed to cope with the growing complexity of our social needs. In this sense, the world of social networking becomes an additional virtual resource of the self that enables us to cope with the widening capacity of our growing social ties (p. 53).

The suggestion, throughout the data set, was that humans are social beings that require communicating and connecting with others for necessary wellbeing and, whatever their attachment styles and how they present, these connections can be sought in online social media. Additionally, it was identified that people with different types of attachment styles tended to use social media for relating differently, for example, the social networking site ‘Twitter’ may be more appealing to more avoidant or dismissing attachment style people as it requires less intimacy while connecting to others.

The discussion of the findings highlighted that Millennials, who have had secure attachments, appear to use social media as a tool that supports and strengthens their 'offline' attachments in a healthy and creative cyclic flow. Whereas, insecure attachments appear to be more linear, where attachment hunger results in these Millennials using social media in an effort to feel 'attachment-satiated', yet the empty calories of online relating leave them wanting and unfulfilled, leading them in a psychotic and creative disorder direction.

The data corpus in general, and the data set for this study in particular, identified how online relating may facilitate the maintenance and development of social networks and create online communities. In this process, what seems to be occurring, is that the use of social media has resulted in different language to offline language use, with different purposes and different meanings. However, in this process, it seemed something of the relating, via online communication such as social media, was lost in translation, i.e. depth of meaning seemed to be lacking in online communication and lack of non-verbal communication evident in face-to-face interactions. Along with the development of this online language, there seemed to be the development of an online culture. This online culture seems to be gaining momentum where as more people, especially digital natives such as Millennials, who spend incrementally more time online, their individual, family and community cultures in the real world seem to be forsaken for the online culture, or at least disrupt real world cultural norms.

This interpretation appears to be supported by Cundy (2015) when stating:

in just a few years, a virtual, push-button, so-called interactive way of communicating has become the norm. It has made enormous inroads into our collective behaviours and it is not going away. Young people can spend the equivalent of a working week in front of screens, affecting how they relate to themselves and others because they are often having contact, but not relationship with real people (Cundy, 2015, p. 51).

An additional aim was to broaden the therapists' lens of these issues and how the implications in relation to patients, who display attachment issues interlinked with social media use and relationship challenges, especially if the client is a 'digital native' and the therapist is a 'digital immigrant'. The data set highlighted a curiosity about the meaning of using digital devices and online media in therapy and if and/or how digital technologies may benefit therapists in their ongoing training, support and professional development.

This was a practiced-based research as I, as the researcher, have been practicing - and my theory has been informed by - my observations using a psychoanalytic attachment lens.

6.2. Study Strengths and Limitations

In considering the strengths and limits of this study, a strength would be the authenticity and directness of the use of an interpretive approach in the way the data is searched, 'listened to' and made sense of, by myself, as the researcher. However, often a qualitative research, such as this one, which was interpretative in approach, is criticised "for lacking generalisability, being too reliant on the subjective interpretations of researchers and being incapable of replication by subsequent researchers" (Vaus, 2002, p. 5). Additionally, I experienced a very limited amount of literature in this particular, as well as the challenges of researching a topic while still amidst the phenomenon. A strength of this study, has been that it has raised further questions thus promoting the need for further research in this area.

6.3. Further Research

Researchers that have been studying the impact of media (beginning with televisions) there are still some unresolved questions, but some implications are being transferred to digital

technology. It appears the impact of the digital evolution is unknown, yet there seems to be raising concerns that communication technology, such as the tools of social media, could disrupt real world human attachment experiences and cultural norms.

Whatever thoughts or views one has of technology, we need to endeavour to accurately understand it and be willing to confront technology's true effects on us. As such this study has highlighted core themes, and raised questions in terms of individual, societal and therapeutic implications, which could benefit from further research.

6.4. Implications for Clinical Practice

Accordingly, Akhtar (2011) highlighted that:

as we enter the second decade of the twenty-first century, psychoanalysts and psychotherapists are forced to wonder about and address the effect of the numerous uses of the Internet by patients and its use and/or intrusion into the therapeutic relationship (p. 69).

Therapists have begun reporting on their work with both digital immigrants and digital natives, who have become consumed by online technology. As a result of this study, I would suggest that, for digital natives such as Millennials specifically, digital technology and in particular social media, seems to have changed how they relate, think and perhaps even how they feel, both consciously and unconsciously having an impact on attachment experiences and the results thereof. It seems the reduce or total lack of face-to-face interactions and the humanness of person-to-person relating, has been impacting how people, such as Millennials, experience attachment and relating to others. The attachment bond to care-givers or significant others seems to have been disrupted. As such, I wonder what the implications might be, as this raises questions about the exponential use of technology, such as social media, regarding the self, love, relating, play, thinking, and the psychotherapeutic treatment itself.

I suggest that whether digital natives are securely or insecurely attached, the fact they are invariably all spending increasingly more amounts of time interacting with others online, rather than face-to-face with attachment figures, seems to be disrupting their attachment experiences as humans. Therapists would be wise to notice, that as part of this online culture – especially for young people, there seems to be a growing tendency for digital natives to use chat rooms as a form of therapy. These chat rooms seem to provide attachment figures in the form of ‘chat room peers’ – which have the potential to be healing or destructive. Digital native’s online behaviour and drive for peer connection and attachment seems to be pervasive and seems to be impacting on offline healthy attachment relationships. There is the concern that digital natives will turn more and more away from face-to-face therapy that might be slow and potentially painful, and turn more towards online quick fix therapy?

This disruption in offline attachment experiences seems to be resulting in psychopathologies, or at least the linear direction towards creative disorders and psychopathology. I considered that online digital communication has been used as a defence against engagement and where the boundaries between real and virtual are blurred, thus impacting on therapy. Additionally, other psychopathologies that could be presented are loss of reality and transference displacement. While patients might present with psychopathologies for various reasons, I would suggest it would be important for therapists to consider how online relating, such as through social media, is likely to be adding another layer within the psychopathology spectrum.

Many questions come to mind concerning therapeutic techniques as the ever broadening analytic frame must make room for cyberspace and the multiple meanings contained therein. For example, how might our patients relate and use social media, and other digital

communication technology, in therapy as a way of exploring and coming to understand the underlying processes that inform the patients' relating, as part of the therapy approach? There is food for thought regarding therapists' work in terms of the impact of internet such as social media on the clinical situation, as well as considerations for expanding adolescent development theory and attachment theory, to include the impact of the digital era. Additionally, it seems helpful to turn to neurophysiology findings in order to get a deeper understanding of the impact of media on young people. I suggest further research into the treatment approaches on how to assess and address these concerns, would be beneficial within the clinical situation.

I imagine many psychodynamic approaches could be applied in this new area (Seligman, 2011), when therapists are flexible and open to adapting new technological contexts (such as social media) within which their digital native patients could bring their fantasies, defenses and feelings. Therefore, using the play-like function of cyber devices it seems possible that the "usual dynamic processes of play, interpretation, understanding, and developmental support suggests that much of the new media can be put to the same uses as the older formats" (Seligman, 2011, p. 424).

There remains the consideration, therefore, that therapy can led to the restructuring of a patients' attachment experiences and recommencing those developmental stages that had been delayed.

6.3. Implications for Wider Society

The digital revolution has arrived and continues to change and develop at such a pace, that researchers are, seemingly, continuously on the back-foot, in terms of exploring and endeavouring to understand the impact of these technologies on humans and human relating.

Cundy (2015) reflected

When the adult attachment interviews were first conducted in the 1980s it was estimated that around 55 per cent of the general population of North America showed evidence of secure-autonomous attachment. The figure was lower among socially and economically deprived populations but it was generally held that around half of adults fell within the secure range, and this has been found in many other countries too. It has been suggested anecdotally since that this number is falling and a greater proportion of adults may be showing insecure attachment patterns. If so, what might be the reasons for this? (p5).

It would seem that whether people have a secure or insecure attachment style, online digital communication technology such as social media provides the spaces for relating. Additionally, there was a sense that the Internet has effected family life and relationships, where there seems to be declines in family member communication, smaller social circles and the corresponding increase in depression and loneliness. Resulting in the digital natives' important developmental stage being significantly impacted as a result of the effects of the digital communication technology.

It would seem that mass social media communication has become the norm, especially among Millennials and other digital natives, with the result that intimacy with others is diminished or lost entirely. Additionally, it seems an emotional detachment occurs, as an unconscious defence, to protect against a wounding online environment. I wonder about the increased insecurity, and anxiety around being vulnerable and intimate with others, that many experience as a result of insecure attachment experiences, perpetuated by their online relating. It seems a downward spiral of seeking more connections online, as a form of protection from their insecurities, which seems to result in rather superficial attachments that rather preoccupy than result in meaningful, deep bonds – which humans innately need. Additionally, as adolescents who are experimenting and developing their identities, are highly influenced by social media

which is more likely to reshape their identity. I wonder what society will be like where more and more people display insecure attachments, are preoccupied online as opposed to relating with the people around them offline, and more disconnected from themselves? Holmes (2001) reflected that “individualism, anomie and alienation become the themes of modern psychological life” (p. 5).

6.6. Summary

In summary, it has been reiterated that humans have a preeminent need for attachment and connection to other humans. This seems to be the driver in the exponential use of online relating through technologies such as social media which, in turn, seems to be impacting on our ways of relating, being and thinking. It raises the questions; such as, what will become of ‘real world’ society if we ‘forget’ our humanness – our empathy for others, our multigenerational heritages and cultures that make us unique and who we are, our physical contact with our attachment figures and subtle non-verbal communications? Akhtar (2011) highlighted the concern that, in terms of the Internet:

the distinction between ‘actual’ reality and virtual reality is chiefly that we are coauthors of the latter, and if online communication is increasingly predicted to (virtually?!) replace the physical, what does this indicate about the qualities of attachment and interpersonal connection in the future (p. 59)?

7. Conclusion

As this was an explorative study no definite conclusion have been provided, in fact I wonder if it may have raised more questions. As such, for digital natives, current research seems to have provided varied conclusions, as to the impact of social media on attachment experiences and ways of relating, while acknowledging intricate impact digital communication technology has

had on our expectations, communication styles, relational styles, and even our identities. This might be due to the complexity of the labyrinth of the Internet and social media in particular and the fact that we are still in the midst of the digital revolution, so it is challenging to reflect on a constantly changing environment. However, there does seem to be the implication that the “growing reliance on virtual socialising [is] a growing public health problem, particularly for young people.” (Balick, 2014, p. 8).

As a human species, we have an innate need for attachment to others, as a means of survival, both physiologically and psychologically. Essentially the human species drive is deeply relational in nature. The disruption of this vital aspect of our humanness, is bound to have serious implications on society and on the public health system. The cyberspace world is potentially a silent threat that has taken hold – especially for digital natives. I suggest further resources and thinking need to be employed to study this further and understand it better.

It is important to bear in mind that throughout the generations, where new tools and technology are developed, there has been radical changes to the nature of the human society. However, digital technology, specifically the availability of online relating through the portable devices of Smartphones, has rapidly revolutionised human connection and relating. As such, this technology seems to have happened so fast that we are not sure what the effects will be. Most therapies, firstly, attend to the unconscious drives of human needs and behaviour, and then exploring and understanding the meanings of these unconscious drives. Perhaps the combining of world view and perspective of both digital immigrants and digital natives, as a cross communication, could better help in the understanding of the phenomenon in its complexity. Thus, each group contains the blind spot of the other?

Akhtar (2011) stated “that the Internet is indeed a strange animal, amorphous in structure, infinite in its content and potential and relentless in its pursuit of information and seduction of potential customers of any kind. The nature of the beast, however, is in its master” (p. 67-68).



Figure 6. Hannah (2015) featuring image by Russell Wedges

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Appendices

Appendix One: Codeable moments from data set

433. *You can write anything about yourself; these people don't know. (fantasy of social media identity/profile and self identity experimentation online) (profile on social media a performance = not authentic and superficial connections/relating)*
434. *You can create who you want to be. (fantasy of social media identity/profile = self identity experimentation online)*
435. *You can say what kind of stereotype mold you want to fit in without . . . maybe in real life it won't work for you, you can't pull it off. But you can pull it off on the Internet. (fantasy of social media identity/profile and self identity experimentation online - Real life versus fantasy of online world)*
436. *Audrey has her cell phone and its camera with her all day; all day she takes pictures and posts them to Facebook. (social media a performance - Narcissistic injury)*
437. *She boasts that she has far more Facebook photo albums than any of her friends. "I like to feel," she says, "that my life is up there." (sense of self-value from social media, not achieved in 'real' life)*
438. *But, of course, what is up on Facebook is her edited life. (not authentic self on social media)*
439. *Audrey is preoccupied about which photographs to post. Which put her in the best light? Which show her as a "bad" girl in potentially appealing ways? (preoccupied attachment = self identity experimentation online and profile on social media a performance)*
440. *If identity play is the work of adolescence, Audrey is at work all day: "If Facebook were deleted, I'd be deleted. . . . All my memories would probably go along with it. (life in social media not 'real' world - self identity experimentation online = preoccupied attachment)*
441. *And other people have posted pictures of me. All of that would be lost. If Facebook were undone, I might actually freak out. . . . (as long as life on social media, Millennials exist -self identity in relation to online existence = fear of loss and abandonment)*
442. *[Facebook]That is where I am. It's part of your life. It's a second you." (as long as life on social media, Millennials exist = self identity in relation to online existence)*
443. *It is at this point that Audrey says of a Facebook avatar: "It's your little twin on the Internet." (self identity in relation to online existence with social media profile replication of 'real' self)*
444. *Since Audrey is constantly reshaping this "twin," she wonders what happens to the elements of her twin that she edits away. (sense that the online created self is somehow real? - as if social media profile takes on human qualities)*
445. *"What does Facebook do with pictures you put on and then take off?" (social media in control of users 'lives', photos etc online)*
446. *She suspects that they stay on the Internet forever, an idea she finds both troubling and comforting. (disturbed by not being able to truly delete/erase aspects of self online = aspects of herself online forever – keeping her alive on the Net)*
447. *If everything is archived, Audrey worries that she will never be able to escape the Internet twin. That thought is not so nice. (no escape from self online = sense of being trapped online)*

Appendix Two: Initial codes from codeable moments

Codeable Moments - Books				
	Alone together	Digital era and attachment	Electrified mind	Hold onto your kids
1	Futuristic like a movie	development of self, other and relationship from care-giver to infant	impact of media on young people	evolutionary change
2	self-sacrifice for technological improvement at human body expense	secure attachments = positive relational experience for infant	processes underlying media effects	unknown impact of digital revolution on our world and our children
3	excitement regarding cyborgs	Attachment style internalised as infant	neurophysiology findings give deeper understanding of impact of media on young people	distressing impact of technological advances causing major cultural setback
4	technology making humans better	seek attachment with others throughout life	older generational/parental and mental health providers guidance	acknowledgement of digital transformation impairing healthy development of our children for generations
5	technology unknown but not to be feared	uncertainty of communication technology's impact on relating	portable digital devices with internet and social network sites have exponentially led to media as central in young peoples lives	questions about impact of digital revolution
6	sense of humans needing technology to be better	acknowledgement of technology's impact on humans	Millennials and young online continuously/frequently	exponential increase in children/teens using social network sites regularly
7	reincarnated by technology	impact of communication technologies on sense of self	Millennials and young spend large portions of their day online	exponential increase in children/teens using social network sites regularly
8	reality diffused?	people impacted by social changes and technology development	Millennials and young online continuously/frequently and it has increased exponentially	research ominous re: Millennial generations social and emotional development due to digital technologies in general and social media in particular
9	social media connections constantly 'on tap'	impact of sense of self from online connectivity?	youth access to online media outside of their parents' control	concern for average Millennial over 10 hours a day on a form of technology and impact of that technology
10	not present	social species	most youth online media exposure not monitored by adults, so important to understand for children's health and wellbeing	parents anxious and don't know how to parent the children's digital media use
11	Future come to roost	connectivity required for human survival	public don't understand what research on media effects means	parenting is about relationship (not set of skills) with their children
12	new ways of living	connectivity required for human survival	research on effects of media on children complex and not clear-cut - as long term studies - and still 'in' study process	child's relationship with parent and their own level of emotional maturity are key
13	not human	connectivity required for human survival	media industries counter research findings with powerful arguments to blunt impact of worrisome findings	trying to understand impact of digital technology while still amidst the phenomenon
14	feel more secure because of technologies connection	naturally driven for connectivity	young people so attached to their digital media and devices, challenging for parents to enforce sensible rules	attachment - a preeminent human drive - key in explanation of impact of digital transformations on children's lives
15	sweet allure/reward of connectedness	naturally driven for connectivity	research that those young people using digital media heavily received lower school grades	attachment and peer orientation key in explanation of impact of digital transformations on children's lives
			<i>respondents who were the least content spent more time with media (thirteen hours and six minutes, on average) than those who were the most content (eight hours and forty-four minutes). research.brownuniv.edu/news/who</i>	
	all codeable moments	brains rewired from digital	generations work together	hide behind technology1
		at war with ourselves		assume internet growup

Sample of codeable moments from each book (in different font colours) with initial codes as individual tabs along the bottom of the spreadsheet.

Appendix Four: Example of 2nd Order Themes

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Impact of internet on life	Reflection	Therapy	Connection/attachment	Millennials	Real life	Human development	Parent & Children	Social Media, Connection
loneliness	gender of smartphone	zohaid	defined online communication	self-imposed racial mediocrity	real life not okay	expanded horizons in children's use of social media	parents' anxiety and lack of knowledge to protect their children's digital media use	social media connection cannot be an 'opt out'
lack of trust in people	gamification of smartphone	depression	not connected to the world	physically close - mentally absent	moments of solitude	expanded horizons in children's use of social media	parents' anxiety and lack of knowledge to protect their children's digital media use	parents' anxiety and lack of knowledge to protect their children's digital media use
status with smartphone	gamification of smartphone	depression	online relationship development	physically close - mentally absent	moments of solitude	expanded horizons in children's use of social media	parents' anxiety and lack of knowledge to protect their children's digital media use	parents' anxiety and lack of knowledge to protect their children's digital media use
borderlines from digital	gamification of smartphone	depression	SM for stress relief	physically close - mentally absent	moments of solitude	expanded horizons in children's use of social media	parents' anxiety and lack of knowledge to protect their children's digital media use	parents' anxiety and lack of knowledge to protect their children's digital media use
internet records creativity	gamification of smartphone	depression	phone call etiquette	physically close - mentally absent	moments of solitude	expanded horizons in children's use of social media	parents' anxiety and lack of knowledge to protect their children's digital media use	parents' anxiety and lack of knowledge to protect their children's digital media use
impact of internet	online communication	depression	digital response times	physically close - mentally absent	moments of solitude	expanded horizons in children's use of social media	parents' anxiety and lack of knowledge to protect their children's digital media use	parents' anxiety and lack of knowledge to protect their children's digital media use
anxiety part of communication	online communication	depression	online communication	physically close - mentally absent	moments of solitude	expanded horizons in children's use of social media	parents' anxiety and lack of knowledge to protect their children's digital media use	parents' anxiety and lack of knowledge to protect their children's digital media use
borderline anxiety	online communication	depression	texting depression & distressing	physically close - mentally absent	moments of solitude	expanded horizons in children's use of social media	parents' anxiety and lack of knowledge to protect their children's digital media use	parents' anxiety and lack of knowledge to protect their children's digital media use
anxiety disorder	online communication	depression	intensity of text messages	physically close - mentally absent	moments of solitude	expanded horizons in children's use of social media	parents' anxiety and lack of knowledge to protect their children's digital media use	parents' anxiety and lack of knowledge to protect their children's digital media use
online emotional dysregulation	online communication	depression	emotional communication types	physically close - mentally absent	moments of solitude	expanded horizons in children's use of social media	parents' anxiety and lack of knowledge to protect their children's digital media use	parents' anxiety and lack of knowledge to protect their children's digital media use
internet effects on response	online communication	depression	texting depression & distressing	physically close - mentally absent	moments of solitude	expanded horizons in children's use of social media	parents' anxiety and lack of knowledge to protect their children's digital media use	parents' anxiety and lack of knowledge to protect their children's digital media use
positive response fulfilling	online communication	depression	intensity of text messages	physically close - mentally absent	moments of solitude	expanded horizons in children's use of social media	parents' anxiety and lack of knowledge to protect their children's digital media use	parents' anxiety and lack of knowledge to protect their children's digital media use
digital communication triggers feelings	online communication	depression	emotional communication types	physically close - mentally absent	moments of solitude	expanded horizons in children's use of social media	parents' anxiety and lack of knowledge to protect their children's digital media use	parents' anxiety and lack of knowledge to protect their children's digital media use
anxiety, wanting	online communication	depression	texting depression & distressing	physically close - mentally absent	moments of solitude	expanded horizons in children's use of social media	parents' anxiety and lack of knowledge to protect their children's digital media use	parents' anxiety and lack of knowledge to protect their children's digital media use
SM is racial anxiety	online communication	depression	intensity of text messages	physically close - mentally absent	moments of solitude	expanded horizons in children's use of social media	parents' anxiety and lack of knowledge to protect their children's digital media use	parents' anxiety and lack of knowledge to protect their children's digital media use
self-expression limitations	online communication	depression	emotional communication types	physically close - mentally absent	moments of solitude	expanded horizons in children's use of social media	parents' anxiety and lack of knowledge to protect their children's digital media use	parents' anxiety and lack of knowledge to protect their children's digital media use
feelings of power	online communication	depression	texting depression & distressing	physically close - mentally absent	moments of solitude	expanded horizons in children's use of social media	parents' anxiety and lack of knowledge to protect their children's digital media use	parents' anxiety and lack of knowledge to protect their children's digital media use
freedom	online communication	depression	intensity of text messages	physically close - mentally absent	moments of solitude	expanded horizons in children's use of social media	parents' anxiety and lack of knowledge to protect their children's digital media use	parents' anxiety and lack of knowledge to protect their children's digital media use
SM is pleasurable	online communication	depression	emotional communication types	physically close - mentally absent	moments of solitude	expanded horizons in children's use of social media	parents' anxiety and lack of knowledge to protect their children's digital media use	parents' anxiety and lack of knowledge to protect their children's digital media use

2nd Order Themes

Appendix five: Example of 3rd Order Themes

3rd Order Themes				
1	2	3	4	5
Psychotherapeutic reflections and implications of social media on attachment experiences.	Millennial Generation	Parenting	Attachment experiences (digital & real life)	Technology
Reflections	Millennials	Parents & Children	Connection and Attachment	Impact of internet/online Social Media
generations work together	self-imposed social media fasts	parents anxious and don't know how to parent the children's digital media use	defend online connectivity	loneliness
quandary of absolutes	physically close - mentally absent	parenting is about relationship (not set of skills) with their children	not connected=loneliness	lack of trust in ppl
room for reflection	pre-corrected self	child's relationship with parent and their own level of emotional maturity are key	online relationships speedup	at war with ourselves
humans vs technology	privacy paper	Millennial parents ignore their kids in preference on digital communication	SM disconnect=relief	brains rewired from digital
what missing in our lives	regret over past postings	face-to face activities such as sharing a meal favour multigenerational attachments	phone call authentic	internet retards creativity
online communicating_loss_gain	safe when booring	older generations (digital immigrants) uncertain about how to navigate and take care of their children and youth in digital era	digital response planned	impact of internet
value humans&scored spaces	Social Media space for Millennials etc	family time dropped by a third in the last decade	cairm measured by communication type	anxiety part of connectivity
opposite to previous generation	afraid will miss something	adults/parents need to manage and slow down children's access to the digital world, be a buffer	seek true connection in person	hardened empathy
comparison_digital/real relating	waste time on internet	This consciousness is not our there in the parent and teacher community	testing depressing & distracting	online reader anxiety
loss of meaning in comm on SM	need to group into real [face to face] communication	Today's parents have become agents of society, rather than buffers to society	intimacy of personal letters	Technology
persistences-data&ppl_protectan	assume chat rooms anonymous	Today's parents are more willing to entrust their children to a digitalised society than to the developmental design of nature	anxiety if not connected to phone	self-sacrifice for technological improvement at human body expense
freedom in gilded cage	avoid real time communication	loss of parental buffer role - likely to put more temptation in children's way	phone attention - not real ppl	excitement regarding cyborgs
SM double-edged sword	Resistance to phone talk	parental concern for children falling behind in society technologically, less concerned about realising children's potential as human beings	time in day_level of focus communication	technology making humans better
dark side of SM	avoid person	blindness and naivety around digital technology	digital vs real communication	sense of humans needing technology to be better
relating between online&offline	exposed vulnerability	parents' job to invite children to exist in their presence so need not look elsewhere	SM connects past & present	feel more secure because of technologies connection
perpetuated online_echo chamber	seek space to express self	control digital access in the meantime and create the space for nurturing interaction to take place so children don't need digitally mediated changes up to parents = room for improvement	humanness of comm	sense of humans needing technology to be better
conflict real & online self	escaping real life	create space to provide the connection our him-or herself	mass communicate	technology making humans better
lost in translation	yearning for yesterday		connect in emergency	reincarnated by technology
influence&outcomes	relationship to social media sites & people		reaching out to others	sense of humans needing technology to be better
				SM like pleasurable
				SM reduces social anxiety
				unburden_venting
				digital communication trigger feelings
				positive response fulfilling
				internet-specific road rage
				SM like pleasurable
				self-expression limitations
				felt sense of power
				fragile self
				SM like pleasurable