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Inside a Hall of Mirrors: Residential Care and the Shifting Constructions of Childhood in Mid-Twentieth Century Britain

Abstract

Drawing on imagery from promotional literature produced between 1930 and 1960 by the National Children's Home, a British child welfare charity, this paper explores constructions of childhood and child development in the context of residential care for children. Analysis of this imagery highlights the excess of meanings that are embedded in photographs and captions and, in turn, their value for identifying how contested ideas, norms and assumptions are negotiated. The paper points to the significance of time and space for meanings of childhood and considers how ideals of home and family are woven through those meanings in different ways and with different emphases in this period.

Introduction

[Ebley Branch] now has a happy family of sixty girls who enjoy the advantages of home life in its beautiful house and grounds (1936).¹

When the children in the mixed families of the small houses [at Bristol] are old enough to make the adventure, their outside schooling will begin, but they will still have their homes to return to, like any other children (1946).²

All the forty Branches of the National Children's Home are concerned with the creation and maintenance of a family life which is healthy, as natural as it can possibly be, and full of interest (1956).³

In 1957 the National Children's Home (NCH),⁴ a British child welfare charity, declared that the photographs reproduced in its annual Year Book were like 'a mirror, or indeed a hall of mirrors' designed to show a 'candid and real likeness ... [of] the children of our family [who] are natural, spontaneous and as full of the joy of life as

any other children one could find.’⁵ The photographs and the emphasis on their ‘real likeness’ were used to support claims by the NCH that it was providing home-like situations, family-like relationships and a secure childhood wherein the emotional, physical and educational needs of children in its care could be recognised and met. In such ways this particular publication was following a long tradition of NCH promotional material which, from the origins of the organization in 1869, stressed that its mission was to provide homes not institutions for orphaned, needy and deprived children.⁶ Yet while rhetoric about this mission remained constant during the first half of the twentieth century, a closer examination of the choice of photographs and the use of captions in the Year Books reveals tensions and contradictions that run through this insistent and over-determined emphasis on the home-like and family-like nature of NCH childcare provision. The imagery points to the shifting nature of meanings of home and family through the twentieth century and to the ways in which ideas of protection and control, freedom and regulation, nature and nurture, order and chaos, individuality and conformity were constantly being negotiated in constructions of childcare and child development in this period. As this article will illustrate, images selected by the NCH to promote its child welfare work capture the excess of meanings that are embedded in ideas of childhood and especially when they involve the portrayal of children without home or family.

The sources for my discussion are NCH Year Books, published between 1930 and 1960, and related archival material.⁷ These Books were designed to promote the work of the NCH as a child welfare charity and to encourage financial contributions from the general public in the form of annual subscriptions, single donations and legacies. As a whole and throughout the thirty years under review, the Books are remarkably

similar in their incorporation of visual material with almost every page containing at least one photograph of a child or group of children.⁸ In this respect the NCH is one of the many institutions including prisons, orphanages and asylums which, from their origins in the nineteenth century, had used photographs as ‘evidence’ of their practices and regimes. While analysis of such photographs has, in turn, often been productively approached through a methodology which engages explicitly with the ‘techniques and procedures, concrete institutions, and specific social relations – that is relations of power’ that shaped them.⁹

Undoubtedly a focus upon the relations of power articulated within the Year Books brings much of value to this historical source but at the same time it shifts attention from the details of individual images and what these might reveal or conceal.¹⁰ In order to engage with these details and the ways in which they intersect with the dynamics of institutional power, this paper draws upon the critical practices of social scientists, social historians and historians of education who work with images. This means that photographs in the Year Books are regarded as products of a particular historical and cultural context and not transparent or simple records of childcare provision and practice. They are read as texts in which it is possible to tease out a variety of stories about childhood and childcare and to identify absences, contradictions and paradoxes in their narratives.¹¹ As texts they are treated, following Peter Burke, as historical evidence of ‘special performances’ wherein we can trace ‘the history of changing hopes, values or mentalities ... through changes in the manner of representing the same kind of people.’¹² Moreover since these performances by the NCH are always enacted in its institutional spaces, my readings highlight the significance of these spaces to the ideas of family, home and childhood

being portrayed. In such ways my discussion complements the work of historians of education and their rich use of textual and visual sources to explore the meanings of (educational) spaces for children and childhoods.¹³

The paper also builds upon developments in the sociology of childhood and recent historical research which, together, have increasingly foregrounded the shifting and contingent nature of childhood as a social phenomenon.¹⁴ It owes much in addition to the analysis of images of childhood by social historians, historians of education, art historians and sociologists.¹⁵ As a whole, however, my discussion suggests that while visual representations of the child can point us to a greater understanding of the ideas, practices and beliefs that shape the shifting constructions of childhood over time, they also offer rich insights into how these constructions constitute and are constituted by ideas of home and family. And I argue, similarly, that titles and captions to these representations add a crucial dimension to our understanding because, as Samuel has noted, they are influential guides in ‘what we are able to see and how we are able to see it.’¹⁶

My exploration of the use of photographs and captions by the NCH during the mid-twentieth century brings together a concern with the significance of time and space for meanings of family, home and childhood and an interest in residential childcare as a site wherein shifting and contested ideas about these meanings were located and managed. In order to trace both changes and continuities in the imagery used by the NCH my discussion is organised into three sections, the 1930s, the 1940s and 1950s; each identifies particular features of the contexts in which the Year Books were produced and considers the diverse ideas and meanings that inflected portrayals of the

organisation and its childcare practices in those periods. The paper thus extends the work on representations of institutional care and philanthropic work with children, which has largely tended to be focused, both in Britain and more widely, upon the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.¹⁷

Freedom and regulation, work and play

As a child welfare charity, the NCH had been established in 1869 by Thomas Bowen Stephenson, a Methodist Minister. It was one of many child rescue charities founded in the same period by different religious denominations and, like them, was concerned with ‘saving’ the children of the poor through Christian doctrine and practice.¹⁸ Care was provided by house mothers who were predominantly members of the Methodist Sisterhood Order and trained by the NCH for work in its Branches as a religious vocation.¹⁹ By the early 1930s the NCH was providing residential care for around 3,200 children in thirty different Branches across Britain. Applications for the admittance of children were made by parents and child welfare workers because of family breakdown, the death of a parent, poverty, cruelty and neglect. At the same time applications were made on behalf of children with disabilities and ill health as the NCH had a sanatorium for ‘consumptive children’, a ‘Branch for the Care and Cure of Crippled Children’ and several convalescent homes. The organisation was also supervising the foster-care placements of between three and four hundred children who could not be accommodated in the Branches due to lack of spaces.²⁰

During the 1930s NCH care was practised within a context of social and political anxiety about the health of children, particularly working-class children, as a result of Britain’s economic decline and the effects of poverty upon mothers and young

children in large and low-waged families in areas with high unemployment.²¹ Surveys of poverty conducted during the 1930s had revealed, for example, that ‘between 21 and 43 per cent of all working-class children fell below their poverty lines, and that ...[r]ickets, the most direct manifestation of early malnutrition was still found in as many as two out of three working-class school-children.’²² NCH Year Books and their focus on the physical, social and educational development of the child and the provision of ‘proper upbringing and right training’²³ reflect this wider context, with imagery being used to illustrate how NCH care and education rescued children from the social and economic deprivation of their past and ensured their active, healthy and productive citizenship for the future.

For example, the first photographs in the 1938 Year Book chart the sequential stages of growth in childhood beginning with the chubby young baby balanced, naked, on weighing scales. The significance of the baby’s weight, a potent indicator of its physical growth and health and of the success of NCH care, is symbolised by the scales and further reinforced with the caption: ‘Greetings from twenty-four pounds of healthy babyhood, and from a hundred others like him in the Children’s Home’.²⁴ Another indicator of physical health – height – is similarly depicted in a photograph (Figure 1) of a young child, smiling as she ‘stands to attention’ in shorts and white ankle socks, while being measured by a nurse with the caption: ‘Toddling time is growing time. One by one the inches are added until “I’m quite a big girl.”’²⁵

Figure 1: ‘I’m quite a big girl’ (NCH, 1938)

Emphases in other photographs of younger children in the 1938 Year Book can be related to the growing influences of developmental psychology and psychometric testing in Britain. As Nikolas Rose has argued, these constructed a standard in the 1920s and 1930s against which the abilities and performances of children of a particular age could be measured and which, in turn, constituted a normalising vision of childhood. Rose notes: ‘Baby books, teacher manuals, and psychology textbooks began to incorporate “landmarks of development” in tabular and pictorial form to enable anyone to evaluate a child’.²⁶ In such texts photographs of individual children intently focused upon performing particular activities were regularly deployed to illustrate developmental landmarks and to ‘show’ behaviours and skills characteristic of children at different age levels. The NCH photograph of a toddler (Figure 2), sitting at a table and engrossed in a task that involves slotting a number of sticks into a round disc that he holds carefully in his left hand, replicates the composition and conventions of these photographs.²⁷ Moreover the portrayal of this boy’s skills of concentration, patience and dexterity, key to the images of childhood development in this emergent scientific literature, is reinforced by the accompanying caption to the photograph which states: ‘Tiny fingers have so much to learn. These must be got right somehow, so, here’s a good try!’²⁸ The ‘showing’ of NCH children in these ways enabled the organisation to promote its work not only by demonstrating awareness of new developments in conceptualising childhood but also by reinforcing the success of its ‘normalising’ care.

Figure 2: ‘Tiny fingers have so much to learn’ (NCH, 1938)

The marking of children's physical and educational development is systematically repeated for each age group of children featured in the 1938 Year Book. These include photographs of four young boys in a class-room reading together and of a group of slightly older girls in full, albeit slightly bedraggled, school uniform, seemingly enjoying a joke together before setting off for school. The importance of fulfilling the child's educational potential is carried by the caption: 'For the nine and ten-year olds school is "the order of the day." And every school satchel carries keys to the future.'²⁹ These photographs and their captions thus provide an implicit indicator of the contrast being made between the ordered, regulated development of children by the NCH and the unruly chaotic lives that children were often presumed to have experienced before being received into care.³⁰ They also demonstrate how quickly the NCH had incorporated into its promotional literature the new standards of welfare for children in care that had been introduced by the 1933 Children and Young Persons Act and the emphasis placed on 'securing that proper provision is made for his [*sic*] education and training.'³¹

This Act was significant for the child in NCH care because it signalled a different approach to the protection of neglected children, not least because it was concerned with the problem of juvenile delinquency. As Harry Hendrick has suggested, the neglect of children was now understood to mean exposure to conditions leading to criminality or immorality, which resulted in a failure 'to provide the young person with the necessary education and training for proper mental and, therefore, social development.'³² The effects of this legislation can thus be traced in photographs of adolescents and the stress placed on the development of skills that could be transferred to the workplace and that would protect them from a life of economic

insecurity and, thereby, possible criminality. Examples include the photograph of a boy using a complicated piece of machinery and another of a boy mixing dough in an industrial-sized bread maker. The accompanying caption to this latter photograph plays with the double meanings of the word 'bread' to emphasise why such skills are important for the young person about to leave care: 'To know how to make bread is also to know how to earn bread – and both are well worth while.'³³ This insistence upon the very particular skills and attributes of young people leaving NCH care was central to the organization's promotion of its work, which was held to be an important 'contribution ... to the nation in character and citizenship.'³⁴ Yet while the importance of nurturing all children's skills was foregrounded in NCH rhetoric, it is boys who feature predominantly in the imagery. The respective careers of boys and girls leaving NCH care were noted in, for instance, the concluding sections to the 1938 Year Book but it is only boys who appear in visual representations of training and of young people's final leave-taking from the Branches. These photographs thus signify the greater value that 'saving' boys held both for the nation and its workforce and for the promotion of the NCH's childcare practices.

Through such details it is possible to trace how these images of childhood were shaped by the influential discourses of health, child development and social training that were emerging in the 1930s. Yet connections to older meanings and especially nineteenth-century Romantic notions of childhood can also be identified.³⁵ Some of these connections were explicit. Photographs used by the NCH not only drew upon Romantic ideas of childhood and their emphasis upon natural innocence but also replicated some of the more famous Romantic paintings of children from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. For example, a photograph from the 1939 Year

Book (Figure 3) has remarkable similarities to the popular Victorian painting, *Bubbles* (Figure 4) by John Everett Millais (1886) which became an advertisement for Pears Soap and which continues to be one of the most reproduced pictures of children.³⁶ Each features a young, curly haired boy holding a pipe and bowl and looking up to a bubble floating above him, a symbol of the shortness of life since it may burst at any moment.³⁷ While the NCH photograph is of a less wistful-looking child than that portrayed by Millais, the image still manages to portray the innocence of childhood and the little boy is as ‘mundane and magical’³⁸ as his prototype.

Figure 3: ‘Playing bubbles’ (NCH, 1939)

Figure 4: John Everett Millais, *Bubbles* (1886)

The ideal of the Romantic childhood and its associations with innocence, freedom and nature can also be identified in the portrayal of the everyday experiences of children in the different Branches of the NCH and the locations of those Branches.

Photographs of each Branch from the 1936 Year Book, for instance, illustrate how the spaces and places of residential care provided the NCH were used to portray the opportunities for young children to experience an unspoilt, natural environment where their physical and psychological health would be improved.³⁹ Descriptions of the Branches have the same emphases. Doddington is described as a ‘happy little Branch for younger boys [which] has the advantages of a roomy country house, good gardens, sunshine and fresh air...the spacious beauty of the Kent countryside by which it is surrounded’.⁴⁰ While the caption of a photograph portraying the location of the Whitby Branch reads: ‘Surrounded by the beautiful Yorkshire countryside, it is well situated in a healthy position on the crest of a hill. With its playing fields and well-

kept gardens and lawns it is a fine home for the upbringing of its family of fifty boys'.⁴¹ This emphasis on outdoor space is also contained in representations of children's daily lives wherein there are repeated images of play, including paddling in the sea, running races and holding tea-parties in the garden.

The child's closeness to nature is illustrated through activities such as gardening and the care of pets, just as in late eighteenth and nineteenth-century paintings of Romantic childhood where Higonnet has noted that 'pets were small and cuddly – kittens, puppies and bunnies were favourite choices – cueing the viewer's interpretation of the child'.⁴² However analysis of the portrayal of older children suggests that, for them, activities were less oriented to play and more towards chores that were central to the maintenance of the homes and their grounds; exemplified through photographs of boys feeding pigs and hoeing vegetable plots and girls picking soft fruit. Yet this is one of the few gendered divides in the representations of childhood by the NCH. There is no evidence, for example, of the 'more physical, spatial, independent, adventurous, scruffy, rebellious elements of country childhoods' identified by Owain Jones as being associated with male children and tomboy girls.⁴³ Rural childhoods were constantly suggested in both the imagery and the captions but, for boys and girls alike, the child's relationship to nature was always safely contained within the boundaries of the Branches. The success of NCH care meant the portrayal of healthy but, as importantly, orderly and disciplined children and the relations between childhood and nature were carefully mediated to ensure this balance was visible.

Other evidence of this mediation can be traced in the Year Books' regular use of aerial photographs of the largest NCH Branches illustrating their size, isolation and clearly demarcated boundaries. Margolis has argued in his analysis of photographs of American high schools that an emphasis upon buildings can be understood as lending legitimacy to social institutions and their professional custody of children,⁴⁴ and there are similar connections to be traced between physical grandeur, reputation and institutional expertise in the NCH photographs. Moreover the walls, roads, hedges and railway lines that encircled these NCH sites illustrate how children were separated, physically and symbolically, from their biological families and from their homes, neighbourhoods and communities more generally. The boundaries within the Branches themselves also served to separate the children from the family lives of staff who were resident on site. A rare insight into the nature of these boundaries is provided in a memoir written by the son of John Saunders, who was Governor of the Congleton Branch in the early 1930s:

I had the run of the whole estate and was in a very privileged position. The green baize doors [to our accommodation] were not barriers to me as they were to boys from the other direction (woe betide any boy who strayed without permission or a *very* good reason) [original emphasis].⁴⁵

It is the multi-layered nature of this imagery produced by the NCH through the 1930s that points us to the extent to which a normative ideal of childhood is constructed through the accommodation of new ideas and beliefs and the negotiation of existing ones. Photographs and captions in the Year Books foreground the NCH's residential Branches as idylls of childhood, where children in care could experience nature, freedom and companionship with their peers. But, at the same time, other photographs

suggest that Branches were equally sites that regulated and measured the development of growth and skills, contained children within rigid boundaries and restricted their contact with the wider world. The common point of connection between these different images of the Branches is a focus upon the buildings and their locations rather than relations of care provided therein. While it is arguable whether social relationships can ever be captured in photography,⁴⁶ an absence of images that feature the internal spaces of the Branches or that portray adults in caring relationships with children, suggests that the visual threads between ideas of home, family and childhood could be loosely drawn for the child in care during the 1930s. Such threads remain, however, a constant presence and the positive emphasis on collective life of institutions that had run through, for example, early twentieth century photographs of children's homes in America was never a feature of NCH imagery.⁴⁷

Nature and nurture, care and control

During the 1940s the NCH struggled to manage the disruptions to its residential care which resulted from Second World War and the abandonment of ten of its Branches because of their coastal locations together with the evacuation of children from other Branches seen to be at risk.⁴⁸ However its child welfare provision was quickly re-established in the immediate postwar period with care being available for 'homeless children; motherless babies; crippled children; maladjusted children; boys and girls received from Juvenile Courts of the country; and children suffering from tuberculosis.'⁴⁹ The number of children in these categories totalled more than 3,500. The NCH also boarded-out children in foster homes and, as part of its child welfare work, placed children for adoption. The portrayal of childhood and child development through the 1940s remained, however, very similar to the 1930s although the implicit

and explicit allusions to the ideal of the nineteenth-century Romantic child began to disappear. This should not be surprising since it was a period in which aspirations for a more egalitarian and economically stable future dominated and 'the past' was frequently associated with the poverty and inequalities of the 1930s' Depression and the deprivations endured because of the war.

The 1945 Labour government's development of social and welfare reforms in support of family life and the well-being of children are illustrative of this focus upon the nation's future. These reforms had begun before the end of the war with the introduction of the Education Act (1944) and were followed by the Family Allowance Act (1945), the National Health Insurance Act (1946) and the National Assistance Act (1948). But it was the Children Act (1948) which established new principles of childcare and which marked a new beginning in the care of deprived children.⁵⁰ Under this Act, local authorities now had the responsibility to receive into care those children whose parents were unfit or unable to take care of them, working through specially appointed Children's Committees. One key element of the Act was a determination to ensure that children in care were seen as individuals with different emotional, psychological and social needs rather than as agents of social disorder.⁵¹ This was clearly mapped in the Act's definition of the responsibilities of local authorities in this area:

Where a child is in the care of a local authority it shall be the duty of that authority to exercise their powers their powers in respect to him [*sic*] so as to further his best interests, and to afford him opportunity for the proper development of his character and abilities.⁵²

Another element was the importance placed on the natural family to a child's well-being and so considerable emphasis was given to boarding out children received into care rather than placing them in residential care since this offered greater opportunity for the child to experience 'normal' home life. The shift in conceptualising best practice in childcare during the immediate post war years did not, however, systematically impact upon the practices of voluntary societies because they were not compelled by the Act to board out their children nor did they have to encourage links between parents and children.⁵³

Nevertheless the Children Act was a defining moment for the NCH in the 1940s because, like all such voluntary organisations, it became fully integrated into the field of childcare, with its Branches now being registered at the Home Office and its methods of care regulated by the Home Secretary.⁵⁴ In addition grants were made available from the Home Secretary to improve provisions in childcare by the voluntary sector while local authorities could make financial contributions to support the promotion of child welfare. The NCH continued, therefore, as a voluntary organisation to have a distinctive role in residential childcare and was not considered to be an anachronism within the emerging post war welfare state. As others have argued, this is because one aim of the post war Labour government was to encourage an active citizenship and the voluntary sector was one arena wherein popular participation in the creation of a new society could be promoted and enacted.⁵⁵

The themes of new beginnings, work in progress and children's rights that feature in the titles of the Year Books from the 1940s reflect this context, illustrating concerns with establishing a peacetime society and a determination to meet the challenges of

post war policy and legislation.⁵⁶ Photographs of individual children and groups of children in the Books point to this concern with their parallel emphases on children's health and welfare in the present and the value they held as worker-citizens for the future.⁵⁷ The 1944-5 Year Book, for example, includes a number of portrait shots of boys and girls of different ages. Each child is smiling, well-dressed and in apparent good health and, as a result, the portraits appear to offer a similar meaning of childhood and child development. However analysis of the captions attached to each photograph suggests how different meanings can be contained within such coherent representations and in a period with such seemingly common interests around children's well-being.⁵⁸

One of the first photographs in the 1944-5 Year Book is of a young boy, about two years old, with his shirt collar out of place and smiling a little anxiously at the camera. To this is attached a rhyme by Heinrich Hoffman, a Frankfurt doctor and children's writer, which stresses the everyday pleasures of childhood for adults and obedient children:

And everybody saw with joy
The plump and hearty, healthy boy.
He ate and drank as he was told,
And never let his soup get cold.⁵⁹

The next photograph in the Year Book features a slightly older boy, looking away from the camera but smiling appealingly. To this is added a quotation from Angelo Patri, an influential Italian American writer on education and childhood. Patri, by the 1940s, had become a highly regarded figure in the USA for his progressive views on education and his publications on child psychology and the problems of childhood.

The caption reads: 'Childhood is a brief moment of morning. For the richness of that morning the child is dependent upon you, dependent upon your love, your wisdom, and your faith.'⁶⁰ So, although these two photographs have many similarities in that they feature clean, healthy and attractive young children, the captions signify very different approaches to childhood.

The piece by Heinrich Hoffman is from his popular book of cautionary tales for children, *Struwwelpeter* which was translated from German into English in 1848, becoming an instant success and remaining in print to the present day.⁶¹ It forms part of 'The story of Augustus who would not have any soup' in which Augustus, initially a 'plump and hearty, healthy boy', refused to eat his soup for several days and, as a result, lost so much weight that he became 'like a little bit of thread' and died. The extract carries, therefore, much more meaning than the four lines immediately suggest since it is part of a wider cultural history of childhood in which stories, rhymes and fables were used by adults to regulate children's behaviour through the generation of fear and anxiety. The photograph and its attendant caption might thus call up in viewers more pessimistic notions of childhood which have their origins in evangelical attitudes towards 'the child' and which regard parental control and correction as critical to their education and the effective development of their moral sensibilities.⁶²

Yet the subsequent photograph and the extract from the writings of Angelo Patri point to a very different notion of childhood. Here the transitory nature of childhood and the child's dependency are used to promote love and understanding on the part of adults rather than the exercise of power and control. In this construction of childhood, as the following extract from other writings by Patri illustrates, adults need to have

confidence in children's own abilities to learn from their experiences and, if necessary, their mistakes:

We, in our anxiety to surround him with every safeguard, inspire him to greater effort and lead him into habits of industry and righteousness...That is a great mistake...*let him do as he likes*. Even when he does things that you wish he wouldn't, *let him* [my emphases].⁶³

This juxtapositioning of an extract from a nineteenth-century cautionary tale for children and one from the work of a progressive Italian American school principal is, therefore, an interesting example of the complex elements at play in the meanings of childhood in any one period. It captures the contestations between ideas of freedom and regulation, care and control, nature and nurture that feature in discourses and images of childhood and highlights the inconsistencies and contradictions that result when cultural traditions, popular ideas and different philosophies about childhood are woven together.

Such use of verse and quotations as captions was common throughout the Year Books of the 1930s and 1940s but individual children in photographs are never named or personalised. Indeed photographs of particular children often appear in different Year Books with different captions or in different contexts. The anonymity of the children and the duplication of photographs can be understood as serving very particular purposes since the imagery was used to demonstrate the success of the NCH in its work with children rather than provide insights into the experiences or backgrounds of individual children. For instance, a portrait of a curly-haired, round-faced, smiling young girl is used in the 1944-45 Year Book and then, two years later, in a piece

about the NCH's determination to ensure the successful placement of children for adoption. Indeed two of the other three photographs included in this piece had also been used on other occasions, thereby belying assumptions on the part of the viewer that the children featured were amongst those who had been adopted in the preceding year. The photograph of a blond-haired baby had appeared ten years earlier in the 1936 Year Book while the photograph of a young boy is featured again on the front cover of 1945-6 Year Book. In such ways children become an anonymous group, with uniform needs and desires, which could be used to portray tropes of childhood - especially wider cultural assumptions about its joyfulness, innocence and dependency - while evoking more personal hopes and expectations about the nature of childhood on the part of the viewer.

One photograph (Figure 5) that illustrates this process very well made its first appearance in the 1936 Year Book as part of a number of photographs depicting life at the Newquay Branch on the north Cornwall coast. It features five young boys grinning mischievously as they peek round a door instead, the photograph implies, of getting ready for bed since they are dressed in pyjamas and hold toothbrushes. In this, the image suggests a spontaneity of action on the part of both the children and the photographer who captures the moment. It also evokes the happy playfulness of the child, suggesting that its physical and emotional needs are being well met by the NCH and, in turn, refusing possible concerns on the viewer's part about the effects of institutional care upon children's lives.

Figure 5: 'Bed-time fun' (NCH, 1936 and NCH, 1946-7)

It was perhaps a recognition of this successful combination that resulted, some ten years later, in the inclusion of the same photograph in the 1946-7 Year Book but under a feature about the Bramhope Branch in semi-rural Yorkshire, which was being re-developed to house around two hundred boys between the ages of eleven and sixteen. The photograph had little relevance to the discussion of Bramhope. This was concerned with the ways in which the Branch would provide older boys with 'a normal school education [to which] could be added the beginnings of a training in industry which could presently lead them to useful positions in life.'⁶⁴ However it does illustrate how certain iconic images of childhood can be transferred to different periods and different contexts because meanings embedded within them – here, happiness, innocence and play – retain their resonance over time. The photograph of these boys symbolised more than their experiences as children and so they remained firmly fixed in the world of childhood by the NCH, never being allowed through its imagery to make the transition to young adulthood.

The use of this image in 1936 and 1946 also suggests greater continuity afforded to meanings of childhood in the child welfare arena during the 1940s than might be imagined, given the very different social and political contexts of this work. It suggests that representations of happy children - in and of themselves – could still carry ideas of successful childcare and child development within the institutional spaces of residential care and without the need for connections to be drawn between children's familial relationships or home life. As we will see, however, the determination by the post war Labour government to promote the rights and needs of individual children, as valued future citizens, to be raised within stable, secure family

units began to shape significantly how the NCH portrayed its childcare regimes in the next decade.

Conformity and individuality, freedom and regulation

By the 1950s a new relationship had been established between the state, the family and welfare practice, partly as a result of post war legislative reforms.⁶⁵ The effects of Children Act meant that statutory child welfare work had come to place a particular value upon family relationships for a child's well-being. As a result there was a determination not to separate children from their families if at all possible or, where it was unavoidable, to provide a substitute family through fostering, adoption or residential care in small group homes. This welfare practice found support equally in the work of John Bowlby, the child psychiatrist and psychoanalyst, whose influential study on the importance of a child's attachments to its mother (or a mother figure) was first published by the World Health Organisation in 1951. His argument that children's mental health suffered when there was no *one* person to provide personal care and security⁶⁶ reinforced the need for more personal care of individual children and raised awareness further about what was needed for the healthy emotional development of children.⁶⁷

The NCH responded to these wider discourses on the importance of family life and sustained emotional attachments for child development through changes to its residential care provisions. In this the original nineteenth-century mission of the NCH that its childcare should be provided in homes not institutions, was in harmony with post war policy and practice. Yet, because of their size and age, Branches that had featured so prominently in earlier Year Books could do little to promote the success of

the NCH in meeting new expectations of good practice in child welfare. The Year Books produced during the 1950s thus increasingly feature the small new homes being built by the organisation and although older Branches are still included, the reader is reminded that these are being replaced because sentiment ‘must not stand in the way of modern and up-to-date provision.’⁶⁸ However the photographs also reveal the ways in which the NCH performed both the role it had played in the history of child welfare provision and its part in shaping the future of the childcare practice.

There are, as result, different emphases and concerns in Year Books from the 1950s and some continuities with earlier publications. The stress on the NCH’s nurture of children in its care remains in its focus on children’s physical health displayed, as in the 1930s, through images which show children’s height and weight being measured as well as the delivery of more specialised medical treatment. Imagery that highlighted the educational and training aspects of care provided by the NCH continues to feature and the gendered dimensions of this training and education are similarly retained, with girls being shown engaged in domestic tasks and boys in gardening, woodworking or mechanical activities. Older boys remain central figures in the portrayal of the NCH’s contribution to the nation, with captions to photographs identifying them as a ‘Citizen of tomorrow’⁶⁹ or as leaving care through ‘The Gateway of Opportunity’ provided by the NCH.⁷⁰

However photographs offering an awareness that children’s individual interests and creative abilities also needed to be nurtured are increasingly included, and there are repeated portrayals of activities such as pottery and painting and representations of children in the uniforms of the Scouting and Guides Movements. The greater focus on

the child's individuality can be similarly traced through the replacement of the formal portraits of children that had marked so many Year Books during the 1930s and early 1940s, with informal portraits in which an individual child is captured eating an ice cream, reading a book or hugging a pet and which tended to be personalized through captions giving a first name.

Another significant pattern that begins to emerge is the use of photographs which portray life inside the Branches as opposed to imagery which highlighted their rural and seaside locations.⁷¹ The internal spaces in which residential childcare was practised and experienced are afforded greater significance and the perceived ideals of middle-class family life become a strong feature in the NCH's promotion of its work. Photographs are deployed to portray the ordered domesticity of everyday family-like activities and relationships and to depict the Branches as sites where children experienced home-like security, comforts and values. Such connections in the imagery to ideals of family and home are reinforced by the titles of the Year Books, which include *Family with a Future* (1953-4), *Meet the Family* (1956-7) and *Family Likeness* (1957-8). Moreover, and as indicated in the opening comments to this article, there is a particular emphasis upon the ways in which children's experiences of family life 'mirror' those of children in NCH care. This notion of 'mirroring' is also played out visually on the front cover of the 1957-8 Year Book (Figure 6) which uses what has become an archetypal image of family likeness – identical twins – to reinforce the extent to which NCH care might be understood as replicating family life and family relationships.

Figure 6: 'Family Likeness' (NCH, 1957-8)

The most extreme limit of this determination by the NCH to position children in its care within an idealised and normalised family is the 1952-3 Year Book, produced to replicate a family photograph album in size and shape, with *Family Album* embossed in gold on the front cover which is made of green leather-effect card. Inside the Year Book is made up of small snapshots that simulated both the form of family photography in the 1950s⁷² and its content. These include the portrayal of rituals, traditions and activities of family life, such as unwrapping Christmas presents, blowing out candles on a birthday cake, and enjoying seaside holidays and picnics.⁷³ The particular nature of the emphasis on the day-to-day activities of residential childcare can be traced in two photographs (Figures 7 and 8) from the 1951-2 Year Book. Together these point to the importance placed by the NCH upon the domestic contexts of its childcare provision and to the significance afforded to order, tranquillity and unity within them.

Figure 7: ‘At the Harrogate Branch’ (NCH, 1951-2)

Figure 8: ‘A “Sister” and her family’ (NCH, 1951-2)

At the Harrogate Branch features a family-like group gathered around the hearth, itself a key signifier of the English home, with the youngest child reading at the house mother’s knee and the older children playing companionably close by.⁷⁴ The calm order of the scene is complemented by the room’s light and airy nature and by its comfortable furnishings, including easy chairs, rugs and cushions. The children are absorbed in different activities, suggesting that individual interests are encouraged and provided for. The photograph portraying *A “Sister” and Her Family* has similar

qualities in its representation of an everyday activity. Here the house mother, the ‘Sister’ of the caption, is overseeing meal-time and the image features small signifiers of middle-class manners and etiquette; a table covered by a cloth, carefully laid with plates, cups and saucers, with a small vase of flowers at its centre and the children positioned evenly around the table quietly eating their food. The number of children in each image suggests that the house mothers would be able to give them individual care and attention. The result is a very different portrayal of NCH care to that offered by photographs from the 1930s and 1940s and an equally different configuration of the connections between meanings of family, home and childhood. Although similar constructions of childhood continue to run through these two photographs, they are located in an ideal of ordered domesticity and given meaning through family-like activities. What such imagery is unable to elide, however, is that residential childcare is always situated in the public realm of policy, legislation and professional practice and is the subject of public intervention and regulation. The photographs may have been used to seemingly capture the private realm of residential care but they are also evidence of the ways in which the NCH sought to make its work transparent and accountable to the public sphere.

The particular use of images by the NCH has many similarities to the purpose of family photography more generally in the post war years.⁷⁵ As Chambers has argued, the ‘family photograph album of the 1950s was an icon of conformity, in which the perfect family was over-determined through the careful selection and display of family photographs of unity, connectiveness and ritual.’⁷⁶ And similarly Bourdieu has claimed that such photography simply reinforces the family group’s sense of its own unity and integration since family photographs elide tension and conflict.⁷⁷ From

these standpoints it is possible to trace the ways in which imagery in NCH Year Books from the 1950s operated and why. The emphasis on the care in the Branches as being home-like and family-like meant that, as the relationship between childhood and family life became more tightly drawn in policy and popular discourses, the NCH was able to portray its regimes and practices as meeting the needs of children for secure attachments. The values, norms and experiences of its 'family' were comparable with those of all families while its provision of family-like care operated to unite the organization with the wider ideals of policy and legislation in this period. In such ways the NCH signalled the success of its childcare work and validated the role afforded to the voluntary sector following the Children 1948 Act of complementing and supplementing state provision for children.⁷⁸ Both these points were of crucial importance to a voluntary organisation, such as the NCH, for, as each of the post war Year Books notes: 'The National Children's Home is Nation wide, but not Nationalized, and is still dependent on Voluntary Contributions.'⁷⁹

The composition and details of photographs in the Year Books from the 1950s illustrate the extent to which middle-class norms of family life and ideologies about the physical, emotional and psychological security of the family had permeated meanings of childhood. In turn they can also be understood as signifying a very positive refusal on the part of the NCH to identify children in its care as being in need of different forms of nurture and attention to children more generally. But while the photographs point to this shift by the NCH towards emphasising its Branches as domestic idylls of comfort, order and security, they also illustrate the continuing emphasis on the spaces and places of childcare provision rather than the relationships within them. One of the striking absences in the imagery is that of adult figures and,

more especially, adults in close contact with children. House mothers are shown performing a variety of tasks in the Branches (as in Figures 7 and 8) but until the mid-1960s there are few portrayals of the types of loving and intimate engagements between adult and child which might be understood as embodying, albeit idealised, family relations. The Year Books repeatedly attempt to draw the reader to the day-to-day experiences of children in NCH care as being family-like and home-like but a closer examination of the photographs suggests that they both support and subvert such a construction of reality. In working so assiduously to locate its child welfare provision within an ideal of home and family, the NCH highlighted even more starkly the missing elements of those ideals for children in its care.

Conclusion

What then can be drawn from such a particular set of sources for our understanding of the constructions and reconstructions of childhood and child development in mid-twentieth century Britain? On one level, the imagery in the Year Books illustrates the social, political and cultural investments in a normative ideal of childhood. The emphasis on children's physical and mental health and, especially, the value of outdoor play and activity to maintaining that health is consistently foregrounded in all the Year Books. The importance of education and training for the workplace and for citizenship more generally is another aspect that seldom slips from the photographic lens. The successful development of the child's mind and body by the NCH is, therefore, a strong feature in these promotional accounts of its work and demonstrates how meanings of childhood were understood both by the organisation and wider society. The most significant change is in the emphasis afforded to children's individuality during the 1950s and to what are considered to be the 'natural' spaces

and places of childhood which shift over these thirty years from an outdoor rural or seaside idyll to an indoor domestic ideal of home and family life.

Yet, on another level, what emerges is the extent to which the photographs and captions used by the NCH can be also interpreted through the notion of a ‘hall of mirrors’; an idea deployed by the organisation in the 1950s and quoted at the beginning of this paper. This notion is apposite, not because the photographs offer us a ‘candid and real likeness’ of the work of the NCH and the experiences of children in its care. It is rather that, like the distorted views we experience in a hall of mirrors, analysis of this imagery points to unexpected, unsettling and unrealistic portrayals of childhood and child development. We are thus able to identify the contradictory dynamics of freedom and regulation that run through the portrayal of country childhoods in the 1930s; the anonymity of children during the 1940s; and the absent presence of the natural family that haunts the imagery of the 1950s. These sources are, therefore, testimony to the contradictions and tensions that surrounded not only the representations of childhood, child development and childcare but also the aspirations, conventions and constraints that shaped NCH work in one thirty year period.

NOTES

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¹ *Sunshine*: 1936 Year Book of the National Children’s Home and Orphanage: 25.

² *Work in Progress*: 1946-1947 Year Book of the National Children’s Home: 33.

³ *Meet the Family*: 1956-7 Year Book of the National Children’s Home: 4.

⁴ The National Children’s Home is now called NCH Action for Children and, at the present time, it works with more young children than any other UK charity. I would like to thank the organization for permission to use these photographs and especially Jenny Collieson for negotiating this.

⁵ *Family Likeness: 1957-8 The Year Book of the National Children's Home: 4.*

⁶ Thomas Bowen Stephenson, who founded the NCH, declared that "The life of the Home is as far as possible conformed to the family model. We do not wish to have a large building, half barracks, half workhouse. Family life and influence – which are God's method of training the human race – are secured for the children as far as may be, whilst at the same time they meet the children of other families in the schoolroom, and workshops, and playground, and at the various festivals in which the whole community would join." Cited in *The Four Freedoms: 1944-5 Year Book of the National Children's Home: 7.* Histories of the NCH include: Jacka, Alan. *The Story of the Children's Home: A Centenary History.* London: NCH, 1969; Philpot, Terry. *Action for Children: The Story of Britain's Foremost Charity.* London: Lion Publishing, 1994.

⁷ The extensive archives of the NCH are held at the University of Liverpool and I am grateful to Adrian Allan, University Archivist, for his advice on the use of the archives and his knowledge of their content.

⁸ No photographer is formally credited in the Year Books during the 1930s but some original photographs in the NCH archives are marked with the stamp of John R. Simmons, a professional photographer with a studio in London. In subsequent years, photographs in the Year Books are attributed generally to the Principal of the NCH (a post roughly equivalent to the Chief Executive of an organisation), to members of staff at the Branches and to John Simmons. There are no sources that identify which photograph was taken by which individual and there is little in the archives to indicate why particular images were taken or how were selected for inclusion in the Year Books.

⁹ Tagg, John. *The Burden of Representation.* Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 1988: 4-5. For further theoretical discussion of photography in this context, see Sekula, Alan. "The Body and the Archive." In *The Contest of Meaning: Critical Histories of Photography*, edited by R. Bolton. Cambridge, Mass: The MIT Press, 1992. A critique of the social power model of photographic theory - as argued by Tagg and Sekula - and the ways in which it conspires with 'the objectifying and dehumanising forces at work in documentary practices' can be found in Roberts, John. *The Art of Interruption: Realism, Photography and the Everyday.* Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998.

¹⁰ Rose, Gillian. *Visual Methodologies.* London: Sage, 2001: 167.

¹¹ For discussions of the different approaches to visual methods in the social sciences, see Bauer, M.W. and G. Gaskell, eds. *Qualitative Researching with Text, Image and Sound.* London: Sage, 2000; Knowles, C. and P. Sweetman, eds. *Picturing the Social Landscape: Visual Methods and the Sociological Imagination.* London: Routledge, 2004; Rose, *Visual Methodologies.* Approaches to the use of visual material by historians of education include: Grosvenor, I, M. Lawn and K. Rousmaniere, eds. *Silences and Images: The Social History of the Classroom.* New York: Peter Lang, 1999; Rousmaniere, Kate. "Questioning the Visual in the History of Education." *History of Education XXX*, no. 2 (2001): 109-116; Burke, Catherine. "Hands-on History: Towards a Critique of the Everyday." *History of Education XXX*, no. 2 (2001): 191-201; Margolis, Eric. "Class Pictures: Representations of Race, Gender and Ability in a Century of School Photography." *Education Policy Analysis Archives* 8, no. 31 (2000): 1-25; Margolis, Eric. "Looking at Discipline, Looking at Labour: Photographic Representations of Indian Boarding Schools." *Visual Studies* 19, no. 1 (2004): 72-96; Margolis, Eric and Rowe, Jeremy. "Images of Assimilation: Photographs on Indian schools in Arizona." *History of Education XXX*, no. 2 (2004): 199-230.

¹² Burke, Peter. *Eyewitnessing: The Uses of Images as Historical Evidence.* London: Reaktion Books, 2001: 28.

¹³ An outline of this work on space and an example of the ways in which the visual and space might be brought together can be found in Grosvenor, Ian, Martin Lawn, Antonio Novoa, Kate Rousmaniere and Harry Smaller. "Reading Educational Spaces: The Photographs of Paulo Catrica." *Paedagogica Historica* 40, no. 3, (2004): 317-332. See also Grosvenor, Ian and Martin Lawn. "Days Out of School: Secondary Education, Citizenship and Public Space in 1950s England." *History of Education XXX*, no. 4 (2004): 377-389.

¹⁴ See, for example, Gittins, Diana. *The Child in Question.* Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1997; James, A. and A. Prout. *Constructing and Reconstructing Childhood: Contemporary Issues in the Sociological Study of Childhood.* London: Routledge Falmer, 1997; James, A., C. Jenks & A. Prout, *Theorizing Childhood* (Cambridge, Polity Press, 1998); Mayall, Berry. *Towards a Sociology of Childhood.* Buckingham: Open University Press, 2002; Prout, A., ed. *The Body, Childhood and Society.* Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000; Smart, C, B. Neale & A. Wade, *The Changing Experience of Childhood: Families and Divorce* (Cambridge, Polity Press, 2001).

¹⁵ See, for example, Aries, Philippe. *Centuries of Childhood.* New York,: Vintage, 1962; Bressey, Caroline. "Forgotten histories: three stories of black girls from Barnardo's Victorian archive."

Women's History Review, 11, no. 3 (2002): 351-73; Higonnet, Anne. *Pictures of Innocence: The History and Crisis of Ideal Childhood*. London: Thames and Hudson, 1998; Holland, Patricia. *Picturing Childhood: The Myth of the Child in Popular Imagery*. London: IB Taurus, 2004; Hwang, C.P., M.E. Lamb and I.E. Sigel, eds. *Images of Childhood*. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum, 1996; Lesnik-Oberstein, K., ed. *Children in Culture: Approaches to Childhood*. Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1998; Mavor, Carol. *Performances of Sexuality and Loss in Victorian Photographs*. London: IB Taurus, 1996.

¹⁶ Samuel, Raphael. *Theatres of Memory*. London: Verso, 1994; 364. A wider discussion of the relationship between the titles, captions and commentaries to photographs can be found in Scott, Clive. *The Spoken Image: Photography and Language*. London: Reaktion Books, 1999.

¹⁷ The philanthropic organisation most associated with the (contentious) use of photographs in the nineteenth century is Dr Barnardo's. A detailed account of this can be found in Koven, Seth. "Dr Barnardo's 'Artistic Fictions': Photography, Sexuality and the Child in Victorian London." *Radical History Review* 69 (1997): 6-45. For other examples of the ways in which images have been used to inform analyses of child welfare work, see Aronsson, K. and B. Sandin. "The Sun Match Boy and Plant Metaphors: A Swedish Image of Childhood". In *Images of Childhood*, edited by C.P. Hwang et al. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum, 1996. Briggs, Laura. "Mother, Child, Race, Nation: The Visual Iconography of Rescue and the Politics of Transnational and Transracial Adoption." *Gender and History* 15, no. 2 (2003): 179-200.

¹⁸ These included Dr Barnardo's in 1870; the Church of England's Waifs and Strays Society in 1881; and the Catholic Crusade of Rescue in 1899.

¹⁹ Details about the relationship between the Sisterhood Order and the NCH and the role of house mothers can be found in the NCH Archives, Section E: Staff and Training.

²⁰ NCH Archives: *The Seven Years' Plan, 1934-1941*. National Children's Home and Orphanage, 1934: 5.

²¹ Hendrick, Harry. *Child Welfare: Historical Dimensions and Contemporary Debate*. Bristol: The Policy Press, 2003.

²² Vincent, David. *Poor Citizens: The State and the Poor in Twentieth Century Britain*. London: Longman, 1991.

²³ *These Things Shall Be!* 1939 Year Book of the National Children's Home and Orphanage: 3.

²⁴ *Childhood: 1938 Year Book of the National Children's Home and Orphanage*: 5.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 10.

²⁶ Rose, Nikolas. *Governing the Soul: The Shaping of the Modern Self*. London: Free Association Books, 1999: 153.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 147-8.

²⁸ *Childhood: 1938 Year Book*, 9.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 17.

³⁰ Fergusson, Harry. *Protecting Children in Time: Child Abuse, Child Protection and the Consequences of Modernity*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004.

³¹ Section 44, Children and Young Persons Act, 1933.

³² Hendrick, *Child Welfare*, 119.

³³ *Childhood: 1938 Year Book*, 28.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 30.

³⁵ See Coveney, P. "The Image of the Child." In *The Sociology of Childhood: Essential Readings*, edited by C. Jenks. London: Batsford, 1982; Cunningham, Hugh. *Children and Childhood in Western Society since 1500*. Harlow: Longman, 1995; Jones, O. "Tomboy Tales: the Rural, Nature and the Gender of Childhood." *Gender, Place and Culture*, 6, no. 2 (1999): 117-136.

³⁶ Holland, *Picturing Childhood*.

³⁷ Postle, Martin. *Pictures of Innocence: Portraits of Children from Hogarth to Lawrence*. London: Holburne Museum of Art and The Lakeland Arts Trust, Butler and Tanner, 2005: 60.

³⁸ Higonnet, *Pictures of Innocence*, 37.

³⁹ Owain Jones explores this idea and notes that the way in which the countryside is regarded a place of health and healing for children is famously captured in Frances Burnett's classic children's story *The Secret Garden* (first published in 1911). See Jones, "Tomboy Tales."

⁴⁰ *Sunshine*, 1936 Year Book, 17.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 22.

⁴² Higonnet, *Pictures of Innocence*, 34.

⁴³ Jones, "Tomboy Tales".

⁴⁴ Margolis, 'Class pictures', 8.

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- ⁴⁵ See NCH Archives: JI8/9/1-3: Congleton.
- ⁴⁶ Margolis, Eric. "Class Pictures: Representations of Race, Gender and Ability in a Century of School Photography." *Education Policy Analysis Archives* 8, no. 31 (2000): 5.
- ⁴⁷ See, for example, Cmiel, Kenneth. *A Home of Another Kind: One Chicago Orphanage and the Tangle of Child Welfare*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995. Cmiel notes of one photograph portraying very young children standing and sitting beside rows of cots that there was no sense of shame that these babies were in a congregate nursery and that, accordingly, the image ran in annual reports between 1895 and 1904.
- ⁴⁸ *Dawn: 1941 Year Book of the National Children's Home and Orphanage*.
- ⁴⁹ *The Joy of the Morning: 1945-46 Year Book of the National Children's Home*: 7.
- ⁵⁰ Hendrick, *Child Welfare*, 136-8.
- ⁵¹ Cameron, Claire. "An Historical Perspective on Changing Child Care Policy." In *Rethinking Children's Care*, edited by J. Brannen and P. Moss. Buckingham: Open University Press: 88.
- ⁵² Children Act 1948, Section 12 (1).
- ⁵³ Grier, "A Spirit of 'Friendly Rivalry'?", 242.
- ⁵⁴ Heywood, Jean. *Children in Care: The Development of the Service for the Deprived Child*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1959: 151-9.
- ⁵⁵ Grier, "A Spirit of 'Friendly Rivalry'?", 238.
- ⁵⁶ As in, for example, *Dawn* (1941); *The Four Freedoms* (1944-5); *The Joy of the Morning* (1945-6); *Work in Progress* (1946-7); *Childhood's Charter* (1947-8).
- ⁵⁷ Lewis, Gail and Fink, Janet. "'All that heaven allows': the worker citizen in the post-war welfare state." In *Citizenship: Personal Lives and Social Policy*, edited by G. Lewis. Bristol: The Policy Press, 2004.
- ⁵⁸ Scott, *The Spoken Image*.
- ⁵⁹ *The Four Freedoms*, 1944-5 Year Book, 6.
- ⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 9.
- ⁶¹ Hoffmann, H. *Struwwelpeter*. London: Belitha Press (1848), 1997. I am grateful to Katherine Holden and Megan Doolittle for pointing out this connection.
- ⁶² Hendrick, Harry. "Constructions and Reconstructions of Childhood: An Interpretive Survey, 1800 to the Present." In *Constructing and Reconstructing Childhood*, edited by A. James and A. Prout.
- ⁶³ Carpenter, C. E., ed. *The Problems of Childhood: Angelo Patri*. New York: Appleton & Company, 1926: 77.
- ⁶⁴ *Work in Progress*, 1946-7 Year Book, 26.
- ⁶⁵ Hendrick, *Child Welfare*, 138-40.
- ⁶⁶ Bowlby, John. *Child Care and the Growth of Love*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1953: 14.
- ⁶⁷ Hendrick, *Child Welfare*, 139.
- ⁶⁸ *Family with a Future: 1953-4 Year Book*, 22.
- ⁶⁹ *Pattern of Care: 1959-60 Year Book*, 22
- ⁷⁰ *Family with a Future*, 42.
- ⁷¹ This pattern is similarly identified recent work on children's institutions in the USA. See, for example, Cmiel, *A Home of Another Kind*; Hasci, Timothy. *Second Homes: Orphan Asylums and Poor Families in America*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1997.
- ⁷² Slater, D. "Consuming Kodak." In *Family Snaps: The Meaning of Family Photography*, edited by J. Spence and P. Holland. London: Virago, 1991.
- ⁷³ Discussion of the nature and meanings of family rituals can be found in Davidoff, Leonore, Doolittle, Megan, Fink, Janet and Holden, Katherine. *The Family Story*; Gillis, John. *A World of Their Own Making: Myth, Ritual and the Quest for Family Values*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1996.
- ⁷⁴ Brindley, Tim. "Privacy, Security and Respectability: The Ideal Victorian Home." In *Ideal Homes: Social Change and Domestic Life*, edited by T. Chapman & J. Hockey. London: Routledge, 1999.
- ⁷⁵ Holland, Patricia. "Introduction: History, Memory and the Family Album." In *Family Snaps*, edited by J. Spence and P. Holland.
- ⁷⁶ Chambers, Deborah. *Representing the Family*. London: Sage, 2001: 75.
- ⁷⁷ Bourdieu, Pierre. *Photography: A Middle-Brow Art*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press: 26. Marianne Hirsch makes similar points in *Family Frames: Photography, Narrative and Postmemory*. Harvard University Press, 2002. She notes: Its content and even its mode of operating may be variable, but what doesn't change is that this ideal image [of the family] exists and can be identified, and has determining influence (11).' For a wider discussion of the different studies of family photography, see

Gillian Rose, "Family Photographs and Domestic Spacings: A Case Study." *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 28, no. 1 (2000): 5-18.

⁷⁸ See Grier, 'A Spirit of "Friendly Rivalry"?'

⁷⁹ This emphasis by the NCH on not being nationalized worked to highlight both that its residential child care provision was not publicly funded and that it was making a unique contribution to child welfare. For example *Childhood's Charter: 1947-48 Year Book* noted, "Whilst recognizing the necessity and desirability of maintaining high standards of efficiency, and welcoming such sanctions as the State may impose in broad terms, the Voluntary Homes realize that they have still a distinctive and progressive work to do (13)."

FIGURES

Figure 1: 'I'm quite a big girl' (NCH, 1938)

Figure 2: 'Tiny fingers have so much to learn' (NCH, 1938)

Figure 3: 'Playing bubbles' (NCH, 1939)

Figure 4: John Everett Millais, *Bubbles* (1886)

Figure 5: 'Bed-time fun' (NCH, 1936 and NCH, 1946-7)

Figure 6: 'Family Likeness' (NCH, 1957-8)

Figure 7: 'At the Harrogate Branch' (NCH, 1951-2)

Figure 8: 'A "Sister" and her family' (NCH, 1951-2)