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Family Figures in 20th-Century British 'Psy' Discourses

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ABSTRACT. This article takes the three figures child, mother-child couple and father and charts their discursive movements over the course of the 20th century in Britain, concentrating particularly on the changes happening around the time of the 1939-45 war. Over time, there is a significant shift from the individual child to the mother-child relation and the importance of fathers for children's self-development appears and disappears as a theme. A rigid construction of stages unevenly gives way to an idea of phase less amenable to a normative discourse. At any given time, there is considerable diversity within 'psy' discourses, and I focus particularly on the differences between and among psychological and psychoanalytic discourses. Certain expressions of psychoanalysis have, in my view, been more successful in theorizing subjectivity as it develops over time within the relations of the family in a way which exceeds or transcends the 'psy' complex's subjectifications and yet does not reduce personhood to an asocial essence. By locating its ontology within the practices and epistemology of psychoanalysis, I consider the conditions for this relative freedom.

KEY WORDS: attachment, family figures, object relations, post-structuralism, 'psy' complex

The 'Psy' Complex, Subjectification and Subjectivity

In the post-structuralist critiques of the family and self that appeared in the last decades of the 20th century, the idea of the 'psy' complex was an important one for focusing attention on the nexus of power-knowledge-practice relations that constructed, or produced, family members at a time when families were an important target of regulation. According to

Nikolas Rose (1990), by the mid-century, children were linked to the formal government machine in three ways: through public health, the juvenile court and child guidance clinics. The 'psy' disciplines, it is argued, contributed authoritative discourses which constructed their objects -the child, the mother-infant pair, the parental couple, the family - in ways that worked to normalize certain identities. These power-knowledge relations informed professional practices and policy formulation.

Moreover, expert discourses framed the norms or values to which people themselves aspired, through self-regulation. This is a key feature of what Foucault referred to as 'subjectification', the representation - through expert discourses - of childhood, motherhood, fatherhood, parental conduct, family life, in such a way as to 'infuse and shape the personal investments of individuals' (Rose, 1990, p. 129). This occurs not just through government institutions, but also through childcare books, radio broadcasts, mothercraft training and women's magazines. According to Rose, following Foucault, the 'psy' complex was influential in these developments.

Subjectification was seen as central in producing subjectivities. Indeed it is central in the way that the 'psy' complex is typically defined: for example, 'the regulatory apparatus which constructs and assesses subjectivity through the monitoring and classification of separate "psychological selves" it then works to produce' (Burman, 1991, p. 142). The concept of the 'psy' complex does not observe the conventional distinction between disciplines and the apparatuses that put knowledge

into practice. It encompasses disciplinary knowledges such as psychometrics, developmental and clinical psychology and psychoanalysis .** Rose (1996) quotes Hall and DuGay: 'It has become impossible to conceive of personhood, to experience one's own or another's personhood or to govern oneself or others without "psy"' (p. 139).

While both of the above quotations are careful to avoid a socially determinist formulation, post-structuralist theory has been criticized for failing to theorize a subjectivity that exceeds its positionings. I am particularly interested in psychoanalytic attempts to conceive of how subjectivity (self or individuality) developed within families and the extent to which these attempts were limited by and exceeded or transcended the 'psy' complex's powers to subjectify. This theme is pursued more centrally in the companion paper (Hollway, 2006b), based on the detail in the present one.

I focus on three family figures - the child, the mother-child couple and the father within the family - and show the changes of emphasis, over time and between discourses. The history that I outline below identifies three overarching and sometimes conflicting paradigms: first there is that which treats the individual child, almost independently of its context; this is partially displaced by a dyadic approach to the mother-child (and later the father-child) relationship, which at times is supplemented by a triadic account, bringing the role of the father into development. As a generalization (one which is not new), before the 1939-45 war the focus of intervention was largely children themselves, rather than their

relationships in the family. The contrast between this focus on the individual and a dominant set of assumptions in British developmental psychoanalytic practice at the end of the 20th century is evident in the following claim:

One feature common to [various therapeutic] approaches ... is the presence of the infant and the value that this has of allowing the therapist to observe in detail, and at first hand, the nature of the relationship between parents and infant in the here and now. This feature of the clinical setting has now become a cardinal principle of most parent-infant therapies. It is rooted in the idea that it is the relationship that is being treated, not one or other member of the dyad or triad. (Miller, 1999, p. 4)

Measuring the Normal

At the beginning of the 20th century, psychoanalysis was a very new phenomenon and psychology had still not broken off from philosophy to establish itself as a science. Psychoanalysis grew out of medicine and a clinical concern with mental illness. Psychology first modelled itself on physics, setting up laboratories to conduct experiments on perception. Developmental psychology grew up closer to the observation tradition, pioneered by Darwin, Freud and Piaget. It was not long, however, before psychometrics, the basis of what Burt (1924) called 'a new, advanced and separate branch' of what he referred to as 'individual differences in mind' (p. 67), eclipsed experimental psychology as a result of its usefulness in placing individuals in groups ('educationally subnormal', for example) for the purposes of regulation. It grew spectacularly because of its utility and

success in categorizing people into groups for whom specific treatments could then be prescribed by government: the grammar or the secondary modern school child, the mentally subnormal or the normally intelligent, officer material or not, mentally ill, and so on. Psychometrics is the measurement of psychological (as opposed to physical) characteristics. If a characteristic of interest for social regulation could be measured, then any person could be compared to all others by virtue of their positions on the normal curve. What was normal became colonized by a statistical concept. Conflating what was seen as natural with statistical normality in this way had powerful effects on subjectivity through reinforcing conformity, pathologizing delinquency and encouraging competitiveness. This new branch of psychology, called individual differences - applied, pragmatic and atheoretical - has been the focus, but not the only target, of a critique of the 'psy' complex and its regulatory and technical priorities (Rose, 1996).

Meanwhile early developmental psychologists aspired to the ethological methods pioneered in the study of non-human animals as a model for the observation and cataloguing of child behaviour. The Child Study Movement started with Darwin (who kept a record of observations on his own son). Its concern was to describe 'patterns of growth and behaviour with the aim of likening human infants to the rest of the animal kingdom' (Urwin, 1986, p. 266). Riley (1983, p. 46) draws attention to the gender of science in these observations. Fathers could function as detached scientists, even in relation to their own children, and liberally

commented on the fact that mothers could not be trusted not to let sentiment intrude, such that their knowledge would not be objective. The model of the detached scientist produced psychological objects that were also seen as detached, and the idea of the isolated, asocial individual dominated early developmental psychology, as it did in many other areas of psychology and philosophy (with notable exceptions, for example the work of William James). Developmental psychology's methods and its resort to biological notions of sensitive periods, bonding, imprinting, genetic determinations and - above all - normative stages of development were a product of this tradition (e.g. the work of Gesell; see Rose, 1990, ch. 12).

Psychology's construct of the developing child was a useful technology in government of the family. According to post-structuralist criticism, the 'scientific' expertise of psychology prescribed norms of development, based on a belief in development as a progression of naturally determined** stages. These manufactured norms provided the categories with which parents, paediatricians and children themselves could judge the child's development and engage their subjectivity:

In the inevitable gaps between the behaviours of actual children and the ideals of these norms and images, anxiety and dissatisfaction are generated in parents, anxiety that is the occasion for seeking professional guidance to manage the discrepancy between the experienced and the desired. (Rose, 1990, p. xi)**

In this way, the privacy of family life did not present a barrier to regulation because these norms ‘commanded a level of subjective commitment from citizens, inciting them to regulate their own lives according to its terms’ (p. 126).

From Stage to Phase in Normal Child Development

The ‘psy’ discourses are themselves capable of reflection, critique and reform, however. Criticism of the naturalized idea of stages of development has subsequently come from within developmental psychology (Bradley, 1990; Burman, 1991, 1994; Morss, 1990). It became apparent that empirical fit with these stages was poor, for example in the case of Piaget (Urwin, 1986) and of Kohlberg’s stages of moral development (Gilligan, 1982). The debate continues. On one hand, undergraduate textbooks continue to use a ‘model of development that is uniform, ahistorical, culture-free and normative’ (Burman, 1991, p. 389). On the other, it is argued that the idea of development and phases should not be thrown out with the bathwater of the stage model. In Benjamin’s (1995) terms: ‘children really do represent and assimilate some things before others, are preoccupied with certain conflicts at one time more than another, as the idea of phase suggests’ (p. 52).

Freudian psycho-sexual stages have also been subject to critique and development. Already in the 1940s, Klein used the term ‘positions’ rather than ‘stages’ to designate the ‘paranoid-schizoid’ and ‘depressive’ dynamics of intersubjective mental life. In contemporary British and relational psychoanalysis, this usage is fundamental to how subjectivity is

understood. In this view the theory of positions, rather than stages of development, 'constituted a significant shift within psychoanalytic understanding ... away from the explaining and curing of discrete symptoms and towards one in which developmental possibilities are traced in the person as a whole, in relation to their prevailing mental states' (Waddell, 1998, p. 6). In the same vein, Erik Erikson described developmental stages that spanned the entire lifecycle. Each was not fixed but depended on what had been accomplished in the previous stage for how it came to be expressed. In many ways this departed from a 'stage' model.

Likewise in the US, Daniel Stern, who bridged developmental psychology and psychoanalysis at the end of the century rather like John Bowlby did in Britain in the 1950s, uses his own term 'domains of relatedness' to contrast his approach with stage theories:

All domains of relatedness remain active during development. The infant does not grow out of any of them; none of them atrophy, none become developmentally obsolete and get left behind. And once all domains are available, there is no assurance that any one domain will necessarily claim preponderance during any particular age period. (Stern, 1985, p. 31)

Increasingly, then, a refined idea of phases in development is espoused in which psychic events overlap and recur, are often coincident and not just successive. The concept of phase is less easy to operationalize in

regulatory practices, but a change in several 'psy' discourses, towards complexity and away from predictability, did nevertheless take place, influenced by evidence from real children.

Differences between Psychological and Psychoanalytic Discourses

The shift from stage to phase illustrates change over time across discourses; the conditions of production of psychology and psychoanalysis illustrate distinct differences between 'psy' discourses at any given time following the emergence of conflict between them early in the 20th century. When and how these two come together (notably in the work of Bowlby and recently Stern, in the US) suggests a significant conjuncture since psychology and psychoanalysis have been in competition and conflict since the early 20th century, precipitated in particular by the rise of behaviourism and psychometrics in psychology.

The child as rational, unitary individual remained the dominant analytic unit for developmental psychology, epitomized in Piaget's account of cognitive-developmental stages. (Piaget's interest in and use of psychoanalytic work on children disappeared from popular knowledge about Piaget's contributions; Urwin, 1986, pp. 269-271). Critiques of this rational, unitary child followed (Henriques, Hollway, Urwin, Venn, & Walkerdine, 1984; Richards, 1974; Richards & Light, 1986) but it has remained the dominant assumption of developmental psychology. Urwin (1986) documents how any emotional or aggressive content has been evacuated from this vision of childhood and resides, instead, in psychoanalytic discourses.

The methodological context is helpful in explaining the marked differences that emerged between psychology, with its base in scientific method, and psychoanalysis, rooted in the clinic. Psychoanalysis's cradle of observation was the consulting room and its method relied on the free associations of patients and the interpretative framework of the analyst, with the aid, from the 1950s onwards, of transference evidence.

Stern (1985, p. 14) distinguishes these two traditions in his categories 'the observed infant' and 'the clinical infant', thus making the point that images of the infant differ as a result of the two methods. However, he claims that the clinical infant of psychoanalysis was a remembered construct from adults on the couch. In Britain this was far from the case. During the 1930s, Melanie Klein, Anna Freud and Margaret Lowenfeld, along with many others, were using versions of a play therapy technique to understand the inner life of children and infants. This was not just in a therapy setting, but also in nurseries and child guidance clinics. Nonetheless their approaches, like Winnicott's subsequently, were informed by psychoanalytic theory. Partly in consequence, there is a marked contrast between the 'emotional' infant of psychoanalysis (characterized by desire, conflict, aggression, libido and defences against anxiety) and the 'rational' infant of developmental psychology (all skilled performance, perceptual development, cognition, motor coordination and the development of reason).

Psychology and psychoanalysis are also based on different epistemologies:

... different notions of cause and effects, of relations between past and present and of developmental processes themselves. For example, psychology has a preference for specific events or processes which can be taken as causal and predictive of later outcomes. This is linked to a view of development which, broadly speaking, progresses 'upwards'. [For psychoanalysis] the relation between past and present is never one of simple determination. It is not that there is no relation between life events and mental concomitants, but the psychic implications of environmental contingencies cannot be read off directly, nor can they be entirely predicted. The subjective consequences are a complex product of meanings produced through previous life history, present circumstances and constructions engendered through the individual's own phantasies. (Urwin, 1986, p. 258)

A difference in method - between measurement and free association, between scientific observation and clinical intervention, between statistical analysis and hermeneutic interpretation, between objectivity and subjectivity - ensured that psychology and psychoanalysis produced radically distinct knowledges. The methods were partly influenced by the site of intervention and therefore the terrain on which evidence was encountered. In the 1950s and 1960s, psychoanalysis was deeply involved in welfare practices, largely through its impact in social work, but also in paediatrics and child psychotherapy. By the 1970s, its influence in mainstream social welfare had been considerably diminished and the influence of psychoanalysis became a more theoretical one. Psychology's

direct contributions to welfare practice have been more stable. They have been effected largely through public health and educational institutions, through the use of technologies for the measurement of children's physical and mental capacities. These are graded according to their achievement in relation to developmental norms, for example in the assessment of 'intelligence' through the IQ test and cognitive development through Piaget's tests.

Psychoanalysis, with its base in clinical practice, tends to construct its objects as pathological, as deviations from the normal, whereas psychology's object has been normal behaviour; in the context of children, normal development. However, as Urwin (1986) cautions, the ways psychoanalysis has been incorporated into professional practices, which rely on a distinction between normal and abnormal, 'tend to render as pathological what psychoanalysis takes as fundamental to all of us' (p. 275). At the same time, psychology's developmental norms became the standard against which deviation was measured.

The Changing Child in Child Guidance

Child guidance emerged from a combination of a psychoanalytic tradition with progressive educational discourses that encouraged creativity and free play as a means to healthy child development. The 'mothercraft' movement of the 1920s (of which the New Zealander Truby King was a prominent exemplar) advocated stern regulation of children and frowned upon mother love. However, through the work of early women analysts such as Horney, Deutsch and Klein (Sayers, 1992) as well as Ernest Jones,

psychoanalysis was already moving from Freud's emphasis on paternal authority to a greater focus on mothering. The 1930s saw the more liberal elements of the 'new psychology' incorporated into the nursery school movement, educational psychology and child guidance. There was a surge of childcare manuals based on these ideas. Anderson and Aldrich's *Understand Your Baby* came out on the eve of the war in 1939 and, according to Hendrick (1997), was 'one of the landmarks in childcare literature' (p. 30). Susan Isaacs, a psychoanalytically informed educationalist, reinterpreted children's anti-social tendencies as 'emotional dilemmas' (Hendrick, 1997, p. 30). This perspective exemplifies a dramatic challenge to the dominant eugenics discourse, which viewed delinquent children as the product of bad inherited traits in the poorer classes. In the 1930s, when babies who were institutionalized while waiting for adoption suffered as adults, it 'was considered a reflection of the morally inferior nature of women who had conceived out of wedlock' (Eyer, 1992, p. 50).

The 1930s saw the first professional training in child psychotherapy. By 1944 there were more than seventy Child Guidance clinics in Britain, despite the wartime disruptions; in 1952, there were 155 (Urwin & Hood-Williams, 1988, p. 108). Such research was closely linked to the actual conditions of children across Britain, which provided a rich source of complex, case-based evidence. The clinics' staff were** mostly medically trained. The first demonstration clinic under the auspices of the Child Guidance Council saw 'backward children' (the largest group),

'delinquent children' (the second largest, chiefly accused of theft) and a group referred for nervousness, unmanageability, and the like. The 1932 report claimed a 48 per cent 'fully adjusted' success rate (Urwin & Hood-Williams, 1988, p. 72). When urgent practical problems were posed as a result of war - for example, concerning the evacuation of children from bomb danger - it was the Child Guidance and child psychotherapy traditions, including, as they did, powerful medical influences, that provided plausible insights and practical recommendations. For example, in 1939, Donald Winnicott, Eric Miller and John Bowlby were all signatories to a piece in the *British Medical Journal* expressing the opinion that the psychological danger of removing children from their families outweighed the physical danger of leaving them in the cities.** This liberal tradition influenced post-war expert discourses.

Wartime Upheaval and Its Effects on Familial Discourses

The 1914-18 war was influential in precipitating the development of psychometrics. Two issues produced during the 1939-45 war and its aftermath provided the immediate and salient context for psychoanalytic discourses: children separated from parents; and women in employment. This was arguably the heyday of psychoanalytic influence in the British public and welfare sphere. Until the 1970s, British social workers used a predominantly psychotherapeutic model for case work, after which sociology's emphasis on social disadvantage saw a widespread rejection of psychoanalysis in favour of an emphasis on supporting clients' access to material and social resources.

Women demonstrated their capacity for doing men's work during the war. Now it is routinely claimed that their return to motherhood and the home afterwards was strongly influenced by Bowlby's expert discourse on maternal deprivation and its harmonious fit with the government's desire to re-establish its traditional male labour force and promote its post-war pronatalist policies. Riley argues that a detailed look at the historical evidence undermines this claim. For example, the Ministry of Labour was of the view that as many women as possible would be needed in employment after the war (Riley, 1983, p. 121). There were conflicts among Ministries and there was much indecision before the wartime nurseries were closed. They were criticized not on grounds of maternal deprivation, but on public health grounds that children in nurseries were extra-vulnerable to respiratory tract infections. In practice, between 1946 and 1955 the number of married women in employment rose by two and a quarter million to three and a quarter million (nearly a half of all women at work) (Titmuss, 1958,** cited in Riley, 1983, pp. 146-147). According to Riley, there was no uniform post-war movement to rehabilitate the family. She concludes that post-war welfare spoke increasingly to 'the assumed needs of separate family members': 'the true target of post-war social philosophy was the mother' (Riley, 1983, p. 170). Evidently this rests on a firm belief in the significance of the mother-child relation, without which influences on the mother would not be expected to reach the child.

War produced a natural experiment on a grand scale when many children were displaced from their positions in the traditional gender-

differentiated family. While fathers went to war, mothers went out to work in droves. Parental couples were broken by separation and death and children were orphaned. Not only day-care but residential nurseries were established to care for children and these provided laboratories for child observation: ‘for the first time the everyday life of (normal) children could be visualized** through the perceptual grid of psychoanalysis’ (Rose, 1990, p. 161). Anna Freud’s Hampstead nursery was founded in 1938, and in 1944 she and Dorothy Burlingham published *Infants without Families* on the basis of their experiences in the nursery (Burlingham & Freud, 1944). The Treasury took over the funding of residential nurseries in 1941. Children were evacuated from the big cities and fostered with families in rural areas. Questions concerning the psychological grounds for these decisions were subdued during the war itself, when physical safety considerations were presumably paramount, but afterwards the issue proliferated: what difference did any of these separations make to children? (R)esidential nurseries became the focus of arguments already established before the war (and which were to extend long after it) about the harmful effects of institutional care and the necessity of conventional family life to produce the balanced member of civil society’ (Riley, 1983, p. 115).

Winnicott had been publishing on such questions, from within both a paediatric and psychoanalytic tradition, since the 1930s. He modified Klein’s focus on the effects of children’s phantasy, and emphasized their actual experience of maternal care. His series of wartime broadcasts

started in 1939 and was published in *The New Era in Home and School* from 1940 on. In 1940, John Bowlby wrote critically about evacuation and nursery care from the perspective of the child's need for its mother. However, Juliet Mitchell (2004), drawing on the detailed empirical evidence collected by Isaacs, Klein and Bowlby for the evacuees' survey in Cambridge, points out that it was children who were evacuated without their siblings who suffered, with the others improving in their lateral relations. In other words, family disruption could not be reduced to maternal deprivation. The conditions of war - actual separations of family members, the trauma that sometimes followed - precipitated the appearance of discourses whose central themes were relationship and attachment. John Rickman, a psychoanalyst, commented that 'we do not fully realise what the family means to us until it is disorganised' (p. 53).**

Soon after the war, following this considerable attention to the institutionalization of children, followers of Bowlby, notably James Robertson and his wife Joyce, were central in transforming the hospital provision for sick children (see companion article , 2006b). Reforms were based on what was now recognized as their distress when, not only removed from their homes, they were faced with a succession of different nurses, an arrangement which made surrogate attachments impossible (Robertson & Robertson, 1989). At first, the Robertsons' attempts met with hostility from paediatricians. The observation of children was central to the success of their campaign: the Robertson's films presented naturalistic evidence in an emotionally engaging way. This use of

observation is an example of synthesis between psychological and psychoanalytic traditions.

The Mother-baby Relationship

The emphasis on the mother-child relationship developed during the 1939-45 war can, in retrospect, be seen as the early articulation of a relational paradigm (in contrast to the individualist one), which has since become widespread in social science, albeit with many expressions and varying emphases. Developmental psychology has been affected by this (Richards, 1974), notably by Trevarthen's work on mother-infant intersubjectivity (1977, 1979). However, the dominance of the biological frame in this tradition is seen in the way that intersubjectivity was understood to be part of a normal core of development which unfolded according to biological principles (Urwin, 1984, 1986). 'Protosociability' was understood as a capacity of the infant, and not something in the relationship between infant and adult.

Psychoanalysis was transformed by a growing emphasis on the mother-'infant' relation, probably best exemplified in the UK by the work of the Tavistock Clinic. (In the US, feminist theorists such as Chodorow [1991] and Benjamin [1990, 1995, 1998] are explicitly writing in a relational tradition which owes more to American 'relational psychoanalysis'; see, e.g., S. Mitchell & Aron, 1999.) The initial move was from instinct theory to what, following Klein, was called object relations, which also involved a shift from Oedipal dynamics and a focus on the child or adult to infant-mother relations at a time before the establishment of

self. From Freud's paradigm of the self being forged out of the clash between the sexual drive or libido and the repressive forces of civilization, the move was to an emphasis on the self being forged out of the unconscious intersubjective dynamics originating in the mother-infant relation. According to Benjamin (1990), 'the last twenty-five years have seen a flowering of psychoanalytic theories about the early growth of the self in the relationship with the other' (p. 12). In the UK, John Bowlby and Donald Winnicott exerted strong early influence over these moves, which I illustrate in detail below.

Winnicott took Klein's basic object relations principle and moved it further in an 'environment' direction: that is, he emphasized the effects of the real care of the actual mother (as opposed to the phantasy mother in the infant's mental life) on the subsequent development of the child. Winnicott's phrase 'good enough mother' has been incorporated into a wider discourse based on the principle that children need their mothers for psychological development. His way of understanding the mother-baby relation is radically relational, as captured in his well-known epigram that 'there is no such thing as a baby' (outside of the baby-mother couple). However, as can be seen in the way that he described the positive effects of the mother's failure, imperfection, absences and hate, as well as the importance of her understanding her baby's communications and responding to them, Winnicott was not working with a simplistic deprivation paradigm. In addition, he explicitly worked against undermining mothers' confidence in their own intuitions about how to look

after their babies. This was in marked contrast to the many baby care manuals after the First World War, with their dislike of any tenderness or empathy with babies, laying down rules from a position of expert authority. From the perspective of Foucault's critique of the role of experts in the production of 'truth', Winnicott's position was paradoxical because here was an expert using his authority to advise mothers to go with their own intuitions.

Bowlby's importance resides both in laying the foundations for attachment theory and in his concept of maternal deprivation. The latter claim, namely that any separation of young children from their mothers would result in psychological damage, was the subject of vehement feminist critique. Bowlby's early work, conducted in the 1930s and probably based on children at the London Child Guidance Centre, investigated the biographies of forty-four juvenile thieves (Bowlby, 1946)** and concluded that a significantly large number of these boys had experienced early separations from their mothers, or mother substitutes, which were traumatic. A control group of other 'problem children' did not show the same high incidence. Here we can see the relevance of that other governmental institution and its relation to 'psy' discourses: the juvenile court. It was probably on the basis of this influential work that Bowlby was invited to write the World Health Organization report on *Maternal Care and Mental Health* (1952). He concluded that 'the evidence is now such that it leaves no room for doubt ... that the prolonged deprivation of

the young child of maternal care may have grave and far-reaching effects on his character and on the whole of his future life' (p. 56).

Riley (1983, p. 98) points out that Bowlby's ideas on maternal deprivation were a synthesis of much available work, for example on institutionalization in the US (Spitz, 1945). We should also not forget Harlow's experiments with monkeys, which were published in the 1940s. They showed that monkeys who had been separated from their mothers and fed by a bottle attached to a wire frame were incapable of functioning as mothers themselves, of mating, or of social life in the group. In retrospect, the huge ideological leap from this kind of evidence is obvious: a range of deprivations, distress and trauma was at risk of being reduced to a single factor - the physical presence of the mother.

Subsequent criticism of Bowlby has positioned him simply as a psychoanalyst (see, for examples, Eysenck's foreword to Patricia Morgan's critique, 1975, and Wootton, 1959), but psychoanalysis at the time was critical of his work, as he was of it. Bowlby's criticism of psychoanalysis was not unlike Winnicott's initially: he disliked the way it did not recognize the effects of the mother on her child. In fact, Bowlby drew liberally on ethology (observation of animal behaviour), and his paradigm therefore depended on evolutionary theory, as did developmental psychology at the time. For example, his formulation of attachment as an instinct was based on the principle that 'animals who do not develop attachment behaviour are unlikely to leave any offspring, while those who do develop it live and breed' (cited in Riley, 1983, p. 107).

He drew parallels between humans and birds in a way that is still common in a psychology that resorts to zoology. Eyer (1992) documents the way that this mode of thinking precipitated a craze for the idea of mother-infant bonding in the 1970s and 1980s in the US. Hospital delivery was, for a time, fixated on an ethological notion of bonding derived from the idea of ‘imprinting’ in young birds and other animals. A few minutes right at the beginning could secure all the benefits of a good mother-child relationship! The terms ‘bonding’ and ‘attachment’ were used interchangeably and there was no stable definition of either (Eyer, 1992). As in Bowlby’s work, the quality of that relationship was ignored.

Differences in Bowlby’s and Winnicott’s Treatment of the Mother–Infant Relationship

While ‘the mother’ and ‘maternal care’ are constructs used liberally in both Winnicott and Bowlby, the terms hide a profound difference of paradigms theorizing the mother-infant relationship. Whereas Winnicott talked about emotional relationships of care and dependency, Bowlby’s ethological paradigm leaned towards a notion of instinctual attachment, based on proximity. A Kleinian analyst, Dr Susanna Issacs Elmhirst, said that Bowlby ‘ignores love and anguish, the real stuff of human life’ (Grosskurth, 1986, 406).**

Fifty years after its introduction, Bowlby’s concept of attachment has come to dominate in a very wide domain both theoretically and in terms of empirical research. The basic idea remains ‘that children have a natural propensity to maintain proximity with a mother figure, that this leads to an attachment relationship and that the quality of this

relationship in terms of security/ insecurity serves the basis of later relationships' (Howe, 1995, p. 46, citing Rutter, 1991, p. 341). This central proposition, like Winnicott but in a different vein, emphasizes that it is the mother-child *relationship* (now extended to parent-child or primary carer-child) that is the most important feature of parental care. Bowlby is now widely regarded as mistaken on two points: first, that care of the child by one maternal figure should be continual (though it should have continuity); and second, his claim, drawn from the idea of imprinting in ethology, of monotropism, namely that infants attach to one figure who alone can provide a secure base. In contrast, 'Today the attachment concept has broadened almost enough to describe the successful development of babies being raised by multiple caretakers - a situation originally thought to cause maternal deprivation' (Eyer, 1992, p. 69).

Bowlby's core position is captured in the claim that the mother is 'going to be his [the child's] anchor - whether she likes it or not - and separations from her are going to give rise to problems' (Bowlby, cited in Riley, 1983, p. 101). While there is, in my view, a fundamental truth in this (as long as the mother includes the idea of mother substitute as well), it illustrates the over- and under-generalizations that characterized his approach: primary carers are reduced to biological mothers, children have no specified age, separations are not qualified in context, length or meaning. It thus contributed to the phenomenon of 'Bowlbyism', 'the intense concentration on the married mother permanently in the home with the child as the unique and adequate guarantee of the child's psychic

health, the defence against delinquency, and family and therefore “social breakdown’ (Riley, 1983, p. 109).

The concept of attachment has had a much longer life and a more reputable career than the concept of maternal deprivation. It is more closely linked with Bowlby’s reforming work in hospitals and over time has become more or less detachable from Bowlby’s zoological proclivities. An influential strand of empirical work in the US (Ainsworth, Bell, & Stayton, 1974) demonstrated attachment behaviour through the systematic use of a ‘Strange Situations Test’, which, because it succeeded in operationalizing and standardizing the idea of separation anxiety and attachment behaviour, has been widely taken up, as has the ‘Adult Attachment Interview’ (see, e.g., Steele, Steele, Croft, & Fonagy, 1999; Steele, Steele, & Fonagy, 1996). Social work was the keenest institutional location for Bowlby’s early ideas. Bowlby, when interviewed, reported that ‘the social workers took to it with enthusiasm; the psychoanalysts treated it with caution ... paediatricians were initially hostile but subsequently many became very supporting ... of course the academic psychologists were bitterly hostile’ (M. Senn, 1977, cited in Eyer, 1992, p. 45). Contemporary social work looks to be re-embracing attachment theory, albeit critically (Howe, 1995;** Kraemer & Roberts, 1996). A 2003 report by the head of research at the National Family and Parenting Institute comments that attachment theory is accepted in New Labour’s family policy. As part of his recommended parenting code, he notes that it is important for

‘working parents to meet the attachment needs of their children’

(Henricson, 2003).

Child development experts, who at first glance appear similar, demonstrate some important differences that, over time, lead to different theoretical, methodological and applied take-up of their work. In the process, discursive possibilities for understanding mother-baby relationships proliferated and offered new choices in the subjective positions they afforded and thus the investments that could be gratified.

Fathers

Fathers are the absent presence in mid-century discourses, and that remains the case until the 1970s. This absence in the post-war mother-child discourses does, however, require consideration. In the early debates about evacuation and residential nurseries, the father was subsumed in the concept of ‘family life’, for example: ‘Psychologists, studying the social phenomena of war, gave scientific warrant to the need for family life in development, which mankind had always instinctively known’ (Bruce, a social policy commentator in the 1960s, cited in Riley, 1983, p. 114).

The father is seen by Winnicott as the supportive context for the mother and baby. Initially he is not assumed to be in direct relation to the baby; only providing support for the mother-infant couple. Underlying this assumption was the belief in separate spheres for women and men, whose practices and personalities then provided necessary role models for sons and daughters. Since the discourse was concentrated so exclusively on babies, fathers’ roles were rarely discussed. Winnicott, however, in his

series of wartime broadcasts, gave one entitled ‘What about Father?’ in which, following Freudian principles, the father represents outside authority: he is ‘the human being who stands for law and order which mother plants in the life of the child’ (Winnicott, 1945,** p. 115). This remains a salient theme in psychoanalytic theorizing (see, e.g., Trowell & Atchegoyen, 2002). According to psychoanalysis, this is because: ‘The father’s symbolic role as culture is about not being the body in which the baby has been carried, suckled and about which the baby phantasizes a perpetual, fused future’ (Minsky, 1999, p. 13). Winnicott also talked about how hatred of parents could usefully get split between them, so that love of the mother, on whom the infant depended, could feel more secure.

Bowlby, like Winnicott, assigned the father to a position outside the mother-baby relationship. He went on ‘remove Father permanently from the scene - by death or divorce or any other reason - and the whole picture changes tragically for the worse’ (Bowlby, 1958,** cited in Riley, 1983, p. 101). The evidence from current clinical child psychoanalytic therapy presents a more refined view of such conclusions, for example suggesting that clinicians need to distinguish between the difficulties that the father’s absence raises for the child and the distress provoked in the mother (Target & Fonagy 2002; see also Blundell, 2002).

This claim of fathers’ indispensability, which is reiterated throughout the following decades and remains common in social policy today, is based on the idea that children (particularly sons) need fathers in order to grow up into moral citizens. Here the focus is on older children,

not babies. Freud articulated this in Oedipal theory (again the focus being on the child not the infant) and his notion of the superego, which can be seen as a belief deeply rooted in patriarchal, religious and enlightenment thinking, whose subjective effects Freud theorized and of which he was then used as the legitimator (J. Mitchell, 1974).** A journalist researching fatherhood concluded that ‘the most striking fact ... is the centrality of the image of the authoritarian father to moral and political debate in the West over many centuries’ (Burgess, 1997, p. 2). To agree with the dominance and longevity of this discourse is not, however, to reject the possibility that, in patriarchal family arrangements, the father did represent the law, which in turn has deep psychological (and gendered) effects on children’s subjectivity.

Although Freud tends to stand accused of privileging the mother-child relationship at the expense of the father (e.g. Parke, 1981, p. 14), in his theory, fathers had the decisive effects on a child’s development because the Oedipus complex, with its focus on fear of the father’s authority, was seen to virtually obliterate what preceded it: that is, the mother-infant relationship. In psychoanalysis the father stands for difference: ‘not the mother/ not me’. Freud’s Oedipal theory had the virtue of considering both parents in relation to the child. In contrast, much later theory has tended to move, seesaw-fashion, from focusing on the mother-child dyad to resurrecting the father-child dyad. More recently there has been a revival of the triangular principle in current British psychoanalytic theorizing of fathers in families (Britton, 1993; Trowell & Atchegoyen,

2002 see Hollway, 2006b). Contemporary feminist psychoanalysis, through the work of Benjamin (1995), has seen the pre-Oedipal father brought back into the picture (e.g. Frosh, 1997).

Current concern about delinquent boys draws on a notion, embedded in popular discourses, of how important it is for boys to have a masculine role model with which to identify. However, earlier work, similar to Bowlby's in design, was ignored outside a small group of academics. The work of Robert Andry, during the late 1950s and 1960s (Andry 1960, 1962), closely paralleled Bowlby's, and its virtual disappearance suggests that the wider discursive climate was a key factor in elevating the authority of Bowlby's work. In 1962, Andry's work on the influence of both paternal and maternal roles in delinquency was published by the World Health Organization (as Bowlby's was a decade before). It specifically aimed to reassess the maternal deprivation argument. Andry's sample of eighty delinquent and eighty non-delinquent boys from South London echoed Bowlby's forty-four juvenile thieves. Andry found no evidence that the delinquent boys had experienced separation from mothers or fathers. The delinquent boys, however, had largely unhappy relationships with their fathers. Andry concluded: 'It was the inadequacies in their fathers' roles, rather more than in their mothers' roles, that served to differentiate delinquents from non-delinquents' (cited in Green, 1976, p. 63).

For this to be taken up, it would have required a shift of popular concern from mothers to fathers and also from ideas about what mothers

provided naturally to an emphasis on the quality of the relationship - maternal or paternal. This came later: by the beginning of the 1980s, Ehrensaft, in the US, could claim that:

According to recent psychological studies, anyone can mother an infant who can do the following: provide frequent and sustained physical contact, soothe the child when distressed, be sensitive to the baby's signals and respond promptly to a baby's crying. Beyond these immediate behavioural indices, psychoanalysts argue that anyone who has personally experienced a positive parent-child relationship that allowed the development of both trust and individuation in his or her own childhood has the emotional capabilities to parent. (Cited in Trebilcot, 1983, p. 48)

Coming to the surface more recently is the fear that if men are not contained and socialized within families (i.e. where they are fathers), there is no hope of civilizing them (e.g. Dennis & Erdos, 1992). Maureen Green (1976), a British journalist who was one of the first to catch on to the new wave of concern with fathers in the 1970s, came to a conclusion which encapsulates many of these fears: 'Mother's ascendance and father's decline leads to a system of child upbringing that is strongly biased in favour of girls, a bias that gets strengthened with each generation' (p. 82). Later, girls attracted serious discursive attention, led by feminist psychoanalysts, the central themes being daughters' problems of psychological separation from the mother and girls' development of

separated and/or relational selves (Brown & Gilligan, 1993; Ernst, 1997; Henwood, 1995; Jordan, Kaplan, Miller, Stiver, & Surrey, 1991).

The adequacy of fathers in terms of the overall quality of their relationships with their children has not been the focus of psychological research, despite the fact that in the 1970s psychologists started to turn their attention to the role of fathers. Michael Lamb (1981),** an American psychologist researching into fathers, acknowledged that ‘researchers have tended to focus on a small number of paternal characteristics, often ignoring other relevant factors and the family constellations within which father-child relationships are embedded’ (p. 24). This is due in part to impoverished methods (how do you quantify that overall quality?) and in part to the lack of a theoretical framework which illuminates the dynamics of relationships. Psychology in the 1970s asked the following kinds of questions (Lamb, 1981):** What difference is there between children raised with and without fathers? What is fathers’ role in cognitive and intellectual development? What different roles do fathers perform from mothers? What is fathers’ role in moral socialisation? (According to Hoffman [1981], ‘the evidence here suggests, contrary to Freud and others, that fathers are far less important than mothers as direct agents of moral socialization’ [p. 375].) What is fathers’ role in the sex-role development of sons and daughters? The findings produced in answer to these questions appear to be an attempt, backed by the authority of science, to produce, in competition with mother, a modern, benign father (not a mention of violence or abuse, for example) who is ‘vital’ for satisfactory cognitive,

moral and especially gender development. On the back of one Fontana paperback, for example (Parke 1981), an anonymous voice summarizes:

New research has shown that by the age of eighteen months, many children are more attracted to their father than to anyone else - including their mother - because father tends to be more playful and stimulating; that little girls who enjoy good relationships with their father are more at ease with strangers and more socially assured; that sons of absentee fathers show a higher incidence of teenage delinquency; that sons fare better in the care of their fathers after divorce.

The appearance of these discourses on fathers in the 1970s makes sense in the context of the rise of feminism, women's further moves into the labour market and a decade of liberal law reform, which loosened men's grip on their wives and children through marriage. A benign and participative father was discovered in psychological discourses (see Lewis, 1987, for an example influenced by feminism). The question of whether mothers and fathers do the same job when they 'parent' has remained curiously unasked outside of the recent Kleinian revivals of the idea of the Oedipal triangle (Hollway, in press, ch. 5).**

Conclusion: Unruly, Changing and Conflicting Discourses

In documenting the discursive changes in family figures in Britain, focusing on the period around the 1939-45 war, I have tried to show the dynamic and diverse character of 'psy' discourses. My purpose in doing this is to unsettle oversimplified notions of 'psy' discourses producing

familial subjectivities directly in the service of regulation. Changes over time occurred for many reasons, both external and internal to the 'psy' discourses. For example, the separation of family members in the 1939-45 war constituted a powerful extra-discursive reason for a broad movement towards discourses that emphasized the importance of family relations in self- development. Internally to several 'psy' discourses, I documented the way in which earlier images were challenged by evidence from practising experts, as in the case of 'stage' and 'phase', even when this shift was contrary to the convenience of a normalizing technology. Considerable variation between discourses, notably psychology and psychoanalysis, was a product of uneven changes in epistemology, methodology, professional location and form of intervention. Controlling, normalizing tendencies were challenged, more or less successfully depending on methodology, by unruly evidence deriving from familial subjectivities that defied subjectification.

The central theme in developmental discourses came to concern the role of significant, familial others in the development of self. By introducing a life-historical dimension, and an intersubjective ontology, this question complicates the problematic of post-structuralist theory, namely how do discourses situated within power-knowledge-practice relations produce subjectivities? Some of the same 'psy' discourses that stand accused of subjectifying family members were also addressing the question of the formation of subjectivity in family relations through naturalistic evidence. In a companion article to this one (Hollway, 2006b),

I try to go beyond the conclusions of post-structuralist theory by evaluating some examples of 'psy' discourses and practices from a psycho-social point of view and outlining what I argue is a workable post-critical theory of the development of subjectivity, focusing on family relations.

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