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Between Love and Aggression:
John Bowlby's Psychology in Interwar Britain

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University College London**

Submitted for the degree of MPhil History of Medicine

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Abstract

This thesis examines the ideas of the psychoanalyst and social psychiatrist, John Bowlby. Drawing on the incipient science of ethology, Bowlby argued that psychological development was the product how social instincts, in particular the need for maternal affection, were reciprocated. While Bowlby's ideas have proved influential and enduring - his notion of the 'Environment of Evolutionary Adaptedness' has underpinned the recent emergence of Evolutionary Psychology - there remains some confusion as to when he adopted his ethological approach. Popular accounts have argued that Bowlby's theorising was shaped by a conversation with the evolutionary biologist and essayist, Julian Huxley, and after reading Konrad Lorenz's *King Solomon's Ring* in 1952. However, as early as the 1930s Bowlby had taken up the observations of the zoologist, Solly Zuckerman, on the behaviour of monkeys and used these to anchor a model of human psychological development in which people had the potential to become loving or aggressive. This is evident in his 1939 publication, *Personal Aggressiveness and War*, co-authored with the economist and socialist political philosopher, Evan Durbin. My thesis, therefore, examines the construction and meaning of Bowlby's model of development in the context of inter-war Britain. I focus on how altruism, viewed idealistically and as the product of individual volition prior to World War I, increasingly came to be seen as part of people's innate psychological make-up. It is argued that Bowlby's model of development was part of the formalisation of the search for the evolved basis of altruism. This formalisation can be seen as embedded in debates over the constitution of democratic socialism with Bowlby and Durbin prominent members of G.D.H. Cole's New Fabian Research Bureau. I go on to examine the role of Bowlby's

psychology in response to the rise of fascism and the prospect of the Second World War. This is understood as part a change in the framework for generating social policy, from idealistic to technological, that was cemented in the post-war government of Clement Attlee.

Contents:

Acknowledgements	7
Introduction:	8
1: John Bowlby and the Evolution of Love	8
2: Historiography	13
3: Between Love and Aggression in Interwar Britain	17
Chapter 1: Changing Conceptions of Altruistic Love	22
1: The Evolution of Love in Late Nineteenth- Early Twentieth Century Britain	22
2: The Reception of Psychoanalysis in Britain	34
3: The Great War and the Rationalisation of Love	39
4: The Primitive Basis of Love	44
5: Ian Suttie and Susan Isaacs' Genetic Psychologies	56
Chapter 2: Bowlby in Search of Love	66
1: Oxford, Progressive Schools and Medical Specialisation	68
2: Psychoanalysis and Juvenile Delinquency	74
3: Personal Aggressiveness and War	77
Chapter 3: Love's Labour's Found	87
1: G.D.H. Cole's Group	88
2. Interwar Economics and Man's Place in Nature	92
3: Wealth Creation and Emotional Education	101

Chapter 4: Security	109
1: The Fragmentation of Pacifism and the Psychologisation of War	110
2: Personal Aggressiveness, War and Collective Security	117
Chapter 5: Security and the State	124
1: Evacuation	124
2: Psychology and the State in Post-World War II Britain	132
3: Conclusion: The Limits of Bowlby's Ideology	137
Bibliography	142

Ghosts whom Honour never paid,
In foolish battle made,
Wandering through the stricken grove
Pluck the bitter herb of Love.

- W.H. Auden, 'Dedication to John Auden', in Auden and Isherwood, *The Ascent of F6*
(London: Faber and Faber, 1937)

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Introduction

1: John Bowlby and the Evolution of Love

This is a story of love – psychologised, rationalised, and woven into national and international social policy. It focuses on one man, John Bowlby (1907-1990), whose formulation of the theory of mother-child attachment has never been satisfactorily contextualised. Some of its elements are known, but not the whole. This thesis seeks to put the man and the theory back together again.

Attachment theory has achieved considerable popular acceptance, being described even as a new paradigm for psychotherapy.¹ Bowlby used the science of ethology to demonstrate that within every infant there was a need for secure attachment to their mother, and the way that this need was reciprocated formed a significant factor in determining personality development:

A young child's experience of an encouraging, supportive and co-operative mother, and a little later father, gives him a sense of worth, a belief in the helpfulness of others, and a favourable model on which to build future relationships. Furthermore, by enabling him to explore his environment with confidence and to deal with it effectively, such experience also promotes his sense of competence. Thenceforward, provided family relationships continue favourable, not only do these patterns of thought, feeling and behaviour persist, but personality

¹ Jeremy Holmes, 'Attachment theory: A biological basis for psychotherapy', *British Journal of Psychiatry*, 163, (1993), 430-438

becomes increasingly structured to operate in moderately controlled and resilient ways, and increasingly capable of continuing so despite adverse circumstances.²

This idea is now so basic to our common sense that it is hard to believe that it had to be invented. It is accepted that Bowlby's orientation owed much to Darwin and, more specifically, that he adopted a biological interpretation of Freudian thought.³ However, where Freud had placed sexual desire as central to psychological life, Bowlby focused upon attachment and the loving relationship between a mother and her child. He claimed that this need for secure attachment was innate and ubiquitous and could also be observed in the behaviour of other primates. Significantly, the famous experiments of Harry Harlow, in which young chimpanzees sought out cloth over wire 'mothers', was formulated after a conversation with Bowlby.⁴ Bowlby went on to propose the idea of the Environment of Evolutionary Adaptedness (henceforth EEA).⁵ According to this, the mechanisms governing human behaviour patterns – such as the need for secure attachment between mother and child, ensuring that a vulnerable infant was protected - had been settled early in the evolutionary process, before the invention of agriculture and the rapid change that ensued.

Not only has Bowlby's notion of the EEA underpinned the recent emergence of the discipline of evolutionary psychology, but he was also one of the first modern Darwinian thinkers to consider the evolution of altruism. The genetic basis of selflessness has been a key concern for evolutionary psychologists. Popular historical

² J. Bowlby, *Attachment and Loss, Vol. 1 Attachment* (London: Pimlico, 1999) 2nd edition, p. 378

³ For a controversial account of Freud's debt to Darwin, see F. Sulloway, *Freud, Biologist of the Mind* (USA: Burnett Books Limited, 1979)

⁴ D. Haraway, *Primate Visions* (London: Routledge, 1989), pp. 235-240

⁵ First proposed in Bowlby's, *Attachment and Loss* in 1969

accounts of the discipline have traced its origins to the mathematical modelling of G.C. Williams who demonstrated how altruistic behaviour could win out in the process of selection.⁶ And the recent and influential work of Robert Trivers has furthered Williams' ideas, employing a kin selection paradigm for examining how altruistic or aggressive behaviour could have been selected for or against.⁷ Indeed, it has been argued it is the evolutionary psychologists' conception of gender differences within the family, and the way these differences give rise to altruistic behaviour, that sets their work apart from previous controversial sociobiological accounts of evolution.⁸

We are still awaiting a thorough going historical examination of evolutionary psychology, but it is a history in which Bowlby will figure prominently.⁹

Writing Bowlby's history allows for an examination of the formulation of evolutionary accounts of altruism and an opportunity to assess their social significance. Such an enquiry is particularly pertinent given recent calls for a psychologically informed social policy.

In her recent book on debates surrounding evolutionary psychology and sociobiology, the anthropologist Ullica Segerstråle identifies a mind-set common to advocates of evolutionary psychology. This mind-set Segerstråle calls a 'Hyper-Enlightenment Quest', whereby evolutionary psychologists argue it is necessary to understand the

⁶ G. C. Williams, *Adaptation and Natural Selection* (Princeton, NJ.: Princeton University Press, 1966); and *Natural Selection: Domains, Levels and Challenges* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992)

⁷ R. L. Trivers, 'The Evolution of Reciprocal Altruism', *Quarterly Review of Biology*, vol. 46, (1971), pp. 35-57; 'Parent-offspring Conflict', *American Zoologist*, vol. 14, (1974), pp. 246-264; and *Social Evolution* (Menlo Park, CA: Benjamin Cummings, 1985)

⁸ see V. Dusek, 'Sociobiology Sanitised: EP and Gene Selectionism', *Science as Culture*, vol. 8 (2), (1999), pp. 129-169

⁹ for discussion of the issues involved in EP and interviews with many of its advocates see U. Segerstråle, *Defenders of the Truth: The Battle for Science in the Sociobiology Debate and Beyond* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); or for critical theoretical discussion see H. Rose and S. Rose eds. *Alas, Poor Darwin* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2000)

evolutionary basis of altruism in order to realise the Enlightenment ambition of the creation of a better society for all.¹⁰ This focus on enabling the potential for altruistic behaviour may be laudable when compared with prior claims of instinctual and unavoidable aggression or, more recently, the evolved basis for rape.¹¹ There are, however, social consequences of seeing altruism as an evolved trait which justify a historical examination of the basis for this modern understanding.

The identification of altruism within nature does not necessarily encourage people to act altruistically. On the contrary, anecdote suggests that the idea of altruism has come to be seen as detached from human agency and can be put to serve any number of different ends. Surely this view of emotions, especially altruism, as gene-serving and somehow separate from how people behave in complex social situations, is to some degree culpable for what many see as our 'post-modern malaise'. By looking at Bowlby's work and contextualising the emergence of his Darwinian interpretation of altruism, this study seeks to enhance and enrich present day debates by examining their contingent basis and reflecting on the earlier discourse it displaced.

It remains unclear when Bowlby's evolutionary outlook was constructed. In an exposition of attachment theory, written by a practicing psychiatrist and psychotherapist Jeremy Holmes, it is argued that Bowlby adopted an ethological approach after talking with the famous evolutionary biologist and essayist Julian

¹⁰ Segerstråle, 'Chapter 18: Interpreting the Enlightenment Quest', in her *Defenders of the Truth*, pp. 349-371

¹¹ On the innate basis of aggression see K. Lorenz, *On Aggression* (London: Methuen, 1966) ; and on rape see R. Thornhill and C.T. Palmer, *A Natural History of Rape: Biological Bases for Sexual Coercion* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2000)

Huxley, in 1952.¹² In Holmes' account Bowlby was lent an advance draft of Konrad Lorenz's *King Solomon's Ring* (1952) and the ideas Bowlby encountered were used to conceptualise data gathered for the World Health Organisation on post-World War II orphans.¹³

A more recent study by Suzan van Dijken, a researcher in Child and Family Studies, revises this account by stressing how a proto-attachment theory can be seen in Bowlby's work prior to World War II.¹⁴ She offers a detailed intellectual biography of Bowlby; showing the prevalence of bio-psychological ideas in the 1920s and 30s and how Bowlby encountered them.¹⁵ Following van Dijken, I will offer a contextual understanding of Bowlby's ideas in the interwar period. My object is to prove that Bowlby's evolutionary perspective was clearly in place by 1939 when he co-authored *Personal Aggressiveness and War* with the socialist political philosopher, Evan Durbin.¹⁶ In this work Bowlby and Durbin found evidence for the innate psychological

¹² J. Holmes, *John Bowlby and Attachment Theory* (London: Routledge, 1993), pp. 13-58. There is a large and growing literature on Julian Huxley. For surveys of his work see C.K. Walters and A. Van Helden eds., *Julian Huxley: Biologist and Statesman of Science* (Houston: Rice University Press, 1993) and M. Keynes and G. A. Harrison eds., *Evolutionary Studies: A Centenary Celebration of the Life of Julian Huxley* (London: Macmillan, 1989). Huxley will later be discussed at length.

¹³ As well as Holmes, for similar account of the genesis of Bowlby's ideas see; M. Rutter, 'Clinical Implications of Attachment Concepts: Retrospect and Prospect', *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, vol. 36, (1995), pp. 549-571; I. Bretherton, 'The Roots and Growing Points of Attachment Theory' in C.M. Parkes, J. Stevenson-Hinde, and P. Marris eds. *Attachment Across the Life Cycle* (London: Tavistock/Routledge, 1991), pp. 9-32; and 'The Origins of Attachment Theory: John Bowlby and Mary Ainsworth', *Developmental Psychology*, vol. 28, (1992), pp. 759-775. Conversations relating to the W.H.O. report between Bowlby, Lorenz, the cognitive psychologist, Jean Piaget, the famous anthropologist, Margaret Mead, and others, can be read in J. M. Tanner and B. Inhelder eds., *Discussions on Child Development: In One Volume* (Edinburgh: Tavistock Publications, 1971)

¹⁴ S. van Dijken., van der Veer, R., van Ijzendoorn, M. and Kuipers, H-J., 'Bowlby before Bowlby: the sources of an intellectual doctrine in psychoanalysis and psychology', *Journal of the History of the Behavioural Sciences*, vol. 34, no.3 (1998), pp. 247-269; and S. van Dijken, *John Bowlby: His Early Life: A Biographical Journey into the Roots of Attachment Theory* (London: Free Association Books, 1998)

¹⁵ see also N. Newcombe and J.C. Lerner, 'Britain between the wars: The historical context of Bowlby's theory of attachment', *Psychiatry*, vol. 45, (1982), pp. 1-12;

¹⁶ on Durbin see Elizabeth Durbin, *New Jerusalem: The Labour Party and Economics of Democratic Socialism* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1985); and S. Brooke, 'Evan Durbin: Reassessing a Labour 'Revisionist'', *Twentieth Century British History*, vol. 7 (1996), pp. 27-52

potential of love in humans, citing the work of the zoologist, Solly Zuckerman, and the psychoanalytic observations of Susan Isaacs.

Bowlby's thinking did undergo subsequent shifts. He integrated cognitive theories into his work, and no doubt his affinity to Lorenz's ideas on imprinting persuaded him to incorporate the ethological concept of innate releasing mechanisms. However, while ethology may have given Bowlby a language and the tools to elaborate his ideas, I believe that the fundamentals of attachment theory were in place prior to World War II. I will locate and discuss its emergence in the context of interwar Britain.

2: Historiography

The multitude, complexity and incompatibility of the approaches to the history of psychology that have arisen in recent years make the need for clarity more pressing than a desire for historiographical originality. Primarily I am concerned with the meaning and the construction of Bowlby attachment theory, which is where I believe van Dijken's work is lacking. While her study is rigorous and invaluable as a guide to research, it is problematic on two counts. First, it has no analytical device for thinking about the making of Bowlby's attachment theory. All she offers is a series of influences that, with the benefit of hindsight, we can see as antecedents of Bowlby's later theory. This approach cannot by definition explain how and why Bowlby's work differed from what went before.¹⁷ The second problem with van Dijken's account is that it is internalistic. Rarely does she stray from discussion of psychology and its related disciplines. Even if one adopts the 'influences' approach there are many fields

¹⁷ For a critique of the use of 'influence' in history see Q. Skinner, 'Limits of Historical Explanations', *Philosophy*, vol. 41, (1961)

other than psychology from which Bowlby could have drawn ideas important to his attachment theory. Of course van Dijken's work could be extended to include extra-disciplinary notions that align with Bowlby's psychological thinking. However, without any analytical concepts the number of prospective influences outside of psychology appears overwhelming, and it is hard to see how this type of history could be written in a meaningful way.

Some of these arguments against 'internal' histories of science are evident in early critical histories of psychology. Reacting against the positivism and justificationism that characterised histories by psychologists themselves, historians of science have long argued that psychology should be seen within its social context.¹⁸ R.M. Young, among others, scrutinised the work of E.O. Wilson and saw his sociobiology as the naturalisation of the social inequalities that critical historians of psychology wanted to highlight and transform.¹⁹ While historical accounts of sociobiology have emphasised how the discipline embodies a conservative ideology, Bowlby's 'psycho-sociobiology' is noticeably different. As we shall see, Bowlby was a close friend of several important Labour party reformers and he showed no interest in justifying social inequality in biological terms.

Bowlby's ideas have, to a certain extent, been tackled by a later generation of historians of psychology. Nikolas Rose, for example, draws upon the work of Michel Foucault to cast psychology in general as part of changing discourses on social

¹⁸ R.M. Young, 'Scholarship and the History of the Behavioural Sciences', *History of Science*, vol. 5, (1966), pp. 1-51

¹⁹ R.M. Young, 'Darwinism is Social', in D. Kohn ed., *The Darwinian Heritage* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1985), pp. 609-38. For discussion of some of the issues involved in these debates see N. Jomonville, 'The Cultural Politics of the Sociobiology Debate', *Journal of the History of Biology*, vol. 35, (2002), pp. 569-593; and R. Lewontin, *It Ain't Necessarily So: The Dream of the Human Genome and Other Illusions* (London: Granta Books, 2001)

relations. Rose addresses the way in which psychology changes ideas about the self and how psychological theories shape new techniques for organising society.²⁰ Bowlby is identified as an important figure in an emergent discourse on maternal deprivation after World War II.²¹ Aside from taking issue with Rose's identification of Bowlby with a post-Second World War movement, I do not think that his separation of language and discursive practices from other aspects of material culture can be maintained. As Martin Jay, the cultural historian, has skilfully argued, language is intrinsically bound up with other forms of human expression, such as visual culture.²² Further, Foucauldian histories allow for no agency behind ideas and offer no sense of the material necessities that must be in place to hold them together.

An alternative approach is that of the sociologists of knowledge who see ideas as situated within society where the conditions for their existence are not determinants but contingencies. Within this school by far the best example of the sociology of psychological knowledge remains the work of Martin Kusch. He argues that psychological knowledge should be seen as a social institution, much as a bank or a church, and that, like these other institutions, it is constructed and sustained by collectives who believe in it.²³ Thus psychological ideas are not only discursive practices but are embedded in wider competing and overlapping social formations that require institutionalisation if they are to be propagated. Within this paradigm, however, it is difficult to understand the relationships of people holding different ideas and how people actually experience their roles in the negotiation of knowledge. This is surely a

²⁰ see N. Rose, 'Engineering the Human Soul: Analysing Psychological Expertise', *Science in Context*, vol. 5(2), (1992), pp. 351-369; *The Psychological Complex* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1985); and *Governing the Soul: The Shaping of the Private Self* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1990)

²¹ see Rose, *Governing the Soul*, pp. 151-177

²² M. Jay, *Downcast Eyes: The Denigration of Vision in Twentieth Century French Thought* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993)

²³ M. Kusch, *Psychological Knowledge: A Social History and Philosophy* (London: Routledge, 1999)

prerequisite for writing meaningful history and not simply recording the past. To fill this void Kusch makes a dichotomy between psychological ideas and ‘folk’ psychologies. He justifies this division by arguing that:

....theories of scientific psychology and bodies of social knowledge are rather different. In the network or web of social institutions, theories of scientific psychology are phenomena of the short term, and highly sensitive to influences of other institutions. Bodies of folk psychology, on the other hand, are fundamental and phenomena of the *durée longue*.²⁴

Although this perspective situates psychology in material conditions and, in contrast to Foucauldian histories, there is some agency behind psychological ideas, it is still difficult so see how psychology connects with people. This latter problem is the concern of Denise Riley in *War in the Nursery* (1983). She focuses on developmental psychologies and their place within twentieth century British society and, in a wide-ranging introduction, discusses the conceptual difficulties at the heart of theories of development.²⁵ This is then used as a platform for an attempt to reconcile social constructivism and biologism. Riley dwells upon Marxism, as this takes the relationship between the individual and the social as the crucial problem.²⁶ Although she acknowledges that there is no secure theory of social relations, she goes on to examine the relationship between the popularisation of developmental psychologies, such as Bowlby’s, and the labour market. My sympathies are with Riley although my interests are slightly different.

²⁴ Kusch, *Psychological Knowledge*, p. 3

²⁵ D. Riley, *War in the Nursery: Theories of the Child and Mother* (London: Virago, 1983)

²⁶ Riley, *War*, p. 3

Rather than look at the popularisation of Bowlby's ideas, I am interested in their construction and meaning. I do not wish to offer a justification for Bowlby but rather, set up a dialogue between his biologism and his social context. Although it is impossible to historically investigate Bowlby's claims on childhood development, I believe that engaging with Bowlby and the issues that preoccupied him will suggest alternative ways of looking at the relationship between the individual and the social.²⁷

In writing Bowlby's history we are afforded the opportunity to reassess the appropriateness of his ideas of development for our present day society. Rather than attempting to offer a grand theory of the relationship between society and developing minds and bodies, I will argue that Bowlby's theory of attachment was part of a process in which the idea of altruistic love became *rationalised*.

3: Between Love and Aggression

A popular or common-sense understanding of the relationship between scientific knowledge and its perceived social value would hold that the former precedes the latter. However, Bowlby's history shows how a belief in an evolved understanding of altruism for the betterment of society was not conceived on the basis of scientific ideas

²⁷ This is basically the same orientation as H. Stuart Hughes in his *Consciousness and Society* (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1979). Conclusive cross-cultural studies for assessing Bowlby's psychology have not been forthcoming. For an example of how cross-cultural studies have been carried out to investigate and refute the claims of evolutionary psychologists, in this case gender differences in sexual jealousy, see D.M. Buss, R.J. Larsen, D. Westen, and J. Semelroth, 'Sex Differences in Jealousy: Evolution, Physiology and Psychology', *Psychological Science*, vol. 3, (1992), pp. 251-255; D.M. Buss, A. Angleitner, B.P. Buunk, and V. Oubaid, 'Sex Differences in Jealousy in Evolutionary and Cultural Perspective. Tests From the Netherlands, Germany and the United States' *Psychological Science*, vol. 7(6), (1996), pp. 359-363; C.R. Harris and N. Christenfold, 'Gender, Jealousy and Reason' *Psychological Science*, vol. 7(6), pp. 364-366; D.A. Desteno and P. Salovey, 'Evolutionary Origins of Sex Differences in Jealousy? Questioning the 'Fitness' of the Model' *Psychological Science*, vol. 7(6), (1996), pp. 367-372; D.M. Buss, R.J. Larsen and D. Westen, 'Sex Differences in Jealousy: Not Gone, not Forgotten and not Explained by Alternative Hypotheses', *Psychological Science*, 7(6), (1996) pp. 373-375; and C.R. Harris and N. Christenfold, 'Jealousy and Rational Response to Infidelity Across Gender and Culture', *Psychological Science*, 7(6), (1996), pp. 378-379.

of altruism. Rather, I contend, new evolutionary accounts of altruism were the product of wider social changes in which love ceased to be seen as a volitional, conscious human activity, and came to be viewed as a potentiality, something that could be engendered for the creation of a more harmonious society. To use the sociologist, Max Weber's, term love became rationalised.

Rationalisation is the most general concept of Weber's sociology. It refers to the process by which knowledge is increasingly systematised with the rise of secular ideology and bureaucratisation.²⁸ Although I do not wish to align myself with Weber's thoughts on love, I will argue that, with the advent of World War I, ideas of altruistic love became modernised.²⁹ Beginning with the work of Wilfred Trotter and his advocacy of the use of psychology to boost the morale of soldiers, altruism began to be seen as the product of the evolved unconscious, replacing the dominant late nineteenth and early twentieth century view of altruism as a conscious and volitional action.³⁰

It has been persuasively argued that in the latter half of the nineteenth century, the idea of altruism was seen as an uncontested ideal that structured contemporary social and

²⁸ H.H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills, *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1970), p. 51

²⁹ on Weber's view on love see Gerth and Wright Mills, *From Max Weber*, p. 347. I am using altruism as a generic term for psychological and proto-psychological conceptions of non-sexual, selfless love. I have tried to avoid being anachronistic and appreciate that the meaning of the term alters. These often subtle changes are noted throughout the thesis, reinforcing the overall argument. I admit that one interesting element not dealt with in this thesis is the frequency of its use. Altruism was in common usage in late nineteenth and early twentieth century thought. With World War I, however, it was less frequently employed and often used interchangeably with co-operation or as an example of a more general conception of love. Tracking these changes and the emergence of altruism within later evolutionary thought could provide an interesting avenue for future investigation, hopefully complemented by this thesis.

³⁰ W. Trotter, *Instincts of the Herd in Peace and War* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, Ltd, 1916). On the rationalisation of medicine and war see R. Cooter, M. Harrison, and S. Sturdy eds. *War, Medicine and Modernity* (Stroud: Sutton, 1998)

moral thought.³¹ Psychological ideas of altruism reflected and contributed towards this framework. For instance, when altruism was cast in Darwinian terms in the work of Henry Drummond, it was represented as the pinnacle of the evolutionary process.³² And in the early theorising on personality or character formation it was argued that altruism was attained through the inhibition of the more primitive selfish faculties.

This conception of altruism began to change with World War I, as I will discuss in Chapter 1, with many of the nineteenth century debates becoming transposed into new ideas on the make up of the human unconscious. After the war, and in the context of a crisis in national identity, many thinkers sought to understand the evolutionary basis of altruism within history and within the unconscious in order to reinstate the certainties of the pre-war world.

The identification of altruism within human nature created a space in which it could be contested on scientific grounds. In the works of Ian Suttie and Susan Isaacs, acknowledged as important precursors to Bowlby's idea of attachment, it can be seen how altruism was constituted psychoanalytically. Altruism was no longer viewed as an a priori ideal but was seen by Suttie as a biologically grounded myth, and by Isaacs as an unconscious genetic trait that had to be understood and enabled by the analyst.

Chapter 2 of this study positions Bowlby in these debates. His changing views of love can be seen as analogous to the shifts that had occurred over the previous half-century. There are many points of contact between Bowlby's changing views of love and the

³¹ S. Collini, 'The Culture of Altruism, Selflessness and the Decay of Motive', in his *Public Moralists: Political Thought and Intellectual Life in Britain 1850-1930* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), pp. 60-90. Also see J. Harris, 'Political Thought and the Welfare State 1870-1940: An Intellectual Framework for British Social Policy', *Past and Present*, vol. 135, (1992), pp. 116-141

³² H. Drummond, *The Lowell Lectures on the Ascent of Man* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1894)

people and institutions who sought to promote its rationalisation. For example, an important contributory factor in shaping Bowlby's notion of altruism was his befriending Hugh Gaitskell, the future Labour Party leader, and Evan Durbin, with whom Bowlby would later write *Personal Aggressiveness and War*. Gaitskell and Durbin both studied at Oxford University where, to a large extent, Socialist politics were underpinned by the new ideas of altruism that had emerged after the war. This forms the subject of chapter 3 where particular attention is paid to the group surrounding the socialist and economic historian G.D.H. Cole. This group and the New Fabian Research Bureau formed the perfect political platform from which Bowlby and Durbin could argue for the integration of rationalised love into mainstream politics. Based on the belief that people had the psychological potential for love, Durbin elaborated his vision of democratic socialism and this proved important in shaping the Labour Party's acceptance of Keynesian economics.

Durbin's ideological package informed his and Bowlby's response to the rise of fascism, and Chapter 4 of this study addresses the place of psychological ideas of love in socio-political debates leading up to World War II. Through an interrogation of changing ideas of security it can be seen how Bowlby and Durbin reconfigured ideas of international co-operation into a psychological defence for fighting the war. The idea of the altruistic unconscious provided the conceptual space for debating the moral questions raised by the prospect of conflict. For Bowlby and Durbin the social group or government that promoted altruistic relationships and enabled international prosperity, was justified in using military action against a German government that was based upon and fostered aggressive tendencies.

This justification for British foreign policy was reflected in Bowlby and Durbin's domestic social policy (Chapter 5). Whereas, prior to 1940, British social policy had been formulated in idealistic terms, we can see in Bowlby's evacuation work, and in Durbin's contributions to the post-war Attlee government, a move towards a technological social policy rooted in a theory of social behaviour that would dominate British politics for the next twenty years. Altruism was no longer to be seen as the driving force for social progress but was instead a potentiality for responsible social behaviour. Historical discussion of these issues raises questions about the appropriate role for psychology in a progressive society, in particular the compatibility, or not, of psychologies of love and commerce.

Chapter 1: Changing Conceptions of Altruistic Love

The idea of selflessness has, of course, a long history and this chapter makes no claims to be comprehensive. Rather, it traces out some of the early British ideas of altruism and draws on recent historical research showing the place of selflessness in late nineteenth and early twentieth century debates. The examples used give the historical background and ancestry of Bowlby's ideas and, in turn, permit an analysis of the changes that occurred in the interwar years.

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1: The Evolution of Love in Late Nineteenth- Early Twentieth Century Britain

The place of ideas of altruistic love in the late nineteenth century is a complex one. Debates surrounding it were mediated by competing ideological concerns and, more broadly, by the variety of responses to the Victorian 'crisis of faith'. However, a pattern can be discerned in these debates. The historian Jose Harris has identified an idealistic intellectual framework for generating social policy in the period. Harris writes of how, with the previously localised provision of social welfare coming within the national sphere, social policy came to be based upon 'corporate identity, individual altruism, ethical imperatives and active citizen-participation'.³³ Sociological and psychological theories, including evolutionary ideas, were rooted in this framework. More profoundly, Stefan Collini has argued that the notion of altruism was fundamental to 'the primacy of morality' that characterised Victorian culture.³⁴ Although we might look back to the work of Jean-Jacques Rousseau to discern a theory of altruistic love, Collini notes how the term was first coined by Auguste Comte

³³ J. Harris, 'Political Thought and the Welfare State', p. 137

³⁴ S. Collini, 'The Culture of Altruism', pp. 60-64. Also see T. Wright, *The Religion of Humanity: The Impact of Comtean Positivism on Victorian Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986)

and did not enter the English language until 1853.³⁵ It quickly became common usage and, Collini argues, became an uncontested basis for Victorian thought. Opposed to selfishness and giving in to one's temptations, altruism was central to the Victorian emphasis on duty and obligation.³⁶ Collini uses various examples to make his case, giving extended discussion to the work of John Stuart Mill. My examples given below – early socio-medical and pedagogical reformers, and early personality theorists – bear out Collini's thesis and provide the backdrop to discussions of changing conceptions of altruism and the later psychoanalytic formulation evident in the work of Bowlby.

In her intellectual biography of Margaret McMillan, the historian Carolyn Steedman traces out the ideas that contributed to McMillan's founding of the first public clinic for children at Deptford in 1910, her presidency of the Nursery School Association, and of her theories on childhood development.³⁷ McMillan had argued for social reform through the introduction of culture in the lives of the working class and the cultivation of childhood imagination. Steedman points to McMillan's debt to Rousseau and the romantic ideas of William Wordsworth, as well as the evolutionary theology of Henry Drummond, the Scottish naturalist and Free Churchman.³⁸

³⁵ *ibid.*, p. 60. On Rousseau and how he conceived of the relationship between virtue and nature see J-J. Rousseau, *The First and Second Discourses*, R.D. Masters ed. (New York: St. Martins Press, 1964); for discussion see, F. Moran III, 'Between Primates and Primitives: Natural man and the Missing Link in Rousseau's *Second Discourse*', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, vol. 54, (1993), pp. 37-58; and M.F. Plattner, *Rousseau's State of Nature: An Interpretation of the Discourse on Inequality* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1979)

³⁶ Collini, 'The Culture of Altruism', pp. 63-4

³⁷ C. Steedman, *Childhood, Culture and Class in Britain: Margaret McMillan, 1860-1931* (London: Virago Press, 1990)

³⁸ On the establishment of romantic, post-Wordsworthian child literature see P. Coveney, *The Image of Childhood, The Individual and Society: A Study of the Theme in English Literature* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1967), pp. 37-51, 68-90. Robert Pattison looks at the differences between Rousseau and Wordsworth's visions of childhood in *The Child Figure in English Literature* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1978), p. 58

In his *Ascent of Man* (1894) Drummond conceived of evolution as not only the progress of matter, as had famously been advocated by Herbert Spencer, but also as the progression of spirit.³⁹

Evolution is Advolution; better, it is Revelation – the phenomenal expression of the Divine, the progressive realisation of the Ideal, the Ascent of Love.... The aspiration in the human mind and heart is but the evolutionary tendency of the universe becoming self-conscious.⁴⁰

This romantic interpretation of Darwinian thought held altruism to be the pinnacle of evolution. Although altruism may have been naturalised, it remained an uncontested ideal. It was not something contained within nature, as later theories would hold, but part of a progressive process through which people had recognised it as their duty to attend to the helplessness of childhood. Katharine Bruce Glasier, a close ally of McMillan, wrote of how this formed the basis for civilisation:

Those who are familiar with the biographical writing of the brothers Reclus and Kropotkin, gathered into a wonderfully suggestive form by Drummond in his ‘Ascent of Man’, will recognise the form of the argument that it was the helplessness of little children more than any

³⁹ On the wider relationship between ideas of childhood development and Darwinian thinking see C. Steedman, *Strange Dislocations: Childhood and the Idea of Human Interiority, 1780-1930* (London: Virago Press, 1995) and C. Castañeda, ‘Developmentalism and the Child in Nineteenth-Century Science’, *Science as Culture*, vol. 10(3), (2001), pp. 375-409. On Herbert Spencer see J.D.Y. Peel, *Herbert Spencer: The Evolution of a Sociologist* (London: Heinemann, 1971)

⁴⁰ H. Drummond, quoted and discussed in J. Moore, *The Post-Darwinian Controversies: A Study of the Protestant Struggle to come to Terms with Darwin in Great Britain and America, 1870-1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), p. 224

other influence that has led us as a human race to the possibilities of the Socialist State.⁴¹

The recognition of childhood innocence and helplessness allowed for the expression of altruism in ‘the infinite self-sacrifices of Maternity’.⁴²

These ideas also featured in the work of James Sully, the psychologist and pedagogue. Sully’s recapitulatory psychology saw the study of childhood as the study of the genesis of the human mind.⁴³ Unlike present day genetic psychologies, based on a material conception of genes that can supposedly pass on psychological structures, Sully’s genetics referred to a temporal state of innocence corresponding to the Romanticism discussed above.⁴⁴ Sully became an important figure in the establishment of scientific psychology in Britain and served as vice-president of the London Child Study Society, founded in 1894, and his work found wide recognition.⁴⁵

The ideas of Drummond and Sully are also evidence of a wider movement based on ‘Immanentist’ theology. An examination of immanentist beliefs further supports Collini’s thesis that altruism was an a priori ideal underlying the values of the period.

⁴¹ Katharine Bruce Glasier, quoted and discussed in Steedman, *Childhood*, pp. 73-4;

⁴² Drummond, quoted *ibid.*, p. 74; Peter Kropotkin was an influential anarchist and had employed Lamarckian theory to argue that co-operation could aid survival and that this trait was passed on directly to future generations; P. Kropotkin, *Mutual Aid: A Factor in Evolution* (London: Heinemann, 1902)

⁴³ J. Sully, ‘Introduction’, in B. Pererz, *Child Psychology* (London: Sonnenschein, 1885), p. v; on Sully see L.G. Gurjeva, ‘James Sully and Scientific Psychology, 1870-1910’, G.C. Bunn, A.D. Lovie and G.D. Richards eds. *Psychology in Britain: Historical Essays and Personal Reflections* (Leicester: BPS Books, 2001), pp. 72-94

⁴⁴ J. Sully, *Studies of Childhood* (London: Longmans Green, 1895); for a comparison with Freud’s model of recapitulation see G. Richards, ‘Britain on the Couch: The Popularization of Psychoanalysis in Britain 1918-1940’, *Science in Context*, vol. 13(2), (2000), p. 188. Humphrey Carpenter writes of the connection between the Wordsworthian understanding of childhood and the genesis story in *Secret Gardens: The Golden Age of Children’s Literature* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1985), p. 9

⁴⁵ Gurjeva, ‘James Sully’, p. 74

In a recent article, Mark Bevir highlights the importance of religious belief in the early years of the Labour movement.⁴⁶ Rather than see ethical socialism as rooted in a secular class movement, Bevir examines the role that religious ideas played in shaping socialist beliefs.⁴⁷ He argues that a common solution to the Victorian crisis of faith, precipitated by the rise of Darwinian theory, was to adopt an immanentist view of God. Replacing atonement theology, immanentism was a belief that God dwells in the world rather than being transcendent of it, and Bevir stresses how this view could promote a socialist outlook.⁴⁸ Immanentism blurred the distinction between sacred and secular; it suggested that everybody contained the divine within them and could support the notion of a universal brotherhood; and it led to a new consideration of Christ the man as an example to follow.⁴⁹

To take one example, the Congregationalist, the Rev. R. J. Campbell, instigated the 'New Theology' social movement and created the Progressive League in 1907.⁵⁰ Campbell had been a charismatic preacher and came to socialism after meeting and being 'converted' by the evangelical Christian and Labour Party Leader, Kier Hardie.⁵¹ Campbell's 'New Theology', which was delivered to Labour churches, trade unions, Independent Labour Party meetings and Fabian debates, was drawn from the doctrine of Divine Immanence. Campbell stressed the impossibility of knowing a

⁴⁶ M. Bevir, 'The Labour Church Movement, 1891-1902', *The Journal of British Studies*, vol. 38(2), (1999), pp. 217-245

⁴⁷ In this respect Bevir is building on the work of Chris Waters, *British Socialists and the Politics of Popular Culture* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990) and S. Yeo, 'A New Life: The Religion of Socialism in Britain, 1883-1896', *History Workshop*, vol. 4, (1977), pp. 5-56

⁴⁸ Bevir, 'The Labour Church', pp. 221-2. On atonement theology, see B. Hilton, *The Age of Atonement: The Influence of Evangelicalism on Social and Economic Thought, 1795-1865* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1988). The differences between Evangelicalism and T.H. Green's views are also discussed in M. Richter, *The Politics of Conscience: T.H. Green and His Age* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1964), pp. 13-32

⁴⁹ Bevir, 'The Labour Church', p. 223

⁵⁰ P.d'A. Jones, *The Christian Socialist Revival, 1877-1914: Religion, Class and Social Conscience in Late-Victorian England* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1968), pp. 421-430

⁵¹ on Keir Hardie K. Morgan, *Keir Hardie: Radical and Socialist* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1975)

transcendental God and how this belief led to a dangerous dualism: 'It is the immanent God with whom we have to do', every man was 'a potential Christ'.⁵² To this end Campbell founded the League of Progressive Thought and Social Service, attracting the support of George Bernard Shaw, among others.⁵³

Immanentist beliefs were exemplified in, but by no means confined to, the work of the Oxford philosopher T.H. Green. Since the publication of Melvin Richter's *The Politics of Conscience: T.H. Green and His Age* (1964), the importance of T.H. Green's idealistic philosophy in shaping British social policy has been well documented. Green's theology was written as a defence of Christianity from the doubts raised by science and scholarship. It stressed activism rather than contemplation and taught the duties of applied altruism rather than piety. Christianity became a social religion based upon active citizenship, and these ideas found a large audience in Mrs Humphry Ward's nineteenth century best seller, *Robert Elsmere*.⁵⁴ Ward wrote of the link between Green's theology and his politics that:

Mr Green was not only a leading Balliol tutor, but an energetic Liberal, a member both of the Oxford Town Council and of various University bodies; a helper in all the great steps taken for the higher education of women at Oxford, and keenly attracted by the project of a High School for the town boys of Oxford - a man...preoccupied...with the need of leading a 'useful life'.⁵⁵

⁵² R.J. Campbell, *The New Theology, Popular Edition* (London: Mills and Boon, 1909), pp. v-vi, ix-x; quoted in Jones, *The Christian*, p. 423

⁵³ Jones, *The Christian*, p. 426

⁵⁴ Richter, *The Politics*, pp. 25-29

⁵⁵ Mrs Humphry Ward, *A Writer's Recollections* (London: Collins, 1918), pp. 133-4

Although Green was undoubtedly an important figure, Jose Harris stresses how his work was just the tip of an idealistic iceberg.⁵⁶

Immanentism, as well as providing the basis for progressive politics, has been seen as laying the groundwork for later psychological ideas of personality. According to the historian Rhodri Hayward, some nineteenth century idealists developed a conception of an altruistic personality through the idea of 'kenosis'.⁵⁷ Kenosis referred to a set of theological beliefs that were based, not on an eternal Godhead, but on the incarnation of Christ and his embracing his mortality.⁵⁸ This allowed for a conception of Christ the person that provided a template for future discussions of personality. An altruistic personality was the product of the individual human conscience following the example of Christ - accepting mortality and finding transcendence through engaging with the social world. Thus, Hayward concludes, in this new theological conception of personality the transcendent aspects of man became the inner life of people living in the social world. This coalesced with an older legal understanding and, as William Wallace, Whyte's Professor of Moral Philosophy at Oxford and a follower of T.H. Green, wrote in an article entitled 'Person and Personality': 'It is tolerably evident that such personality is a quality inhering in the individual through his place in the system.'⁵⁹

This new conception of personality can be seen in the British response to the work of Arthur Schopenhauer. I dwell on Schopenhauer because the British reception of his

⁵⁶ Harris, 'Political Thought', p. 123

⁵⁷ R. Hayward, 'Popular Mysticism and the Origins of the New Psychology, 1880-1910', PhD Thesis, Lancaster University, (1995), pp. 8-78

⁵⁸ Hayward, 'Popular Mysticism', p. 17

⁵⁹ W. Wallace, 'Person and Personality', in his *Lectures and Essays on Natural Theology and Ethics* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1898), p. 268

work shows how immanentism was resistant to any metaphysical or scientific analysis of altruism. Schopenhauer's ideas are now seen as precursors to Freud's and they were characterised by his opposition to Hegelian idealism. Schopenhauer built upon and extended the work of Immanuel Kant to construct a philosophy of the will. In his principal work, *The World as Will and Idea* (1819), he proposed, in line with Kant, that phenomena exist as we perceive them but, (unlike in Kantian philosophy) believed that it was possible to grasp ultimate reality. Schopenhauer identified reality with will. The will contained not only reason but also unconscious physiological functioning. The parallels with the work of Freud, who admired Schopenhauer, are easy to draw, and the 'unconscious' aspect of Schopenhauer's thinking was developed by Edward Von Hartmann in nineteenth century Germany.⁶⁰ However, for Schopenhauer altruistic love was not to be found in the rational or unconscious parts of the will. On the contrary, Schopenhauer thought the nature of the will would continually lead people to be unhappy as their urges could never be satisfied. Drawing on Eastern and Western religions, Schopenhauer argued that it was only by the abandonment of the experience of the will that people would be able to act ethically and altruistically. Altruistic love was a metaphysical state, radically different from the sentimental love of couples which was driven by the will and could result only in the conflict of passion and reason. However, such a metaphysical analysis of altruism and the difficulty of its attainment was radically inconsistent with British philosophy.

Schopenhauer's work was not readily assimilated in Britain and did not come to have any significant impact until after his death. In the first English biography and overview of his work Helen Zimmern noted the steady growth of curiosity in it. But she took

⁶⁰ see R.K. Gupta, 'Freud and Schopenhauer', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, vol. 36(4), (1975), pp. 721-728

issue with what she saw as his one-sided idealistic tendency and did not believe that Schopenhauer successfully reconciled metaphysics with the natural world.⁶¹ This point was drawn out by a reviewer in the pages of the journal *Mind* who wrote how Schopenhauer had taken metaphysical and philosophical concerns and placed them within the will (the realm of the physical scientist) while Schopenhauer's own metaphysics were inadequate.⁶² This view was again repeated by the aforementioned William Wallace who commented at length on the confusing relationship of the will and the intellect in Schopenhauer's thought.⁶³ The Victorian conception of the relationship between the will and the intellect can be examined through the idea of character.

Character was used to refer the possession of highly valued moral qualities which generally equated to the ability to inhibit or restrain one's self from the lower forms of behaviour.⁶⁴ There was much discussion about how such a character could be produced, for example, in the economics of Alfred Marshall and in the Fellowship of the New Life, out of which the Fabian Society had grown in 1883.⁶⁵ For the purposes of this study it is important to note that altruism was not being directly cultivated. How could it be if it resided outside of human nature as an a priori ideal? What could be cultivated were habits that would allow for the expression of altruism.

⁶¹ H. Zimmern, *Arthur Schopenhauer: His Life and His Philosophy* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1876)

⁶² R. Anderson, 'Schopenhauer's Philosophy', *Mind*, vol. 1(4), (1876), pp. 491-509

⁶³ W. Wallace, *Life of Arthur Schopenhauer* (London: Walter Scott, 1890)

⁶⁴ S. Collini, 'The Idea of Character, Private Habits and Public Virtues', in his *Public Moralists*, pp. 96-7

⁶⁵ *ibid.*, pp. 91-3; the changing objective of economics as regards character will be drawn out later in this study.

Prior to the advent of psychoanalysis, there is little evidence of psychological theorising being employed for the betterment of character. Rather, early personality theories were distinguished by taxonomies of instincts and elitist judgements of what constituted better characters, i.e. how those of a certain disposition could inhibit the baser instincts.

The most widely read psychologist of the early twentieth century was William McDougall, whose *An Introduction to Social Psychology* (1908) went through 21 editions in twenty years and it was structured around his 'hormic' psychology.⁶⁶ The term 'hormic' referred to his belief that all behaviour was purposeful. For McDougall, instincts were the sources of 'hormic energy', but human character was explained by the ability to inhibit instincts and be 'self-regarding'.⁶⁷ Following on from McDougall, Alexander Shand's *The Foundations of Character* (1914) cast altruistic love within this hormic model. Shand employed a distinction between the sentiment of love based upon the sex instinct and love based upon devotion.⁶⁸ The devotional form could be seen in maternalism and the commitment of men to science and art. While it might take many forms, it was always characterised as the pursuit of some 'Ideal'.⁶⁹ Pursuing

⁶⁶ L. Hearnshaw, *A Short History of British Psychology, 1840-1940* (London: Methuen and Co. Ltd., 1964), p. 188; W. McDougall, *An Introduction to Social Psychology* (London: Methuen, 1908); for limited historical discussion of McDougall see L. Krantz and D. Allen, 'The Rise and Fall of McDougall and Instinct', *Journal of the History of the Behavioural Sciences*, vol. 3, (1967), pp. 326-38, and H.G. McCurdy, 'William McDougall', in B.B. Wolman ed., *Historical Roots of Contemporary Psychology* (New York: Harper and Row, 1968), pp. 111-130

⁶⁷ Even when McDougall was introduced to and borrowed from the work of Freud, he maintained that it was inhibition and not the unconscious that explained human behaviour; Hearnshaw, *A Short History*, p. 193

⁶⁸ A. Shand, *The Foundations of Character* (London: Macmillan and Company, 1920), p. 112, first published 1914. Many of Shand's ideas had actually preceded McDougall's and can be seen in A. Shand, 'Character and the Emotions', *Mind*, vol. 5, (1896), pp. 203-226. For discussion of Shand's debt to the utilitarian John Stuart Mill's version of ethology and French ideas of character formation see, D.E. Leary, 'The Fate and Influence of John Stuart Mill's Proposed Science of Ethology', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, vol. 43 (1), (1982), pp. 153-162

⁶⁹ Shand, *The Foundations*, p. 113

an 'Ideal' was not driven by a natural instinct. Rather the pursuit itself constituted an altruistic character and was, therefore, the product of individual choice.

This model of altruism was not a simple reflection of immanentist beliefs, but was underpinned by an elitist idea of the inferiority of the masses.⁷⁰ As Reba Soffer has argued, this British social psychology constituted a new form of elitism based on the fear that mass democracy would destroy moral institutions.⁷¹ McDougall's hierarchical psychology supported his belief in the irrationality of the masses and his authoritarian politics.⁷² And the views of Alexander Shand, an aristocrat with royal connections, can be seen to embody an elitist model of altruism. Shand's psychology equated to a scale for measuring altruism and contained no genuine insight into the quality of selflessness. It is tempting to place his ideas within a larger tradition of institutions that sought to collapse altruism into a few simple moral imperatives; the 'muscular Christianity' of British public schools and Boy Scout movement are ready examples.⁷³ I do, however, grant that this would take a much longer analysis.

⁷⁰ For a wide ranging discussion of turn-of-the-century psychologies and how they embodied the idea of the inferiority of the masses see P. Crook, *Darwinism, War and History: The Debate Over the Biology of War from 'Origin of the Species' to the First World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), especially pp. 146-152

⁷¹ R.N. Soffer, *Ethics and Society in Modern Britain: The Revolution of the Social Sciences, 1870-1914* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), pp. 217-233 and 234-251; and R.N. Soffer, 'The New Elitism: Social Psychology in Pre-War England', *The Journal of British Studies*, vol. 8(2), (1969), pp. 111-140

⁷² see W. McDougall, *The Group Mind* (Cambridge: The University Press, 1927), and *Ethics and Some Modern World Problems* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1924)

⁷³ On the idea of character and public schools see J.A. Mangan, *Athleticism in the Victorian and Edwardian Public School: The Emergence and Consolidation of an Educational Ideology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981); on the failure of public school sporting 'comradeship' to make an impact on the working class see S. Barlow, 'The Diffusion of "Rugby" Football in the Industrialised Context of Rochdale, 1868-90: A Conflict of Ethical Values', *International Journal for the History of Sport*, vol. 10(1), (1993), pp. 46-67; on boys' movements see M.D. Blanch, 'Imperialism, Nationalism and Organised Youth', in J. Clarke, C. Critcher and R. Johnson eds., *Working-Class Culture – Studies in History and Theory* (London: Hutchinson, 1979), pp. 103-120.

The social psychology of McDougall and Shand had its own contemporary critic in the Fabian, Graham Wallas.⁷⁴ In *Human Nature in Politics* (1908) Wallas addressed the relationship between psychological states and the rise of rationalistic, individualistic and large scale societies.⁷⁵ However, rather than turn to social psychology as the means to solve these modern problems, Wallas' political science advocated the creation of a system of government that supported cultural and individual variety. In his next book, *The Great Society* (1914), Wallas addressed the anti-intellectualism he thought characterised the early years of the twentieth century.⁷⁶ For us, this work is notable for discussing the limits of psychological theories of love:

Is love of our fellows natural to us? Mother-love is certainly natural; and so are the weaker forms of love arising from fatherhood, sex and Fellow-membership of the human species. Philanthropy, however, in order to become the Public Spirit required in the Great Society, must be strengthened by Imagination, Knowledge, Habit, the aesthetic emotion, and other dispositions.⁷⁷

But Wallas was in a minority and the elitism of McDougall was strengthened by the arrival of psychoanalysis. As we shall see, many of the earliest British psychoanalysts were drawn from the London medical elite - a group that has been described as

⁷⁴ On Wallas see R.N. Soffer, *Ethics and Society*, pp. 190-208; and M.J. Wiener, *Between Two Worlds: The Political Thought of Graham Wallas* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971). Wiener argues that Wallas struggled to reconcile the revival of Evangelicalism that underpinned the thought of T.H. Green, and utilitarian beliefs.

⁷⁵ G. Wallas, *Human Nature in Politics* (London: Archibald Constable and Co. Ltd., 1908)

⁷⁶ G. Wallas, *The Great Society: A Psychological Analysis* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1914)

⁷⁷ Wallas, *The Great Society*, pp. x-xi

advocating a holistic approach to doctoring in support of patrician values - and took up the hormic social psychological model to discuss love.⁷⁸

With the first incursions of psychoanalysis in the 1910s it can be seen how some of the debates over love were interiorised and cast as part of an unconscious struggle.⁷⁹

However, prior to the First World War, there is no evidence that a desire for altruistic love was seen as a combatant in an internal psychological battle. Rather, it was the goal towards which psychoanalytic investigation should strive. Some early British psychoanalytic ideas are outlined below before turning to the impact of World War I where psychological ideas of altruism were transformed.

2. The Reception of Psychoanalysis in Britain

Unlike in America – where the Clark University Conference of 1909 marks a clear point of entry for psychoanalytic thought – Freud’s ideas crept into Britain just prior to World War I. With the hormic model of social psychology dominant in Britain, psychologists had a catalogue of instincts with which to debate the makeup of Freud’s notion of the unconscious. Leslie Hearnshaw, in his classic *A Short History of British Psychology* (1964), argues that with the advent of psychoanalysis the multiplicity of instinct theories in nineteenth and early twentieth century psychology engendered the

⁷⁸ on the relationship between medicine and ideology in early twentieth century Britain see C. Lawrence, ‘Incommunicable Knowledge: Science, Technology and the Clinical Art in Britain: 1850-1914,’ *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol. 20 (1985), pp. 503-520; and ‘Still Incommunicable: Clinical Holists and Medical Knowledge in Interwar Britain’ in C. Lawrence and G. Weisz eds. *Greater than the Parts: Holism and Biomedicine 1920-1950* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 94-111. On the importance of hormic psychology in the take up of psychoanalysis see, Hearnshaw, *A Short History*, p. 189.

⁷⁹ ‘Interiorised’ is used here rather than ‘internalised’, which has psychoanalytic connotations. I am studying changing ideas of altruism and am making no claims as to how they have restructured the human mind.

formation of various ‘depth’ psychologies.⁸⁰ Although the group advocating depth psychologies is traditionally seen as eclectic, there was a broad consensus that Freud had over-emphasised the role of the sex instinct in psychological functioning. For example, in one of the first systematic expositions of psychoanalytic thought to appear in Britain, *The Psychology of Insanity* (1912), by Bernard Hart, a psychiatrist at University College Hospital, it was stated that:

Freud considers that the origin of all cases belonging to varieties of mental disease can be traced back to factors connected with a single one of the great instincts, that of sex....Freud’s generalisation is considered by most authorities to be too wide, and has not been universally accepted. The evidence produced in its favour is, indeed, not altogether convincing, and, even allowing for the fact that Freud’s conception of sex is far wider than is covered by the ordinary use of the term, his theory cannot be said to have been satisfactorily established.⁸¹

Likewise, William Brown, then Head of the Psychological Department, King’s College, London, thought that the sexual instinct was only one part of the psyche. Brown went further in a letter to the journal *The Strand*, entitled ‘Is Love a Disease?’⁸² As the title suggests, the letter, written in 1912, addressed Brown’s concerns that altruistic or devotional love would come to be seen as a pathological condition. Brown, a Christian as well as a psychologist, went to great lengths to make a

⁸⁰ Hearnshaw, *A Short History*, pp. 238-9

⁸¹ B. Hart, *The Psychology of Insanity* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1930), p. 166, first published 1912

⁸² W. Brown, ‘Is Love a Disease?’, *The Strand*, (January, 1912), pp. 96-103

distinction between sexual and spiritual love. It was sexual love that Brown thought in need of a cure, and psychoanalysis was the means by which it could be affected.

To illustrate his argument Brown used a photograph of an embracing couple under which the caption read, 'John Tanner and Ann Whitefield in 'Man and Superman', A Play based on Schopenhauer's theory of love'. The depicted couple represented the form of spiritual love advocated by Brown and their association with Schopenhauer and George Bernard Shaw's play were used to justify his assertion. Schopenhauer had shown to Brown that, 'the offspring of a love-match are likely to be finer children than those of a marriage without affection'.⁸³ For Brown, true love was the source of evolutionary progress.

Sandra Ellesley points out in her thesis on the popularisation of psychoanalysis, that Brown transposed the idea of a perfect couple into individual unconscious. This is borne out by Ellesley's discussion of Brown and his use of Shaw's play. She writes of how the character of Tanner personifies intelligence and Ann great instinctual power. Progress lies in the coming together of these two attributes.⁸⁴ Brown reasoned that love based purely upon instinct was emasculating and that no good could come of it. This type of love, seen by Brown as the dominance of irrationality and femininity within the psyche, was thus appropriate for treatment by psychoanalysis. Psychological health, equating to altruistic or spiritual love, could be restored by directing reason against 'the irrational emotional tendencies that have gained a footing in his subconscious, so

⁸³ Brown, 'Is Love', p. 96

⁸⁴ S. Ellesley, 'Psychoanalysis in Early Twentieth-Century England: A Study in the Popularisation of Ideas', Ph.D. thesis, University of Essex, (1995), p. 146; see also B. Shaw, *Man and Super Man: A Comedy and a Philosophy* (London: Constable, 1903); F. Whitman, *Shaw and the Play of Ideas* (London: Cornell University Press, 1977); and J.L. Wisenthal, *The Marriage of Contraries* (Cam. Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1974), pp. 22-57

that they are seen in their true light and combated accordingly.’⁸⁵ Rationality had to triumph over bestiality in order to direct evolution to the higher end of spiritual love.

Thus in Brown’s letter we can see how the mixture of metaphysical and instinctual ideas that had characterised many of the nineteenth and early twentieth century debates on altruistic love were transposed into psychoanalytic notion of the unconscious. The inhibition of selfish, baser instincts was transformed into a gendered unconscious struggle. For the analyst, it was then a question of understanding unconscious conflicts so that spiritual love could win out.

It is possible to see the psychoanalytic casting of debates on love as the first step on a road to rationalisation whereby love becomes the problem of the psychoanalyst not the individual conscience. However, prior to World War I the ideal of altruistic love was not being contested or justified on psychoanalytic grounds.

Less conventional than Brown, although equally idealistic, was the work of Montague David Eder. Born into a wealthy Jewish family, Eder inherited a large amount of money after his father’s death. With this money Eder began studying medicine in London and, while training, was greatly influenced by the ideas of the anarchist, Peter Kropotkin. Kropotkin had argued that doctors should attend to social problems and, allied to this, that co-operation and altruism evolved in a Lamarckian fashion.⁸⁶ After travelling the world Eder returned to Britain to fight an unorthodox socialist cause. Eder thought that socialism should strive to allow for individual freedom. In 1907 he devised ‘The Endowment of Motherhood Scheme’ based on the politics of *The New*

⁸⁵ Brown, ‘Is Love’, p. 103

⁸⁶ M. Thomson, ‘Mind in Socialism: Montague David Eder, Socialist, Psycho-analyst, and Zionist’, Unpublished MS, p. 3

Age; a periodical of the anarchist A.R. Orage that advocated 'Collectivism of the Nation, Communism for the Home, and Anarchism for the Individual'.⁸⁷ Believing that women had an instinctual desire for motherhood that needed to be satisfied, Eder argued that they should be provided with a weekly wage so that they could look after their children for the first two years of their lives. Thereafter children should be moved to communal homes where they might be able to find their individuality. Finding sympathy with the socio-medical reformers, Eder worked with Margaret McMillan at her Deptford Clinic and founded the journal *School Hygiene* in 1910. The first issue of *School Hygiene* contained an article by McMillan reiterating Kropotkin's 'Appeal' to doctors to consider social problems.⁸⁸

Eder used *School Hygiene* as a way of popularising his burgeoning interest in psychoanalysis. He had befriended Ernest Jones who later claimed that he introduced Eder to analysis around 1908.⁸⁹ Eder was unusual in his openness in speaking and writing about Freud's ideas on childhood sexuality.⁹⁰ He used these ideas to challenge conventional morality and as a justification for his own socialist/anarchist ideology; 'We are surely on the threshold of discoveries in the psychic region comparable with the gift of the new world'.⁹¹ A subsequent paper, delivered with his wife at the North England Education Conference in 1914 was entitled 'The Unconscious Mind in the Child' and caused such uproar when published in the journal, *Child Study*, that every copy was withdrawn.⁹²

⁸⁷ M.D. Eder, *The Endowment of Motherhood* (London: New Age Press, 1908), p.1; on Orage see W. Martin, *The New Age Under Orage* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1967)

⁸⁸ Thomson, 'Mind in Socialism', p. 9 and M. McMillan, 'On the Threshold', *School Hygiene*, vol. 1, (1910), pp. 28-31

⁸⁹ E. Jones, 'Obituary to M.D. Eder', *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, vol. 17, (1936), pp. 143-6

⁹⁰ Thomson, 'Mind in Socialism', p. 10

⁹¹ *ibid.*, p. 10

⁹² M.D. and Mrs. Eder, 'The Conflicts of the Unconscious Child', *Child Study*, vol. 9(6), (Oct. 1916), pp. 79-83; and vol. 9(7-8), (Nov.-Dec. 1916), pp. 105-8

Whereas William Brown had turned to psychoanalysis to support a conventional morality, controversy surrounded Eder attempted grounding of morality in psycho-sexual ideas. He befriended D.H. Lawrence who, whilst writing *Sons and Lovers*, was keen to think about the psychoanalytic implications of his work. Lawrence thought of Eder's lifestyle as a model for a new society without the repression and corrosion of Victorian and Edwardian values.⁹³

While Eder may have blurred the Victorian dichotomy of altruism and individual desire, he retained a faith in social obligation or duty. His radicalism lay in his attempt to ground altruism in psycho-sexual theory, as opposed to the older model of character building through inhibition. He did not challenge the a priori assumption that altruism was the goal to be worked towards. This can, however, be seen to change with World War I as altruism came to be seen as a potentiality within human nature that could serve the national interest.

3. The Great War and the Rationalisation of Love

'The war has been a vast crucible in which all our preconceived views concerning human nature have been tested.'⁹⁴ This was the verdict of the psychologist and sometime anthropologist W.H.R. Rivers on war's effect on psychological thinking. Recent historical accounts share Rivers' emphasis on the importance of the war in shaping psychological thought. The focus of historical scrutiny has, in the main, been

⁹³ B. Maddox, *The married man' - A Life of D.H. Lawrence* (London: Sinclair-Stevenson, 1994), pp. 196-7

⁹⁴ W.H. R. Rivers, *Instinct and the Unconscious: A Contribution to a Biological Theory of Psycho-Neuroses* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1920), p. 252

upon shellshock and its socio-economic and political context.⁹⁵ The war added a new dimension to psychology as psychiatrists were charged, not simply with curing soldiers, but with returning them back to the war. The historian Martin Stone writes of psychoanalysis and psychiatry in wartime that:

....this reformulation of psychiatry did not revolve around a set of scientific judgements of an 'abstract' ideological kind but around a set of practical problems. These were related to the undermining of army discipline, the existence of a large number of servicemen unfit for any kind of work – military or otherwise – and the accumulation of a substantial pensions bill.⁹⁶

Stone concludes that the war 'set psychiatry's field of practice squarely within the social fabric of industrial society'.⁹⁷

But historical attention to shellshock has obscured other aspects of the relationship between psychology and war, not the least of which were the changing psychological ideas of love in this period. I wish to argue that psychological ideas of altruism in wartime should also be seen in the way Stone historicises psychoanalysis and shellshock, i.e. that the war saw military and industrial technologies applied to psychological ideas. While Rivers, with his interest in psychoanalysis, drew upon William McDougall's taxonomy to address shellshock and thought that World War I had shown 'self-preservation' or 'danger' instincts central to unconscious conflicts, the

⁹⁵ M. Stone, 'Shellshock and the Psychologists', in R. Porter, W.F. Bynum and M. Shepherd eds., *The Anatomy of Madness, Essays in the History of Psychiatry, Vol. II Institutions and Society* (London: Tavistock Publications, 1985)

⁹⁶ Stone, 'Shellshock and Psychiatry', p. 265

⁹⁷ *ibid.*, p. 266

war led Wilfred Trotter to see psychological functioning as a conflict between individuality and altruism.⁹⁸

Wilfred Trotter, the London surgeon and brother-in-law of Freud's British apostle Ernest Jones, began propounding his social psychological notion of a 'herd' instinct in 1908.⁹⁹ Prior to World War I, Trotter did not equate altruism with his notion of a herd instinct. He believed that true altruistic behaviour in man was not part of nature. Rather he saw it as the product of human volition – '...conscience is an indirect result of the gregarious instinct, and is in no sense derived from a special instinct forcing men to consider the good of the race rather than individual desires.'¹⁰⁰

Trotter's *Instinct of the Herd in Peace and War* (1914) further developed these notions of a 'herd' instinct. However, with his increasing use of the psychoanalytic model of the mind, altruism became interiorised: without altruism 'egotistic reason would...have rapidly carried the race to destruction in its mad pursuit of pleasure for its own sake.'¹⁰¹ Now couched in psychoanalytic language, Trotter's conception of altruism was transformed from an act of individual volition into an unconscious potentiality.

Trotter's depiction of the gregarious instinct as an internal struggle was given additional emphasis by the perceived necessities of wartime and he came to believe that his theory could serve the national interest:

⁹⁸ on Rivers' new taxonomy, *Instinct and the Unconscious*, appendix 7, pp. 248-259; and see Stone, 'Shellshock and the Psychologists', pp. 255-6

⁹⁹ W. Trotter, 'Herd Instinct and its Bearing on the Psychology of Civilised Man', *Sociological Review*, vol. 1(1), (1908), pp. 227-248

¹⁰⁰ Trotter, 'Herd Instinct', p. 248

¹⁰¹ quoted in H.C. Greisman, 'Herd Instinct and the Foundations of Biopsychology', *Journal of the History of the Behavioural Sciences*, vol. 15, (1979), p. 360

....it [psychology] is capable of becoming a guide in the actual affairs of life and of giving an understanding of the human mind such as may enable us in a practical and useful way to foretell some of the course of human behaviour. The present state of public affairs gives an excellent chance for testing the truth of this suggestion, and adds to the interest of the experiment the strong incentive of an urgent national peril.¹⁰²

He concluded with a slightly opaque paragraph suggesting that his theory could be used to reinforce the morale of soldiers:

....the needs and capacities that were at work in the primeval amoeba are at work in him [the soldier]. In his very flesh and bones is the impulse towards closer and closer union in larger and larger fellowships. To-day he is fighting his way towards that goal, fighting for the perfect unit which Nature has so long foreshadowed, in which there shall be a complete communion of its members, unobstructed by egoism or hatred, by harshness or arrogance or the wolfish lust for blood. That perfect unit will be a new creative, recognisable as a single entity; to its million-minded power and knowledge no barrier will be insurmountable, no gulf inseparable, no task too great.¹⁰³

Here Trotter clearly employed a distinction between the psychological 'fact' of altruism and its value in fighting the war. The phylogeny of altruistic love was played

¹⁰² W. Trotter, *Instincts of the Herd in Peace and War* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, Ltd, 1916), p. 6

¹⁰³ Trotter, *Instincts of the Herd*, pp. 212-213

out internally or unconsciously in wartime and it was through the triumph of love over egoism, ontologically, that would assure the future of civilisation. This contrasts sharply with the elitism of pre-war social psychology. Altruism was not wrought through the inhibition of baser instincts, but was itself a natural capacity that could only be obscured by egoism and hatred; and the altruism of the common soldier was the basis for the advance of civilisation. The parallels between Trotter's beliefs and the use of male bonding employed by military authorities in World War I, are striking.

Joanna Bourke, in her history of the British male body during the war, writes that it is axiomatic for histories of World War I that servicemen 'bonded' together.¹⁰⁴ This was not, however, an inevitable consequence of the war but something actively encouraged by those in power. As Bourke notes, part of disciplining a regiment involved 'ritualized humiliations and rites of powerlessness', but this was not only an exercise in degradation. The other side to army discipline involved love - binding men together through inspiring pride in men as a group.¹⁰⁵ For example, the creation of Pals' Battalions was hugely important to British recruiters. Instigated by Lord Derby at a crowded meeting in St. Georges Hall, Liverpool, the idea was that those who 'joined together should serve together'. This idea proved very successful and was soon sanctioned by Lord Kitchener.¹⁰⁶ Between August 1914 and June 1916 close to forty per cent of service and reserve battalions were raised by bodies other than the War Office.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁴ J. Bourke, *Dismembering the Male: Men's Bodies, Britain and the Great War* (London: Reaktion Books, 1996), p. 126

¹⁰⁵ Bourke, *Dismembering*, p. 128

¹⁰⁶ J. Stevenson, *British Society, 1914-1945* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1984), pp. 50-51

¹⁰⁷ Bourke, *Dismembering*, p. 131

I grant that there is a lack of evidence showing the interpenetration of psychological and military ideas of altruism. This would require a complex social analysis detailing the relationship between Trotter's ideas, military planning and soldiers' understandings. Nonetheless, the link is intriguing. In contrast to the assertion of the historian John Keegan that the 'Pals' Battalions' were a spontaneous and popular movement, Bourke makes a strong case for the idea of male bonding working downwards from hierarchically organised institutions, grounded in 'muscular Christianity', and becoming a part of the values of working class soldiers.¹⁰⁸ In other words, the idea of male bonding was no longer just the preserve of public schools where it had served as a way of differentiating 'characters'. It was now seen as part of the psychological nature of the common soldier and rationalised for the war effort.

Despite the lack of evidence implicating psychological theories in this process, post-war debates do support the thesis that World War I witnessed a fundamental change in conceiving of altruism. After the war, and in the context of a crisis of national identity, the idea of altruism was reconfigured with the primitive aspects of man accorded greater value than the previously esteemed moral codes of the pre-war period.

4. The Primitive Basis of Love

Jay Winter, the cultural historian, argues that with the Great War people turned back to the past and employed a complex traditional vocabulary of mourning - symbols of

¹⁰⁸ J. Keegan, *The Face of Battle* (London: Cape, 1976) and Bourke, *Dismembering*, pp. 138-144

meaning were 'resurrected' during and after the war.¹⁰⁹ War memorials are testament to this process and Winter notes how British authorities were unique in using the ordinary 'Tommy' as a figure for war memorials, rather than mythical or iconic figure of the French or the German classical male nude. The reputation of the essential goodness of the British soldier was further enhanced by the predominately upper-middle class war poets who stressed the universal suffering of soldiers.¹¹⁰ This, Winter argues, was important for the refashioning of notional identity that occurred after the war. Such an analysis can be elaborated by considering the post-war crisis of national identity as a shift from the primacy of morality to the primacy of primitivism.

It has been commonplace to note that, after World War I, British culture evidenced a crisis of national identity. Precisely what this crisis entailed has been a matter of some consternation. For example, the historian Alison Light contends that the period saw a move away from masculine and imperialist values towards a more domestic, feminine and inward-looking national identity.¹¹¹ This has recently been challenged by Matthew Thomson, in a study of race and psychology in early twentieth century Britain.¹¹² Thomson argues that imperialism was not replaced by the domestic vision described by Light, but that the two were intertwined in a focus on the primitive and instinctual aspects of identity.¹¹³ Thomson writes of how, from around the beginning of the

¹⁰⁹ J. Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 226-7

¹¹⁰ J.M. Winter, 'British National Identity and the First World War', in S. Green and R. Whiting eds., *The Boundaries of the State in Modern Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996). Laurinda Stryker examines the shared language of poets, chaplains and psychologists during the war and discusses their emphasis on the idea of courage, 'Languages of Sacrifice and Suffering in England in the First World War', PhD Thesis, University of Cambridge, (1992)

¹¹¹ A. Light, *Forever England: Femininity, Literature and Conservatism Between the Wars* (London: Routledge, 1991)

¹¹² M. Thomson, "'Savage Civilisation' Race, Culture and Mind in Britain, 1898-1939', in W. Ernst and B. Harris eds., *Race, Science and Medicine: Racial Categories and the Production of Medical Knowledge, 1700-1960* (London: Routledge, 1999), pp. 235-258

¹¹³ Thomson, "'Savage Civilisation'", pp. 256-7

twentieth century, racist psychology – psychology that stressed innate inequalities and cast races on a hierarchical scale from civilised to primitive – gradually came to be replaced with a more pluralistic understanding that emphasised cultural differences and that found evidence of a primitive mentality within civilised society. This new theoretical position was particularly suited to addressing questions of national identity after World War I.¹¹⁴ He points to the emergence of the Mass Observation movement at the end of the 30s – a movement that sought to identify the ‘savage’ elements of British society – as the culmination of this process.¹¹⁵

While Thomson’s thesis is convincing, I think the post-war change in British culture is more profound than he acknowledges. The diversity of interwar identities that could be formed on alternative understandings of primitivism is well beyond the scope of this study; ranging as they do through hedonistic jazz and the music and dancing of Josephine Baker, to the populist Oriental and African influences in art deco, and even Baldwinite Conservatism.¹¹⁶ However, detailing changing ideas of altruism in this period is revealing on several counts.

In his novel, *The Secret Places of the Heart* (1922), H.G. Wells explored the link between primitivism and identity and showed how it could have a regenerative

¹¹⁴ *ibid.*, p. 236

¹¹⁵ *ibid.*, pp. 250-251. On Mass Observation see the accounts by its founders, C. Madge and T. Harrison, *Mass Observation* (London: Frederick Muller, 1937) and T. Harrison, *Savage Civilisation* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1937)

¹¹⁶ Thomson gives several pages to the subject, Thomson, ‘Savage Civilisation’, pp. 246-250. Some of the links between primitivism and art are discussed in E.H. Gombrich, *The Preference for the Primitive: Episodes in the History of Western Taste and Art* (London: Phaidon Press Ltd., 2002). On the appeal of Stanley Baldwin’s Conservatism and the idea of an organic ‘Englishness’ see, S. Nicholas, ‘The Constriction of National Identity: Stanley Baldwin, “Englishness” and the Mass Media in Interwar Britain’, in M. Francis and I. Zweiniger-Bargielowska eds., *The Conservatives and British Society, 1860-1990* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1996), pp. 127-70. Many of these issues as they relate to science and medicine are discussed in C. Lawrence and A-K. Mayer eds. *Regenerating England: Science, Medicine and Culture in Inter-War Britain* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2000)

effect.¹¹⁷ The character Sir Richard Hardy is cured of his depression by the psychologist Dr Martineau (fictive author of *The Psychology of the New Age*) through the recognition of primitive culture and a loss of his modern selfhood after a tour of ancient sites in the south of England.¹¹⁸ While Wells points to the pivotal role of psychology in the use of primitivism for the reconstruction of national identity, the psychological theorising of the period was rather more complicated than the tour conducted by Dr. Martineau.

In 1923, discussing of the effect of war on ideas of love, F.R. Barry, a Christian minister with an interest in psychology, wrote that:

...the terrific strain to which all were subjected, and from which we have none of us yet fully recovered, forced the mind back, as it were, upon itself, and created an unprecedented interest in the specifically mental sciences, as well as in spiritualism and similar cults. We are all psychologists today.¹¹⁹

The mental implosion described by Barry can be explored by discussion of the psychologies of religion that arose after World War I. In particular it can be seen how altruism had lost its exalted place within British culture and that Christian psychologists and pro-psychology Christians sort to reinstate its incontestable status.

¹¹⁷ H.G. Wells, *The Secret Places of the Heart* (London: Cassell, 1922). On Wells see D.C. Smith, *H.G. Wells: Desperately Mortal* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986)

¹¹⁸ Thomson, "Savage Civilisation", p. 247. The title of Dr Martineau's book was significant: *The New Age* of A.R. Orage, to which M.D. Eder had subscribed, had acquired a psychology and, as will be shown, this fundamentally changed the purpose of reform for Eder and his associates. Wells had previously fictionalised Eder's 'The Endowment of Motherhood' scheme in his *The New Machiavelli* (London: John Lane, 1911); see Thomson 'Mind in Socialism', p. 6.

¹¹⁹ F.R. Barry, *Christianity and Psychology: Lectures Towards and Introduction* (London: Student Christian Movement, 1923), p. 1

For some church ministers, knowledge of psychology could help them carry out their pastoral duties, or at least arm them against materialist views of the mind.¹²⁰ Others found a higher purpose for psychology and it became the means to reinstate their spiritual beliefs and transform society through understanding and enhancing the historical and evolutionary basis of altruism.¹²¹

In sharp contrast to the prior belief in an unquestioned altruistic ideal, some post-World War I religious thinkers argued that altruism was an aspect of human nature that had to be released. This involved identifying the historical and psychological aspects of religious experience to enable love. As Barry wrote in his advocacy of a psychology of religion, 'We can become free only when our whole selves are caught up into a harmonious controlling purpose to which every element of our nature is loyal: and that, in the fullest Christian sense, is Love.'¹²²

Barry was not alone. W.B. Selbie, Wilde Lecturer in Natural and Comparative Religion at Oxford, argued in his *The Psychology of Religion* (1924) that:

A sound philosophy of religion will find its materials in history and psychology...the psychology of religion has some severe limitations, and can only carry us a certain way in the direction of a true science of

¹²⁰ For a general overview of the relationship between psychology and the church in the interwar period see G. Richards, 'Psychology and the Churches in Britain 1919-1939: Symptoms of Conversion', *History of the Human Sciences*, vol. 13(2), pp. 57-84. Richards notes that The Lambeth Conference of 1920 stated that ordinals 'should be equipped by training in psychology, and be given some acquaintance with methods and principles of healing'; Richards, 'Psychology and the Churches' p. 63

¹²¹ In framing the section in this way I am ignoring those who thought psychology could replace religion by offering a set of humanistic values. This group contained followers of C.G. Jung and although his work was undoubtedly influential in interwar Britain I do not believe that his ideas impinged upon the work that followed on from the British evolutionary psychological tradition that has been described above.

¹²² Barry, *Christianity and Psychology*, p. 191

religion. It provides us with our material and indicates the use that may be made of them.¹²³

Although American psychologists such as G.S. Hall and William James had offered psychological accounts of religion, Selbie thought that they cast it in Darwinian terms as a struggle for existence, 'judging religion by the way in which it helps or hinders that struggle'.¹²⁴ Selbie looked to the history and psychology of religion for the source of the unifying and joyous capacity of the religious sentiment, believing this could serve as a guide for determining the conditions for physical and psychological development.¹²⁵ The views of Selbie and Barry can be found echoed in many pro-religious psychological works throughout the 1920s. For instance, in *An Introduction to the Psychology of Religion* (1923) Robert Thouless, a psychology lecturer at the University of Manchester, argued for a presumption of the truth of religion. He thought that the truth or falsity of religion could not be proved or disproved empirically for, 'even if we find that the mind obeys psychological law this cannot disprove the existence of the supernatural in the mind.'¹²⁶ Indeed, Thouless found evidence for the supernatural in Alexander Shand's conception of the altruistic character and the

¹²³ W.B. Selbie, *The Psychology of Religion* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1924), p. 3

¹²⁴ Selbie, *The Psychology*, p. 5. On G. Stanley Hall see D. Ross, *G. Stanley Hall: The Psychologist as Prophet* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1972). For biographical details and surveys of the work of William James see R.B. Perry, *The Thought and Character of William James as Revealed in Unpublished Correspondence and Notes, Together with Published Writings, 2 volumes* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1935) and G.E. Meyers, *William James: His Life and Thought* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986)

¹²⁵ 'religious sentiment' was Selbie's term and the lengths he went to differentiate it from an instinct suggest he had the work of Shand and McDougall in mind, Selbie, *The Psychology*, p. 13

¹²⁶ R. Thouless, *An Introduction to the Psychology of Religion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1923), p. 264; Thouless drew on the work of J.B. Pratt whose *The Religious Consciousness* (New York: Macmillan, 1920) offers what I think is the clearest defence of a psychology of religion: just because we can offer a psychological explanation for perceiving the sun does not mean that the sun does not exist.

sentiment of love: 'The emotions organised in the religious sentiment are, on the whole, the same as those of the sentiment of love'.¹²⁷

Tellingly, where Shand's notion of the altruistic character was essentially an evaluative judgement, Thouless took it as evidence for the actual existence of a divine selflessness. The movement from using psychology as an evaluative judgment on altruism to a psychological understanding of altruism can also be seen in J.A. Hadfield's *Psychology and Morals* (1923). This book was not explicitly religious but took up McDougall's hormic psychological to examine the basis of moral sentiments.¹²⁸ Hadfield included a section on 'The Function of Love' in which he argued that love was not necessarily a civilised trait but could be found in even the most basic societies, and that the understanding and enhancement of love was the only resolution to the problems that faced the post-World War I world:

We find love in all communities in the world, even the most primitive. It is not specifically Christian virtue, for we find the golden rule, 'Love thy neighbour as thyself', in at least a dozen religions of the world. The commandment 'Thou shall love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with thy soul and with all thy mind, and thy neighbour as thyself' existed before Christianity. But the Christian religion adopted it as the *basic* principle in life.

It is obviously the solution to the world's problems, for only by good can the peace of the world be achieved. All Conferences in the world

¹²⁷ Thouless, *An Introduction*, p. 100

¹²⁸ J. Hadfield, *Psychology and Morals: An Analysis of Character* (London: Methuen, 1964), first published 1923

will fail, as indeed at the present time they are failing time and again, if they meet an atmosphere of suspicion, threats and fear.¹²⁹

Love, these authors felt, had been lost in history and a psychological understanding of it was being used to reaffirm morality. As Selbie put it, 'there is nothing derogatory to religion in the fact that it has had a lowly origin.'¹³⁰ This new psychological conception of altruism also found expression in the idea of the group. At Oxford, for example, an associate of Selbie, Frank Buchman, founded what later became known as the Oxford Group movement.

Frank Buchman underwent a spiritual experience while visiting the Keswick Convention in Cumbria, in 1908:

I began to see myself as God saw me, which was a very different picture than the one I had myself.... I sat there and realised how my sin, my pride, my selfishness, and my ill-will had eclipsed me from God.... I was the centre of my own life. That big 'I' had to be crossed out.¹³¹

Returning to his native America he became responsible for Christian work at Pennsylvania State University and, in 1921, he was invited to attend a Disarmament Conference in Washington. On the way he decided the plans for world peace were inadequate and that what was required was a spiritual revolution starting with

¹²⁹ Hadfield, *Psychology and Morals*, p. 101

¹³⁰ Selbie, *The Psychology*, p. 13

¹³¹ G. Lean, *Frank Buchman: A Life* (London: Constable, 1985), pp. 30-1; on the Keswick Convention see J. Kent, *Holding the Fort* (London: Epworth Press, 1978)

individual salvation.¹³² He set off for England and ended up in Oxford where he founded what became known as the ‘Oxford Group’, building up a number through what he called the practice of ‘soul surgery’.¹³³ He would meet with students undergoing personal crises, identify their sins, and persuade them that these sins were the choice of the self. The self had to be renounced through Buchman’s ‘soul surgery’.¹³⁴ Every Buchman success was encouraged to continue his practice and love was the ultimate goal towards which individuals should work: ‘The greatest of all human words, because it denotes the greatest of human powers, is the word love – a word which signifies desire at its highest intensity’, as one convert expressed it.¹³⁵ In 1928 Buchman took some of his followers to South Africa and *The Times* referred to the travellers as the ‘Oxford Group’.¹³⁶ After some dispute with the university the name stuck.

In her recent thesis, Alison Falby has argued that Buchman and Gerald Heard, a writer on the evolution of consciousness, laid the basis for early secular group therapy.¹³⁷ This, Falby believes, was a continuation of the immanentist theology of the nineteenth century, and she notes how both Buchman and Heard drew on the ideas of Henry Drummond.¹³⁸ While I agree with Falby that the work of Heard and Buchman was important in the formation of new psychological ideas, there were, however,

¹³² P. Howard, *The World Re-Built: The True Story of Frank Buchman and the Men and Women of Moral Re-Armament* (London: Blandford Press, 1951), pp. 124-5

¹³³ for discussion of Buchman’s impact on Oxford see R. Crossman ed. *Oxford and the Groups: The Influence of the Groups Considered by Rev. G.F. Allen, John Maud and others* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1934)

¹³⁴ H. Begbie, *Life Changers* (London: Mills and Boon, 1924)

¹³⁵ Begbie, *Life*, p. 17

¹³⁶ Howard, *The World*, p. 125

¹³⁷ A. Falby, ‘Gerald Heard (1889-1971) And British Intellectual Culture Between the Wars’, D. Phil Thesis, Oxford University, (2000), p. vi. For Heard’s views on religious groups see his, *Social Substance of Religion: An Essay on the Evolution of Religion* (London: G. Allen and Unwin, 1931). Heard would go on to put his ideas into practice, eventually setting up communities in California with the author Aldous Huxley.

¹³⁸ Falby, ‘Gerald Heard’, p. 162, 164 & 179; and Lean, *Frank Buchman*, p. 78

differences between the religious groups of Heard and Buchman and pre-World War I theology. In contrast to the idealistic theology of the late nineteenth century, Buchman advocated the use of the social group as the vehicle for the eradication of the self.

Groups were not merely the appropriate means for spreading Buchman's message, nor were they a way of promoting good character, as had been the goal of some nineteenth century institutions, such as the Fellowship of the New Life. For Buchman, the group was a way of re-creating a *natural* selfless personality. Not all of the attempts to recover love in the interwar period were conducted by explicitly religious thinkers, nor was the search for the psychological contingencies of love only directed to specifically religious ends. Luisa Passerini has shown in her study of contemporary psychological ideas, *Europe in Love, Love In Europe* (1999), that secular attempts to forge a new morality based upon the reconstruction of love were also apparent in this period.¹³⁹

Passerini takes as her starting point the myth that Europeans invented courtly love in 12th century Provence, a myth that was carried through the Enlightenment. During the interwar period, she argues, the theme of the Europeanness of love was central to those wishing to bridge the gap between political extremes. As the 'new' Europe offered by these extremes (Communism, Fascism, and American individualism) came to be seen as a Europe of decline and decadence so love came to be seen as the means of reinstating civilisation. As evidence she notes the preoccupation with love in the art and literature of the period, for example C.S. Lewis' *The Allegory of Love* (1936), and the proliferation of psychologies of love.

¹³⁹ L. Passerini, *Europe in Love, Love in Europe: Imagination and Politics in Britain Between the Wars* (London: I.B. Tauris Publishers, 1999)

Passerini's arguments are very speculative and she never really addresses exactly who wished to use love to reinstate civilisation. Nor does she interrogate and differentiate the various psychological theories involved. There are, therefore, large gaps in how she explains this turn to love. Also, she often resorts to Jungian psychoanalysis and the notion of a collective unconscious as causal, rather than offering a socio-cultural analysis. What her work does reinforce is that the idea of love was being discussed and contested in the interwar period, and this can clearly be seen in some of the psychological theories that took altruism as their central concern.

Institutionally, secular psychological discussion of altruism was served in part by the Tavistock Clinic. Founded by Hugh Crichton Miller in 1920, and staffed by eclectic depth psychologists, it became known as the 'Parson's clinic' for its emphasis on moral as well as psychological treatment.¹⁴⁰ Although the Tavistock Clinic had many religious affiliations it also acted as a centre for the discussion and dissemination of various new interpretations of psychoanalysis. This was in stark contrast to the British Psycho-Analytic Society, presided over by the dogmatic Freudian, Ernst Jones. In debates at the Tavistock and in the pages of the *British Journal of Medical Psychology* (the Tavistock was closely linked to the Medical Section of the British Psychological Society) the search for the psychological roots of idealistic love was reformulated into a formal developmental theory of altruism.¹⁴¹

Writing in the *British Journal of Medical Psychology* in 1932, David Eder took up some of Freud's ideas in *Civilisation and Its Discontents* (published in England in

¹⁴⁰ on the Tavistock clinic see H.V. Dicks, *50 Years of the Tavistock Clinic* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1985)

¹⁴¹ Between 1921 and 1934, three quarters of the articles published by the *British Journal of Medical Psychology* were concerned with psychodynamics, see Hearnshaw, *A Short*, p. 285

1930) and dismantled his own prior beliefs in individual freedom and improvement.¹⁴²

No longer was a new life of love something to be worked towards, Eder claimed it was simply a ‘myth of progress’ to make life more bearable:

We are born mad, acquire morality and become stupid and unhappy.

Then we die. This, the natural history of man under domestication, is so rigid a sequence under a variety of forms and changes in the patterns of civilisation, that mankind has invariably found it helpful to find a refuge in myths to relieve its perplexity and to mitigate its unhappiness.¹⁴³

As Mathew Thomson notes, the faith in progress required for Eder’s new humanism was fast disappearing in the interwar period and this was reflected in his psychoanalytic theorising. It has been argued that this introspective form of psychoanalysis was somehow indicative of the destructive tendencies of the period and also characterised much of the literature 1930s.¹⁴⁴ In *Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious* (1921), D.H. Lawrence blamed psychoanalysis itself for the post-war erosion of morality. However, rather than advocate the abandonment of analysis, Lawrence argued that notions of the unconscious and repression needed rethinking: ‘Psychoanalysis is wont, under a therapeutic disguise, to do away entirely with the moral faculty of man. It is time the white garb of the therapeutic coat was stripped off the psychoanalyst.... It is obvious that we cannot recover our moral footing until we can in some way determine that true nature of the unconscious’.¹⁴⁵ Although this study

¹⁴² M.D. Eder, ‘The Myth of Progress’, *British Journal of Medical Psychology*, vol. 12, (1932), pp. 1-14

¹⁴³ Eder, ‘The Myth’, p. 1

¹⁴⁴ L. Stonebridge, *The Destructive Element: British Psychoanalysis and Modernism* (London: Macmillan, 1998)

¹⁴⁵ D.H. Lawrence, *Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious* (New York: Thomas Seltzer, 1921), pp. 12-13 & 26

has found wider reasons for the interwar debates on the basis of altruism, Lawrence shows how psychoanalysis and the idea of the unconscious offered a new space for discussing morality. And it is to other contributors to the *British Journal of Medical Psychology* and their analysis of love that I now turn.

Associates of the Tavistock and contributors to the *British Journal of Medical Psychology*, the psychoanalysts Ian Suttie and Susan Isaacs elaborated psychoanalytic theories of altruism and they are acknowledged as key figures in the formation of Bowlby's thought. Bowlby recognised Suttie's ideas as precursors to his own, and he was to utilise Susan Isaacs' observations and theorising about child development in his *Personal Aggressiveness and War* (1939). In the work of Suttie and Isaacs Freudian theory was used to rationalise the post-World War I concerns. The reinstatement of altruism through a psychological or evolutionary understanding came to be viewed as an unconscious psychological process. They offered genetic and developmental theories of altruism that afforded a practical and secular means to unlock the psychological potential for love. In doing so, altruism and morality became constituted in scientific terms, requiring the skills of the psychoanalyst to be understood and enabled.

5. Ian Suttie and Susan Isaacs' Genetic Psychologies

Ian Suttie was born in Glasgow in 1889. He qualified in medicine and specialised in psychiatry at Glasgow University. In 1928 he moved to London to become a clinical assistant at the Tavistock Clinic. His theorising involved overhauling psychoanalysis and basing it around love rather than sex. The outcome was his *The Origins of Love*

and Hate (1935) published a few days after his death.¹⁴⁶ When the book was reissued in 1989 Bowlby supplied a foreword where he wrote that, ‘as an early contribution to an evolving discipline of personality development and psychopathology with an application in psychotherapy, Suttie’s *The Origins of Love and Hate* stands out as a milestone.’¹⁴⁷

Suttie’s ideas can be bracketed under two headings: first, his emphasis on love as the key to successful psychotherapy; and, second, his identification of love within ontogeny and phylogeny as rooted in the child’s need for their mother. Suttie’s view that successful psychotherapy required a bond of love between analyst and patient was probably taken from the controversial psychoanalytic ideas of Sandor Ferenczi whose work Jane Suttie, Ian’s wife, translated into English. However, Suttie did not share Ferenczi’s concept of love and his theorising was very much in the British tradition.

Suttie’s debts to the psychology of religion debates are obvious from his introduction, particularly his equating the emotion of tenderness with Christian love. This position was common to psychologies of religion. For example, Robert Thouless employed Shand’s notion of the sentiment of love to describe the origins of the religious experience. However, rather than see psychology as descriptive of or equivalent to the selflessness of a religious consciousness, Suttie looked for its unconscious underpinnings in both individual and social development. To this end he went onto propose an elaborate ‘dimorphic’ conception of nature and culture.

¹⁴⁶ see D. Heard, ‘Introduction: Historical Perspectives’, in I. Suttie, *The Origins of Love and Hate* (London: Free Association Books, 1988), pp. xvi-xl; Dorothy Heard is a psychoanalyst and is the niece of Suttie.

¹⁴⁷ J. Bowlby, ‘Foreword’, in I. Suttie, *The Origins*, pp. xvi-xvii

While David Eder had been dismissive of the importance of myth making in human history, Suttie saw myths as valuable in themselves and connected to human biology. He shared with Freud a belief in organic repression, but where Freud saw myth and morality as moderators of sexual behaviour, Suttie thought that (both ontologically and phylogenetically) we had undergone a repression of tenderness. We were, thought Suttie, suffering from a 'tenderness taboo'.¹⁴⁸ Suttie's theory was not an alternative to Freud. Freud's theory was recapitulatory because he believed that in individual development people recapitulate the *whole* of human history. In contrast, Suttie's theory was dimorphic because he believed that in individual development people recapitulate only part of phylogenetic evolution. Suttie thought that Freud had described the winning out of aggressive patriarchal mythology based upon selfish desires and had ignored matriarchal mythology. It was the tender, matriarchal mythology based upon the devotional idealistic love between mother and child that Suttie wished to resurrect. In this view the Christian belief in love was now part of unconscious human psychological nature. Altruism was the domain of the analyst and had to be negotiated in psychoanalytic terms.

Suttie believed his theory was compatible with contemporary approaches to biology and he was one of several thinkers who constructed a new genetic psychology, comparable to some present day understandings. As has been shown, nineteenth century genetic psychology, practised by James Sully amongst others, referred to the romantic identification of a state of innocence. In Suttie's formulation, although he looked back through history for the roots of tenderness, there was also his belief that this was being played out within the unconscious development of individuals. He did

¹⁴⁸ Suttie, *The Origins*, p. pp. 80-96; see also I. Suttie and J. Suttie, 'The Mother: Agent or Object?', *British Journal of Medical Psychology*, vol. 12(2), (1932), pp. 91-108

not refer to the principles of genetic inheritance of psychological states, but his ideas did contain the conceptual foundations of present day evolutionary psychology. This can also be seen in the work of Susan Isaacs, the contemporary of Suttie and colleague of John Bowlby.

Susan Isaacs is recognised as a prominent figure in the professionalisation of the child study movement of the 1930s. Indeed, following on from Margaret McMillan, she became an important figure in the Nursery School Association. Less has been written on how her conceptual model of development differed from other educationalists of the time.¹⁴⁹ She was not simply part of a movement stressing environmental over hereditary explanations of personality formation.¹⁵⁰ Rather, she offered a dimorphic model of development (almost identical to that of Suttie) which aimed to identify the root cause of sociability in childhood development.¹⁵¹ It was this model, and Isaacs' observations of developing children, recorded in her *Social Development in Young Children* (1933), that Bowlby employed in *Personal Aggressiveness and War*. Isaacs' work offers an excellent contrast to nineteenth century genetic psychology and with other important psychological theories of the 1920s and 30s, such as Kleinian psychoanalysis, North American behaviourism and Piaget's cognitive psychology.

Isaacs' *Social Development in Young Children* (1933) was based upon observations of children's behaviour that she made while running The Maltings school in

¹⁴⁹ For biographies of Isaacs see J. Sayers, 'Psychology and Psychoanalysis: the Case of Susan Isaacs', in G.C. Bunn, A.D. Lovie and G.D. Richards eds. *Psychology in Britain: Historical Essays and Personal Reflections* (Leicester: BPS Books, 2001), pp. 205-222; D.E.M. Gardner, *Susan Isaacs* (London: Methuen Educational Ltd, 1969); and L.A.H. Smith, *To Understand and to Help* (London: Associated Press, 1985)

¹⁵⁰ this is the explanation of R. Smith, *The Norton History of the Human Sciences* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1997), p. 625

¹⁵¹ on Isaacs and Suttie's collaboration see I. Suttie, M. Ginsberg, S. Isaacs, and T.H. Marshall, 'A Symposium on Property and Possessiveness', *British Journal of Medical Psychology*, vol. 15, (1935), pp. 51-83

Cambridge.¹⁵² ‘Running’ is perhaps a misnomer as Isaacs’ style was to allow the children to express themselves as freely as possible. Indeed this ‘authenticity’ is one of the reasons Bowlby would later find Isaacs’ work so useful.¹⁵³ Isaacs’ book was not primarily about education in the traditional sense. She responded to Bertrand Russell’s characterisation of her approach as the ‘application of psychoanalytic theory to education’ by stressing how her interest was psychological and not educational. In looking at the psychological she was responding to the children’s need to be *understood*.¹⁵⁴ This understanding Isaacs expressed in terms of Kleinian psychology.

Melanie Klein had visited England in 1925 to deliver a series of lectures and had paid a visit to Isaacs’ school.¹⁵⁵ The lectures later formed the basis of Klein’s *The Psychoanalysis of Children* (1932), in which she gave examples of childhood phantasies or instincts that form a child’s personality.¹⁵⁶ Isaacs, too, depicted her children as driven by phantasies, but her characterisation of them was markedly different from Klein, a difference that was shared by Bowlby. The main difference in Isaacs’ work was her emphasis on the importance of the ‘real’ social world in a child’s psychological development. While Klein saw phantasy as the child’s imposition of meaning upon the world, irrespective of the actual social world inhabited, Isaacs was concerned with how real phenomena, particularly sex/gender differences, became internalised. Prior to writing *Social Development* she had engaged in debates with the

¹⁵² S. Isaacs, *Social Development in Young Children* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1933). The Maltings School was established by the entrepreneur and inventor Geoffrey Pyke. Pyke would go on to become one of Lord Mountbatten’s chief scientific advisors during World War II; D. Lampe, *Pyke: The Unknown Genius* (London: Evans Brothers Ltd., 1959), pp. 36-58 & 95

¹⁵³ J. Bowlby and E.F.M. Durbin, *Personal Aggressiveness and War* (London: Routledge, Kegan Paul, 1939), p. 62. Others saw less reason to value Isaacs’ efforts (or lack of efforts). The psychoanalyst James Strachey mocked it and others referred to her school as a pre-genital brothel, see Sayers, ‘Susan Isaacs’, pp. 210-211

¹⁵⁴ Sayers, ‘Susan Isaacs’, p. 212

¹⁵⁵ *ibid.*, p. 212

¹⁵⁶ M. Klein, *The Psychoanalysis of Children* (London: Hogarth, 1932)

psychologists Jean Piaget and Karen Bridges. In doing so she employed an interactive model of development, stressing the need for a genetic understanding of psychology that did not detract from the value of emotions.

Isaacs' model of development can be seen initially as a contrast to the work of Jean Piaget and then in opposition to the North American interpretation of genetic psychology. In her first book about her school, *Intellectual Growth in Young Children* (1930), Isaacs took issue with the theories of a young Piaget, who was concerned with the developmental stages in a child's understanding of the world.¹⁵⁷ He pointed to distinct stages in cognitive development that determined how children organised their world. Because Piaget's model was not purely intra-psychic, but relied on the child's continual interaction with the world, Isaacs believed he paid insufficient attention to social instincts. On his theory she wrote:

....the social factor is thus the key to intellectual growth; but we are given no key to social development in its form. This has no explanation – it would seem to be itself the principle of explanation...No psychological genesis of the social instincts appearing at 7-8 years is offered. They are, presumably, the result of some biological process of maturation of the nervous system, and their roots are not to be sought in previous psychological happenings.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁷ S. Isaacs, *Intellectual Growth in Young Children* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1930). See also S. Isaacs, 'Review of *A Child's Conception of the World* by J Piaget', *Mind*, 38, (1929), pp. 506-513; 'Critical Review of Three Works by J. Piaget', *Journal of Genetic Psychology*, 36, (1929), pp. 597-609; 'Review of *The Child's Conception of Causality* by J. Piaget', *Mind*, 40, (1931), pp. 89-93; 'Review of *The Moral Judgement of the Child* by J. Piaget', *Mind*, 40, (1934), pp. 85-90, and Sayers, 'Susan Isaacs', pp. 211-2. On Piaget see F. Vidal, *Piaget Before Piaget* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1994)

¹⁵⁸ Isaacs, *Intellectual Growth*, p. 78

Isaacs thought the process of socialisation gradual and continuous and that it should be placed at the heart of any theory of intellectual development. Her subsequent book, *Social Development in Young Children*, aimed to tackle this issue head on. In doing so she set her work against that of a Canadian behaviourist, Katherine Bridges.

From 1925-8 Bridges was a Rockefeller funded psychologist of McGill University Nursery School. Her work was reported in *The Social and Emotional Development of the Pre-School Child* (1931) as part of the research programme of the Canadian National Committee for Mental Hygiene.¹⁵⁹ In it she looked to devise behaviour scales rather than the then fashionable mental scales. Her scales operated on two axes: social development and emotional development. The former being what children do, the latter what they express when they do it. While her social scale reflected contingent behaviour, her emotional scale she sought to explain in genetic terms.¹⁶⁰

Emotions, for Bridges, were hard to disentangle from one another. She could think of no distinct visceral patterns corresponding to any single emotion, for example, perspiration linked to fear and anxiety. Rather, she thought emotions should be seen as changes in the behaviour of the total personality.¹⁶¹ So she argued that it was difficult to determine from general observations what exactly constituted separate emotions.¹⁶² Following the behaviourist Watson, she believed that controlled experiments from a child's birth could establish how visceral, glandular and motor changes came to be

¹⁵⁹ K.M. Banham Bridges, *The Social and Emotional Development of the Pre-School Child* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner and Co., 1931). See also K.M. Bridges, 'A Genetic Study of the Emotions, 1930', *Journal of Genetic Psychology*, vol. 152 (4), (1991), pp. 487-99

¹⁶⁰ Bridges, *The Social*, 'Chapter XV – A Genetic Theory of the Emotions', pp. 198-211

¹⁶¹ *ibid.*, p. 198

¹⁶² *ibid.*, p. 203

associated to form what are commonly thought of as emotions: ‘The genetic theory of the emotions is thus that excitement, the undifferentiated emotion present at birth, becomes differentiated and associated with certain situations and motor responses to form the separate emotions of later life’.¹⁶³ This was not a genetic theory as it might be understood today, where genes are thought to give rise to specific behaviour patterns. It was an attempt to disentangle the multitude of ontogenetic processes that go into making up a behaving personality.¹⁶⁴

Isaacs thought Bridges’ material valuable and agreed that a genetic theory was necessary to make sense of her descriptions of children’s behaviour.¹⁶⁵ However, Isaacs disagreed with Bridges’ quantitative approach and her behaviourist interpretation. She denied the usefulness of scales, thinking quantitative perception a poor second to the ‘systematic scrutinising of the actual events *from the psychological point of view*’, (her italics).¹⁶⁶ For Isaacs, psychology was not about achieving a disinterested subjective understanding, but about connecting with children. This perspective made it impossible for Isaacs to accept Bridges’ mechanistic interpretation of emotion:

Moreover, the poverty of her interpretive theories actually makes it possible for her to suggest (apparently) that the specific emotions of fear and anger are not to be seen until two years of age. This seems

¹⁶³ *ibid.*, p. 201

¹⁶⁴ This conception of genetics goes back at least as far as the work of the American J.M. Baldwin. See R. Wozniak, ‘Metaphysics and Science, Reason and Reality: The Intellectual Origins of Genetic Epistemology’, in J.M. Broughton and D.J. Freeman-Moir eds., *The Cognitive-Developmental Theories of James Mark Baldwin: Current Theory and Research in Genetic Epistemology* (Norwood, New Jersey: Alex Publishing, 1982), pp. 13-45

¹⁶⁵ Isaacs, *Social Development*, p. 207

¹⁶⁶ *ibid.*, p. 6

again to be a case of eyes blinded by inadequate psychological theory.¹⁶⁷

Isaacs' interpretive genetic theory made use of Freud's notion of the unconscious mental life of children and adults. She admitted that her theory was ultimately derivative with adult relationships being understood as the result of earlier social interaction. But Isaacs thought relationships at home were irreducible to basic physiological processes, describing a child's relationship with their parents as special and placing an emphasis on early conflicts about a child's possible rivals at home.¹⁶⁸

Thus Isaacs' idea of genetic psychology was much more closely aligned to present evolutionary understandings. Children were vital, innately endowed organisms with social instincts at a temporal disjuncture to their environment. Her genetic psychology was not about appreciating childhood innocence, as had been Drummond and Sully's concern, but about actively seeking out the contingencies for loving and sociable childhood development. Furthermore, as Isaacs and Suttie elaborated their genetic theories within a Freudian framework we can see a reconfiguration of the idealism that had underlain prior theorising.

In Suttie's dimorphism and Isaacs' commitment to understand the children she taught, altruism ceased to be an a priori category and was, instead, conceived of as an unconscious process that had to be related and enabled by the analyst. Altruism had thus shifted from being an incontestable ideal within Victorian culture, to a desirable psychological state constructed by psychologists of religion in their attempts to

¹⁶⁷ *ibid.*, p. 10

¹⁶⁸ *ibid.*, p. 207

reaffirm the basis of morality, to being an unconscious process requiring the expertise of the psychoanalyst. We must now turn to how Bowlby came to and employed these psychoanalytic ideas of love in his own early personality theorising, before we can examine the social implications of this rationalised view of love.

Chapter 2: Bowlby in Search of Love

In 1925 John Bowlby entered Trinity College, Cambridge, and enrolled for the Natural Science Tripos.¹⁶⁹ This was intended to lead Bowlby to following in his father's footsteps, to become a distinguished surgeon.¹⁷⁰ The choice of career served a dual purpose: Bowlby thought it acceptable to his father and that he would be able to better people lives. Prior to entering Cambridge Bowlby wrote to his mother that he would, 'improve the community as a whole'.¹⁷¹ This cannot be regarded simply as the beginning of Bowlby's interest in medicine and psychiatry and the first step to constructing his attachment theory. In 1927 Bowlby gave up his plans to become a medical doctor and, after a year spent studying for the Moral Science Tripos, turned his back on his university education altogether. He never offered an explanation for this shift, and subsequent biographers have been no more forthcoming.¹⁷² It seems clear, however, that Bowlby went through a fundamental change in his social outlook, for the abandonment of his medical studies coincided with a change in his political views. During the General Strike of 1926 he had volunteered to help the Tory

¹⁶⁹ The Natural Science Tripos granted exemption from Parts I and II of the Bachelor of Medicine (M.B.); S. van Dijken, van der Veer, R., van Ijzendoorn, M. and Kuipers, H-J., 'Bowlby before Bowlby: the sources of an intellectual doctrine in psychoanalysis and psychology', *Journal of the History of the Behavioural Sciences*, vol. 34, no.3 (summer 1998) p. 248

¹⁷⁰ Bowlby's father, Sir Anthony Alfred, was a surgeon at St. Bartholomew's Hospital. Here he excelled, obtaining membership of the Royal College of Surgeons in 1879 and winning the Brackenbury scholarship in surgery in 1880. After holding a succession of offices he was appointed consulting surgeon in 1919. In 1920 he succeeded Sir George Makins as president of the RCS. His rise in the medical establishment was complemented by distinguished service to the monarchy and the army. He was awarded a knighthood in 1911 for his services to Edward VII and George V. By this time he was already a Major in the Army having served in the South Africa war in 1899. During World War I he was made Major-General and was largely responsible for the medical services of the British forces in France: *Dictionary of National Biography: the Concise Dictionary, Part 2 1901-1970* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), p. 97

¹⁷¹ S. van Dijken, *John Bowlby: His Early Life: A Biographical Journey into the Roots of Attachment Theory* (London: Free Association Books, 1998), p. 46

¹⁷² For Bowlby's lack of an explanation see M.J.E. Senn, 'Interview With Dr John Bowlby in London, England, 19th October, 1977', p. 1 Unpublished, National Library of Medicine, quoted in van Dijken, *John Bowlby*, p. 41

government, and was set manning an electricity generating system.¹⁷³ By 1927 he was a passionate Labour Party supporter. Thus, it was in the same year that he turned his back on the Tory Party and also turned his back on a conservative medical establishment.¹⁷⁴

After leaving Cambridge, Bowlby rejected a position as teacher at St. Paul's, a prestigious London boy's school, thinking the job too ordinary. Instead, he sought out teaching work in less conventional schools and, held his first appointment at Dunhurst, the Junior School of Bedales.¹⁷⁵ Here, Bowlby resolved to understand the work of educationalists: 'It is impossible to estimate the scope and value of work in education, work which has been touched on by most geniuses and has been taken for granted by all fools'.¹⁷⁶

Dunhurst could not afford to make him a full member of staff and Bowlby resigned after only 6 months.¹⁷⁷ The next post Bowlby found was at Priory Gate, Norfolk, a school for maladjusted children. Here Bowlby formed a lasting friendship with John Alford, a war veteran who had received some therapy from Homer Lane, an important figure for the institutionalisation and popularisation of psychoanalysis in Britain (see

¹⁷³ van Dijken, *John Bowlby*, pp. 44-5

¹⁷⁴ on the relationship between medicine and ideology in early twentieth century Britain see C. Lawrence, 'Incommunicable Knowledge: Science, Technology and the Clinical Art in Britain: 1850-1914,' *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol. 20 (1985), pp. 503-520; and 'Still Incommunicable: Clinical Holists and Medical Knowledge in Interwar Britain' in C. Lawrence and G. Weisz eds. *Greater than the Parts: Holism and Biomedicine 1920-1950* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 94-111. Bowlby's father is an archetype of the patrician London doctors described by Lawrence.

¹⁷⁵ van Dijken, *John Bowlby*, p. 48

¹⁷⁶ Bowlby writing to his mother in 1928; quoted in van Dijken et al., 'Bowlby before Bowlby', p. 251

¹⁷⁷ van Dijken, *John Bowlby*, p. 51

below).¹⁷⁸ It was Alford who encouraged Bowlby to complete his medical training and to become a psychiatrist and psychotherapist.¹⁷⁹

It was only after Bowlby resolved the crisis of his youthful idealism that he returned to medicine and began formulating the attachment theory for which he would later become famous. Bowlby's changing views on altruism are analogous to the changing conceptions of love that occurred in the preceding half century. In his life we see in microcosm the process by which ideas of love in Britain became rationalised. His abandonment of his Tory political beliefs and his Whiggish views of medicine came to be replaced by a search for the natural potential of love in the children he taught. After returning to medicine, Bowlby formalised this concern, constructing his theory of attachment; a theory that he would apply to the problems of juvenile delinquency and then to the socio-economic and political problems that faced Britain with the rise of fascism in the lead up to World War II.

1: Oxford, Progressive Schools and Medical Specialisation

There are many points of contact between Bowlby's changing views of love and the various people and institutions discussed in the previous chapter. An important contributory factor in Bowlby's abandonment of his medical studies was his encounter with friends of his elder brother, Tony, at Oxford University. Among these were the future Labour leader, Hugh Gaitskell, and Evan Durbin, with whom Bowlby would later write *Personal Aggressiveness and War* (1939). Discussion of Gaitskell and Durbin's socialist politics will be taken up in the next chapter. Here I want to

¹⁷⁸ on Lane see D. Wills, *Homer Lane: A Biography* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1964)

¹⁷⁹ van Dijken et al., 'Bowlby before Bowlby', p. 253

concentrate on how their views were related to the discussion of love and of groups that were prevalent at Oxford in the late 1920s. It was after meeting Durbin and Gaitskell that Bowlby's conception of altruism changed – signified by his giving up his medical studies and his Victorian sense of duty.

Evan Durbin (1906-1948) was an important figure in the Labour party until his untimely death, saving his daughter and a friend from drowning.¹⁸⁰ Because of this he has received scant historical attention; the exception being an exposition of his democratic socialist economics, written by his daughter Elisabeth, and a recent article by Stephen Brooke.¹⁸¹ Durbin's youth needs to be understood against his changing religious beliefs. His father had been a Baptist minister and a staunch Liberal supporter, and his mother the daughter of a Congregationalist divine. 'God and Mr Gladstone', he was to write of his childhood, 'I was uncertain which one was more important'.¹⁸² Although he abandoned his father's liberalism for socialism early in his life, Durbin maintained that in his youth orthodox religion was 'the kernel of my philosophy'. Writing in 1924, the year he entered New College, Oxford as a zoology student, Durbin thought there only two things of which he could be certain: 'this life is dark, we move in the gloom of unknowable, almost unthinkable mysteries, but shining clear through them all there are two great facts on which I stake my all, Christ's life and Christ's death'.¹⁸³ With this background it is not unreasonable to suppose that Durbin formed an opinion on the ideas of W.B. Selbie and the Oxford Group

¹⁸⁰ Durbin was one Labour MP's tip to be future Prime Minister, see S. Taylor, *A Natural History of Everyday Life: A Biographical Guide for Would-be Doctors of Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. 45

¹⁸¹ E. Durbin, *New Jerusalems: The Labour Party and Economics of Democratic Socialism* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1985); S. Brooke, 'Evan Durbin: Reassessing a Labour 'Revisionist'', *Twentieth Century British History*, vol. 7 (1996), pp. 27-52

¹⁸² quoted in P. Clarke, *Liberals and Social Democrats* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), p. 279

¹⁸³ Evan Durbin, 'Notebook, 1924', Durbin Papers, British Library of Political and Economic Science, (hereafter BLPES), 10/1

movement headed by Frank Buchman. Buchmanism did attract comment from other Oxford notables of the period such as the left-wing intellectual and future member of the Labour cabinet Richard Crossman, and the poet W.H. Auden.¹⁸⁴ Indeed, the influence of Buchmanism within the Labour movement has been a matter of some controversy.¹⁸⁵

Although it is not possible to know exactly what Durbin was thinking during this period, he did gradually abandon his orthodox religious beliefs in favour of an almost evangelical socialism. Along with Gaitskell, he is remembered for his devotion to character development and, as an Oxford contemporary put it, ‘a passion for improving the human race, beginning with me’.¹⁸⁶ Such sentiments are, of course, compatible with a number of social and political philosophies. It is, however, telling that both Durbin and Gaitskell set their views against the hedonism of the 1920s. Gaitskell would later recall how, with the General Strike, he turned his back on the frivolities of the period and became a serious minded student.¹⁸⁷ And Durbin, in a defence of utilitarianism, believed that it had, ‘...degenerated into the personal hedonism of the 1920s’.¹⁸⁸ Within this context Durbin and Gaitskell reaffirmed altruistic action and this was reflected in their politics.

¹⁸⁴ R. Crossman ed. *Oxford and the Groups: The Influence of the Groups Considered by Rev. G.F. Allen, John Maud and others* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1934)

¹⁸⁵ For conflicting accounts see P. Howard, *The World Re-Built: The True Story of Frank Buchman and the Men and Women of Moral Re-Armament* (London: Blandford Press, 1951), especially p. 42 and 132; and, playing down the importance of the MRA, the former Labour MP, Tom Driberg, *Mystery of Moral Re-armament* (London: Seeker and Warburg, 1964)

¹⁸⁶ J. Ornik, quoted in E. Durbin, *New Jerusalems*, p. 4

¹⁸⁷ H. Gaitskell, ‘At Oxford in the Twenties’, in A. Briggs and J. Saville eds. *Essays in Labour History* (London: Macmillan, 1967), pp. 6-19. For biographies of Gaitskell see P. Williams, *Hugh Gaitskell: A Political Biography* (London: Cape, 1979); and B. Brivati, *Hugh Gaitskell* (London: Richard Cohen Press, 1996)

¹⁸⁸ E.F.M. Durbin, *The Politics of Democratic Socialism* (London: George Routledge and Sons Ltd., 1940), p. 329

Durbin and Gaitskell's socialism found expression in their membership of a circle surrounding the economic historian G.D.H. Cole.¹⁸⁹ I will discuss the Cole group in the next chapter. It is only important here to note that at the key stage in Bowlby's career, in which he turned his back on medicine and conservatism, he was exposed to debates over the basis of altruism and aligned himself with Durbin and Gaitskell's political commitment.

After abandoning his medical studies Bowlby sought out work in progressive or experimental education and this was yet another point where he encountered debates on the psychology of love. This form of education had become established in Britain in the 1890s, coinciding with the change in child labour laws. It addressed itself to moral development or the formation of the person. Originally built on a diverse range of theories from a variety of educationalists - Froebel, Pestalozzi, Montessori and Dewey – it can be seen how, as with academic psychology, the impact of psychoanalysis resulted in the interiorisation of some of these debates.

The Bedales school, where Bowlby was first employed, was founded by J.H. Badley in 1893 and had been set up in reaction to 'muscular' Christianity, with its bias towards the classics, and its obsession with public school team games. The emphasis was rather on learning by doing and enabling children to fulfil their individual potential.¹⁹⁰ In contrast, Bowlby's next appointment was at the more recently formed Priory Gate.

¹⁸⁹ The 'Cole Group', of which Durbin and Gaitskell were a part, was named such at a much later date. Margaret Cole writes that it was not unprecedented for tutors to meet with their students to discuss politics and this practice had been carried out by the historian and social critic, R.H. Tawney, for years before Cole began collecting students around him; M. Cole, *The Story of Fabian Socialism* (London: Heineman, 1961), pp. 208-9

¹⁹⁰ J.H. Badley, *Bedales: A Pioneer School* (London: Methuen and Co., 1923); A. Clarke, 'Dunhurst', in G. Brandreth and S. Henry eds. *John Haden Badley 1865-1967: Bedales School and its Founder* (The Bedales Society, 1967); and van Dijken, *John Bowlby*, p. 49

This school had been founded by Theodore James Faithfull and was run along the lines of the Order of Woodcraft Chivalry (a non-religious organisation founded by a Quaker who thought that World War I had destroyed the idealism of the scouts) mixed with some Freudian theory.¹⁹¹ It was closely linked to the psychoanalytical ideas of A.S. Neill who, after being treated by the anthropologist and psychoanalyst W.H.R. Rivers in World War I, used psychoanalysis to support his belief in non-repressive libertarian education.¹⁹² Neill's psychoanalytic ideas meshed with the Darwinian psychology of the American G. Stanley Hall and bio-psychology of Ernest Haeckel. Haeckel's 'Biogenetic Law' – a law that equated pre-adolescent development with phylogeny, and all subsequent individual development with the modern struggle to find new ways of evolving – underpinned the emergence of various naturalistic youth movements such as the Order of Woodcraft Chivalry.¹⁹³ Neill did not actually psychoanalyse students; this was, however, practiced by Homer Lane who saw analysis as a corrective in childhood development.

Homer Lane was an unconventional American who was invited to England by the Earl of Sandwich in 1913 to organise a reformatory school for delinquent children.¹⁹⁴ This was named the Little Commonwealth, and a book was published on the experiment by Elsie T. Bazely: *Homer Lane and the Little Commonwealth* (1928). Lane's ideas were introduced to Bowlby while he was teaching at Priory Gate, and we know that he read

¹⁹¹ van Dijken et al., 'Bowlby before Bowlby', p. 251; on post-imperialist youth movements and the Order of Woodcraft Chivalry see J. Webb, *The Occult Establishment* (La Salle, Illinois: Open Court Publishing, 1975)

¹⁹² R.D. Hinshelwood, 'Psychoanalysis in Britain: Points of Cultural Access, 1893-1918', *The International Journal of Psycho-analysis*, vol. 76, (1995), p. 145

¹⁹³ Webb, *The Occult*, pp. 81-88. On Haeckel see Stephen Jay Gould's *Ontogeny and Phylogeny* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1977), pp. 76-85

¹⁹⁴ Hinshelwood, 'Psychoanalysis in Britain', p. 144

Bazely's book along with Lane's *Talks to Parents and Teachers* (1928).¹⁹⁵ Although the experience may have led Bowlby to conceptualise educational issues in psychoanalytic terms, there is no indication that Bowlby chose to follow Lane's psychotherapy. Lane had been forced to disband the Little Commonwealth in 1918 following a scandal.¹⁹⁶ He then set up his own psychotherapeutic practice and became something of an iconic figure for intellectuals advocating, and practicing, a more liberal sexuality. Auden and Christopher Isherwood were among his followers.¹⁹⁷ There is no evidence that Bowlby subscribed to Lane's views on sexuality. In contrast, he took to the theme of the psychoanalysis of love as the panacea for society's ills, and returned to his medical studies.

Bowlby's state of mind when he returned to medicine at University College London in 1929 can be inferred from a letter he sent to the journal *The Nation and Athenæum*. In this, he addressed the issue of maternal mortality and argued for a radical reorganisation of medical teaching along specialist lines.¹⁹⁸ This is an indication of his belief in the rationalisation of medical and psychiatric practice. It did not mark his return to the conservative values that had characterised his initial medical studies. Rather, Bowlby's medical ideology aligned him with the left-wing socio-medical reformers such as Sir Arthur Newsholme and Bowlby's library contained a copy of his *Medicine and the State* (1932).¹⁹⁹ Newsholme, the Chief Medical Officer, had argued

¹⁹⁵ van Dijken, 'Bowlby before Bowlby', p. 53; H. Lane, *Talks to Parents and Teachers* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1928); and E. T. Bazely, *Homer Lane and the Little Commonwealth* (London: New Education Book Club, 1928)

¹⁹⁶ Hinshelwood, 'Psychoanalysis in Britain', p. 145

¹⁹⁷ see C. Isherwood, *Christopher and his Kind, 1929-1939* (London: Minerva, 1993), pp. 9-13

¹⁹⁸ J. Bowlby, 'Maternal Mortality', *The Nation and Athenæum*, vol. 48, (4th October, 1930), p. 12

¹⁹⁹ A. Newsholme, *Medicine and the State: The Relation Between the Private and Official Practice of Medicine with Special Reference to Public Health* (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd, 1932), Bowlby's copy is available from the Wellcome Library, London. On Newsholme see J.M. Eyler, *Sir Arthur Newsholme and State Medicine 1885-1935* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997)

that the specialisation of medical science had only worked because of an accompanying increase in human empathy.²⁰⁰

Bowlby's maintenance of his socialist beliefs after returning to medicine is further illustrated by his managing 'Bogey's Bar', a cafe in the basement of the Royal Hotel just off London's Russell Square (Bogey was Bowlby's nickname). The bar was the investment of Durbin and Gaitskell and was frequented by London's socialist intellectuals.²⁰¹ Thus, it appears Bowlby was committed to a state-led process of rationalisation for socialist ends. But the transposition of these ideas into psychoanalysis had begun with Bowlby starting his training at the Institute of Psycho-Analysis in 1929.

2: Psychoanalysis and Juvenile Delinquency

At the Institute of Psycho-Analysis Bowlby entered into personal analysis with Joan Riviere, a friend and associate of Melanie Klein. He disagreed with Riviere and Klein, thinking their teaching dogmatic, but when he qualified as a doctor in 1933 he was accepted for further psychoanalytic training.²⁰² Without access to Bowlby's training records it is difficult to know what transpired between himself, Riviere and Klein. In retrospect it is easy to understand how Bowlby's commitment to the professionalisation of medicine would conflict with Klein's use of her powers of

²⁰⁰ Newsholme, *Medicine and the State*, p. 31

²⁰¹ Brivati, *Hugh Gaitskell*, p. 30. Both Durbin and Gaitskell had moved to London around 1930 as economists at University College London.

²⁰² van Dijken et al., 'Bowlby before Bowlby', p. 255

persuasion as justification for her analytical insights.²⁰³ Bowlby's differences with Klein would later come to a head as he developed his views throughout the 1930s.

From 1933 Bowlby held several positions. As well as continuing his psychoanalytic training he joined the Maudsley Hospital, London, to specialise in psychiatry. Here he worked under the influential psychiatrist Aubrey Lewis and conducted research on personality types.²⁰⁴ This probably led him to begin a PhD under Cyril Burt, examining emotional classification of personalities.²⁰⁵ Little is known of this experience, except that he abandoned his research after two years.²⁰⁶ What is known, however, is that during this time Bowlby worked closely with Susan Isaacs who was a colleague of Burt's at the London County Council, and that he formed with her a lifelong friendship. We also know that Bowlby shared Burt's concern with juvenile delinquency. Later he held an honorary membership in the Institute for the Scientific Treatment of Delinquency, for whom he treated referrals to its Psychopath Clinic. During this time Bowlby also secured a half-time fellowship to work as a child psychiatrist at the London Child Guidance Clinic in Islington.²⁰⁷ It was on his work at the London Child Guidance Clinic that Bowlby first began to publish his ideas of childhood development.

²⁰³ for Klein and Riviere's individualistic interpretation of instincts of love see their *Love, Hate and Reparation* (London: Hogarth Press, 1937). On Riviere see A. Hughes ed., *The Inner World and Joan Riviere* (London: Karnac, 1991); on Klein, P. Grosskurth, *Melanie Klein: Her World and Work* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1986)

²⁰⁴ van Dijken et al., 'Bowlby before Bowlby', p. 255; on Lewis see M. Shepherd, *A Representative Psychiatrist: The Career, Contributions and Legacies of Sir Aubrey Lewis, [Psychological Medicine Monograph no. 10]* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986)

²⁰⁵ Bowlby and Burt's correspondence can be found in, 'PhD', Bowlby Papers, (CMAC), Wellcome Library (hereafter WL), PP/BOW/D.1. On Burt see L. Hearnshaw, *Cyril Burt: Psychologist* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1979)

²⁰⁶ van Dijken, *John Bowlby*, p. 71

²⁰⁷ van Dijken et al., 'Bowlby before Bowlby', pp. 256-261. On the Institute for the Scientific Treatment of Delinquency see E. Glover, *The Diagnosis and Treatment of Delinquency; Being a Clinical Report on the Work of the Institute During 5 Years 1937-1941* (London: ISTD, 1941)

Child guidance clinics first began to appear in England in the 1920s.²⁰⁸ There were multiple reasons for the creation of these clinics, but the primary motive was money from the American Commonwealth Fund. The fund believed in the prevention of delinquency through early psychological intervention.²⁰⁹ Thus was the London Child Guidance Clinic created in 1928.²¹⁰ Bowlby's work on delinquency was substantial and the context within which it was created shaped his ideas in at least two important ways.²¹¹ First, the clinics' brief to prevent juvenile delinquency through early intervention created a space for a psychological investigation of childhood behaviour. This, however, is not enough to explain the constitution of Bowlby's theorising since alternative formulations were wide ranging. The genesis of his ideas is better explained by the socio-cultural developments referred to in Chapter 1.²¹² Bowlby argued that delinquency stemmed from early childhood experiences, in particular separation from the mother through death or a broken home. Unlike in the Victorian psychological model, where morality was a product of the will inhibiting undesirable traits, Bowlby viewed moral and altruistic behaviour as rooted in the unconscious and developing through 'natural' family relations.

²⁰⁸ see N. Rose, *The Psychological Complex* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1985), pp. 176-219; and D. Thom, 'Wishes, Anxieties, Play and Gestures: Child Guidance in Inter-war England', in R. Cooter ed., *In the Name of the Child: Health and Welfare 1880-1940* (London: Routledge, 1992), pp. 200-219

²⁰⁹ Thom, 'Wishes, Anxieties', p. 206. On the Commonwealth Fund see A. McGee Harvey and S. Abrams, *"For the Welfare of Mankind": The Commonwealth Fund and American Medicine* (London: John Hopkins University Press, 1986)

²¹⁰ Thom, 'Wishes, Anxieties', p. 207

²¹¹ See J. Bowlby, 'The Abnormally Aggressive Child', *The New Era*, (1938); 'Hysteria in Children', in H. Milford ed. *A Survey of Child Psychiatry* (London: Oxford University Press, 1939), pp. 80-94; 'Substitute Homes', *Mother and Child*, X(1), (1939), pp. 3-7; 'Jealous and Spiteful Children', *Home and School*, IV(5), (1939), pp. 83-5; 'The Influence of the Early Environment in the Development of Neurosis and Neurotic Character', *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, vol. 21, (1940), pp. 154-178; 'Forty-four Juvenile Thieves: Their Characters and Home Life', *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, vol. 25, (1944), pp. 1-57 & 207-228; and 'Childhood and the Origins of Recidivism', *The Howard Journal*, vol. 7(1), (1945-6), pp. 30-33.

²¹² An example of an alternative approach to the prevention of delinquency can be found in Cyril Burt, *The Young Delinquent* (London: University of London Press, 1925)

Second, and more significantly, Bowlby's work on delinquency set his theories in a politico-legal framework. Explicitly, this linked his ideas to the needs of the state, a connection I will explore in Chapter 5, with regard to the evacuation of children during wartime.

Bowlby's work for the London Child Guidance Clinic culminated in the publication of two articles in the *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*. The first of these, 'The Influence of the Early Environment in the Development of Neurosis and Neurotic Character', he read to the British Psycho-Analytic Society in 1939 in order to qualify for voting rights.²¹³ This brought him into direct confrontation with Melanie Klein and her followers. He caricatured Kleinian psychology for paying insufficient attention to the environment. Childhood development, he argued, was not purely intra-psychic, but was characterised by social interaction with the world, particularly through parents. Isaacs' defence of Bowlby cemented their personal and professional alliance. Later he would draw upon her work when, with Evan Durbin, he started to extend his psychoanalytical theorising to international relations.

3: Personal Aggressiveness and War

When the storm clouds of war gathered over Europe for the second time in the twentieth century, Bowlby turned his attention away from domestic issues of juvenile delinquency and applied his growing understanding of social interaction to the international arena. Together with Durbin, he brought psychoanalytic, anthropological and zoological findings to bear upon the recently witnessed violence in Spain and

²¹³ see van Dijken et al., 'Bowlby before Bowlby', pp. 261-263. Bowlby's opinion of the members of the British Psycho-analytic Society can be seen in 'Notes on Members of the British Psychoanalytic Society 1935-1945', Bowlby Papers, (CMAC), WL, PP/BOW/G.1/8

Germany.²¹⁴ In their book, *Personal Aggressiveness and War* (1939), Bowlby and Durbin found the evidence for the innate psychological potential of love in humans in the work of the zoologist, Solly Zuckerman, and in the psychoanalytic observations of Susan Isaacs.²¹⁵

Zuckerman had begun the research for *The Social Life of Monkeys and Apes* (1932) in his native South Africa, looking at baboon colonies in the wild. Upon moving to England he had been encouraged by members of the scientific community, such as Julian Huxley, to continue his work. His book was one of the first attempts to systematically study the behaviour of primates, a necessary preliminary stage in order to achieve a scientific understanding of man, Zuckerman maintained. Too often, he noted, theories on the origin of human nature were based on nothing more than anecdotal accounts of the lives of other primates.²¹⁶

Zuckerman distanced himself from previous anthropomorphic attempts to understand animals. Instead, he sided with the philosopher and biologist Jacques Loeb, and his psychologist disciple Edward Thorndike.²¹⁷ Loeb had attacked the psychological method of introspection and believed the way to establish a science of animals and man was through controlled experiments of their overt behaviour.²¹⁸ In common with

²¹⁴ Bowlby's notes for this project can be found in, 'Personal Aggressiveness and War', Bowlby Papers, (CMAC), WL, PP/BOW/K.1

²¹⁵ J. Bowlby and E.F.M. Durbin, *Personal Aggressiveness and War* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench and Trubner and Co. Ltd, 1939). While the book was co-authored, the appendix in which the scientific evidence is discussed was the sole work of Bowlby. On Zuckerman see his autobiography S. Zuckerman, *From Apes to Warlords: The Autobiography (1904-1946) of Solly Zuckerman* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1978)

²¹⁶ S. Zuckerman, *The Social Life of Monkeys and Apes* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner and Co. Ltd., 1932), p. 8

²¹⁷ Zuckerman, *The Social Life*, p. 10

²¹⁸ On Jacques Loeb see P.J. Pauly, *Controlling Life: Jacques Loeb and the Engineering Ideal in Biology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987). For a literary representation of Loeb as the founder of the modern mechanistic conception of life see Sinclair Lewis's *Arrowsmith* (New York: Grosset and

Loeb and his psychologist followers, Zuckerman thought overt behaviour could be explained in terms of physiological processes which go to make up a reflex.²¹⁹ The development of complex behaviour was the result of the interaction of the form of the organism, a few innate reflexes that aided reproduction and survival, plus the environment.²²⁰ At this time Zuckerman did not believe his findings could contribute to human sociology as man's capacity for language, and the cultural phenomena this enabled, were beyond the scope of biology. It was not until 1962 that the primatologist Robert Altmann built upon Zuckerman's work by integrating semiotics into the study of animal behaviour, laying the basis for the controversial discipline of sociobiology.²²¹ However, in the context of interwar Britain, moves were already being made for biology to play a prominent role in consolidating human values. This can clearly be seen in the work of Julian Huxley.

In his autobiography Julian Huxley recalled how his philosophy of science came to him in America while recovering from a breakdown:

My nervous breakdown in 1912, due to my unresolved conflicts about sex, had inflicted on me 'the dark night of the soul', in which all sense of fruitful communion, in human love, or with natural and man-made-beauty, and even in fruitful moral and intelligent co-operation, went

Dunlape, 1924) and for discussion of this see I. Lowy, 'Immunology and Literature in the Early Twentieth Century: *Arrowsmith* and *The Doctor's Dilemma*', *Medical History*, 32, (1988), pp. 314-332. For discussion of Loeb's influence on psychology and for a wider consideration of how his philosophy continues to entice and frustrate present day biologists see R.C. Lewontin, 'The Science of Metamorphoses' in his, *It Ain't Necessarily So: The Dream of the Human Genome and Other Illusions* (London: Granta, 2001), pp. 109-132. For a eulogistic account of the work of Thorndike see G. Jonçich, *The Sane Positivist: A Biography of Edward L. Thorndike* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1968)

²¹⁹ Zuckerman, *The Social Life*, p. xii

²²⁰ *ibid.*, pp. 20-22

²²¹ see D. Haraway, *Primate Visions* (London: Routledge, 1989), pp. 106-7

overboard. The essential religious feeling of oneness with nature, with art and fellow human beings, was lost. Even the consolation of work denied me.

I gradually recovered my normality in Texas....I read the essays of Lord Morley, where he affirmed....that 'the next great task of science will be to create a religion for humanity'. He stressed that writers and artists as well as scientists could play their part in this transformation.

Earlier my aunt Mary Ward's book, *Robert Elsmere*, had made a deep impression on me, and help convert me to what I must call a religious humanism, but without a belief in a personal God.²²²

Huxley's debt to the nineteenth century idealists for his conception of progress has been acknowledged by historians.²²³ However, his work in the interwar years contrasted starkly with earlier attempts to reconcile Darwinian thought to Christianity. This can partly be explained by his writings during World War I. After Huxley recovered from his breakdown he became head of the Department of Biology at Rice University in America. Here, in the midst of the Great War he set about constructing an evolutionary theory that could unite humanity, replacing all the conflicting 'creeds'

²²² J. Huxley, *Memories*, vol. 1 (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1978), p. 153

²²³ See for instance P. Bowler, *Reconciling Science and Religion: The Debate in Early Twentieth Century Britain* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), pp. 150-3. For differing accounts of how Huxley's cultural values shaped his evolutionary view of progress see J.C. Greene, *Science, Ideology and World View* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981); J.C. Greene, 'The Interaction of Science and World View in Sir Julian Huxley's Evolutionary Biology', *Journal of the History of Biology*, vol. 23, (1990), pp. 39-55; W. B. Provine, 'Progress in Evolution and Meaning in Life', M.H. Nitecki ed., *Evolutionary Progress* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), pp. 49-74; J.R. Durant, 'Julian Huxley and the Development of Evolutionary Studies', in M. Keynes and G. A. Harrison eds., *Evolutionary Studies: A Centenary Celebration of the Life of Julian Huxley* (London: Macmillan, 1989), pp. 26-40; R.M. Gascoigne, 'Julian Huxley and Biological Progress', *Journal of the History of Biology*, vol. 24, (1991), pp. 433-455; V.B. Smocovitis, 'Unifying Biology: The Evolutionary Synthesis and Evolutionary Biology', *Journal of the History of Biology*, vol. 25, (1992), pp. 40-43; and C. Divall, 'From a Victorian to a Modern: Julian Huxley and the English Intellectual Climate', in C.K. Walters and A. Van Helden eds., *Julian Huxley: Biologist and Statesman of Science* (Houston: Rice University Press, 1993), pp. 31-44

– religions, capitalism, socialism, imperialism, nationalism, scientism – that had created such international disharmony.²²⁴ He advocated state planning through ‘a common theory of life’, greater political power for scientists and engineers, and eugenic measures for the control of the future of human hereditary.²²⁵

Unlike in the work of Henry Drummond, where evolution was a continuous process towards a spiritual end, Huxley’s evolutionary idealism was set in a belief that human beings’ had an evolved capacity for consciousness and this allowed them to direct the future course of evolution. During the interwar years Huxley developed a belief that large scale evolution had come to an end and that a point had been reached where man was the ‘trustee’ for future evolutionary progress.²²⁶

This belief led Huxley to advocate eugenics as the conscious and scientific understanding of heredity to control the direction of human evolution.²²⁷ He also looked to understand and control the biological basis of behaviour.²²⁸ Along with Zuckerman, Huxley was instrumental in the establishment of the Institute for the Study

²²⁴ M. Swetlitz, ‘Julian Huxley and the End of Evolution’, *Journal of the History of Biology*, vol. 28, (1995), p. 184

²²⁵ Huxley’s early views on evolutionary progress are discussed in Swetlitz, ‘Julian Huxley’, pp. 184-185. Huxley justified his arguments by citing the H.G. Wells’ edited, *Socialism and the Great State* (New York: Harper, 1911). However, the war formed the principle basis of his views; Swetlitz cites the following papers from the Julian Huxley archive as evidence: Julian Huxley, ‘Biology, the Individual and the State’ (1916), box 57, folder 6, Julian Sorrell Huxley Papers, Foundren Library Rice University Houston, Texas (Hereafter JSHP); ‘Biology and War’ (1916), box 57, folder 6, JSHP; ‘Notebook on Religion’ (1916-17), box 56, folder 8, JSHP; ‘Letters to Beloved’ (1917), box 58, folder 1, JSHP; and ‘Wanted – Unity of Political Command’ (1918), box 58, folder 6, JSHP

²²⁶ see M. Swetlitz, ‘Julian Huxley’, pp. 181-217

²²⁷ On Huxley and eugenics see J. Huxley, ‘Marriage and Eugenics’, in A. Forbath ed., *Love, Marriage, Jealousy* (London: Pallas Publishing, 1938), pp. 289-323

²²⁸ Simon Frankel, a historian of science, argues that Huxley early ornithological investigations, focussing mainly on monogamous birds, were structured by his conservative and patriarchal attitudes. These studies, supposedly disproving the notion of female ‘choice’ in mating, were used to undermine claims for the sexual selection model of evolution, supporting instead Huxley’s favoured natural selection model. However, as we have seen, Huxley’s position was not really natural selectionist at this time. And his attitudes towards sex were not really conservative, but confused. S. J. Frankel, ‘The Eclipse of Sexual Selection’, in R. Porter and M. Teich eds. *Sexual Knowledge, Sexual Science: The History of Attitudes to Sexuality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 158-183. On Huxley’s sexuality see Huxley, *Memories*, p. 54, 74 & 153

of Animal Behaviour (ISAB) in 1936.²²⁹ Although it reflected the many different aspirations and theoretical inclinations of its members, the ISAB did lay the foundation for the British school of ethology that Bowlby would draw upon in his theorising.²³⁰

Huxley's notion of control differed from the American ideas employed by Zuckerman. Huxley equated control with consciousness and when he applied his philosophy of science to human psychology he could employ the notion of the unconscious to give him his subject matter. Thus, Huxley could draw on Freud when considering the violence of the 30s, believing aggression to be the product of unconscious primitive forces, and remain true to his 'trustee' model of evolution.²³¹ This perspective is also evident in Bowlby's theorising.

Bowlby saw Zuckerman's observations of the behaviour of monkeys and apes as the means to grasp what was essential to all primates, humans included. Along with Huxley, but unlike Zuckerman, Bowlby saw no sharp divide between human culture and primate nature. Instead, he saw human culture as distinct from, but interacting with, primitive instincts active in the human unconscious. This was similar to the dimorphism proposed by Ian Suttie and the model of evolution which was to underlie the later notion of the Environment of Evolutionary Adaptedness which is discussed in the introduction of this thesis. Bowlby's emphasis on understanding purposeful, innately endowed organisms was thus clearly in place before his reading of Konrad

²²⁹ The importance of Gerald Heard, the writer on the evolution of consciousness (discussed in Chapter 1), in mediating between Huxley and Zuckerman has yet to be systematically explored. On Zuckerman's opinion of Heard see Zuckerman, *From Apes to Warlords*, pp. 49-51. For Huxley on Heard see Huxley, *Memories*, p. 207

²³⁰ On the establishment of the ISAB see J.R. Durant, 'The Making of Ethology: The Association for the Study of Animal Behaviour, 1936-1986', *Animal Behaviour*, vol. 34, (1986), pp. 1601-1616

²³¹ J. Huxley, 'Peace through Science', in S. Jameson ed. *Challenge to Death* (London: Constable and Co. Ltd., 1934); p. 297

Lorenz's *King Solomon's Ring* (1952), the point at which most biographers see Bowlby's adoption of an ethological perspective.

Bowlby justified the suitability of using Zuckerman's study to prove the inherent qualities of man by noting that humans shared with other primates basic physiological processes and related social structures. These social structures were organised around the biological potential of both males and females for mating at any time. Unlike other mammals who have a mating season, or who only mate when the female of the species is on heat, primates, humans included, were held together by a permanent heterosexual interest which formed the basis of family life: 'The male retains possession of his female or females, has frequent intercourse with them all the year round, and consequently is a father socially as well as biologically'.²³² It followed from this that primates, humans included, had basic sexual and parental instincts that enabled these social structures to function.

As a corollary to basic sexual and parental instincts Bowlby found evidence in Zuckerman's work for other elemental instincts, notably male aggression and dominance.²³³ Aggression enabled the males to secure wives and food, while dominant behaviour enabled a stable social organisation that was not constantly threatened by violent extinction. To strengthen the case that studies of primates were suitable for understanding human behaviour, Bowlby noted that the same instincts and social structures could be seen among 'simpler peoples'. Pointing to a study by the anthropologists L. T. Hobhouse, G.C. Wheeler and Morris Ginsberg, *The Material Culture and Social Institutions of Simpler Peoples* (1915), Bowlby described how in

²³² Bowlby, *Personal Aggressiveness*, p. 53

²³³ *ibid.*, pp. 55-8

societies without government the basic social structure is that of enlarged families in which the most frequent source of fighting is over the possession of women.²³⁴ He also saw this state of nature in the behaviour of children who, he felt, were more direct and honest in their expression of feelings than adults.²³⁵ Although children did not exhibit aggression over the possession of sexual partners, Bowlby argued that one of the principal causes of childhood violence were situations that threatened the loss of affection.²³⁶ In order to prove this he drew upon the work of Isaacs, in particular her study *Social Development in Young Children* (1933). In doing so Bowlby recast people's evolutionary past as part of the human unconscious. For example, he cited Isaacs' work to support his claim that children fight when they are in situations which threaten the loss of possessions or affection, and when they experience anxiety or frustration over the accomplishment of a task.²³⁷ After giving various examples from Isaacs' book Bowlby concluded that, like apes, the most intense aggressive behaviour in children resulted from a rivalry for possession of a female:

....perhaps the most important objects of which a child wants possession are the people who afford him pleasure and whom he loves. In this respect children are very much like apes who, as Zuckerman says, treat females fundamentally as material objects. Isaacs notes that aggressive behaviour from the motive of rivalry for the possession of a

²³⁴ *ibid.*, pp. 59-61. L.T. Hobhouse, G.C. Wheeler, and M. Ginsberg, *The Material Culture and Social Institutions of Simpler People* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1965), first published 1915. On Hobhouse's liberal sociology see S. Collini, *L.T. Hobhouse and Political Argument in England 1880-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979)

²³⁵ Bowlby, *Personal Aggressiveness*, p. 62

²³⁶ *ibid.*, p. 64

²³⁷ *ibid.*, pp. 62-72

person was both more frequent and gave rise to more acute tension of feeling than did rivalry over material possessions.²³⁸

Although children did not fight over the possession of wives they seemed to be endowed with the same instinct to defend the attentions of females. Bowlby, honouring a statement in *Personal Aggressiveness* that future research should focus upon this link, would later elaborate this theme and help promote work that aimed to show how people and other primates shared the same instinct for maternal affection.²³⁹

Bowlby's discussion of childhood development reveals how Isaacs' model of social development was compatible with his own instinctive model. In both cases the crucial factor in development was the interaction of social dispositions – unconscious primitive desires - with a real environment. Isaac's model of development fitted with Bowlby's claims that our evolutionary past, evident in Zuckerman's studies of primates, was a key factor in ontological childhood development.

Although *Personal Aggressiveness and War* dwelt only on the causes of violence, Bowlby's early conceptual model was also the basis of his more refined work on attachment. In 1939 he had already identified the significance of the mother-child bond, and he employed a conception of nature and culture whereby human instincts, understood as unconscious reworkings of our evolutionary past, were separate from

²³⁸ *ibid.*, p. 65

²³⁹ Harry Harlow's famous experiments with the wire and cloth chimpanzee 'mothers' was conceived after a conversation with Bowlby, see H. Harlow, *Love in Infant Monkeys* (San Francisco, 1959), reprinted from *Scientific American*, (1959), and D. Haraway, *Primate Visions*, pp. 235-240. For discussion of Harlow see D. Blum, *Love at Goon Park: Harry Harlow and the Science of Affection* (Chichester: Wiley, 2002). Bowlby would play an instrumental role in helping the ethologist Robert Hinde set up a Medical Research Council Unit to study these issues, see Bowlby Papers, 'Application', Autumn 1958, (CMAC), WL, PP/BOW/B.3/18, 'Letter from Hinde to Sir Harold Himsworth', 23rd Oct., 1963, (CMAC), WL, PP/BOW/B.3/18

but interacted with social institutions. This incomplete division of nature and culture underlay his later notion of the EEA.

As well as marking an important conceptual milestone, Bowlby's work also points to the fact that, in the context of interwar Britain, altruism was increasingly being contested as a psychological phenomenon. The moral faculty of human beings was in the domain of psychoanalyst and this had important social implications. These can be explored by looking at how Bowlby used his rationalised conception of love to ground his and Durbin's wider political and socio-economic claims.

Chapter 3: Love's Labour's Found

In the previous chapters it has been argued that, with World War I, ideas of altruistic love became rationalised. Increasingly altruism came to be seen as lost in mankind's evolutionary past, and a psychological understanding of its roots sought to reinstate the previously unquestioned commitment to altruism. The rationalisation of love culminated in the psychological theorising of Ian Suttie, Susan Isaacs and then John Bowlby. In their model of individual development it was the early interaction of basic social instincts, understood as unconscious urges from our evolutionary past, which formed the basis of personality development. The mother-child bond was already being considered as an important factor in the development of an altruistic personality; as evident in Suttie's dimorphism and in Bowlby and Isaacs's view of the mother as an object to be possessed. This view of altruism was not confined to clinical psychological settings. Indeed, the context within which it was conceived - as a solution to the crisis of national identity - and the fact that the theory emphasised the ubiquity of these social instincts, provided compelling reasons for its extension to wider social problems. It was not only Bowlby's psychology that was thus underpinned; a great deal of political and socio-economic thought in interwar Britain was similarly informed and it supported a tightly packaged democratic socialist ideology.

It has already been stressed how Bowlby's encounter with his elder brother's friends from Oxford University was pivotal in shaping his social and psychological outlook. It was noted how both Evan Durbin and Hugh Gaitskell committed themselves to a socialist cause in opposition to the hedonism of the period. It can be speculatively

argued that this framed their view of altruism such that they viewed it as a natural potentiality. Oxford also provided a context for the establishment of a political platform in which ideas of rationalised love could figure. This chapter elaborates on the political thinking of Bowlby's sometime collaborator Evan Durbin and examines how Oxford provided him with an institutional base for the propagation of political and socio-economic ideas based on rationalised love. Durbin held a prominent place in a group surrounding the socialist and economic historian, G.D.H. Cole. This group concerned itself with rethinking socialist ideology and, to this end, founded the New Fabian Research Bureau (NFRB) and the Socialist Society for Inquiry and Propaganda (SSIP) in 1931. The function of the NFRB was to examine long-term socialist policy and Bowlby and Durbin both became members. The culmination of this work can be seen in *Personal Aggressiveness and War* and in Evan Durbin's *The Politics of Democratic Socialism* (1940). Durbin's centre-left treatise employed his and Bowlby's work on aggressiveness to support his vision of the future of socialism. This chapter examines the place of psychologies of love within this political orientation.

1: G.D. H. Cole's Group

While at Oxford Durbin made many friends who shared a similar political outlook. Among them were G.D.H. and Margaret Cole who, at this time, were concerned with reformulating collectivist socialist ideology. The period between 1929 and 1933 has recently been described as 'The Age of Cole' because of the impact he had upon the British Labour movement in this period.²⁴⁰ Understanding Cole's work, the context in

²⁴⁰ N. Riddell, 'The Age of Cole'? G.D.H. Cole and the British Labour Movement 1929-1933', *The Historical Journal*, 38(4), (1995), pp. 933-957

which he operated, and Durbin's place in the ensuing debates reveals how space was created for rationalised ideas of love to find a place in mainstream politics.

G.D.H. Cole had spent much of the 1920s in an intellectual wilderness. His pluralistic notion of guild socialism, developed from 1910 to 1922, had been conceived in opposition to Fabian collectivism and stressed the need to establish a direct democracy based upon the ideas of Rousseau. Although a number of guild committees were created in 1919, several factors contrived to rob the movement of the trade union support it required to maintain its impetus. The Russian Revolution led to serious splits within the National Guilds League and the formation of the Communist party in Britain divided the loyalties of former supporters. The recession of the early 20s, moreover, meant that long-term goals gave way to more immediate priorities.²⁴¹

The historian N. Riddell argues that by 1923 Cole was 'ideologically stranded' and that he retreated into academia. This is confirmed by a diary entry of Beatrice Webb:

Cole...has lost all touch with other people and has no spiritual home in, or outside of the Labour movement. Politically, he is a lost soul - the older men have ceased to fear him; the younger men no longer look up to him.... He still trots out his 'worker's control' - but in a disheartened fashion, without conviction that anybody cares about it.²⁴²

With the failure of the General Strike of 1926 demonstrating the limits of the direct trade union action he had previously advocated, Cole gradually moved back towards

²⁴¹ Riddell, 'The Age', p. 936-7

²⁴² Beatrice Webb's diary, 17th May 1924, Passfield Papers, BLPES. Quoted in Riddell, 'The Age', p. 937

the Labour party and its Fabian collectivist philosophy. He rejoined the Fabian Society in 1928, and by 1929 was arguing the Labour Party should seek independence from the unions. However, the precise nature of Cole's beliefs at this time is a matter of some contention.

A.W. Wright has argued that Cole's views did not change fundamentally. He notes that his principle work in this period, *The Next Ten Years in Social and Economic Policy* (1929), reflected only an acceptance of state intervention as a necessity to counter economic problems and the threat of fascism.²⁴³ In contrast, Riddell points out that Cole now conceived the psychology of the working class to be less dominated by their workplace and less political than he had once thought and hoped.²⁴⁴ Furthermore, and following on from his first shift in emphasis, Cole now saw it as the job of government experts to run industry, rather than the workers and the unions. Because of this Cole was to argue that the socialisation of banking and finance were more important for the Labour government than the nationalisation of industry. This, he thought, would enable the government to aid suffering industries and create new ones.²⁴⁵

While establishing his new ideological package, Cole set about recruiting support for his opposition to the government of Ramsay MacDonald. This government, Cole felt, was unable to effectively tackle the problem of unemployment. He founded the New Fabian Group, to 'rally the young men, among whom there is some excellent

²⁴³ A.W. Wright, *G.D.H. Cole and Socialist Democracy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), pp. 119-122; G.D.H. Cole, *The Next Ten Years of Social and Economic Policy* (London: Macmillan, 1929)

²⁴⁴ Riddell, 'The Age', pp. 939-940. For discussion of the meshing of liberalism and socialism in the interwar years see M. Freeden, *Liberalism Divided: A Study in British Political Thought, 1914-1939* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1986), especially pp. 294-328. Freeden notes how some debates on political psychology were structured around the belief that liberal notions of individuality and the self were so strong in British culture that an introduction of radical socialism was impossible.

²⁴⁵ Riddell, 'The Age', p. 941

stuff...and get some decent Socialist literature instead of ILP (Independent Labour Party) or Mosley amateur claptrap'.²⁴⁶ Durbin attended the group's initial meetings, held at Easton Lodge in Essex, and it appears that he was part of the 'excellent stuff' to which Cole referred.²⁴⁷

The meetings of the New Fabian Group quickly led to the establishment of the New Fabian Research Bureau (NFRB) to examine long term policy and the Socialist Society for Inquiry and Propaganda (SSIP) to spread the findings of the NFRB and promote discussion of them within the Labour movement.²⁴⁸ Having received the approval of the Webbs, the two bodies were formally established in 1931. Cole wrote of the NFRB that:

The Bureau does not promise immediate results. It is setting out on a programme of research meant to be spread over a considerable period of time, and it is setting out to do this work patiently...conscious that what the Labour movement needs above all is the constant expansion and adaptation of policy in the light of changing conditions, on a basis of accurate research and collection of available experience.²⁴⁹

²⁴⁶ Cole to Beatrice Webb, 9th Dec. 1930, BLPES, Passfield Papers, II/4. Quoted in Riddell, 'The Age', p. 947

²⁴⁷ S. Brooke, 'Evan Durbin: Reassessing a Labour 'Revisionist'', *Twentieth Century British History*, vol. 7 (1996), p. 33. The village of Little Easton, in which the lodge resided, was the home of an intriguing mixture of intellectuals. H.G. Wells lived there after the First World War and it became fictionalised as Matching Easy in his *Mr Britling sees it Through* (1916). In the 1930s it was the home of the economist, Harold Laski, the psychoanalyst, John Strachey, and the editor of the *New Statesman*, Kingsley Martin. Indeed, Martin dedicated a chapter of his autobiography to it. The lodge itself was owned by an eccentric socialist, Daisy, Countess of Warwick, who cared more for animals than human beings. It is a remarkable fact, given future developments, that she kept monkeys in large cages near the lodge and would complain of what a nuisance it was having to get up in the night to stop them fighting. See K. Martin, 'Chapter 5: The Cottage', in K. Martin, *Editor: A Second Volume of Autobiography, 1931-1945* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1969), pp. 124-143. On Martin see C.H. Rolph, *Kingsley. The Life, Letters and Diaries of Kingsley Martin* (London: Gollancz, 1973)

²⁴⁸ Riddell, 'The Age', p. 947-948

²⁴⁹ Cole, quoted *ibid.*, p. 948

The creation of the NFRB was the perfect platform from which Bowlby and Durbin could argue for the integration of a rationalised love into mainstream politics and both became early members. First, the bureau was based on the Fabian model of state collectivism. Second, as the above quotation illustrates, it was technocratic with a commitment to experts running industry and, following on from this, the application of social science. And last but not least, it was based on the premise that the psychology of the working classes was not dominated by the workplace. There was thus room for the psychologisation of domestic arrangements such as the relationship between mother and child and the application of these psychological ideas by a collectivised, centralised government. This can clearly be seen in the economic ideas advocated by Durbin. His main contribution to the NFRB was to formulate an argument for the Labour party adopting consumer economics. Although there were similarities in Durbin's thinking and that of John Maynard Keynes, Durbin's position was more complicated. Confusingly, his economics have been described as a mix of Keynesianism, Fabian socialist concerns and Hayekian liberal economics. However, a close reading Durbin and Keynes' economic ideas shows how their differences were rooted in the adoption of contrasting psychological models - Durbin's rationalised love and Keynes' 'animal spirits'.

2: Economics and Man's Place in Nature in Interwar Britain

Through his work with the NFRB, Durbin confronted the major problems of socialist economics. As part of G.D.H. Cole's Bureau and its ideology of the socialisation of banking and finance, Durbin argued for the necessity of a managed economy. Cole had

supported the findings of the enquiry on industry and finance, set up by the government in 1929 and chaired by Lord Macmillan. These findings, published in 1931 and mainly the result of the contributions from Keynes and Ernest Bevin, stated that wage cutting would only be to the detriment of consumer power, and that what was required was state driven economic expansion.²⁵⁰ This inquiry anticipated but failed to impact upon the economic crisis encountered by Ramsay MacDonald's Labour government, a government that, for various reasons, was resistant to imaginative economic solutions.²⁵¹ On 23 August 1931 Macdonald resigned as Prime Minister and precipitated the replacement of the Labour government with a coalition.

During the economic turmoil of the 30s Durbin elaborated ideas of state-driven economic expansion in his *Purchasing Power and Trade Depression* (1933), *Socialist Credit Policy* (1934) and *The Problem of Credit Policy* (1935).²⁵² It was these ideas that Durbin and Hugh Gaitskell developed in the NFRB and worked to introduce to the Labour party. It earned them the reputation of 'identical twins' in the Labour movement.²⁵³

An historian of the Labour Party Stephen Brooke has recently tried to understand Durbin's economic ideas as part of his Labour 'revisionism'. Brooke argues that, as well as working closely with Cole, Durbin also sympathised with the Liberal economists of the London School of Economics. He suggests that Durbin's thinking

²⁵⁰ *ibid.*, p. 951, on Keynes role in the Macmillan committee see R. Skidelsky, *John Maynard Keynes: The Economist as Saviour, 1920-1937* (London: Macmillan, 1992), pp. 343-362

²⁵¹ see R. McKibbin, 'The Economic Policy of the Second Labour Government', *Past and Present*, vol. 68, (1975), pp. 95-123

²⁵² E. Durbin, *Purchasing Power and Trade Depression: A Critique of Under-Consumption Theories* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1933); *Socialist Credit Policy* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1934); *The Problem of Credit Policy* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1935)

²⁵³ E. Durbin, *New Jerusalems: The Labour Party and the Economics of Democratic Socialism* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1985), p. 4

reflected the schizophrenic position in which he found himself between economists at opposite ends of the political spectrum.²⁵⁴ For example, Durbin believed that pricing in a planned economy was not about efficiency, but primarily about enhancing individual consumer power.²⁵⁵ The balancing of individual or consumer rights and the perceived necessity of a managed economy would form the basis of Durbin's muted response to Keynes' 'General Theory' when it was published in 1936. Rather than seeing Durbin's economics as a middle-way between contrasting ideologies, they are better understood as grounded in a commitment to a rationalised love. This becomes clear if you compare Durbin's ideas with the London School of Economics' 'Austrian school' (under Hayek) and their belief in the 'natural corrective', and with Keynes' notion of the 'animal spirits of capitalism'.

After moving to London in 1929, and a short stint at University College London, Durbin secured a Senior Lectureship in Economics at LSE, which was dominated by the future Nobel Prize winner Friedrich Hayek and the liberal Lionel Robbins. This became known as the Austrian school after the birthplace of Hayek. It was characterised by a belief in free trade and, allied to this, the notion that within nature there was a corrective for unsustainable economic activity. This was not Durbin's position; he argued for state driven economic expansion. However, Brooke argues that Durbin did share Hayek's concerns, famously laid out in *The Road to Serfdom* (1944), that a planned economy could be oppressive.²⁵⁶ For example, Durbin wrote that:

What we have in mind is a principle of policy - that in any standard of living it is desirable to retain the power of consumers to influence the

²⁵⁴ Brooke, 'Evan Durbin', p. 34

²⁵⁵ *ibid.*, p. 34; see E. Durbin, *Purchasing Power*.

²⁵⁶ F.A. Hayek, *The Road to Serfdom* (London: G. Routledge and Sons, 1944)

production of commodities as part of personal liberty. To do so a system of prices and costs, whose character has been investigated in the Theory of Value, must be maintained. Whether or not it will prove efficient to administer certain industries in a larger number of comparatively small units or not is another matter – determined by technical consideration. There is, therefore, no conflict between unified planning and the maintenance of some degree of consumer sovereignty.²⁵⁷

Brooke argues that this emphasis on individual liberty formed Durbin's response to Keynesian economics later in the decade.²⁵⁸ It is true that in a review of Keynes' *The General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money* (1936), Durbin argued that:

....private enterprise involves the domination of man over man in one of the most objectionable and uncontrollable forms. The necessary relation of employee to private employer may be, and too often is, oppressive to the one and degrading to the other.²⁵⁹

However, understanding this as an ethical objection and part of Durbin's battle between his liberalism and socialism, as Brooke does, is too simplistic. Durbin's political and socio-economic arguments contained a consistent ideology that was not simply the dilution of capitalist and socialist extremism. Indeed, Durbin's ideological consistency is evident in his call for economists to work more closely with other social

²⁵⁷ Durbin to Maurice Dobbs, 21st December, 1942, Durbin Papers, BLPES, 6/1

²⁵⁸ Brooke, 'Evan Durbin', p. 34

²⁵⁹ 'Professor Durbin Quarrels with Professor Keynes', *Labour*, (1936), p. 188

scientists.²⁶⁰ This ideology is evident in his *The Politics of Democratic Socialism* (1940) in which he synthesised his and Bowlby's work in *Personal Aggressiveness and War* with his economic beliefs. *The Politics of Democratic Socialism* will be discussed later. For now I wish to concentrate on Durbin's reaction to Keynes' economic theory and dwell on the psychological aspect of Keynes and Durbin's work. Through this analysis it can be demonstrated that Durbin's views economic views, in sharp contrast in Keynes', were based upon a belief in the cultural enabling of a natural potential to act altruistically.

In his monumental biography of Keynes, Robert Skidelsky does draw attention to the differences of Keynes and Durbin.²⁶¹ He identifies but does not elaborate upon the fact that these differences were first and foremost psychological: 'It is difficult for me to understand,' Durbin wrote to Keynes on 29 April, 1936, 'how the author of the *Economic Consequences of Peace*...can argue that one advantage of a *laissez-faire* system lies in the freedom it gives to certain privileged persons to exercise their sadistic impulses in the control of industrial workers'.²⁶²

The centrality of the sadism, identified by Durbin, to Keynes' theory has been discussed by Ted Winslow. Winslow argues convincingly that it was Keynes' abandonment of a belief in the rational economic motives of man, and the replacement of this with a notion of 'animal spirits of capitalism', that underpinned his economic

²⁶⁰ E. Durbin, 'Methods of Research – A Plea for Co-operation in the Social Sciences', *Economic Journal*, vol. 48, (1938), pp. 183-195. It is clear from this article that Durbin regarded the psychological work on character formation of primary importance for the economist.

²⁶¹ Skidelsky, *John Maynard Keynes*, p. 575

²⁶² D. Moggridge ed., *The Collected Writings of John Maynard Keynes*, vol. 29 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 234

ideas.²⁶³ Keynes' 'General Theory' supposed that, to enable economic growth, the conditions had to be in place to encourage investment from entrepreneurs:

A large proportion of our positive activities depend on spontaneous optimism rather than on a mathematical expectation, whether moral or hedonistic or economic. Most, probably, of our decisions to do something positive, the full consequences of which will be drawn out over many days to come, can only be taken as a result of animal spirits – of a spontaneous urge to action rather than inaction, and not as the outcome of weighted averages of quantitative benefits multiplied by quantitative probabilities. Enterprise only pretends to itself to be mainly actuated by the statements in its own prospectus, however candid and sincere. Only a little more than an expedition to the South Pole, is it based on an exact calculation of benefits to come. Thus if the animal spirits are dimmed and the spontaneous optimism falters, leaving us to depend on nothing but a mathematical expectation, enterprise will fade and die – though fears of loss may have a basis no more reasonable than hopes of profit had before.

It is safe to say that enterprise which depends on hopes stretching into the future benefits the community as a whole. But individual initiative will only be adequate when reasonable calculation is supplemented and supported by animal spirits, so that the thought of ultimate loss which often overtakes pioneers, as experience

²⁶³ E.G. Winslow, 'Keynes and Freud: Psychoanalysis and Keynes's Account of the 'Animal Spirits of Capitalism'', *Social Research*, vol. 53, (Winter 1986), pp. 549-578. Less convincingly Winslow argues that Keynes did not directly acknowledge the importance of psychoanalysis in his work because of his own psychological make-up and his own anal-sadistic complex.

undoubtedly tells us and them, is put aside as a healthy man puts aside the expectation of death.

This means, unfortunately, not only that slumps and depressions are exaggerated in degree, but that economic prosperity is excessively dependent on a political and social atmosphere which is congenial to the average businessman. If the fear of a Labour Government or a New Deal depresses enterprise, this need not be the result either of a reasonable calculation or of a plot with political intent; - it is the mere consequence of upsetting the delicate balance of spontaneous optimism. In estimating the prospects of investment, we must have regard, therefore, to the nerves and hysteria and even the digestions and reactions to the weather of those upon whose spontaneous activity it largely depends.²⁶⁴

To understand the conditions that would encourage investment and release these 'animal spirits', Keynes drew upon the psychoanalytic ideas of Ernest Jones, whom he footnoted in his 'General Theory'. Keynes was presumably introduced to Freud through his Bloomsbury connections. In 1925, James Strachey reported that Keynes was 'engrossed in the case histories of Freud'.²⁶⁵ In the same year, in a letter to the *Nation*, Keynes wrote that:

Professor Freud seems to me to be endowed, to the degree of genius, with a scientific imagination which can body forth an abundance of

²⁶⁴ John Maynard Keynes, *The General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money* (1936) in D. Moggridge ed., *The Collected Writings of John Maynard Keynes*, vol. 7 (London: Macmillan, 1973), pp. 161-2

²⁶⁵ Skidelsky, *John Maynard Keynes*, p. 234; on Keynes and Bloomsbury see Ted Winslow, 'Bloomsbury, Freud and the Vulgar Passions', *Social Research*, vol. 57(4), (1990), pp. 785-819

innovative ideas, shattering possibilities, working hypotheses, which have sufficient foundation in intuition and common experience to deserve the most patient and unprejudiced examination.... But when it comes to the empirical or inductive proof of his theories, it is obvious that what we are offered in print is hopelessly inadequate to the case.... I venture to say that at the present stage the argument in favour of Freudian theories would be very little weakened if it were to be admitted that every case published hitherto had been wholly invented by Professor Freud in order to illustrate his ideas and to make them more vivid to the minds of his readers. That is to say, the case for considering them seriously depends at present on the appeal which they make to our own intuitions as containing something new or true about the way in which psychology works, and very little indeed upon the so-called inductive verification...²⁶⁶

Ted Winslow argues that Keynes' intuitive acceptance of Freud is evident in his various references to 'money loving' and 'money-making instincts'. He goes on to propose that Keynes' psychological portrait of capitalist entrepreneurialism, a characteristic that he saw as so essential for economic recovery, is comparable to Freud and Jones' notion of the anal-sadistic character. In Freudian theory the anal-sadistic character is someone who becomes fixated at the anal point of psychological development. From around the age of 18 months the pleasures of retaining or expelling faeces may be so great that toilet training is achieved only with the greatest reluctance on the part of the child and he or she may become fixated on these pleasures. In

²⁶⁶ John Maynard Keynes, Letter to the *Nation*, 1925; quoted from D. Moggridge ed., *The Collected Writings of John Maynard Keynes*, vol. 18 (London: Macmillan, 1978), pp. 392-3

adulthood this person will either exhibit defensive traits such as stinginess ('not letting go') - the anal personality - or aggressively seek out the pleasures that were once thwarted - the anal-sadist and entrepreneur.²⁶⁷

It was not that Keynes approved of capitalist entrepreneurialism. However, even his antipathy towards it strengthens Winslow's argument that he was drawing upon the psychoanalytic notion of anal-sadism. In his 'Economic Possibilities for Our Grandchildren', Keynes hoped that;

...we shall be able to afford to assess the money-motive at its true value.

The love of money as a possession – as distinguished from the love of money as a means to the enjoyments and realities of life – will be recognised for what it is, a somewhat disgusting morbidity, one of those semi-criminal, semi-pathological propensities which one hands over with a shudder to the specialists in mental disease.²⁶⁸

Keynes' debt to Freud is all the more striking given the propensity of respected contemporary psychologists who all proposed a discreet acquisitive instinct, rather than the complicated Freudian notion of an unconscious anal fixation. William McDougall, W.H.R. Rivers, and the American, James Drever, had all postulated an acquisitive instinct of some form.²⁶⁹ This is not the place to offer a history of the

²⁶⁷ S. Freud, 'Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality', in J. Strachey ed., *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud: Vol. VII* (London: Hogarth, 1953); and 'Character and Anal Eroticism', Strachey ed., *The Standard Edition: Vol. IX* (London: Hogarth, 1959)

²⁶⁸ Keynes, *Essays in Persuasion*, in D. Moggridge ed., *The Collected Writings of John Maynard Keynes, vol. 9* (London: Macmillan, 1972), pp. 307-9

²⁶⁹ W. McDougall, *An Introduction to Social Psychology* (London: Methuen, 1908), p. 88 & 322; W.H.R. Rivers, *Instinct and the Unconscious: A Contribution to a Biological Theory of Psycho-Neuroses* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1922), first published 1920, pp. 260-73; and J.

interiorisation of acquisitiveness, although I see no reason why this could not be accomplished along the lines of the discussion of altruism in chapter 1. Instead, I wish to focus upon how acquisitiveness featured in the debates on the rationalisation of love.

Where Keynes had reluctantly accepted entrepreneurialism as a necessary stimulant for economic growth (underpinned by an unconscious, irrational anal-sadistic impulse) Durbin drew upon psychologies of love. In contrast to Keynes' reluctant acceptance of sadistic impulses as necessary for economic stimulation, Durbin held to a belief in the cultural enabling of an altruistic personality within childhood development. This allowed him to formulate a theory of 'mixed economy' in which the emotional education of children could allow for sustainable wealth creation. Durbin's use of a rationalised understanding of love to underpin his ideas was part of a wider movement that essentially depoliticized economics and placed it within the realm of the psychoanalyst. This can be explored by looking at similar psychologically informed economic thought in the period.

3: Wealth Creation and Emotional Education

In 1935 Ian Suttie, Susan Isaacs and the sociologists Morris Ginsburg and T.H. Marshall convened for a symposium on property and possessiveness. Their conclusions were published in the *British Journal of Medical Psychology*.²⁷⁰ It will be recalled that Bowlby took his theoretical lead from Suttie and Isaacs and that the

Drever, *Instinct in Man: A Contribution to the Psychology of Education* (Cambridge: The University Press, 1921), first published 1917, pp. 187-190

²⁷⁰ I.D. Suttie, S. Isaacs, M. Ginsberg, and T.H. Marshall, 'A Symposium on Property and Possessiveness', *British Journal of Medical Psychology*, vol. 15, (1935-6), pp. 51-83

British Journal of Medical Psychology had been the principle forum in which psychological ideas of love were discussed in the interwar period. The discussion did not focus on the psycho-sexual origins of possessiveness, but rather examined how the mother-child bond had impacted upon economic behaviour.²⁷¹ After surveying some of the historical evidence Suttie stated that:

I have endeavoured to show reason for believing that possessiveness has not the close relationship to reality-thinking and to self-interest that is usually supposed, but has been so institutionalised in our culture that we take it for granted and even mistake it for a criterion of rational behaviour or for the inevitable expression of an inborn impulse. I suggest that the original utility-function of property has become completely overlaid by an abstract and largely unconscious social aim and 'value' so that economic behaviour and institutions have become divorced in many cases from economic 'interest' and practical needs, and show all the excesses and conflicts which characterise psychopathic thought and behaviour.²⁷²

The divorce of the economic utility of property was, for Suttie, the product of the abstraction and corruption of the mother-child bond. Unlike the Freudian/Keynesian view, in which the desire for material gain was a semi-pathological state, acquisitiveness for Suttie was not in itself irrational but was mediated by feelings of greed or altruism.

²⁷¹ Isaacs' interest in economics was probably formed through her long time friendship with the LSE economist Lionel Robbins, D. Gardner, *Susan Isaacs* (London: Methuen Educational Ltd, 1969), pp. 50-

²⁷² I. Suttie, 'A Symposium', p. 61

Suttie went on to propose that rectifying the mother–child bond could provide a solution to economic problems by reinstating the reality of acquisitiveness as a biological utility:

The variability of the sentiment of personal property as between one culture and another, and between individuals of the same culture, also points to a complex origin of this sentiment and to its intimate relation with social development. Mythology, psychopathology and the study of young children tend towards the same conclusion; that acquisitiveness is developed, not mainly from motives of organic need and satisfactions, or other material utilities, but as a special technique for the maintenance and development of social rapport. If this process is to be the case we can infer a strict relationship between the development of man's economic disposition and the particular manner in which the emotional bond with the mother is replaced by others, and with the degree of social anxiety and antagonism occasioned by this substitution. The control of this process of 'psychic weaning' would then appear theoretically to offer a means of moulding economic motive (and ultimately economic system) far safer, pleasanter and more effective than the legal control of adult behaviour.²⁷³

Without this intervention, Suttie warned, greed was inevitable:

²⁷³ *ibid.*, pp. 61-2

...unless there were a concomitant change (to a better understanding of economic systems) in our mode of rearing young children, the social anxiety and competitiveness generated at this period of life must seek an outlet in possessiveness or in some other form of social competition. Until such a change in rearing customs is brought about, the economic motive will continue to aim not 'to be well off', but 'to be better off than other people'.

After eliciting agreement from Isaacs and Ginsberg the published report of the symposium concluded with the words of the sociologist T.H. Marshall:

My difficulty is...in understanding why the anxiety-security complex of the mother-need situation should necessarily lead to irrational competitive acquisitiveness.... I have tried to show that the property situation is highly adaptable to real social ends. I believe that the anxiety-security complex is inescapable. I see no reason to weaken it. I suggest that it is by no means impossible to educate it.²⁷⁴

The conclusion of this conference thus took rationalised altruistic love, in the form of the mother-child/anxiety-security complex, as the means to solve economic problems. It was this view that was to be reiterated by Bowlby and Durbin in *Personal Aggressiveness and War* and then, more robustly, in Durbin's *The Politics of Democratic Socialism*.

²⁷⁴ T.H. Marshall, 'A Symposium', p. 83. On Marshall see A.M. Rees, *T.H. Marshall's Social Policy in the Twentieth Century* (London: Hutchinson, 1985)

One of Durbin's principal justifications for his work on aggressiveness was its potential economic benefit. He argued that peace led to the active co-operation with others that enabled the division of labour and the creation of an affluent society, '[extending] enormously the opportunities for life and satisfaction...'.²⁷⁵ And Bowlby concluded *Personal Aggressiveness* by asserting that acquisitiveness was rational, but that attempts to frustrate the pursuit of material gain were psychopathological.²⁷⁶ Echoing the views of Suttie and Marshall, Durbin called for an emotional education of children that would engender love and guarantee peaceful and constructive contributions to society.²⁷⁷

This call was repeated by Durbin in his *The Politics of Democratic Socialism* which was a thorough-going exposition of his democratic socialist politics, economics and social philosophy. As Brooke has argued, this work is redolent of the socialist, R.H. Tawney.²⁷⁸ As well as receiving a dedication in *The Politics of Democratic Socialism*, Tawney was also acknowledged by Durbin as an advisor who read drafts and made recommendations for revisions to the book.²⁷⁹ And there is indeed evidence for Tawney's influence in Durbin's conviction that economic issues were important but 'transitory' in creating a better society. In *The Acquisitive Society* (1921) Tawney had offered a defence of the pursuit of material gain by contending that it was quite reasonable if each and every person were allowed the same opportunity:

²⁷⁵ J. Bowlby and E.F.M. Durbin, *Personal Aggressiveness and War* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner and Co. Ltd., 1939), p. 5

²⁷⁶ Bowlby, *Personal Aggressiveness*, p. 150

²⁷⁷ Durbin, *Personal Aggressiveness*, pp. 41-45

²⁷⁸ Brooke, 'Evan Durbin', p. 42

²⁷⁹ acknowledgements in E. Durbin, *Politics of Democratic Socialism* (London: George Routledge and Sons Ltd., 1940)

In the modern revulsion against economic tyranny, there is a disposition to represent writers who stand on the threshold of the age of capitalist industry as the prophets of a vulgar materialism, which would sacrifice every human aspiration to the pursuit of riches. No interpretation could be more misleading.... The grand enemy of the age was monopoly; the battle cry with which enlightenment marched against it was the abolition of privilege; its ideal was a society where each man had free access to the economic opportunities which he could use and enjoy the wealth which by his efforts he had created. That school of thought represented all, or nearly all, that was humane and intelligent in the mind of the age. It was individualistic, not because it valued riches as the main end of man, but because it had a high sense of human dignity, and desired that men should be free to become themselves.²⁸⁰

But Brooke is wrong in supposing that this belief in the cultivation of personality through material gain was *transposed into* Durbin's use of psychology.²⁸¹ As we have seen, Durbin evidenced a commitment to changing human character, enabling the biological potential of people to act altruistically, to resolve economic issues. This was not the enlightenment vision of Tawney but, to use the concept of Ullica Segerstråle (discussed in the introduction), this was a 'hyper-enlightenment' belief, whereby knowledge of human psychology, i.e. altruism, was necessary for improving society.²⁸²

As Durbin wrote:

²⁸⁰ R.H. Tawney, *The Acquisitive Society*, (London: Bell, 1921), pp. 19-20

²⁸¹ Brooke, 'Evan Durbin', p.42

²⁸² Segerstråle, 'Chapter 18: Interpreting the Enlightenment Quest', in her *Defenders of the Truth: The Battle for Science in the Sociobiology Debate and Beyond* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 349-371

The greatest single achievement of science in the twentieth century consists, or so it seems to me, in the light that has been thrown upon the formation of personal character. As a result of the observations and reflections of the analytical psychologists, we are now in a position to understand in a way that was quite impossible before this work had been done the nature of the causes that determine the behaviour of individual human beings.... I think it is obvious that psychological and anthropological studies contribute enormously to our understanding of every important social institution: the family, property, law, the distribution of authority and power in society, loyalty to the state, religion, co-operation, political conflict and war.²⁸³

To describe Durbin's work as 'hyper-enlightenment' is not to lavish it with Whiggish praise. Durbin depoliticized economics, divorcing it from wider social evaluation, and used instead personality as the means to ground a stable economy. This viewpoint was fundamentally different from the previous generation of economists. The likes of Tawney and Alfred Marshall had seen a close relationship between character formation and economics – Marshall believed that 'the progress in man's nature', embodied in the English character, had arisen from his exhibiting 'more self-reliant habits, more forethought, more deliberateness and more free choice'.²⁸⁴ In Durbin's work economics did not reflect any human values, but was viewed as part of a technocratic state supported by a psychoanalytically informed notion of altruism. These issues are further explored in subsequent chapters.

²⁸³ E.F.M. Durbin, *The Politics of Democratic Socialism* (London: George Routledge and Son Ltd., 1940), p. 37

²⁸⁴ Alfred Marshall quoted in Collini, 'The Idea of Character', p. 92. For further discussion of Marshall see S. Collini, D. Winch and J. Barrow, *That Noble Science of Politics: A Study in Nineteenth Century Intellectual History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), pp. 309-337

There is little direct evidence of Bowlby's political views in this period, although his membership of the NFRB and his collaboration with Durbin strongly suggests that he shared many of his friend's beliefs. It was not until 1945 that Bowlby would write of how psychology could and should be used to stabilise society.²⁸⁵ But the idea of social behaviour as the basis for a progressive society is crucial to understanding the importance of his and Durbin's ideas in the interwar period and afterwards. The final two chapters of this thesis offer an understanding of their work in the context of the prospect of World War II and the rise of fascism, and then their place in the post-war Labour government of Clement Attlee.

²⁸⁵ J. Bowlby, 'Psychology and Democracy', *Political Quarterly*, vol. 17, (1946), pp. 61-77

Chapter 4: Security

The immediate context for the writing of *Personal Aggressiveness and War* (1939) was, of course, the rise of fascism and the imminent prospect of a second world war. But, as we have seen, predisposing the writing of this work were crucial interwar shifts in moral, socio-economic, political, and, not least, psychological thinking.

Altruism, Bowlby and Durbin argued, was a natural human capacity, residing in the unconscious, and Durbin had elaborated a political philosophy on this basis. This was a radical reworking of older socio-political ideas that had been based on an uncontested individual altruism. In response to the rise of fascism, this reworking was extended to, and consolidated, in terms of international relations. The violence that erupted in Europe was seen by some thinkers as the antithesis of psychologies of love and this shaped a specific reaction to debates over the justification of taking military action.

With the fragmentation of the pacifist movement in the middle of the 1930s and the failure of the political mechanisms for peace, pacifist sympathisers began to look to understand the psychological roots of nationalism and warfare to prevent an increasingly likely World War II. While Bowlby and Durbin were part of this movement that stressed the psychological basis of aggression and warfare, they also had a political and economic philosophy grounded in the enhancement of the evolutionary basis of altruism. As was argued in chapter 3, Durbin's economics were based on the premise that people needed to co-operate for sustainable wealth creation. The mother-child bond was seen as a possible point for intervention in order to ensure

this stability. When surveying the international scene Bowlby and Durbin not only sought to capture the psychological roots of aggression in Germany and Spain, but also to castigate governments for allowing this to happen to the detriment of international trade relations.

Economic internationalism had been a common justification for opposing fascism, but until the work of Bowlby and Durbin the collectivised use of force had not been explained in psychological theory. Economic internationalism had mainly been based on the Covenant of the League of Nations and the ultimately unsuccessful pledge of collective security. Bowlby and Durbin, however, saw the necessity of psychological intervention for the creation of stability, co-operation and wealth. Thus, in their work the notion of security shifted from an anchoring in international alliance, to one based on psychology.²⁸⁶

1: The Fragmentation of Pacifism and the Psychologisation of War

Personal Aggressiveness and War (1939) was an extended version of an article for a conference on 'War and Democracy' (1938), and it was principally about the coming war.²⁸⁷ Durbin wrote that the empirical evidence on personal aggressiveness, which was supplied by Bowlby, was necessary to understand the causes of war between

²⁸⁶ In this regard Bowlby and Durbin's legacy is evident in The Seville Declaration on Violence (1986). Adopted by UNESCO and endorsed by a number of scientific organisations, the declaration was partly the work of another of Bowlby's collaborators, the ethologist Robert Hinde, and was intended to counter claims of the genetic inevitability of war; D. Adams, ed., *The Seville Statement on Violence: Preparing the Ground for the Construction of Peace* (Geneva: UNESCO, 1991)

²⁸⁷ See G. Catlin and E.F.M. Durbin eds., *War and Democracy* ((London: Kegan Paul, 1938)

human societies, concepts such as capitalism and nationalism were insufficient - they were only descriptive and not explanatory.²⁸⁸

Durbin and Bowlby were not alone in advocating this view. As Martin Ceadel outlines in his *Pacifism in Britain, 1914-1945, The Defining of a Faith* (1980), their perspective on warfare can be traced back to debates in the middle of the 1930s and the formation of a psychological strand of pacificism. Discussing the various strands of pacifism and pacificism in the interwar years, Ceadel notes the distinction between those who absolutely rejected the war, and those who opposed it but believed that the use of controlled force might be necessary to achieve sustainable peace.²⁸⁹ Bowlby and Durbin were in this latter camp. Moreover, they were among a group that can be termed 'psychological pacificists'.

Ceadel proposes that pacificists could be categorised as either 'world socialists' - those who saw warfare as the product of class relations; conspiracy theorists - those that attributed warfare to the actions of specific interested parties, e.g. arms manufacturers or international financiers; or 'internationalists' - those who believed that international harmony was in the interest of every state. For the internationalist it was acceptable to use force to transfer the power of a noncompliant head of state if cultural or economic influence proved insufficient to dispel irrational nationalism.²⁹⁰ The issue of international cooperation and the internationalists' justification for fighting a war, were hugely controversial in the 1930s. It was in these controversies that the idea of a 'psychological pacifism' was constructed.

²⁸⁸ E.F.M. Durbin and J. Bowlby, *Personal Aggressiveness and War*, (London: Kegan Paul, Trench and Trubner and Co. Ltd, 1939), p. 3

²⁸⁹ M. Ceadel, *Pacifism in Britain, 1914-1945, The Defining of a Faith* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980), p. 5

²⁹⁰ Ceadel, *Pacifism*, p. 5

As Ceadel notes, the interwar years saw international pacificism flourish as the nineteenth-century liberal belief in progress was tempered by the experience of World War I.²⁹¹ This mixture of optimism and pessimism had been institutionalised at the Peace Conference of 1919. Here the 58 governments that comprised the League of Nations agreed to condemn as ‘illegal’ any war that had begun without first exhausting the machinery of the Covenant of the League. The formation of the League of Nations, therefore, legitimised the collectivised use of force in order to preserve peace. This legal transformation of warfare framed many of the anti-fascist debates in Britain. Opposition to the rise of Hitler led to considerable support for this notion and, by 1935, the Labour Party had committed itself to what had become known as ‘collective security’.²⁹²

The failure to honour the pledge for collective security is now well documented. Less historical discussion has been given to the alternative strands of international pacificism that arose in the middle of the 1930s. Ceadel attributes this historical blind-spot to the conventional belief that 1935 saw clarification of the task of the League of Nations and that this clarification marked a split between pacifists and those who advocated a military deterrent.²⁹³ However, as Ceadel notes, this split cannot be clearly observed in the pacifists and pacificists who, from 1933, argued that warfare was the result of patriotism, and that patriotism was a culturally or psychologically conditioned ‘war convention’.²⁹⁴ It is in the discussion of the war convention that it is possible to

²⁹¹ *ibid.*, p. 6

²⁹² *ibid.*, p. 147 For a contemporary account of the legal transformation of warfare and the construction of collective security see A. D. McNair, *Collective Security: An Inaugural Lecture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1936)

²⁹³ Ceadel, *Pacifism*, p. 147

²⁹⁴ *ibid.*, p. 148

discern the psychological theories of warfare with which Bowlby and Durbin concerned themselves.²⁹⁵

The most famous critique of war that employed the notion of a war convention came from A.A. Milne's *Peace With Honour* (1934):

When a nation talks of its honour it means its prestige. National prestige is a reputation for the will to war. A nation's honour, then, is measured by the nation's willingness to maintain its reputation as a user of force.²⁹⁶

Milne held out-and-out pacifist views, opposed to any idea of a national identity and war-mongering. However, this was not true of all those who critically assessed the war convention. In a series of essays entitled *Challenge to Death*, edited by Storm Jameson and published in 1934, the psychological rather than the cultural basis of patriotism, nationalism and warfare were discussed by a variety of authors.²⁹⁷

Ceadel is probably correct to see these essays as reflecting the fragmentation of the pacifist movement. However, it is possible to discern some continuity between the views expressed in *Challenge to Death* and the post-World War I formation of rationalised views of altruism. As was stressed, it was in the work of Wilfred Trotter

²⁹⁵ Alternative psychological accounts of warfare can be found in E. Glover, *War, Sadism and Pacifism* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1946), first published 1933; and later in W. Brown, *War and the Psychological Conditions of Peace* (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1942). Both works drew on Freud's notion of the destructive instinct and saw war as the release of mankind's primitive impulses.

²⁹⁶ A.A. Milne, *Peace With Honour: An Inquiry into the War Convention* (London: Methuen, 1934), pp. 27-8

²⁹⁷ S. Jameson ed. *Challenge to Death* (London: Constable and Co. Ltd., 1934); On Jameson see her autobiography, *Autobiography of Storm Jameson: Journey from the North: vol. 1* (London: Virago, 1984), first published 1969. Jameson was a well connected novelist and *Challenge to Death* began when she organised a diner party for potential writers against the war; Jameson, *Autobiography*, pp. 327-330

and his *The Instincts of the Herd in War and Peace* (1914), that we are first able to discern a psychological and non-volitional theory of altruism. Significantly *Challenge to Death* opened with an extensive quote from Trotter on the necessity of a psychological understanding of love and his belief that;

...the progressive evolution of society has reached a point where the construction and use of a scientific statecraft will become an indispensable factor in further development and the only means of arresting the dreary oscillations between progress and relapse which have been so ominous a feature of human history....The only way in which society can be made safe from disruption or decay is by the intervention of the conscious and instructed intellect as a factor among the forces ruling its development....²⁹⁸

The contributors to *Challenge to Death* heeded Trotter's words and, following on from Jameson's introductory essay on 'The Twilight of Reason', looked for a scientific explanation for the causes of war.²⁹⁹ Among the contributors were respected writers and thinkers, such as Julian Huxley, the novelist Vera Brittain and her husband, George Catlin.³⁰⁰ Brittain wrote of how, '...we have become masters of matter, but have not learnt to use, control and understand our own minds'.³⁰¹ Catlin, who would

²⁹⁸ Trotter quoted in Jameson ed. *Challenge to Death*, p. xv

²⁹⁹ As with the post-World War I debates on the evolutionary basis of altruism, the discussion of the psychological basis of patriotism and war in the nineteen thirties was also closely linked to unorthodox Christian theology. For example see L. Richards, *The Christian's Contribution to Peace: A Constructive Approach to International Relationships* (London: Student Christian Movement Press, 1935), especially, pp. 29 and 48

³⁰⁰ The contributors uniformly viewed warfare as the result of patriotism although differed in the degree to which they accounted for it psychologically. Along with Jameson, Huxley, Brittain and Catlin, other contributors included Gerald Heard, Vernon Bartlett, J.B. Priestley, Rebecca West, Winifred Holtby, Mary Agnes Hamilton, Ivor Brown and Phillip Noel Baker.

³⁰¹ V. Brittain, 'Peace and the Public Mind', in Jameson ed., *Challenge to Death*, p. 41

later go onto organise with Durbin the 1938 conference on 'War and Democracy', looked to the psychology and anthropology of groups to explain nationalism and war.³⁰² It was, however, Huxley's essay on 'Peace through Science' that discussed at the greatest depth the potential of psychology. He began his essay by stating his philosophy of science:

Science is organised and tested knowledge; and in that knowledge lies the potential control of phenomena. In regards to war, science can have two functions, the one promoting and the other impeding war. It can amass knowledge about the methods of prosecuting war so as to make it more efficient; or it can amass knowledge about the nature, causes and activities of war with a view to checking or preventing it.³⁰³

This was in keeping with Huxley's 'trustee' model of evolution and, when applied to the psychology of warfare, this philosophy replicated Trotter's belief in the necessity of becoming consciously aware of the unconscious processes that enabled aggression or co-operation. Trotter's views had been expressed in terms of Freudian psychology, and it was to Freud that Huxley turned:

The most fundamental cause of war, if one can speak of one among several contributing and necessary causes as being more fundamental than the others, is, I take it, the psychological. You could have no war unless human beings had certain capacities for anger, for mass emotion, and grim determination in the course of action.... Granted these are

³⁰² G. Catlin, 'The Roots of War', in Jameson ed., *Challenge to Death*, pp. 20-39

³⁰³ J. Huxley, 'Peace through Science', in Jameson ed., *Challenge to Death*, p. 287

obvious but often neglected facts, from which there is no escape short of millennial selective breeding, there remain others more equally basic and of more immediate import. I mean those revealed by the study of the human subconscious-work first begun by Freud....³⁰⁴

We have seen how this work on the human unconscious had been constructed in Britain within the evolutionary tradition. By the middle of the 1930s some psychologists were beginning to bring psychoanalytic ideas to bear upon the biological basis of love and offer a formal developmental theory. Huxley's solution to warfare was in keeping with this trend. After summarising the impulses that made up the unconscious he proposed the possible eradication of aggressive tendencies through emotional education:

If we could bring our children up so that their impulses for violence- which are perfectly natural and normal biological properties, and not the stigmata of original sin-were not crudely repressed, but given reasonable outlets and rational direction, so that they could be harnessed with the rest of the team of human driving forces instead of being inhibited and forced into unwilling opposition, intense war-fever could not occur, the danger of the outbreak of war would be lessened, and its violence and horror diminished.

But though we know enough psychology to be sure that this could be done, we do not yet know enough to say just *how* it could be done. It is

³⁰⁴ Huxley, 'Peace through', p. 297. Huxley should have used 'unconscious' when referring to Freud's work. Indeed, it has been pointed out that Huxley was generally inconsistent in his terminology regarding consciousness, M. Swetlitz, 'Julian Huxley and the End of Evolution', *Journal of the History of Biology*, vol. 28, (1995), p. 185

in this field of applied psychology and scientific education that an enormous amount of research is needed.³⁰⁵

This is precisely the line Bowlby and Durbin would take in *Personal Aggressiveness and War*. While Huxley had only hoped that psychology might be used to redirect aggression, Bowlby and Durbin offered an entire political philosophy underpinned by developmental psychology. This led them to take a more definite line than the contributors to *Challenge to Death* on the question of the collectivised use of force.

2: Personal Aggressiveness, War and Collective Security

Bowlby and Durbin's commitment to emotional education has already been noted. Through the mother-child bond they believed it possible to create a harmonious and prosperous society. When set in an international context these views led them to deride alternative forms of government that were based upon extreme nationalism and hatred.³⁰⁶

The evidence drawn from the behaviour of baboons and children and from primitive societies had led Bowlby to conclude that: 'The evidence in fact supports Hobbes'

³⁰⁵ Huxley, 'Peace through Science', p. 301

³⁰⁶ *Personal Aggressiveness and War* came out of a research project, instigated by Durbin and funded by the Rockefeller foundation, investigating the psychology of international relations; 'Psychological Research', Durbin Papers, BLPES, 4/4. This project was to have continued and to have looked at comparisons in how the war was financed but it appears this proposal was rejected; 'Rockefeller Research Project', Durbin Papers, 4/5, BLPES. In Britain, however, there were moves to launch a full scale investigation into the causes of warfare based on Bowlby and Durbin's approach; 'Chatham House', Bowlby Papers, (CMAC), WL, PP/BOW/K.1/9. It has been argued that the Rockefeller Foundation's patronage of social sciences in England was intended to bolster the social order of capitalist democracy see D. Fisher, 'The Rockefeller Foundation and the Development of Scientific Medicine in Great Britain', *Minerva*, vol. 16, (1979), pp. 20-41; and Fisher, 'American Philanthropy and the Social Sciences in Britain, 1919-1939: The Reproduction of a Conservative Ideology', *The Sociological Review*, vol. 28, (1980), pp. 277-315. That the Foundation backed Durbin is probably explained by the compatibility of his ideas with big business, capitalist interests. I do not think it suggests a radical rethinking of Rockefeller motivation is required.

view that without government and in a state of nature, man's life, thanks to his animal passions and rivalries, tends to be 'solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short.'³⁰⁷ It was the state that raised man up above the level of animals and enabled the stability necessary for peace and prosperity. It was, therefore, at the level of government that responsibility had to be placed. Fascism was a retrograde form of government which appealed to the baser, more destructive instincts of man:

Working hand in glove with rational acquisitiveness (the economic motive) are the forces of irrational acquisitiveness....The need for a scapegoat is believed to play as large a part in civilised communities as it does in primitive. The causes of the persecution of German Jews are shown to be a similar nature to the causes of the expulsion of devils by primitives. The differences lie not so much in origin of hatred as in the victims selected. Exactly the same motives are held to be at the root of certain international hatreds. The hatred of Nazi Germany for Bolshevik Russia is instanced and analysed. Propaganda is successful only in so far as there is a potential need for a scapegoat in the populace...it is impossible to account for the hatred which can so easily be stimulated in ordinary citizens in certain circumstances without supposing that there is this need latent in everyone.³⁰⁸

Bowlby and Durbin speculatively argued that this operated through the transposition of feelings in individual development to the political arena:

³⁰⁷ Bowlby, *Personal Aggressiveness*, p. 62

³⁰⁸ *ibid.*, p. 150

The transference of the predominant feelings of childhood from parents to the organs of political life – to the State and the parties in it – is almost universal. Hence the importance of symbolic figureheads and governors, Kings and Führers. Hence the fanaticism and violence of political life.³⁰⁹

Although Bowlby and Durbin advocated the emotional education of children as the panacea for these social ills, they thought adult aggression too deeply entrenched in the psyche to be displaced by any moral or rational interjection. The collectivised use of force was, therefore, necessary and justifiable. Durbin would later write that:

I find no warrant in the evidence of psychology, or in history, for believing that aggressive groups of adult human beings can be restrained by kindness, or cured of aggression by submission to their will. On the contrary, I believe that social justice and international justice can be founded only upon peace and law; and that peace and law, in their turn, can be based only in the last resort, upon the use of force. Aggressive individuals and minorities within the state and within the growing community of nations must be restrained by force, if they cannot be persuaded by reason. We cannot hand over the world to the law breaker, simply because he is armed with machine-guns and bombing aeroplanes. Nor would ordinary men and women permit it to

³⁰⁹ Bowlby and Durbin, *Personal Aggressiveness*, p. 20

be done. They are prepared to pay the heavy price that is necessary to prevent it.³¹⁰

Thus, Bowlby and Durbin's psychological conception of the roots of warfare, coupled to their belief that it was a problem of national government, rather than an international phenomenon, justified the use of force for the international good. This strengthened Durbin's conviction that a state should be judged by how it enhanced the natural capacity of man for altruism. Whereas prior to World War II Durbin's thinking had been concerned with using psychology for the economic benefit of society, during the war it became integral to the national and international democratic project. In a sense collective security became transformed from an international pact into an emotional condition.

In *The Politics of Democratic Socialism*, published in 1940 but written on the eve of war, Durbin reflected on the development of his political thought:

...to those of us who were brought up in the liberal and democratic traditions of British political life a certain form of utilitarianism is bred in our bones, and will not pass from us until we are dead. It is not the utilitarianism that degenerated into the personal hedonism of the 1920s. We do not believe that personal pleasure, narrowly defined, is the object of life. We respect the importance of the common good, and we recognise the obvious biological and psychological fact that 'we are

³¹⁰ E.F.M. Durbin, *The Politics of Democratic Socialism* (London: George Routledge and Son Ltd., 1940), pp. 328-9

members of one of another', and that the good of those for whom we care is essential to our happiness...³¹¹

In contrast to nineteenth century utilitarianism, Durbin's politics were justified in psychological terms. But this was not simply the naturalisation of a political philosophy. Durbin's debt to psychology had far deeper and wider ranging implications. Durbin elaborated this theme in an essay of 1942: 'What have we to defend? A Brief Critical Examination of the British Socialist Tradition'. In this revision of the principles of British politics, he argued that evolutionary and historical progress was rooted in social co-operation:

One of the most powerful forces in human life is the loyalty that the individual feels towards various social groups: families, churches, tribes, nations. We often under-estimate the power of these feelings and speak and think as though the pursuit of private gain and personal ends was the mainspring of all action. But the reflection of a moment will show that throughout recorded history, men and women have combined for common purposes: the preservation of the race, the production of physical necessities and the enjoyment of each others' company. They have always prepared to lay down their lives in order to preserve the social groups that served these purposes.³¹²

³¹¹ Durbin, *The Politics*, p. 329

³¹² E.F.M. Durbin, 'What have we to defend? A Brief Critical Examination of the British Socialist Tradition', in N. Deakin ed. *Origins of the Welfare State*, vol. 2 (London: Routledge, 2000), pp. 5-6, first published 1942

This passage permits us to see how Durbin psychologised collective security, identifying British society with a long evolutionary history of social groups. The British political system became an exemplar of the type of social co-operation:

The parallel between the team games of which we are so fond and the conduct of our own political life is as profound as it is familiar... When the game is over and the battle is lost or won, the opponents shake hands and arrange a return match.

It is this form of our political life that infuriates the extremist in our midst and puzzles the foreign visitor – the communist and the ‘near communist’, the Fascist and the ‘crypto-Fascist’, cannot understand the light-hearted good fellowship with which we engage upon our political warfare.³¹³

Even the allied forces were cast in this mould; Durbin describing their relationship as based on ‘the sentiment of love, the mixture of impatience and affection that unites a family of vigorous and tolerant brothers.’³¹⁴ Such a simplification of politics and society was and is unsustainable and this can be seen in the problems of evacuation, World War II’s very own test of Durbin’s belief in the British government as the apotheosis of the loving social group. Bowlby would be heavily involved in the evacuation of children from British cities, a scheme that encompassed all the

³¹³ Durbin, ‘What have we to Defend?’, p. 38

³¹⁴ *ibid.*, p. 65. Durbin was by no means alone in justifying the war in terms of the loving social group. In America Frank Buchman, he of the Oxford Group Movement, was spreading the message of his recently formed campaign for Moral Re-Armament (MRA). In 1939 he gave a radio broadcast ‘One Hundred Million Listening’ with the then senator Harry Truman and argued that the war was just if the allied forces had love on their side. Senator Harry S. Truman, Rear-Admiral Richard Byrd and Dr. Frank N.D. Buchman, ‘One Hundred Million Listening: A World Broadcast on Moral Re-armament From Station WRUL Boston October 29th 1939 (London: Hazell, Watson and Vilney Ltd., 1939). It is unclear how important the MRA was in ensuring American intervention after Pearl Harbour or, for that matter, the dropping of the first atomic bomb.

psychological and political issues that have been discussed above. And, after the war, Durbin would become an important figure in the Labour government of Clement Attlee. An examination of the evacuation debates and Durbin's political manoeuvrings allows for a deeper historical understanding of the scope of Bowlby and Durbin's work.

Chapter 5: Security and the State

Bowlby's involvement in the evacuation of children from British cities during World War II provided him with the opportunity to apply and extend his psychological ideas. Here he employed his evolutionary theorising to address children's anxiety at being away from their families. It also marked an important shift in the intellectual basis for conceiving social policy. Whereas, prior to 1940, British social policy had been formulated in terms of social and political a priori ideals and individual altruism, thereafter, partly as a result of Bowlby's involvement, it became rooted in a technological framework. It was to remain so for the next twenty years.

The second part of this chapter explores the impact of Bowlby and Durbin's thinking on the post-war Attlee government. Although it is difficult to gauge its precise impact, some important lines of research are identified that potentially afford a history of psychology more closely aligned to more conventional political and social British history.

1: Evacuation

In the summer of 1938 a government committee laid out plans for an anticipated mass exodus of Britain's cities if and when war was declared on Germany.³¹⁵ Believing that, in the event of war, panic would inevitably lead people to flee to the country, the committee sought to impose some order. It, therefore, divided Britain into three areas:

³¹⁵ Discussion had begun as early as 1924 and had led to the formation of the Evacuation Sub-Committee of Imperial Defence on 16th Feb. 1931, see R. Titmuss, *Problems of Social Policy, 1950* (New York: Pelgrave Macmillan, 2002), p. 23

‘evacuation’, ‘neutral’ and ‘reception’ areas.³¹⁶ Certain groups would be allowed to leave evacuation areas, those in which heavy bombing was expected, to safe reception areas where the government would ensure suitable accommodation. Millions of people were affected by this policy, even when it was limited to ‘priority cases’. Of particular concern was the separation of families with children of school age. The scale of the scheme and the co-operation required has attracted considerable historical comment. Richard Titmuss, in his *The Problems of Social Policy* (1950), offered a rigorous analysis of the logistical difficulties faced by the various government departments involved and this was readdressed in Angus Calder’s widely read *The People’s War* (1969).³¹⁷ Both Calder and Titmuss generally accepted the state’s approach and played down the fact that when war broke out the government had to persuade reluctant parents to send their children away. The figures for different regions varied widely. In London under half of its school children left the city, while in Rotherham only eight per cent moved. Even in Lancashire, where the percentage was highest, the proportion was only two-thirds.³¹⁸ Calder puts this down to the ‘flair’ or otherwise with which local authorities had publicised the scheme, and the ‘greater courage or greater apathy’ of people during wartime.³¹⁹

The absence of detailed historical discussion of the wider political significance of the evacuation scheme is surprising. This is all the more so given that this was at the forefront of the minds of those charged with delivering it. In an introduction to a

³¹⁶ A. Calder, *The People’s War: Britain 1939-1945* (London: Granada Publishing, 1971), first published 1969, p. 42

³¹⁷ R. Titmuss, *Problems of Social Policy*; and A. Calder, ‘Chapter 2: “This Strangest of Wars”’: September 1939 to April 1940’, in his *The People’s War*, pp. 40-88

³¹⁸ Titmuss, *Problems of Social Policy*, pp. 103-4

³¹⁹ Calder, *The People’s War*, p. 43

general survey into the success and failures of the scheme, written in 1940, the Fabian Margaret Cole wrote that:

...this evacuation was both an effort of national government and an operation which gravely affected social institutions as well as the lives of individuals; it sought to combine the compulsion of national need with as much as could be retained in emergency of the 'voluntary principle' on which so much of English public service has been built. As such, it seems to provide, bottled neatly, as it were, by the unforeseen cause of the war, a laboratory experiment in State control upon which the student of politics can ponder and ratiocinate.³²⁰

The scheme gave rise to many tensions between those acting on behalf of the state and those it sought to help. For example, the billeting of suitable accommodation in reception areas was a constant source of aggravation. It was, however, the issue of parental non-compliance that was the most worrying, and it was for this that the expertise of Bowlby and Susan Isaacs was recruited.³²¹

With the outbreak of World War II, and before joining the Emergency Medical Service and then the army, Bowlby was involved in the evacuation of children from London to Cambridge.³²² The reasons for Bowlby's involvement were multiple. He had been

³²⁰ M. Cole, 'Introduction' in R. Padley and M. Cole eds. *Evacuation Survey: A Report to the Fabian Society* (London: Routledge, 1940), p. 3

³²¹ for a recent factual study of evacuation of London school children see R. Samways, *We Think You Ought to Go: An Account of the Evacuation of Children From London Based on the Original Records of the London County Council* (London: Greater London Records Office, 1995)

³²² Bowlby joined the Emergency Medical Service in 1940. However, he soon left after objecting to patients from Dunkirk being referred to as cowards by the Consultant Neurologist, Dr. Gordon Holmes: B. Shephard, *A War of Nerves: Soldiers and Psychiatrists 1914-1994* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2000), pp. 171-2. After this he joined a group of army psychiatrists who worked to standardise officer

working for the London County Council on the problem of juvenile delinquency and there were fears that this would increase with evacuation.³²³ There was also an influential call for the inclusion of applied psychology in government campaigns, such as evacuation. This emanated from the 'Tots and Quots' Club, a club made up of prominent scientists that included Durbin and Bowlby's friend, Hugh Gaitskell. The views of this group were made widely known with the publication of *Science in War* in 1940.³²⁴ Bowlby's own views on the evacuation scheme became known through a report by the Fabian society to which he contributed. In this he stressed the necessity of creating homely environments for evacuees in order to minimise children's anxiety:

Those whose normal peacetime work takes them into daily contact with the psychological problems of family life, difficult children and foster homes are surprised not by the breakdown of evacuation but at its partial success.

The truth is that every human being from birth to old age draws emotional sustenance and strength from those few people who constitute his home. Love and friendship are as vital to man, especially the child, as bread and coal.

These simple human needs need reinstating in a world preoccupied by economic stress and political strife. They need reinstating also

selection, see M. Pines, 'A History of Psychodynamic Psychiatry in Britain', J. Holmes ed. *A Textbook History of Psychotherapy in Psychiatric Practice* (Edinburgh: Churchill Livingstone, 1991). This group of psychiatrists would later form the core of the Tavistock Clinic as it was reorganised after the war. For critical discussion of the reorganised Tavistock, N. Rose and P. Miller, 'The Tavistock Programme: The Government of Subjectivity and Social Life', *Sociology*, vol. 22, (1988), pp. 171-192

³²³ Bowlby, along with Donald Winnicott, a paediatrician and psychoanalyst, and Emanuel Miller, a child psychiatrist, wrote a letter on this subject to the *British Medical Journal*, 'Evacuation of Small Children: Letter to the Editor', *British Medical Journal*, (1939), p. 1202-3. This concern would eventually lead to a joint memorandum from the Home Office and Board of Education in 1941 insisting preventive measures were taken: Samways, *We think you ought to go*, p. 44

³²⁴ *Science in War* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1940)

because they are the essential background against which the emotional problems of the evacuation must be seen. For evacuation has broken up family life all over the country.³²⁵

This view is unsurprising given what is known of Bowlby's psychological theorising at this time. One can also see in it the same slippage of the use of security that was evident in his psychologising of warfare. The evacuation scheme should not only be based on the removal of children from threatened cities, but, in Bowlby's opinion, should have attended to the emotional need for security. Furthermore, he argued the emotional needs of children should be addressed by trained professionals:

...it should be realised that the successful placement of children in foster-homes requires skill, training and expertise.... For this reason it is a very serious criticism of the Government's evacuation scheme that no attempt has ever been made to enlist the services of social workers whose peacetime profession it is to handle problems of this kind.³²⁶

Here Bowlby's framework clearly anticipated the later movement toward a technological social policy. The role of government and the ends towards which it was working were not questioned. He advocated the employment of trained experts to cater for a need that he had understood from his theorising to be unquestionably innate and ubiquitous. Bowlby did not stop here; he went on to offer a psychological account of why many parents had been uncooperative with the scheme. He attributed many of the

³²⁵ J. Bowlby, 'Psychological Aspects', in R. Padley and M. Cole eds. *Evacuation Survey*, p. 186

³²⁶ Bowlby, 'Psychological Aspects', p. 193

problems of evacuation to parental anxiety. A better psychological understanding of parenthood was needed to overcome this:

Very little consideration has been given to the parents of the little children who have been evacuated. What reference there have been have been almost universally disparaging. They have not kept the children clean or trained them properly, they upset the children by their visits, they evade the foster-homes on Sunday, above all they are wicked and selfish either not to send the children away or else to bring them home again.

But let us consider the question from the parents' point of view. The life of most married women centres round the looking after their husband, children and home. To many it is the purpose and end of their life, the object of all their hopes and ambitions, the vehicle for their energies and enthusiasm. Suddenly, to ask these women to give up their children is like asking a physician to give up his practice or a naval captain his ship. They will feel bored and miserable....

And fathers must not be forgotten. One man of 40 went completely off his food when his little girl was sent away. He ate nothing and got more and more depressed. After 2 or 3 weeks of this it was hardly surprising that his wife brought the child back again.³²⁷

³²⁷ *ibid.*, p. 191

Bowlby did offer sensitive, sympathetic and respectful solutions to the problems faced by parents and the unavoidable distress caused by the scheme.³²⁸ However, there were wider political ramifications in his stance. Bowlby psychologised parents, and they were cast as objects of empirical study, rather than citizens who shaped their circumstances. It was a psychologisation that was neither confined to the war, nor to Bowlby alone. Isaacs, introducing a later survey of the Cambridge evacuation experience, shared Bowlby's views and looked to their post-war applicability:

The sharp lesson in the ineffectiveness and waste of a partial approach to a great human issue, applies by no means only to the temporary crisis of dispersing urban populations during a war. It has an equally direct and urgent bearing upon the whole field of education and of social reconstruction during and after the war.

This is not the place to enter into such larger questions. We feel justified, however, in stressing our conclusion that a true understanding of the feelings and aims of ordinary human beings is an essential condition of success, whether we are concerned with the replacing and rebuilding of our great cities, the renewal of life in the countryside, the humanizing of our town schools, the training and teaching of youth, the education of adult citizens, the revision of economic structure.

Everyone of these purposes not only requires a co-operative effort from departments and sectional authorities now so often working

³²⁸ *ibid.*, p. 192-3

isolatedly; it demands also the full knowledge and understanding of human nature as a whole.³²⁹

Such a perspective can be understood as part of an incipient political and social policy framework. Analysing the period from 1940 to 1960 Jose Harris has observed how the former ethical basis of politics and social policy completely disappeared. She reports on ‘the widespread silence on the theme of the underlying nature, powers, and purposes of the state’, and demonstrates how the states’ idealistic framework became replaced by a more technological conception of politics.³³⁰ Now social policy came to be derived from supposedly neutral social sciences. Likewise, the historian Dorothy Porter notices a similar trend in changes to social medicine.³³¹ Porter argues that, by the interwar years, social medicine had assumed an explicit political role as reformers, such as the Webbs and Newsholme, attempted to make advanced industrial society an egalitarian and healthy utopia.³³² Opening up health care to everybody became fundamental to the creation of a fair and democratic society.³³³ But with World War II this egalitarian underpinning disappeared and was replaced by a social medicine grounded in social behaviour. Porter argues that this change in emphasis can be seen

³²⁹ S. Isaacs, ‘Introduction’, in S. Isaacs ed., *The Cambridge Evacuation Survey* (London: Methuen and Co., 1941), pp. 1-11

³³⁰ J. Harris, ‘Political Thought and the State’, in R. Whiting and S. Green eds. *The Boundaries of the State in Modern Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 15

³³¹ D. Porter, ‘From Social Structure to Social Behaviour in Britain after the Second World War’, *Contemporary British History*, vol. 16(3), (2002), pp. 58-80

³³² S. Webb and B. Webb, *Soviet Communism: Dictatorship or Democracy?* (London: Left Review, 1936) and A. Newsholme, ‘Some Conditions of Social Efficiency in Relation to Local Public Administration’, *Public Health*, vol. 22, (1908-9), pp. 403-415

³³³ For discussion also see D. Porter, ‘Changing Disciplines: John Ryle and the Making of Social Medicine in Twentieth Century Britain’, *History of Science*, vol. 30, (1992), pp. 119-47; D. Porter, ‘John Ryle: Doctor of Revolution?’, in D. Porter and R. Porter eds., *Doctors, Politics and Society: Historical Essays* (Amsterdam and Atlanta: Rodopi, 1993), pp. 229-47; and D. Porter, ‘Social Medicine and Scientific Humanism in mid-Twentieth Century Britain’, *Journal of Historical Sociology*, vol. 9, (1996), pp. 168-87

reflected in other sociological work of the period. For example, it is evident in Michael Young and Peter Wilmott's *Family and Kinship in East London* (1957).³³⁴

Harris and Porter's work provides a useful means to assess Bowlby's ideas. This assessment can, in turn, fill gaps in their accounts. Harris and Porter are unclear as to how the transformation they record took place. Harris sees the displacement of political by technological goals merely as the result of the rise of Keynesian economics and disintegration in the quality of political debate.³³⁵ The evacuation debates, however, go some way to explaining the rise of the technological basis for conceiving of social policy, and consideration of Bowlby and Durbin's work in the context of the post-war Attlee government can further illuminate this.

2: Psychology and the State in Post-World War II Britain

In 1945 the Labour party won a landslide victory and formed the first ever majority Labour government with Clement Attlee as Prime Minister. The government has been seen as one of the great reforming ministries with the nationalisation of the Bank of England, coal, civil aviation, cable and wireless, gas, inland transport, and iron and steel, and the creation of National Insurance, National Assistance, and the National Health Service.³³⁶ While these reforms are well documented, little has been written of the more problematic question of the place of psychology in this new welfare provision. The belief in the necessity of psychologically informed social policy was by

³³⁴ M. Young and P. Wilmott, *Family and Kinship in East London* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1957); Porter, 'From Social Structure', p. 70

³³⁵ Harris, 'Political Thought and the State', p. 27

³³⁶ There is a vast literature on the Attlee government. For surveys see K. Morgan, *Labour in Power, 1945-51* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984); H. Pelling, *The Labour Governments 1945-51* (London: Macmillan, 1984); and P. Hennessy, *Never Again: Britain 1945-51* (London: Cape, 1992)

no means held across the government. It was, however, a prerogative for Bowlby and Durbin, and looking at their advocacy of a psychologically informed state we can begin to get a historical understanding of an issue that is still of importance today. It suggests that the inclusion of psychology was not driven by a concern for welfare provision but by a desire for ontological security that we have seen formulated in the pre-war and evacuation debates.

From around the middle of the 1930s Durbin had steadily increased his influence and standing within the Labour movement. During the war his theories of a mixed economy would have appealed to the coalition government and he secured a temporary appointment on the economic section of the War Cabinet Secretariat in 1940. This was followed by a position as personal assistant to Clement Attlee who was then Deputy Prime Minister. After the war Durbin would go on to become Parliamentary Secretary at the Ministry of Works before his death in 1948, and he was a key figure in establishing the party's economic outlook.³³⁷ As has been argued, the use of psychology for creating a harmonious society was central to Durbin's economics and he worked hard to get the subject on the government's agenda.³³⁸

In 1945 Durbin organised a conference with G.D.H. Cole. The conference addressed 'Psychological and Sociological Problems of Modern Socialism', and was well attended by some of the most prominent left-wing thinkers, including Karl Mannheim,

³³⁷ S. Brooke, 'Problems of 'Socialist Planning': Evan Durbin and the Labour Government of 1945', *The Historical Journal*, vol. 34(3), (1991), pp. 687-702

³³⁸ It has been argued that psychology played an important part in establishing Attlee's ministry as truly modern; M. Francis, 'The Labour Party: Modernisation and the Politics of Self-Restraint', in B. Conekin, F. Mort, and C. Waters eds., *Moments in Modernity* (London: Rivers Oram Press, 1999), pp. 152-170. Francis records how a Parliamentary Private Secretary, Christopher Mayhew, felt so inadequate in the presence of ministers such as Gaitskell and Harold Wilson and their 'unpretentious youth, well-trained efficiency and modernity' that he took the advice of Durbin and sought out a psychotherapist to recover his mental balance.

T.H. Marshall, W.A. Robson, R.H. Tawney, Harold Wilson, Michael Young and Bowlby.³³⁹ Its purpose was to look at how experts from the social sciences could help inform a deeper understanding of socialism, democracy and liberty.³⁴⁰ Bowlby's contribution to the conference was published the following year in the *Political Quarterly*.

Entitled 'Psychology and Democracy', it was a clear statement of Bowlby's belief in the necessity of a psychological understanding of the roots of love for the constitution of democracy, not simply its maintenance:

...a co-operative, peaceful and non-persecutory society demands that personal and social relations within it be based on the principles of freedom and democracy. Since the valuation of a society of this kind is clearly a moral judgement, if it can be demonstrated that liberty and democracy are necessary for its existence, they cease to be merely desirable in themselves but are seen to be social and psychological techniques having as their purpose the creation of a society with certain particular valued attributes.³⁴¹

After summarising his work on personal aggressiveness, Bowlby speculatively set out the environmental or 'field' conditions that would allow for democracy to flourish.

The idea of the 'field' was taken from the Polish psychologist and philosopher Kurt Lewin who advocated a constructive experimentalism whereby the experimenter was

³³⁹ Plans for this conference can be found in 'Notes on Social Psychology', Durbin Papers, BLPES, 4/8

³⁴⁰ see S. Brooke, 'Evan Durbin: Reassessing a Labour 'Revisionist'', *Twentieth Century British History*, vol. 7, (1996), p. 40

³⁴¹ J. Bowlby, 'Psychology and Democracy', *Political Quarterly*, vol. 17, (1946), p. 61

forced to continually re-evaluate his or her conceptual schema to deal with complicated social relations.³⁴² Although purporting to be an advocate of Lewin's 'field theory', Bowlby in fact collapsed complex social relations into his own developmental theory, eschewing the social 'field' and replacing this with an individualistic social ontology, namely the need for security.³⁴³ For example, he equated the democratic process with the early development of children's personalities:

By and large the same factors which promote libidinization and co-operation in childhood, proximity of authorities, a sense of being valued, tolerance for private interests and so on, are those which also evoke co-operative attitudes in grown-ups.³⁴⁴

Bowlby believed the exercise of government or management should have been the actualisation of this innately grounded co-operation. In effect he naturalised through psychology the political or managerial process in the light of his observations of childhood development, exactly as Durbin had done in his essay on 'What have we to defend?'.³⁴⁵ This can be objected to on philosophical grounds as an example of the naturalistic fallacy. There are also objections that can be levelled at it from a social and historical perspective and these can be examined through some of the political debates of the period.

³⁴² Bowlby, 'Psychology and Democracy', p. 73; on Lewin see A. Métraux, 'Kurt Lewin: Philosopher-Psychologist', *Science in Context*, vol. 5, (1992), pp. 373-84

³⁴³ On how Lewin's theory was taken up in this way in America and the conceptual issues involved see K. Danziger, 'The Project of an Experimental Social Psychology: Historical Perspectives', *Science in Context*, vol. 5, (1992), pp. 309-28

³⁴⁴ Bowlby, 'Psychology and Democracy', p. 67

³⁴⁵ E.F.M. Durbin, 'What have we to defend? A Brief Critical Examination of the British Socialist Tradition', in N. Deakin ed. *Origins of the Welfare State*, vol. 2 (London: Routledge, 2000), pp. 5-6, first published 1942

Bowlby's principle incentive for the development of a psychological view of democracy was its potential to accommodate a Labour government as much as to deter the threat of a further war, all the more horrific in view of the new nuclear weapons. He concluded:

The return to power of a Labour Government pledged to promote a high degree of internal and external co-operation would be an excellent reason for fostering research along these lines. Such considerations attain even more urgent significance with the advent of the atomic bomb. All our previous experience points inescapably to the conclusion that neither moral exhortation nor fear of punishment will succeed in controlling the use of this weapon. Persons bent on suicide and nations bent on war, even suicidal war, are deterred by neither. The hope for the future lies in a far more profound understanding of the nature of the emotional forces involved and the development of scientific social techniques for modifying them.³⁴⁶

Bowlby would go on to pursue this research at the Tavistock Clinic and work for the inclusion of psychoanalysis within the NHS.³⁴⁷ It remains for further research to show how significant this technological framework for social policy was for the labour movement, given that it was rooted in the notion of security and social behaviour rather than welfare. One potentially fruitful line of research might be the later development of T.H. Marshall's notion of citizenship in which he attempted to

³⁴⁶ Bowlby, 'Psychology and Democracy', p. 76

³⁴⁷ On Bowlby's post-war work at the Tavistock see Rose and Miller, 'The Tavistock Programme: The Government of Subjectivity and Social Life', pp. 171-192

constitute society in terms of social production.³⁴⁸ It remains here, however, to offer a historical assessment of Bowlby views, to judge the extent that they constitute a coherent ideological package.

3: Conclusion: The Limits of Bowlby's Ideology

I have argued that Bowlby's theory of attachment needs to be understood as embedded in wider socio-economic and political debates. His developmental theory was constructed in the context of post-World War I thinking on altruism, the post-war crisis of national identity, and the debates surrounding democratic socialism. This model of development acted, in turn, as the basis for Bowlby and Durbin's emergent political and socio-economic beliefs. It is thus impossible to separate Bowlby's psychology from the social-economic and political interests within which it was forged. They mutually reinforced one another and constituted a coherent plan for social action, or ideology.

This ideology can be summarised as the state-led application of a universalistic psychology to intervene primarily in familial relations and aid in the development of children to become altruistic (but otherwise autonomous) members of society. This intervention was justified by reference to the ability of peaceful societies to create wealth for the benefit of everyone. Any act of aggression worked against wealth creation and was, therefore, irrational and a psychological problem. The great absence

³⁴⁸ On Marshall's conception of citizenship see B. Turner, 'The Erosion of Citizenship', *British Journal of Sociology*, vol. 52(2), (2001), pp. 189-209; and M. Freedon, 'Civil Society and the Good Citizen: Competing Conceptions of Citizenship in Twentieth-century Britain', J. Harris ed., *Civil Society in British History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), pp. 275-292

in Bowlby and Durbin's thinking is an explanatory account of how people are supposed to connect with the many institutions of industrial society.

This absence is unsurprising given their model of psychological development and its emphasis on universal and primitive human instincts, and their commitment to a form of government that could regulate these instincts. Rather than offering an explanation or understanding of the institutions that comprise civilisation, Bowlby and Durbin merely advocated that forms of government that accentuated people's aggressive tendencies be replaced by those that enabled loving ones. This form of dualism cannot account for Bowlby and Durbin's own value system, shown to be rooted in interwar British society. Moreover, it is problematic in other ways.

Bowlby and Durbin believed that early psychological intervention would tackle the root cause of social problems, namely aggressiveness. If this could be achieved then people would be free to follow their desires in a caring society and an economy maintained by lasting peace. With their model of development, Bowlby and Durbin had little conception of the role commerce and consumerism in shaping people's desires. It would, of course, be anachronistic to criticize them for it. Nevertheless, they can hardly be excused for granting no space for the competitive nature of private enterprise given that this was a subject widely debated during the post-war period of nationalisation.

Writing in 1952, after his resignation from the Labour government, Aneurin Bevan lamented the prominence accorded to economic considerations with Keynesian economics and wrote of its detrimental effect on socialism:³⁴⁹

What I wish to emphasise here is that Parliamentary action was still to be the handmaid of private economic activity; was still to be after the fact. Private enterprise was still regarded in that policy, as the dominant consideration, and the role of Parliamentary action was to provide a stimulant when it looked like flagging. This is wholly opposed to Socialism, for to the Socialist, Parliamentary power is to be used progressively until the main strands of economic activity are brought under public direction.³⁵⁰

And here lies the central problem with Bowlby and Durbin's perspective. Their solution to social problems was wholly psychological and could not conceptually deal with the fact that private enterprise was and is inherently self-interested and competitive. It is all very well to take the Keynesian line and argue that entrepreneurialism ultimately serves wider social needs through driving an otherwise stagnant economy. But, it is impossible to maintain that this is compatible with the creation of a caring and harmonious society.

Bevan, rather than offer to correct individual behaviour to serve an economic end, outlined an alternative democratic vision, arguing that social harmony could be achieved by the proper regulation of economic activity:

³⁴⁹ A former Minister of Health, and of Labour and National Service under Attlee, Bevan resigned after new NHS charges were introduced.

³⁵⁰ A. Bevan, *In Place of Fear* (London: Heinemann, 1952), p. 31

If individual man is to make a home for himself in the Great Society, he must also seek to make the behaviour of social forces reasonably predictable. The assertion of anti-socialists that private economic adventure is a desirable condition stumps him as profoundly unscientific.³⁵¹

This was the inverse of Bowlby and Durbin's interpretation of democratic socialism, and Bevan came close to making explicit reference to their views:

Rational thought fights in vain against the irrational mood which is produced by the endemic war in industry, commerce and finance. The psychology of competition, and love of peace, are uneasy bed-fellows. The love of peace is certainly there, but it is overwhelmed time and again by waves of mass emotion from the countless millions of little and great frustrations experienced in the competitive struggle for existence.³⁵²

It appears that little has changed. We still need to ask to questions about what role psychology can play in a truly progressive society. Indeed, this goes to the heart of the evolutionary psychology debates. The model of human nature advocated by evolutionary psychologists like Bowlby, perpetuates the view that social organisation is at best a secondary consideration in understanding peoples' needs, at worst it is

³⁵¹ Bevan, *In Place of Fear*, p. 36

³⁵² *ibid.*, pp. 49-50. In 1955 Bevan fought an unsuccessful leadership challenge against Hugh Gaitskell, opposing plans to introduce National Health Service charges: see R.J. Godfrey, 'The Bevan-Gaitskell Rivalry: Leadership, Conflict and Division within the British Labour Party', DPhil thesis, University of Sussex, (1986)

irrelevant. This is not a sustainable position; my hope is that I have provided some indication that its existence is not based on any 'scientific' considerations, but rather, a set of socio-cultural beliefs that are historically contingent, and can and should be reconsidered.

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