

Fifty Years of Attachment Theory

Sir Richard Bowlby

I am not a psychologist, I like to design racing cars. I lived close to my father all my life: I lived with him, in the flat above him, in the house next door to him, shared a boat on the south coast and a holiday home on the Isle of Skye. I find that I remember more about my father than I once realized. It was a psychiatrist who told me that.

It is astonishing to me, as a layman, that Attachment Theory was not greeted with a great chorus of "Hallelujah!, at last we have seen the light." It was not like that. It was a real struggle to get this concept—one of the fundamentals of what makes us human—more widely understood so that society could benefit. It is solidly based on research and, after all, what is the point of doing research if nobody knows about it? That makes it a waste of time. Even when it is obscure, as much of it can be, research data is valuable. I have spent much of my life trying to clarify research findings in medical science and assist in their wider circulation. Eventually I quit my job to communicate Attachment Theory in what I hope is a more accessible way so that it could be more broadly understood.

What I want to do tonight is to recount some of the struggles that Attachment Theory has had in gaining a wider acceptance.

It is fifty years since my father wrote *Child Care and the Growth of Love*, and although Attachment Theory is now established as a valuable working model in child development and mental health circles, the general public's knowledge of the concept of attachment is notably lacking. From my position inside the family and outside the professions, I am taking a critical look at what prevents the dissemination of the valuable insights that Attachment Theory could bring to the general public. For some years I have been presenting recollections of my father's professional struggle to develop Attachment Theory, and some of the public's misunderstandings of what he wrote. Sometimes this has been because of the emotional difficulties that they have with his work, and there are also wider social issues which still prevent many people from accepting Attachment Theory.

Probably the largest group consists of people fortunate enough to have had a secure attachment, who have the confident expectation of repeating the cycle with their own children; for this group the whole subject is so self-explanatory and obvious that it hardly merits comment—unless things go wrong.

In a way I do not even like to call it Attachment Theory any more; I prefer to call it research into bonding. For many people "theory" means a vague, "anything goes", sort of idea; it does not have only the strict scientific definition which is to be found in the dictionary.

The origin of my father's motivation for working on this conundrum of the parent-child attachment relationship probably stems from a traumatic event when he was about four years old. In 1911 his father was a successful surgeon who lived in a large London town-house with his wife and six children. The normal arrangement for child-care at that time was to have a senior nanny—she was called Nana—and one or two nursemaids who helped out as more children were born. My father was the fourth child; he had a nursemaid called Minnie who had day-to-day responsibility for him. The children rarely saw their father, except on Sundays and holidays; and they only saw their mother for an hour a day between 5.00 and 6.00 in the evening. Effectively, these children had twenty-three-hour a day good quality and non-parental care. My father grew to love Minnie, who once told his sister that John was her favourite, and my guess is that Minnie was his surrogate, principal

attachment figure in preference to his own mother. Then, when he was four, Minnie left the family to get a better job. When my father spoke of this event, he said he was sufficiently hurt to feel the pain of childhood separation—but was not so traumatized that he could not face working with it on a daily basis. All this is in print; it is not a family secret.

At the age of twenty-one, my father, a disenchanting medical student, was working at Priory Gate, a school for maladjusted children (that's what they were called—people were not very "PC" in those days). Here he met John Alford, a remarkable man for whom my father had great respect and who became a professor (in Canada, I believe). Alford had noticed that many of the disturbed children in the school came from very disrupted family backgrounds. It was he who convinced my father to complete his medical degree and study psychoanalysis; he also inspired his interest in maternal deprivation, the forerunner of his later work on attachment. I imagine my father identified the loss of his Minnie with the maternal deprivation experienced by the delinquent children in the school. He undertook his study of forty-four juvenile thieves before the Second World War and it was published in 1944. He found that seventeen of the group had suffered an early prolonged, or permanent, separation from their mother, or permanent mother substitute, during the first five years of their life—as compared with only two in the control group. In order that he could be absolutely sure of the disrupted childhood these children had experienced, he recorded only death, desertion, or divorce in the families; these were the only data that he could be absolutely sure were reliable.

My father was not afraid to confront intimidating figures, which was to lead him into a series of conflicts throughout his career. It began with his protracted psychoanalytic training, when he would insist on arguing with his analyst, Joan Riviere, and his supervisor, Melanie Klein. He found it hard to accept their rigidly-held theories because he believed these failed to satisfy the scientific rigour he had learned at Cambridge when studying medicine. (I may say that Donald Winnicott was at Cambridge, too, and neither did he go much on the training; it was very rigid; there was no emotion involved; everything was very clinical.)

In 1949 the World Health Organization (WHO) invited my father to report on the psychiatric needs of the many homeless

children who had been orphaned because of the Second World War. The wide-ranging material that he gathered for the WHO report, called *Maternal Care and Mental Health*, was published in 1951. The main text of the report was used for his popular and controversial paperback *Child Care and the Growth of Love*, written in 1952 and published a year later. It used to be said about him: "Stick a pin in Bowlby and out comes maternal deprivation!" At this point he was still working with the material on orphans; he had not worked out Attachment Theory. On the first page of both books he outlined the conditions needed for the healthy development of children:

For the moment it is sufficient to say that what is believed to be essential for mental health is that the infant and young child should experience a warm, intimate and continuous relationship with his mother, or permanent mother substitute, in which both find satisfaction and enjoyment.

However, only in the paperback does he clarify his use of the words "permanent mother substitute" by adding: "one person who steadily mothers him". Nowhere did he clarify his use of the word "continuous", and this was to get him into a great deal of trouble later on. It is worth noting here that if you look up the word "attachment" in the index of *Child Care and the Growth of Love*, you will not find it. He had not worked it out in 1952, and did not use it in a publication until 1957.

Video clip of John Bowlby

What I noticed was that there were children who had been referred for persistent thieving, truancy, and what I spotted was that they had had very, very disrupted childhoods. A continuous relationship between a mother and child in which both find happiness and satisfaction, promotes mental health.

Notice again his use of the word "continuous"; he frequently used it but did not distinguish between what he meant by "the enduring relationship" from that of "unbroken contact".

Child Care and the Growth of Love was primarily addressing children's experience of complete maternal deprivation, or prolonged

separation, when abandoned in orphanages; he saw this as being "foremost among the causes of delinquent character development". He clarified the term "prolonged separation" as being "complete and prolonged separation, six months or more, from their mothers or established foster-mothers." However, the phrase "prolonged separation" has been misrepresented and frequently used to suggest that Attachment Theory warns of grave consequences for the young child whose mother works outside the home. For example, in 1998, in her best-seller *Life after Birth*—which is about working mothers—Kate Figes adds a distorting twist to a passage from my father's paperback; she says:

He advises that mother should not work outside the home and warns that there is a very strong case indeed for believing that prolonged separation of a child from its mother or mother substitute during the first five years of life stands foremost among the causes of delinquent character development.

Figes equates the effect of mothers working outside the home for some hours a day with the effects of prolonged separation of six months or more, or even death. It is partly such confusion in popular books that has made Attachment Theory look so ridiculous that people dismiss it, along with Bowlby, out of hand.

In 1958, five years after *Child Care and the Growth of Love* was published, my father wrote a pamphlet called *Can I Leave my Baby?* I think he wrote this to clarify his position and to answer some of his critics, but the damage had already been done in the widely-read paperback and his pamphlet was only a minor publication:

Mothers sometimes ask: "Then can we never leave our small children?" I do not believe that anyone has ever suggested they should not. It is an excellent plan to accustom babies and small children to being cared for, now and then, by someone else—father, for instance, or Granny, or some other relation or neighbour; in this way mother can have some freedom too, for an afternoon's shopping in peace, visits to the doctor or dentist, the cinema or tea with friends.

Leaving small children whilst you go out to work needs much more care. If your own mother is living nearby or a dependable

neighbour can be daily guardian, it may work out all right. But it needs regularity, and it must be the same woman who cares for him.

It is the same with nannies. Nannies are valuable people, provided they are good ones and provided they stay. It is the chopping and changing of people in charge of a young child which upsets him. If a mother hands over her baby completely to a nanny (as my father was) she should realise that in her child's eyes, Nanny will be the real mother figure, not Mummy. This may be no bad thing, always provided that the care is continuous, but for a child to be looked after entirely by a loving nanny and then for her to leave when he is two or three, or even four or five, can be almost as tragic as the loss of a mother.

That's straight autobiography! I do not think he realized it was the word "continuous" that was the cause of the misunderstanding in the first place. I think his own loss of Minnie must have created a complete blind spot for him; otherwise, considering that the prime purpose of his pamphlet was to clarify what he meant by "continuous care", he would surely have defined the word "continuous". I suspect he was so deeply affected by this experience of a discontinued relationship that, to him, the meaning of a continuous relationship was so blindingly obvious and of such overpowering significance that it never even occurred to him that it might need defining. I would define his use of "continuous" (when applied to a relationship) as an enduring relationship, lasting many years, where periods of separation are shorter than would cause the child distress or trauma. The length of the period will depend upon the age of the child, the person with whom they are left, where they are left, how often they are left, and also the child's temperament and the quality of his relationship with their principal attachment figure—that is, the person who is leaving him.

The following video clip of my father is a bit confusing because he makes a Freudian slip, an example of a lack of coherent narrative: he refers to his mother as his grandmother.

Video clip of John Bowlby interview

Interviewer: "Do you think a nanny intervenes in the relationship between a mother and her child?"

John Bowlby: "Not necessarily; only if one is jealous of the other . . . but if each have their own role and the parents see plenty of the children, there is no problem. I think one of the problems nowadays is that nannies don't stay. I mean, in my day I had a nanny. I was one of six children. Nanny came when my elder sister was a baby and stayed until my grandmother died at the age of ninety. She was part of the family, you see. That was a way of life which has long since ceased; I happened to notice just the other day that the Princess of Wales' nanny had left after she was with the family for four years; she has now left and that, I am sure, is very unsettling for the two princes. Nannies leaving can be very traumatic, especially if the children have become very attached to them."

Interviewer: "So time is the important thing rather than . . .?"

John Bowlby: "Continuity is one very important thing, and the personal relationship between nanny and mother is the other critical thing. If they each have their own role it's all right; if they compete, it's all wrong."

A fundamental principle of Attachment Theory is that people of all ages show a preference for one primary attachment figure above all others; this will usually shift from the primary attachment figure, usually the birth mother but not necessarily, to a romantic partner over time. For babies older than a few months, the primary attachment figure is almost always the biological mother but it could be anyone else who takes on the long-term commitment of raising the child. My father told me how the arrangement of someone's attachment figures can be described as a pyramid: friends and familiar neighbours at the base, secondary attachment figures above them, and the primary attachment figure at the top. In *Attachment* (Volume I) he comments that it may be confusing to refer to all of them as "attachment figures", and to all the behaviour as "attachment behaviour". He was keen to emphasize that we need *multiple* attachment figures, but that they are arranged in a hierarchy. In *Separation* (Volume II) he says:

Whether a child or adult is in a state of security, anxiety or distress is determined in large part by the accessibility and responsiveness of his principal attachment figure.

If a child has a surrogate carer, parents may fear that it will be the surrogate carer, not themselves, who will take that special top spot in the child's affections. It is of the greatest importance to the child that the initial primary attachment figure should be accessible for many years, preferably well into adulthood. I accept, of course, that there are many situations when the sensitive use of good quality, age-appropriate substitute care is the realistic choice for parents. Sarah Blaffer Hrdy, a Professor of Anthropology, in her excellent book *Mother Nature*, explains how she used her knowledge of Attachment Theory to arrange day care for her baby. The programme at the Harvard Yard Day Care Centre, which she used, was designed by Berry Brazelton, a leading advocate of Attachment Theory; Professor Hrdy describes a facility that worked so well precisely because it addressed the various attachment needs of the children.

In 1951 my father met Konrad Lorenz; it was a red-letter day for him. He had read Lorenz's work on the imprinting of goslings and how they incessantly followed the first moving object they saw during the crucial early phase. This was an inspiration to my father and he began to examine the biological origins of an infant's "proximity-seeking" behaviour. Imprinting is a bit different to attachment, for the birds evolve from a different stem, but nevertheless the behaviour was sufficiently close to arouse his interest. Birds had always been a source of fascination to him—in fact, I got involved in photography because I discovered the camera that he had used as a naval cadet at Dartmouth College to indulge his hobby of photographing nesting birds.

Being on sabbatical in Palo Alto in 1957 gave my father enough time to pull together all the strands of his work. This was when he said to me:

You know this business about the instinct for a small child to stay close to its mother, and the intimate relationship they form, well, I believe that it's the same instinct to form close relationships that stays with us all our lives; and we suffer the same feelings of loss when a loved one dies as a child feels who's lost his mother.

The following year he read a paper to the British Psycho-Analytic Society (BPAS) called *The Nature of the Child's Tie to its Mother*, in which he first outlined what was to become known as Attachment Theory. This paper was received with great hostility in London; an orchestrated attack on his ideas was mounted. I believe that it was on this occasion that somebody remarked "Very interesting, Dr Bowlby, but what has it got to do with psychoanalysis?" He considered this paper was a watershed in his career—because it simultaneously outlined the basis of the attachment relationship, and also alienated him from the vast majority of his professional psychoanalytic peers for many years to come. Not only was he challenging many of the theories of Klein and Freud, but he was presenting a coherent alternative theory instead. To psychoanalysts at the time, many with unbearable traumas in their past, this new theory must have been deeply disturbing. Years later, in 1987, he remarked: "I have found it extremely unfashionable to attribute psychopathology to real-life experiences."

It is important to realize how many years it took my father to work all this out, and what a struggle it was to establish which parts of the jigsaw fitted where; which bits belonged to a different puzzle; and which bits were just rubbish. Many people still think that he created Attachment Theory fully-formed, in an instant of time, in 1950. He did not. People say he changed his mind; well, the seeds were sown when he was four years old; he was forty-six when *Child Care and the Growth of Love* came out; and he was seventy-three when he completed the Attachment trilogy. I think it is reasonable to assume that there was some development in his knowledge between the ages of four and seventy-three. As for changes of mind, Germaine Greer writes in *The Whole Woman*, (published 2002):

In *The Female Eunuch* I argued that motherhood should not be treated as a substitute career; now I would argue that motherhood should be regarded as a genuine career option, that is to say, as paid work and, as such, as an alternative to other paid work. What this would mean is that every woman who decides to have a child would be paid enough money to raise that child in decent circumstances.

My father supported the view, in print, that mothers should receive proper financial support from the State for the first three years of their child's life.

His guiding principle was that: "If the theory doesn't fit the data, change the theory, not the data." It took him years to develop a theory of attachment that incorporated all the research data that his colleagues had amassed; only then did he start to write the three volumes. I think his forthright manner made him the champion of those who felt supported by him, but a pariah to those who felt threatened by his ideas; I fear there has been a limited meeting of minds as a result.

Video clip of John Bowlby interview

John Bowlby: "About sixty per cent of mothers do a very good job, so the majority of women have a good model to follow—and there is an awful lot to be said for that."

Interviewer: "So you are saying that 40 per cent do not do a good job?"

John Bowlby: "I am."

Interviewer: "And what does that mean?"

John Bowlby: "Well, it means a lot of mental ill-health and disturbance and delinquency and what have you."

Well, that's telling you! No wonder he had his battles! In taking up this principle, I try to be as thoughtful and as considerate as I can, but I do think that these issues have to be addressed. One cannot just sweep great chunks of human nature under the carpet; these are the chunks that make us who we are, that make us human. He considered the best conditions for optimum mental health for children under three years old were:

a resourceful parent (usually but not necessarily, the biological mother) who was happy to stay at home, with adequate emotional, practical and financial support, where both the parent and child found satisfaction and enjoyment.

My wife, Xenia, was a full-time, stay-at-home mother; she is sometimes asked what it was like to live next door to John Bowlby and bring up his grandchildren. She says that he only ever once gave her advice. This was in 1968, when she was pregnant for the second

time and under some peer pressure to stop providing "comfort on demand" for our two-year-old. (They said: "You'll make a rod for your own back.") He said to her: "Carry on exactly as you are; take no notice of what others say, you are doing it right." I think that may be a message for some of us to take away tonight. Our daughter Sophie and her husband Matt have recently had a baby and bought a small house. They told us that when house-hunting, they had drawn a three-mile circle around our house, and had only looked at places inside that circle.

I now turn to some of the financial and emotional obstacles that have made Attachment Theory so unpalatable to the public. Humans have an insatiable appetite for knowledge and invention aimed at making life better and easier. However, our genetically inherited developmental needs remain unchanged. If we allow them to be submerged by the lifestyle that technological and social progress has made available, we get into trouble. I was born in 1941 and people of my age are now becoming grandparents; we can see some of our children struggling to arrange their lives and afford the lifestyle that they have grown to accept—the lifestyle and values adopted by my generation. We need to look at the care of small children from the perspective of their parents, the thirty-something generation of new mothers and fathers.

Two big changes during my lifetime can be singled out. First is the dramatic increase in wealth and living standards that much of society enjoys, compared with the 1940s and 1950s when I was a child in England. The second change is perhaps even more dramatic: the huge social and cultural changes brought about by the equal opportunities movement in the 1970s. This opened up to a much wider spectrum of society an array of social, educational, and employment possibilities that had previously been closed on grounds of race, gender, age, class, or creed. The consequent rise in living standards and disposable income for a broad band of middle-class young people raised their expectations very high. These included good housing, transport, holidays, television, designer clothes, mobile phones, central heating, entertainment and leisure activities—not to mention PCs, CDs, plasma screens and all those gizmos. These expectations have been created by my generation and it is not unreasonable for my children to wish to provide these high standards for their own families. However, they need to pay

for this lifestyle and, particularly nowadays, decent housing is expensive. As a result, many new families feel they have little or no choice but to continue earning two salaries throughout their child-rearing years. Having choices is very important and these financial pressures drastically limit the choice of most parents.

I want to touch on the emotional sensitivity of new parents, and in particular the reaction that information on attachment findings produces when people first encounter it. Let me first, however, acknowledge that some parents of small babies feel that parenting would be so frustrating to them that the baby would fare better with long periods of day care and shorter periods of their own "quality time". It must also be acknowledged that in some very dysfunctional circumstances, long periods of non-parental care, foster-care or even adoption may be needed to reduce the transmission of dysfunction to the baby. Lastly, I respect anybody who does not have children at all.

Most informal discussions with parents about attachment-related issues rapidly become focused on their own personal experiences. These reflections may go back to childhood memories of family pleasures, or the pain of family breakdown, or of personal trauma; sometimes people also worry about the parenting arrangements for their own children. The problem here is that much of the memory of childhood is, as this audience will certainly know, stored at the unconscious level. Triggering these memories makes some parents very uncomfortable although they are not sure why; fight, flight, or freeze may be the instinctive response that emerges.

Of the many difficulties surrounding parenting issues, I think day care is the most contentious. One outspoken psychologist, Jay Belsky, has created controversy by spreading the findings of the massive National Institute of Child Health and Development (NICHD) study of day care for over 1,200 children. In spring 2001 the results were released for the cohort which had reached the age of four-and-a-half years. Belsky was quoted as saying:

We find clearly, indisputably and unambiguously that the more time spent in care, the more likely [the children] are to be aggressive and disobedient. . . . Even more surprising, the results are the same regardless of the type of quality of day care, the sex of the child, or whether the family is rich or poor. What seems to matter

most is time. The more hours spent away from parents, the more likely is the child to have behavioural problems. . . . In no case can the findings be described as strong, but a small impact on many may be of far greater social significance than a large impact on a few.

Many parents who have no choice but to work will find these words painful, and will not want to hear them. I think there is a similarity between the way my father was treated when he delivered his uncomfortable message many years ago and the way Belsky is being treated today when he reports the more uncomfortable aspects of the NICHD day care study. I did, by the way, take this quote to Belsky to check he was comfortable with my using the piece; he confirmed that it was accurate and that he would stand by it. When I likened the struggle that he was having to my father's struggle, he said: "I think it has something to do with the initials!"

There is currently a culture glorifying the independence of the nuclear family who can make it on their own without being dependent on anyone else, and of denigrating the inter-dependence of the extended family. Peer pressure often encourages mothers to return to work promptly, aided by attractive employment offers which may not be available after a maternity break of several years. Many young couples have made financial commitments which require them both to return to work after the birth of a baby; there is often, however, a dramatic shift in their feelings once the new baby arrives, and they may come to regret entering into those commitments. There are some positive reports about the advantages of modern childcare arrangements that are reassuring to new parents:

- Playing with other infants in day care helps the social development of the child.
- Infants have a better standard of living with two-income parents.
- Day care infants have a larger vocabulary and are more ready for pre-school facilities.
- Working parents are less depressed and isolated than stay-at-home parents.
- High-quality day care can compensate for a very poor family environment.

- Childcare professionals are more experienced and know how to stimulate babies.

There are also reports of problems associated with modern day care arrangements:

- Parents are less sensitive to the baby's cues for attention if they are apart all day.
- Only one in ten day care places is rated as high-quality, and for many these are unaffordable or unavailable.
- The more time an infant under three is apart from his parents, the more likely he is to be aggressive.
- When multiple care-workers look after a baby, there is a negative impact on his emotional development.
- Separating a small child from a surrogate primary attachment figure can leave lasting emotional scars.

In 1987, on my father's eightieth birthday, the *Boston Globe* quoted from an interview with him where he had said: "What astonishes me most about family life in the United States is that mothers tell me they can't afford to look after their own babies—in the richest country in the world!" He felt that society had overlooked the enormous amount of time involved in delivering emotionally enriching parenting, and that we too often short-change our infants. He thought that making appropriate arrangements for the care of babies and small children needed the intelligent application of Attachment Theory in order to avoid the pitfalls of the past. I realize that there is no benefit in ramming Attachment Theory down the throats of vulnerable parents who cannot alter their circumstances. We need, therefore, to find new ways of opening up the debate before people become locked into decisions they later regret.

How to be a good enough parent, or whether our own parents were good enough for us, or if our children will become good enough parents, or even the definition of a good enough parent, are powerful attachment issues that most people find difficult to talk about. It is frightening to enter the world of scientifically demonstrable evidence concerning the long-term mental health of children. The irony is that it is often people's own past attachment

experiences that prevent them from having a clearer understanding of Attachment Theory.

Video clip of John Bowlby

I think boys learn an enormous amount from being apprenticed to their fathers and girls learn an enormous amount by being apprenticed to their mothers. This is the usual pattern. It's not necessary, but it is the common pattern. Children flourish on attention from adults and if children get an adult's attention, and affection, and enjoyment, and company, and so on, they prosper. So many children unfortunately don't get that from their parents and grandparents. I would say you cannot over-estimate the importance of parental attitudes towards children. It is absolutely crucial. The lessons here are frightfully simple and people who neglect their children do not like hearing them; that's the trouble!

Did you notice that he was quite emotionally choked at one point? It was obviously a very personal message that he brought, but he always tried just to stick with the data. He was guided by his feelings, by his experiences, but he used classic scientific methods in his work and stuck very carefully to the science. His article "Psychoanalysis as Art and Science", is a particularly helpful way of looking at these matters.

An article written shortly after the death of my father summed up, in a sentence, the dilemma between parents' social aspirations and the demands on them as parents. That sentence, which I quote from memory, was: "Why couldn't John Bowlby come up with a theory of child development that was more appropriate [*sic*] to the needs of modern parents?" The dilemma is plain to see in such distorted logic. Part of the trouble is the word "theory"—I've got my theory, you've got yours, and we can have any old theory! Our use of the word "theory" in common parlance is very loose, so why shouldn't somebody come up with a theory that suits us better if you are not using the word in the proper, strictest scientific sense? It is a bad word. I use it here because you all understand what I mean, but I don't use it to a general public audience.

Over the years there has been a polarizing of opinion, whipped up by the media, between those who are vehemently against

attachment thinking as they understand it, and those who are passionately in favour of their version of it. This destructive polarization of opinion prevents the general public from getting a balanced view of Attachment Theory. Let me summarize the four main factors that I believe are preventing the knowledge of Attachment Theory from becoming more widely accepted by the general public:

1. Some people are securely attached and are comfortable with their life choices, hence the topic is of little concern to them.
2. Some are confused by the widespread misrepresentation and ridicule of my father's work in the popular media.
3. Some have personal memories of painful childhood issues that are awakened by the insights afforded by Attachment Theory.
4. Some are anxious about the long-term consequences that limited parenting choices may have for their own children.

The research data on many aspects of Attachment Theory is now unassailable. Somebody recently asked me if I had attended a "big conference in Minneapolis". I had not, and asked why I should have gone there. The answer was: "It was astonishing; there were 3,500 people and the only show in town was your father's work!" Despite that, the way we have been communicating this knowledge to the general public for the past fifty years has not been effective. Many lay people are still mystified by the emotional and social development of their children. For me, the challenge ahead is to find new and appropriate ways to help ordinary men and women to benefit from my father's knowledge.

Vote of thanks by Brett Kahr

Thank you very much, Sir Richard. I think we all realize how lucky we are—those of us who practise in the fields of psychology, counselling, psychoanalysis, or psychotherapy—that Sir Richard has now retired from his post at the Royal Free Hospital, and therefore may devote himself full-time to the furtherance of his research. He has actually given a great gift to those of us who work as mental health professionals.

Introduction of Pearl King

Brett Kahr

We have a further treat tonight. Pearl King has kindly accepted our invitation to follow Sir Richard Bowlby this evening, and to share with us her personal and unique reminiscences of both Donald Winnicott, the man, and John Bowlby, the man. Pearl is one of the few people alive today who worked very closely with both, and who knew each of them in a variety of contexts. It is vitally important for those of us who are students, entering the psychoanalytical or psychotherapeutic field for the first time, confronted by an often confusing and overwhelming array of historical personalities, to begin to learn about competing theories by first understanding the man or the woman behind these theories. In this spirit, we have called upon Pearl King to provide us with some biographical meat and potatoes, if you will, something to underpin our knowledge of these two towering figures in the burgeoning disciplines of infant and child mental health.

Pearl King occupies a unique position in the international psychoanalytical movement. She has practised as a psychoanalyst for over fifty years, having become the very first non-medical President of the British Psycho-Analytical Society, and having served as Secretary to the International Psycho-Analytical