

**Anne Karpf/ 'Constructing and Addressing the "Ordinary Devoted Mother": Donald Winnicott's BBC broadcasts, 1943-62'<sup>1</sup>, for publication in *History Workshop Journal*, vol.78, Autumn 2014**

**Abstract:**

Donald Winnicott's 50 BBC radio talks, broadcast between 1943-62, constitute the heart of his oeuvre and were later published in the bestselling book, 'The Child, the Family and the Outside World'. This article argues that, although commentators have routinely alluded to the broadcast origins of these talks, the importance of their institutional context is commonly effaced, as a result dehistoricising them. The article seeks to recover the conditions of production of the talks as 'spoken word', emphasising Winnicott's formidable linguistic skills, his understanding of register and his sensitivity to listeners, qualities developed under the formative influence of Winnicott's two producers, Janet Quigley and Isa Benzie.

Contemporary attempts by the BBC to popularise psychoanalysis met with significant resistance and criticism within the Corporation but Winnicott avoided such controversy, it is argued here, because of the way he was positioned within the BBC, and the role he played in wartime British society. The article places Winnicott among other popularisers of psychoanalytic ideas at the time, such as Susan Isaacs, John Bowlby and Ruth Thomas, and contends that, while Winnicott's idealisation of motherhood has been rightly criticised, his broadcasts also conveyed a powerful sense of motherhood as a lived experience.

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Between 1943 and 1962, the psychoanalyst Donald Winnicott gave more than 50 broadcasts on BBC Radio.<sup>2</sup> Mostly taking the form of scripted talks, the broadcasts covered a wide range of subjects - from guilt and jealousy to evacuation and step-parents. Many (though not all) were subsequently published as pamphlets, and later formed the basis of a bestselling book - 'The Child, the Family and the Outside World', first published by Penguin in 1964, and two other volumes, 'Talking to Parents' and 'Winnicott on the Child'.<sup>3</sup> For most non-clinicians or general readers these books<sup>4</sup> are their port of entry into Winnicott, and constitute the heart of his oeuvre. Both historians of psychoanalysis and biographers of Winnicott routinely acknowledge their genesis as broadcasts, but mostly in a manner as to suggest that this was

incidental to their creation, and constituted merely their method of transmission or vector of his fame.

This cursory acknowledgement, however, effaces the importance of the talks' institutional origins, and plays a part in dehistoricising them. Although cultural histories often reference the broadcasts as an example of the popularising of psychoanalytic ideas, these have a tendency to reduce their history to chronology so that the broadcasts are regarded at most as an example of a historical process, rather than themselves seen as historically produced.<sup>5</sup> (The exception is Michal Shapira, who draws attention to the contribution of Winnicott's BBC producers.<sup>6</sup>) This paper, instead, by recovering the conditions of the broadcasts' production, tries to understand the nexus of historical factors that made them possible. How was this particular cultural space for the transmission of this set of psychoanalytic ideas about mothers and children created at this historical moment?

The argument that follows looks for answers in a number of different spheres: in the role and structure of the BBC in this period; in the emergence of the broadcast talk as a cultural form; in Winnicott's constellation of professional identities and abilities which made radio such a congenial medium for him; and in Britain's wartime preoccupations which, it is suggested, the broadcasts implicitly addressed. After briefly sketching some dominant themes of the broadcasts, it draws on material primarily from the BBC Written Archives, but also from Winnicott's papers in the Wellcome Library, London, and the Oskar Diethelm Library in New York, to trace the development of Winnicott's career as a broadcaster, and examine the factors that came together to (over)determine it.

### **The talks**

The BBC Radio Talks Script Index for Dr D. Woods Winnicott begins with a broadcast on 10.12.43 called 'Getting to know your baby' in the series 'Happy Children'. Winnicott contributed ten more talks in the 'Happy Children' series by the end of April 1945, and four more talks under the rubric 'Difficult Children' in 1945/6. He did not broadcast again until 1949, when he gave nine talks on the Home Service in what became his most famous series, 'The Ordinary Devoted Mother and Her Baby'. In 1952 Winnicott re-recorded five

shorter versions of these talks for 'Woman's Hour' on the Light Programme (home to 'Woman's Hour' from the programme's launch in 1946). According to the BBC Script Index (which lists all scripts submitted to the BBC Script Library, though not necessarily all that were broadcast), he did not go into a studio again until 1955, nor did he broadcast between 1956 and 1959. The series returned as part of the 'Parents and Children' slot on Network Three in 1960, although now called 'The Ordinary Devoted Mother and Her Children'. After it finished later that year, Winnicott only gave a handful of radio talks again until his death in 1971.

Although the talks have different titles - 'What do we mean by a normal child?', 'The First Weeks', 'Baby Bites', 'How much do we know about babies as cloth-suckers?' 'The Beginnings of Jealousy' - they constitute a recognisable whole. In them Winnicott laid out the fundamentals of his theory: that the baby is a person from the start, that it is through the intimate relationship with an attentive, 'devoted', 'good enough' mother - a mother who can be loved, hated and depended upon - that the baby develops into a healthy, independent, adult individual. And that when mothers try to do things by the book - or by the wireless - "they lose touch with their own ability to act without knowing exactly what is right and what is wrong".<sup>7</sup> On the other hand "When things go wrong, as they must do from time to time, you are at a disadvantage if you are working blind. If you know what's going on you become less sensitive to criticism and to chance remarks from passers-by"<sup>8</sup> - the *raison d'être* of his talks. Adam Phillips has argued that for Winnicott, the non-prescriptive mother in her relationship to the baby formed a model for the non-impinging psychoanalyst - both of them creating a setting of trust in which development could take place at its own pace.<sup>9</sup> In some sense Winnicott extended this same practice to the broadcast, hoping to engender in the listener not compliance but a space in which to think about her baby and its needs. Winnicott provided a 'holding environment' for listeners, and his female producers provided a holding environment for him.

### **The beginning**

Winnicott's broadcasting career was shaped by two pioneering female producers in the Talks department, Janet Quigley and Isa Benzie, with whom he developed a remarkably close and trusting relationship. Quigley first

approached him in November 1943, asking if he would be interested in taking part in a series of planned talks on the upbringing of children. A number of salient features of their subsequent collaboration emerge in this early correspondence. "We have dealt with this subject in the past but always from either the physical side or the psychological. In this series we are hoping to combine both aspects and to have specialists working together."<sup>10</sup> Since Winnicott, as both a paediatrician and psychoanalyst, embodied both aspects, he was of obvious value to the Corporation.

A meeting was arranged. The day after it took place Quigley asked if he could come in for a "short microphone test? It is always as well to have this before going ahead," while also reassuring him that, "if you were to take part in this series you would of course have a completely free hand to develop your subjects the way you thought fit."<sup>11</sup> When Winnicott sent her his first draft script a few days later, he entreated her to "look at this as an essay, and use your broadcasting experience to criticise it freely? As I told you I am at the beginning of this work."<sup>12</sup>

Quigley arranged a date for the first recording: "We can see from this how you get on at the microphone and whether you feel like contributing regularly to the series."<sup>13</sup> But she was also critical of his draft script, arguing that it wasn't factual enough, and asking that he give "some actual examples of how a mother can get to know her baby. Referring to your own list of subjects what about bringing in the baby's early sensitivity to mother's anxiety and depression and refer to the different types of first contact or infant behaviour with the breast."<sup>14</sup> No copy of his draft script exists but the eventual script as broadcast incorporated all these ideas.<sup>15</sup> Winnicott sent the revised version to her with a note reading "Dear Miss Quigley, Would you take a look at this? I hope it's in time. Any suggestions welcomed as I feel right at the beginning as a broadcaster."<sup>16</sup>

As these exchanges show, Quigley wanted evidence of Winnicott's suitability for broadcasting, both through his microphone test and performance in his first recording, as expertise alone had increasingly come to be seen as a necessary but insufficient quality in those invited by the BBC to give talks. She also clearly guided and shaped the content of the individual broadcasts. And yet, even at this early stage, she was ready to give him absolute freedom to

mark out the subject areas. For his part Winnicott openly expressed his lack of confidence, while at the same time indicating that he was at the start of something that he anticipated continuing. (As did Clare Britton, his future wife, who wrote to him presciently just before the recording: "I hope you make a *very good* broadcast -& that it won't be too nerve-wracking. I hope it will be successful & that you'll be asked again<sup>17</sup> -& will become very famous."<sup>18</sup>) Winnicott repeatedly invited Quigley's criticism and guidance; Quigley responded by inducting him into broadcasting. Moulding him into an effective broadcaster therefore became a joint project, with a shared sense that there was more to come from him.

What is remarkable is how quickly he established himself. Within 19 months five of his talks had been published in a one shilling pamphlet called 'Getting to Know Your Baby' which, he informed Quigley, was 'doing nicely'.<sup>19</sup> By 1946 Isa Benzie was writing to propose a discussion programme: "We think the programme is likely to stand or fall by your participation."<sup>20</sup> In 1949 he had *carte blanche* in his choice of subject-matter: he recalled Isa Benzie telling him that summer "that I could give a series of nine talks on any subject that might please me"<sup>21</sup> - his pleasure at this freedom of the air palpable. Another producer, Eileen Maloney, wrote to him in 1958 that "Nobody will ever believe (sic) that my programme is any good until you broadcast in it."<sup>22</sup>

### **Quigley's influence**

Winnicott's talks are often described as though they were in some sense pre-existing and simply needed to be 'decanted' onto the wireless. Nothing could be further from the truth. Quigley and Benzie were formative in guiding both the choice of subject-matter and approach: they were midwives to the broadcasts. Winnicott's second and third talks illustrate the nature of Quigley's collaboration with him. The subject was 'Why does your baby cry?' After wrestling with the script, Winnicott wrote to Quigley to say that he could not fit all he wanted to say into one broadcast.<sup>23</sup> Quigley agreed that it needed two but urged him to also include material on how to deal with the different kinds of crying. In the resulting broadcasts, reprinted as 'Why do babies cry?'<sup>24</sup> Winnicott typically avoids instructing listening mothers but expatiates eloquently on the meaning of the different kinds of cries a parent can expect

to hear from their baby: these are among the most beautiful and sensitive pieces of his writing.

Quigley could be stern. When he sent her the script of his fourth talk, 'Where does Dad come in?', she responded "I am afraid I am not altogether happy about the script, I think it would be depressing to wives whose husbands are away, likely to remain away until the war is over and I wonder if it would not be made possible to give it a more positive, encouraging tilt.... Most men, I think, are frightened of small babies... Many women...get the children off to bed before the father returns."<sup>25</sup> As ever, Winnicott nudged his script in the direction of Quigley's remarks: "I know that some fathers are very shy about their babies at the beginning", he said at one point,<sup>26</sup> and at another, "very often... mother finds it a little difficult to know when to make use of her husband, and when to wish him out of the way. No doubt it is often far simpler to get the baby to bed before father comes home,"<sup>27</sup> a stance he went on to gently criticise.

In one instance Winnicott actually incorporated part of Quigley's comments into his script. When planning his eighth broadcast, on the only child, Quigley wrote him (unusually) an intensely personal letter about her own experience. "There is an odd feeling ... of closed-inness. Perhaps too much love, too much attention, too much possessiveness make one feel shut up with these parents who imagine long after it has ceased to be true that they are the whole of your world."<sup>28</sup> A long section from Quigley's letter was quoted verbatim ("as a friend said to me") in Winnicott's final script.

Winnicott never stopped being self-critical and tried, to the last, to develop his skills as a broadcaster. In 1945 he wrote to Quigley "Use the blue pencil or any other colour. Or say if it's no good."<sup>29</sup> Working on his script about the evacuated child he confessed, "I have had an awful time with this.. Let me know if it is no good, I'm beyond telling, having restarted many times, frantically looking round for a way of reviving dead mutton."<sup>30</sup> He was also learning to think like a broadcaster - which ideas would work on air, how many talks they would need, and even how topical they were. In November 1944, for example, he wrote "I shall be very glad to try and help in the new series. Last time I so hit (sic) up, getting used to the microphone, that I forgot all about co-operating... I think your topic [on the difficult child] is going to be red hot in a

few weeks' time because of Lady Allen of Hurtwood's publication of 500 letters following her letter to the Times."<sup>31</sup>

### **Benzie takes over**

In October 1945, Janet Quigley left the BBC because she was getting married, even though the BBC had rescinded its 'marriage bar' for women the previous year.<sup>32</sup> (She later returned as editor of 'Woman's Hour', in which capacity she would commission more work from Winnicott.) She handed over to a young Scottish producer, Isa Benzie, with whom she had shared a flat in London.<sup>33</sup> If Quigley 'discovered' Winnicott, then Benzie shaped him, and while Quigley's relationship with him remained, for the most, that of trusty colleague, Benzie was far more emotionally entangled.

Winnicott is commonly credited with having a gift for producing the memorable catchphrase, but in fact it was Benzie who came up with the 'Ordinary Devoted Mother' as the title for the series. Winnicott recounted how, in the summer 1949, Benzie and he were walking together, discussing a possible radio series. "She was, of course, on the lookout for a catchphrase, but I did not know this. I told her...I would like to talk to mothers about the thing that they do well, and that they do well simply because each mother is devoted to the task in hand, namely the care of one infant.. I said that ordinarily this just happens... Isa Benzie picked up the clue in a matter of twenty yards, and she said: 'Splendid! The Ordinary Devoted Mother.' So that was that."<sup>34</sup>

While Quigley mostly corresponded with Winnicott in a warm but professional manner, Benzie was effusive and personal. Commenting on Winnicott's draft script on security, she rhapsodised: "On first reading I did rather long to see you again... the only appropriate words to be used of what you are now writing are the sort of words applied to the later output of certain pictorial artists... the second page of your script broadcast last Monday...is a remarkable example of the poetry you are now writing and of the immense refinement of style."<sup>35</sup>

### The radio talk

Winnicott contributed to the development of the radio talk as a cultural form but also benefitted from it. In the late 1920s and early 1930s Hilda Matheson and Charles Siepmann, successive Directors of Talks at the BBC, presided over the emergence of the radio talk as a conduit for progressive opinion and a mediating agency between the state and the people.<sup>36</sup> Williams has argued that new communications technologies are initially largely parasitic on the genres established by the media that preceded them, before developing their own specific forms.<sup>37</sup> Before the advent of radio and at its inception, the sermon, the lecture and the political speech were the chief modes of public address, but Matheson was particularly interested in vitality in broadcast speech, decrying both the 'holy' voice (best suited to large echoing churches) and the 'poetry' voice (with its surfeit of 'elocution').<sup>38</sup> It was useless, she suggested, "to address the microphone as if it were a public meeting, or even to read it essays or leading articles. The person sitting at the other end expected the speaker to address him [sic] personally, simply, almost familiarly, as man to man."<sup>39</sup>

Although she was writing in 1933, the ability to communicate with what she called 'vernacular intonation' and 'vernacular English'<sup>40</sup> remained a pressing one. Charles Hill, the BBC's 'Radio Doctor' in the second world war, was embraced warmly by both the Corporation and listeners because his broadcast style was so far from that in most serious talks - stentorian speakers stressing their own, superior knowledge. The first post-war BBC research survey revealed that the average listener understood only 30 percent of the average talk and had difficulty with the language. Hill, on the other hand, was a master of the demotic, mixing plain-speaking with humour.<sup>41</sup> While he was a more informal broadcaster than Winnicott, his vowels flatter and his form of address more 'blokeish', in his capacity to express himself through vivid descriptions and similes Hill can be considered, in some sense, Winnicott's forerunner.

Scannell and Cardiff argue that the accessible, informal type of talk that Matheson tried to foster lapsed after a few years, both because busy experts were not prepared to devote the time to adapt to the medium, and because a personal, populist style "seemed a breach of the conventions of learned discourse and argument."<sup>42</sup>



Yet Winnicott managed with ease the complex task of sounding simultaneously authoritative and (relatively) conversational. He did not believe that popularising diminished the seriousness of his work. One of his most powerful stylistic devices was to address the listener in the second person, buttonholing her with the direct appeal of 'you', constantly imagining himself in her position, and encouraging her to identify with the group of women whose remarkable recorded studio discussions formed the innovative centre of a number of his broadcasts. Introducing the two 1960 programmes on "saying 'no'", for example, he said "I think you will enjoy the discussion, which lasts about eight minutes. It feels real to me... It's just the way you would discuss the same subject."<sup>43</sup> Winnicott was addressing the listener just as Matheson would have wanted - personally, simply, almost familiarly, man to woman.

### **Conceiving the listener**

Implicit in Matheson's characterisation of the effective broadcaster, able to speak to a single person, was a parallel one of the listener, now constituted as an individual, listening alone, rather than as part of a mass audience. And one factor contributing to Winnicott's success as a broadcaster was the clear conception he had of his listeners. Winnicott believed it was to mothers that he "deeply needed to speak".<sup>44</sup> At the same time he believed that mothers were 'specialists' in the care of their own children: "I want to encourage you to keep and defend this specialist knowledge. It cannot be taught."<sup>45</sup> Winnicott attempted to legitimise mothers' knowledge by comparing it to that of other, generally accepted, male specialists. For example he remarked, following the discussion on saying 'no', "I always enjoy hearing.. when people talk about their speciality. It's the same when farmers talk about wheat and rye and potatoes."<sup>46</sup>

Though Quigley thought radio well-suited to 'indirect propaganda' as a means of conveying valuable social messages,<sup>47</sup> Winnicott professed himself 'allergic to propaganda'.<sup>48</sup> "All my professional life I have avoided giving advice," he said in a lecture to midwives in 1957.<sup>49</sup> "You will be relieved", he declared to radio listeners, "that I am not going to tell you what to do... I cannot tell you exactly what to do but I can talk about what it all means."<sup>50</sup>

Perhaps because he came to psychoanalysis via paediatrics, Winnicott had an acute understanding of different audiences, and the different registers they called for. An inveterate letter-writer to medical journals, he wanted to help shape national debates and had no hesitation in entering controversies (such as on ECT) with often outspoken contributions, which contrast sharply with the non-judgmental tone he adopted on the wireless. In 1939, together with John Bowlby and Emmanuel Miller, he wrote a letter to the *British Medical Journal* warning that the evacuation of children between the ages of two and five "introduces major psychological problems."<sup>51</sup> He also pronounced as a totally ridiculous notion Frederick Truby King's injunction that babies should be refused if they demanded nourishment outside the scheduled feeding time as this would strengthen their character.<sup>52</sup>

Even more striking was his stance on leucotomy, a controversial neurosurgical procedure for the treatment of mental conditions of which he was a prominent and deliberately provocative public critic.<sup>53</sup> But when, in 1946 Benzie wrote suggesting a radio discussion on pre-frontal leucotomy between Winnicott and the procedure's advocates, Winnicott refused because he felt, as he later recalled, that "it would be better to work in psychiatric circles and not introduce the subject to the wider public for fear of rousing emotion and making the scientific discussion more difficult."<sup>54</sup> It was only after another programme had aired the subject three years later that he felt there was an appropriate public space in which the subject could usefully be debated.

Indeed Winnicott was opposed to 'health education in mass form', in part because he believed that listeners would not give such broadcasts their full attention, but also because he feared that it might attract those "morbidly interested in disease".<sup>55</sup> In this he was following the medical orthodoxy of the time,<sup>56</sup> but he also intuitively understood the dangers of focusing, to an undifferentiated radio audience, on the pathological rather than the ordinary, the exceptional rather than the normal, especially because it brought the risk that listeners would feel bad but would have no access to therapy.

Although Winnicott was highly sensitive to "an undermining of the self-confidence of the listener",<sup>57</sup> and the risk of "creating despair",<sup>58</sup> on several occasions it fell to his producers to point out the unintended effects of his draft scripts on the listener-mother. In 1950, for example, Benzie wrote him a

forthright letter asking a change of emphasis. "I get out of this script a rather strong feeling that (in my imagination) I am to blame about the baby which has had a bad start... I believe what worries me is my suspicion that you do think they are in some way to blame - or else how came you to write on the third line of page 10, 'no one could blame the mother here ?' "<sup>59</sup>

On another occasion, ten years later, discussing his script on security for children, she wrote "I should find it a bit grim I think if as a mother I heard over the wireless that I must fail with some of my children."<sup>60</sup> Winnicott responded: "I'm glad you asked me to cross out that bit about failures."<sup>61</sup>

Benzie also encouraged Winnicott to think of the contrasting imperatives exacted by different networks. The first 'Ordinary Devoted Mother' series, for example, was broadcast on the Home Service in 1949, but it was repeated in 1951 and 1952 on 'Woman's Hour' on the Light Programme. "We were really alone on the Home Service - you were alone with the listener, and now no one is alone! I find I imagine the listener as interrupted while feeding her baby by the man who has come to read the gas meter."<sup>62</sup> In another letter she differentiates between the 'specific, limited, easily defined audience'<sup>63</sup> of Home Service and the broader Light Programme one of 'Woman's Hour'.

### **Listener reaction**

From his earliest broadcasts onwards, listeners wrote in great numbers to Winnicott - hundreds of letters alone after two 1955 talks on step-mothers. Occasionally they were 'fiercely critical'.<sup>64</sup> He was highly sensitive to their tone, writing to Benzie with evident relief in 1949, "We have had rather nice letters... haven't we: about 'How's the Baby?' and no nasty ones."<sup>65</sup> Many of the correspondents, were appreciative, often exceedingly so, such as this one, on the 1960 series of 'The Ordinary Devoted Mother and Her Children': "These programmes have been outstandingly successful, due mainly to the perception and sympathy of the paediatrician. He is able to go unerringly to the point, but always with tact and understanding, and he holds no-one guilty."<sup>66</sup> Listeners often asked for advice or recounted their own experiences. He would reply to his producers with suggestions as to how they should word their response.

The correspondence he received was extremely valuable to Winnicott, especially after the war when he was longer seeing children in paediatric

clinics, only psychiatric ones, and therefore was not so close to 'ordinary' mother-child interaction.<sup>67</sup> As Benzie put it to Quigley in 1956: "You will perhaps recall his delighted amazement at the quantity and quality of the correspondence, which he recognised as ore from a gold mine, to which a professional worker like himself or his wife... normally never can have access."<sup>68</sup>

Winnicott devoted the final programme of the second series of 'The Ordinary Devoted Mother and Her Baby' in 1952 to what he called 'My Fan Mail' (letters about the previous talks), attempting to correct misunderstandings but also to reassure listeners. His challenging of child-care orthodoxies undoubtedly left some listeners confused. In one survey of family life in a London suburb the researcher was asked by a young mother whether she approved of thumb-sucking. "She had been told by the Health Visitor to stop her baby from doing it, but 'the gentleman on the wireless' (in 'Woman's Hour') said that it might do psychological harm to stop a baby sucking his thumb."<sup>69</sup>

In Winnicott's 1944 broadcast, 'Why does your baby cry?', one of his most explicitly psychoanalytic ones,<sup>70</sup> he suggested that some parents were terrified of losing their temper because they had not been allowed to as infants and, if they hear their babies cry out of hopelessness and despair, then "the situation has got beyond you, and you are in need of help."<sup>71</sup> The talk attracted some hostile letters. Writing to Quigley he admitted: "I have also some evidence of harm done by my remarks. One can't be sure if one does harm or good."<sup>72</sup> She replied, "As you say, one has to be very careful in talks of this kind not to alarm people unduly."<sup>73</sup> Quigley and Benzie acted as a kind of surrogate listener - the mother who should not be alarmed (although only Benzie had a child), and were able to test out Winnicott's potential effect on the audience.

In one of Winnicott's last broadcasts, on 'Feeling Guilty', he discussed with Claire Rayner, later a well-known agony aunt but at that time a young nurse and mother, the subject of guilt. "Talking as observer and psychologist... to mothers and fathers, about their children, I find that however careful one is, one tends to make them feel guilty. I've taken a lot of trouble to try and put things in such a way that it's not critical and that it's trying to explain things rather than to say that this is wrong... And yet people constantly come to me

and say, every time you talk, or every time I read something you write, I feel so wicked."<sup>74</sup>

Rayner, too, spoke sensitively about guilt and yet, according to the BBC's audience research, some listeners dismissed the broadcast as 'Freudian nonsense', a large number accusing Rayner of "dressing-up the simple maternal emotion of anxiety for a child's welfare by calling it 'guilt'."<sup>75</sup> Ironically, in trying to empathise with and normalise mothers' guilt, Winnicott and Rayner were accused of producing it.

### Language

Perhaps the single most critical factor that made the broadcasts so influential was Winnicott's use of language. As has been suggested, he was acutely sensitive to the different constituencies he was addressing - in his clinic, in the lectures he gave at the London School of Economics, and in his broadcasts - and the different discourses, and not just subject-matter, that they required. He had a strong sense of when to use psychoanalytic language, and when to translate it into a demotic language accessible to lay listeners - the latter a capacity he developed in the ten lectures he gave for non-analysts at the Institute of Education in 1936 at the request of Susan Isaacs.<sup>76</sup> So, for example, in his 1960 broadcast 'What Irks', he was able to allude to the argument he made in his paper 'Hate in the Countertransference' without ever using the clinical term,<sup>77</sup> and in the 1962 talk 'Now We Are Five', he describes the transitional object (a possession, such as a comfort blanket, that helps the infant weather the transition from inner world to external reality and so separate from the mother) as a 'special object'.<sup>78</sup> Occasionally he brought in the psychoanalytic language he had used in his clinical writings, only to gloss or even gently mock it: "I once risked the remark, 'There is no such thing as a baby' - meaning that if you set out to describe a baby, you will find you are describing a *baby and someone*"<sup>79</sup>. In another broadcast he said "I wanted to give it a name so I called it 'primary maternal preoccupation,' but what's in a name?"<sup>80</sup>

Abrams argues that he deconstructed the technical language of psychoanalysis "to keep his thinking alive."<sup>81</sup> Winnicott had the capacity to describe phenomena that were "outside the realm of the written or spoken word until

he came to grips with them."<sup>82</sup> He developed an idiosyncratic language, coming up with an arresting phrase - such as 'good enough mother' - which then became part of both specialist and popular discourse.<sup>83</sup> But Winnicott was also a famously playful communicator. Benjamin Spock praised "the surprising contrasts in his language. It is predominantly grave, deeply thoughtful and analytical. Then suddenly he gives way to earthy folk talk."<sup>84</sup> Ogden has suggested that he should be read line by line, out aloud, like a poem, "exploring what the language is doing in addition to what it is saying... the more distinctive signature of Winnicott's writing is the voice. It is casual and conversational, yet always profoundly respectful of both the reader and the subject matter under discussion. The speaking voice gives itself permission to wander, and yet has the compactness of poetry."<sup>85</sup>

Ogden was referring to Winnicott's 1945 paper, 'Primitive Emotional Development'; by then he had written a number of radio scripts. Winnicott's written voice, I want to suggest, owes so much to the speaking voice because he had developed, through his broadcasting experience, the skill of writing to speak. The published versions of his scripts hardly needed editing:<sup>86</sup> Winnicott wrote words that he could speak easily on air, and his scripts were then published - the cycle from written to oral back to written forms ensured, and reflected the fact, that Winnicott regarded the process as a single one. Indeed his scripts include hand-written lines and even paragraphs which seem to have been added in the studio and are as fluent as any of his other writing. His script on 'The return of the evacuated child', broadcast on 23rd March 1945, for example, contains the following scrawled addendum:

"So when children complain after they come home, they are often showing that they had constructed a better home in their imagination while they were away, a home that denied them nothing and that had no monetary problems and no lack of floor space, in fact a home that lacked only one thing - reality."<sup>87</sup>

After three false starts are crossed out, he continues:

"Real home also has its advantages, though, and children have ['much' is crossed out] everything to gain if they gradually come to accept it as it is."<sup>88</sup>

The accessibility of Winnicott's writing resulted in part from his analytic work with children - he said "I never use long sentences unless I am very tired".<sup>89</sup> He

had written to his sister Violet in 1919: "If there is anything which is not completely simple for anyone to understand I want you to tell me because I am now practising so that one day I will be able to introduce the subject [psychoanalysis] to English people so that who runs may read."<sup>90</sup> Yet undeniably this dimension of his broadcasting was encouraged by Quigley and Benzie, as much as they defended him against BBC criticism. In 1944 the Director of Talks criticised one of Winnicott's scripts as "very difficult indeed to understand. He... wants much simpler, more straightforward treatment."<sup>91</sup> By 1952 a letter from Benzie praised "the same simple language on which so much work has been done and for the use of which you knew the audience would be grateful",<sup>92</sup> suggesting that this clarity of expression had now been attained and had been jointly produced.

The contrast with John Bowlby is telling. When Benzie wrote to Bowlby in 1946, inviting him to participate in 'Seven to Fourteen', an educational series for mothers, she felt it necessary to spell out the approach required in more explicit terms than were ever required with Winnicott: "I don't know whether I said that one of the exercises necessary for speakers is to make all one's points - so far as possible - not only with pictures and examples and concrete nouns but literally with words of one syllable."<sup>93</sup> 12 years later another producer had to write to him in much the same terms.

### **Winnicott's voice**

Winnicott's actual voice, as Quigley put it in 1960, "can be off-putting".<sup>94</sup> It was high-pitched and slow, and did not reflect his vitality. BBC audience research found that many listeners judged it unpleasant, or even 'awful'.<sup>95</sup> According to the audience research report of one of his final broadcasts, given in 1962, some thought "his style... somewhat slow and monotonous, and his voice (which did not apparently always give a clear indication of his sex, several listeners referring to him as 'she') rather unattractive."<sup>96</sup> He himself was deeply critical of the way he sounded. He wrote to Benzie in 1960, "I've just listened to Jealousy, and while I liked the script I HATED the voice. It has to be altered."<sup>97</sup> The following month, editing the 'Security' programme, Benzie wrote to him to say "I have never heard your voice better: I think we did better with it than we have often done before."<sup>98</sup> In a memo to Quigley, Benzie elaborated that, in his years of broadcasting, Winnicott had often "been taken

for a woman by more than half the listening world," not, in her words, because he was in the least effeminate but because he had a bad heart and used so little voice. She attributed the improvement on this occasion to the studio manager, who thought to position the microphone closer to Winnicott so that "a great deal of the natural virile quality in his voice was restored."<sup>99</sup> Winnicott himself was delighted, and wrote to say: "I listened to my voice as reconstituted by your colleague. For the first time I did not hate hearing myself."<sup>100</sup>

Various explanations for Winnicott's voice have been advanced. Benzie speculated that one reason for his high voice was his "lifelong professional habit of talking to mentally sick small children in a very very quiet way."<sup>101</sup> Barbara Dockar Drysdale suggested that it was the legacy of a childhood filled with too many females.<sup>102</sup> A producer who worked with him remembered that "He told me that he had such a high voice because when he was talking to the children they related to someone with a high voice better - someone like their mother, or a woman anyway."<sup>103</sup>

And not just when talking to children. However much Winnicott's voice grated on some listeners, it may also have helped him communicate with mothers in a manner that did not feel like the *de haut en bas* declamation of a male expert: it positioned him instead vocally mid-way in pitch between a man and a woman. This vocal 'no man's land' made him, in a sense, androgynous, combining the authority of a male doctor with a more supposedly 'female' empathy. One listener recalled, when she heard Winnicott by chance on the wireless, that "I felt he was speaking directly to me.. and that he understood what I was going through", to the extent that she was sure that he was a woman.<sup>104</sup> Bowlby, by contrast, was described by Benzie as "not an A+ broadcaster, but a good steady A... His defects are a slight absence of 'give'...we are... left with a trace of plummy."<sup>105</sup>

### **Why no resistance?**

Winnicott continued to have access to the airwaves for so long in part because he was championed by Benzie and Quigley, who rose to become Chief Assistant in the Talks department. And yet it remains a matter of curiosity that



his undeniably psychoanalytic approach found such favour and met so little resistance both during and after the war.

In some ways he perfectly fitted the emerging BBC. As a result of the heightened role that it played during the second world war, the BBC found itself at the end of the war at the zenith of its power and influence - part of a post-war social, as well as economic, reconstruction, what Richard Hoggart has called the 'bump of social purpose'<sup>106</sup> in the post-war years. To its then Director-General William Haley the BBC was a 'social asset'.<sup>107</sup> It was also a weathervane of new intellectual currents and, from the mid-1930s onwards, as part of the cultural renaissance represented by Penguin Books, the documentary film movement and Mass Observation, it played a pioneering role in developing new cultural forms such as the radio documentary and the radio feature.

Yet even in such a welcoming, liberal climate any psychoanalytically-orientated broadcast - such as a 1943 talk by Edward Glover - almost invariably trailed controversies behind it, or, as in the case of Elliott Jacques's temporary role as the Woman's Hour Psychiatrist, generated "occasionally definitely unpleasant letters".<sup>108</sup>

In 1947 two Third Programme talks by John Rickman on psychoanalysis produced by Benzie attracted universal obloquy. Benzie argued that 'as far as I know' they were 'a world premiere' in radio talking about psychoanalysis, and defended her choice of speaker because "there are only about 100 analysts in the country. About 50 of these are foreigners and as such I didn't want them on our trial trip; most of the others... live in a sort of hot-house and never leave what my speaker calls 'the couch-and-sofa tandem'".<sup>109</sup> Her speaker on the other hand, she proudly declared, had been trained by Freud himself! Listener reaction to the talks, according to BBC Listener Research, was 'displeasing and shaming' (Benzie's words),<sup>110</sup> although she insisted that this was due to "particularly strong 'resistances' from an intellectual audience" to the ideas of psychoanalysis, even if, she conceded, the talks could be disliked on good grounds apart from resistance.

Why did Winnicott not arouse similar resistance? Although one reason was that he understood the talk form so well, another, I want to suggest, is how he

was positioned in the BBC. Winnicott was 'protected' by both how he and his listeners were situated. It was only after 1959 that he broadcast on the Third Programme - all his earlier talks were transmitted on the Light Programme or the Home Service. The Light Programme, launched as soon as the war ended, was much more skewed towards working-class (79% of its listeners in 1949) than the more middle-class audience that tuned in to the Third Programme (35% of whose audience was working-class): Light Programme listeners were assumed to have left school at 14 or 15.<sup>111</sup> Light Programme and Home Service talks were less likely to be reviewed in the press, especially if they were regular items in a daytime magazine programme. What's more Winnicott broadcast explicitly to mothers ('Woman's Hour' under Quigley, according to *The People* in 1951, made "brighter, down-to-business programmes for housewives"<sup>112</sup> - hardly the stuff of controversy). And, since he did not advocate a rigid or novel child-rearing regime, his talks were less likely to incite hostility. There was a longstanding view among the 'Woman's Hour' programme team that the male BBC management hardly ever listened to the programme because "at two o'clock they were probably still at lunch".<sup>113</sup>

It is interesting that Benzie claimed that the ill-fated two 1947 talks on psychoanalysis were a 'world premiere', even while she was simultaneously producing talks by Winnicott - almost as if she had forgotten that Winnicott too was a psychoanalyst. Perhaps this was because of his billing. Winnicott broadcast anonymously, as was the custom of the time, the fear of being thought to advertise one's services being great among the medical professional, especially before the establishment of the National Health Service. (It was this that deterred Anna Freud - or so she claimed - from agreeing to broadcast.<sup>114</sup> Winnicott seemed not to fear it.<sup>115</sup>) Winnicott was usually billed as 'speaking anonymously, as a psychologist',<sup>116</sup> although at other times as 'a doctor caring for children',<sup>117</sup> and only infrequently a 'psychotherapist',<sup>118</sup> even though he was President of the British Psychoanalytic Society from 1956 until 1959. In a sense the camouflage of medicine and psychology suited him: it prevented listeners from being scared of what he had to say, or placing him within a particular analytic tradition, emphasising instead his medical expertise and his focus on normality. Indeed his positioning, both through the kind of programming, network and billing,

and later 'Woman's Hour' itself, helped normalise him and his psychoanalytic discourse.

### Freudish

Another reason that Winnicott found such a secure berth in the BBC was - Benzie's belief in resistance notwithstanding - because of the penetration of psychoanalytic ideas in British society. This diffusion of psychoanalytic concepts helped ready British listeners for Winnicott, who then played a major role in further amplifying it. Richards has described how Freudian ideas and language had percolated into everyday English by the 1930s. He traces this back to the first world war, during which psychologists drew on Freud's ideas to treat shell-shock, and which left British society seeking to understand the unprecedented collective trauma that it had experienced. Britons, he argues, craved enlightenment, and psychoanalysis seemed to be able to explain the 'fragility of reason', especially in the aftermath of war. Expressions such as Oedipal complex, sublimation and ego entered common parlance.<sup>119</sup> The Bloomsbury set also helped disseminate psychoanalytic ideas<sup>120</sup> (Lytton Strachey's younger brother, James Strachey, was Winnicott's analyst), and the arrival in Britain of Melanie Klein in 1926 and Freud in 1938 accelerated the process. By 1939, as W.H.Auden remarked, Freud was "no more a person now but a whole climate of opinion."<sup>121</sup> The ubiquity of psychoanalytic ideas was reflected in many articles in the popular press and magazines, even before 1920.<sup>122</sup> The result, Richards suggests, is that people who considered themselves 'modern' learnt to speak Freudish.<sup>123</sup>

Waters has drawn attention to the role also played by interwar criminologists, who adopted psychoanalytic ideas in their campaigns for penal reform. By the 1950s, he shows, psychoanalytic accounts of the origins of homosexuality had become dominant in official thinking, and had also helped shape popular conceptions about how to treat delinquency.<sup>124</sup> (Such an approach was famously satirised by the 1957 Broadway musical 'West Side Story' in Stephen Sondheim's lyrics for 'Gee Officer Krupke': "This boy don't need a judge, he needs an analyst's care").

Zaretsky, who calls Winnicott 'the first English analytic media celebrity', argues that that he was one of a new breed of post-war non-phallic, benign, avuncular

analytic advocates for children and their mothers.<sup>125</sup> Certainly Winnicott, as part of the British school of object relation theorists, translated psychoanalysis from a theory of sexual desire - with which it had become so deeply associated as a result of Freudianism - into what Phillips calls 'a theory of emotional nurture.'<sup>126</sup> (He was also much more on the side of fun than Klein.) And this, perhaps, is also why he was so successful a broadcaster, because his was a tremendously British psychoanalysis, as against the dark Jewish mittel-European drives of Freud and Klein's destructive infant. He understood Englishness: "the Englishman," he wrote, "... does not want to be upset, to be reminded that there are personal tragedies all over the place, that he is not really happy himself, in short - he refuses to be put off his golf."<sup>127</sup> Winnicott not only embodied Englishness, he 'performed' it.<sup>128</sup> Commentators have remarked upon his 'British reserve', his mixture of formality and intimacy,<sup>129</sup> his cheerful commonsense as against the 'sad analytic charm' of Freud's 'Mourning and Melancholia'.<sup>130</sup> The psychoanalysis that found favour in British popular post-war thinking and Winnicott's broadcasts alike was not an introspective one<sup>131</sup> that privileged an individual's sexual drives but a much more relational, pragmatic one, mediated through discussions of child-rearing.<sup>132</sup>

If Winnicott was populariser-in-chief of psychoanalytic ideas about parenting, his was not a lone voice. Susan Isaacs, for example, broadcast seven BBC talks between 1929 and 1943,<sup>133</sup> and from 1929 to 1936 wrote for 'Nursery World.' In her book 'The Nursery Years', first published in 1929 and reprinted 19 times over the next 40 years, she too suggested in simple language, for example, that forcefully trying to prevent a baby sucking their thumb was more harmful than thumb-sucking itself.<sup>134</sup> In many respects Isaacs can be said to have been the precursor of Winnicott. Other radio popularisers included psychoanalyst Ruth Thomas, who gave 19 talks between 1942 and 1948,<sup>135</sup> and was the author of a number of 'parent guidance' pamphlets issued by the National Association of Mental Health. The shift towards more liberal child-rearing practices was enshrined in and encouraged by 'The Common Sense Book of Baby and Child Care', the bestselling manual on childcare by the American paediatrician Benjamin Spock, published in 1946. Dr Spock was an admirer of Winnicott: he recalled reading him in the 1930s and finding that he helped bridge the gap between paediatrics and child development.<sup>136</sup>

Magazines were another important medium for communicating psychoanalytic ideas about the child. In May 1947 'Childhood' magazine was launched; it styled itself 'The Magazine for Modern Parents' - modern parenting, presumably, being identified with a liberal post-war, post Frederick Truby-King style. Early copies offered startling proof of how deeply psychoanalytic thinking had penetrated into ideologies of childrearing in Britain, with even a magistrate offering a psychological explanation for the behaviour of 14-year-old girl brought before him for stealing.<sup>137</sup> Subsequent issues offered frankly Winnicottian accounts of the meaning of jealousy and consoling, alongside bland childcare advice dispensed by John and Ursula Bowlby.<sup>138</sup> All these interventions into family life were part of a shift away from an interwar hygienist and behaviourist literature which, as Shapira has pointed out, focused on children's bodies, to a postwar psychoanalytic position centred round the mother-infant bond.<sup>139</sup>

Indeed the spread of the child guidance movement had laid the foundation for Winnicott, who cut his teeth in it. The clinics, founded in the 1920s and 30s, propagated a developmental view of childhood,<sup>140</sup> and so not only helped shape Winnicott but also readied the population for his ideas about children's needs.

But probably the most significant factor in creating a public receptive to Winnicott's theories was the second world war. In eviscerating the old certainties and traditional beliefs a state of national insecurity produced a hunger to learn about how personal security could be established and maintained. Family life became a site of absence as well as presence: with men recruited and children evacuated, a public space was created in which the family could be thought about, and thought about differently. Women's role as keeper of the home and hearth became symbolically more important and more visible. There was a greater willingness to examine and understand the origin of individual destructive instincts at a time when the consequences of collective aggression were so terrible. In some sense, perhaps, Winnicott's wartime broadcasts, through their analysis of babies' feelings, acted also as a medium to express adults' confusion and fear, which was otherwise hard to speak about in wartime when it was felt that public morale needed to be kept high: discussion of infants' angry and anxious states could therefore serve as a

conduit through which their parents' similar emotions might be safely articulated and contained.

In 1940 Winnicott was appointed psychiatric consultant to the government evacuation scheme in Oxford, in which capacity he supervised hostel workers' care of children separated from their mothers.<sup>141</sup> Evacuation was thus formative to his thinking, but also to that of the population at large: the removal of children from their homes and mothers threw into sharp relief what constituted good mothering - and what the reliable, continuing presence of a mother contributed to a child's emotional growth.

Indeed the trauma of these enforced separations, Thomson has argued, led to an overestimation of the capacity of the family: post-war Bowlbyism, in reacting against the separation of the mother and the child, fostered another form of separation - of the child from the outside adult world.<sup>142</sup> And, as Thomson has pointed out, the post-war idealisation of maternal care in the home was, by the late 1960s, coming to be seen not as a solution but increasingly as part of the problem.<sup>143</sup>

### **Mothers and devotion**

Winnicott's broadcasts are often regarded as an ideological contribution to this post-war idealisation of both the mother and the home, part of a process through which women evicted from their wartime occupations by the return of servicemen were offered another specialist job in exchange: mothering. This way of viewing Winnicott characterises him as a traditionalist, an almost anti-progressive figure.

Certainly, Winnicott didn't question sex differences<sup>144</sup>: mothering instincts were apparent in little girls who play with dolls, he suggested; mothers didn't need intellectual abilities.<sup>145</sup> There was also an intrinsic contradiction in having a male expert legitimise the expertise of mothers. And, as Alexander has pointed out, aside from the maternal Winnicott was strangely uncurious about any other elements of female identity, such as female sexuality.<sup>146</sup> On occasions he sounded patronising, as if he were talking to children and not just about them. Indeed it has been suggested that he "constitutes himself as a mother to an audience of mothers who are like an infant. But speaking for the mother is only one way to surreptitiously control her. Another way is to speak

on behalf of the infant."<sup>147</sup> Although there is some truth in this, Winnicott's identification with the infant was, in places, almost total - uninhibited, earthy and unembarrassed. It was less the case that he spoke on behalf of the infant and more that in some sense he became one.

Most mothers are probably neither as ordinary nor devoted as Winnicott depicted them, but Winnicott must be read and listened to historically. His conception of 'the ordinary devoted mother' is implicitly contrasted not with an 'ordinary undevoted mother' (Winnicott was rarely judgmental about mothers in his broadcasts) but with an 'extraordinary devoted mother': he was attempting to name, make visible and hymn the routine practices of mothering, which he felt had been neglected. But this desire to excite wonder at the multiple, tiny ways in which mothers respond to their babies, and imbue them with the respect that he thought they merited, was understood by some late 20th century commentators as normative.

In reality Winnicott was sensitive to the frustrations and even hatred that could be generated by caring for a baby - the sense of "Damn you, you little bugger."<sup>148</sup> This emerged strongly in the introductions he recorded to the broadcast discussions between mothers on what irked them and how they managed their irritation, discussions that retain their freshness still today. Although the transcribed version elides individual voices into a single composite mother, the broadcast conversations contained a variety of voices and allowed women to give a vital sense of motherhood as a lived and diverse experience. Winnicott could also be radical his attitudes to women: his view that a fear of women often follows from the refusal to acknowledge our early dependence on mothers is a startling idea for a male doctor to have originated in the 1950s.<sup>149</sup>

Winnicott stopped broadcasting regularly in the early 1960s, partly because of ill-health, although he continued to write and lecture widely. But his ideas were also increasingly out of sync with changing social currents. Post-Spock, liberal parenting itself came to be problematised, with women beginning to critique the notion of maternal sacrifice. In 1966 Winnicott complained in a letter to an ex-patient, "I hardly ever seem to speak on the BBC."<sup>150</sup> A Third Programme discussion the following month, in which he was interviewed at home by Penelope Leach on 'What is a Freudian in 1967?', ended disastrously.

When Winnicott received a copy of the rough script from the producer, he asked for his contribution to be cut, because it compromised him as president of the British Psycho-Analytical Society. "You are dealing with rather weighty matters... I think analysts are not very good as broadcasters, self included."<sup>151</sup> Other than taking part in a television programme in 1968, Winnicott's career as a broadcaster was over.

The BBC gave Winnicott the opportunity to contribute to, and indeed shape, the national debate. Together they took psychoanalysis out of the consulting-room and onto the airwaves, helping to position it more prominently in post-war society.<sup>152</sup> Anna Freud herself enthusiastically endorsed the broadcasts. "I admire your 'Devoted Mother' talks very much, and I feel no student of our subject should miss either reading or hearing them."<sup>153</sup> In 1939 there were over 9 million licence-holders in the country;<sup>154</sup> to the general public Winnicott was largely unknown. By the end of the war, seven years later, as a result of his broadcasts he was a renowned public figure.<sup>155</sup> The influence of the broadcasts continued long after they had been transmitted, through the pamphlets based on them and later the books. 'The Child, the Family and the Outside World' sold 50,000 copies in its first three years, and was reprinted four times before Winnicott's death in 1971.<sup>156</sup> His work also sold well in the United States, and he took a keen interest in its sales, often writing to ask for sales figures.<sup>157</sup>

How was this particular space at this particular historical moment created? Winnicott's unrivalled ability to communicate without jargon, his imaginative gifts, his feminised voice - all these were seized upon by his committed female BBC producers (Winnicott was never produced by a man), in a BBC reaching its apogee of influence, keen to broadcast innovatory ideas to a wartime public hungry to understand both human aggression and the role that good enough mothering could play in limiting its impact - especially when such ideas were not labelled psychoanalytic, and could be 'domesticated' by being transmitted in safe slots such as 'Woman's Hour', the Light Programme and Home Service.

Winnicott, the quintessential Englishman among Europeans, with a talent for metabolising psychoanalytic ideas for lay listeners, also found a post-war female public for whom the home and mothering had become emblems of 'normality'. Winnicott was their guide through this new normal, and its rhapsodist.



All these factors contributed to the dissemination of Winnicott's ideas through broadcasting so that, some 50 years after his last talk, we still speak Winnicottish.

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<sup>2</sup> Winnicott's broadcasts are commonly dated as beginning in 1939. 'The Child and the Outside World', published in 1957, includes 'The Deprived Mother', and gives its origins as 'BBC broadcast 1939, published New Era 1941', but Robert Ades has suggested that its style is very different from Winnicott's wartime broadcasts and that it may not have been broadcast (personal communication, 26.3.13). Certainly there is no record of it in Winnicott's entry in the BBC Radio Talks Script Index, which begins in 1943. The correspondence with Winnicott's first producer, Janet Quigley, seems to corroborate 1943 as the start date.

<sup>3</sup> Winnicott, D.W. 1964. *The Child, the Family and the Outside World*. London: Pelican

Winnicott, D.W. 1993. *Talking to Parents*. Cambridge, Mass: Perseus

Winnicott, D.W. 2002. *Winnicott on the Child*. Cambridge, Mass: Perseus

<sup>4</sup> Along with two more collections of Winnicott's writings:

Winnicott, D.W. 1971 *Playing and Reality*. London: Tavistock Publications

Winnicott, D.W. 1986. *Home is where we start from*. London: Pelican

<sup>5</sup> For example Mitchell, J. 1974. *Psychoanalysis and Feminism*. London: Pantheon. Even Winnicott's biographer, F.R. Rodman (in 'Winnicott: Life and Work', Da Capo Press, 2003), follows this approach, never mentioning Winnicott's BBC producers and the role they played in fashioning both the style and content of his broadcasts.

<sup>6</sup> Shapira, M. 'Psychoanalysts on the Radio: Domestic citizenship and motherhood in postwar Britain', in Regulska, J. and Smith, B.G. (eds.). 2012. *Women and Gender in Postwar Europe*. London: Routledge.

<sup>7</sup> Winnicott 1993, p.5

<sup>8</sup> Winnicott 2002, p.131

<sup>9</sup> Phillips, A. 1988. *Winnicott*. London: Fontana

<sup>10</sup> BBC Donald Winnicott Woods Dr RCONT 1 File 1a 1943-1959 (hereafter TWa). Janet Quigley (JQ) to Donald Winnicott (DW), 1.11.43

<sup>11</sup> TWa: JQ to DW, 12.11.43

<sup>12</sup> TWa: DW to JQ, 16.11.43

<sup>13</sup> TWa: JQ to DW, 22.11.43

<sup>14</sup> *ibid*

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- <sup>15</sup> 'Getting to Know Your Baby' in Winnicott 1964, op cit.
- <sup>16</sup> TWa: DW to JQ, undated
- <sup>17</sup> Winnicott's biographer, F. Robert Rodman, adds in brackets 'it was probably his first', Rodman, op cit, p.99
- <sup>18</sup> *ibid*
- <sup>19</sup> Winnicott's inverted commas. TWa: DW to JQ, 7.8.45
- <sup>20</sup> *ibid*, Isa Benzie (IB) to DW, 18.4.46
- <sup>21</sup> Winnicott 2002, p.11.
- <sup>22</sup> TWa: Eileen Mahoney to DW, 24.10.58
- <sup>23</sup> TWa: DW to JQ, 12.1.44
- <sup>24</sup> Winnicott 1964
- <sup>25</sup> TWa: JQ to DW, 13.3.44
- <sup>26</sup> Winnicott 1964, p.113
- <sup>27</sup> *ibid*
- <sup>28</sup> TWa: JQ to DW, 16.1.45
- <sup>29</sup> TWa: DW to JQ, 15.1.45
- <sup>30</sup> TWa: DW to Dorothy Bridgeman, 11.2.45
- <sup>31</sup> TWa: DW to JQ, 12.11.44. Lady Allen, a campaigner on children's rights and welfare, had a letter to the Times published on 15 July 1944 which called for a public inquiry into the 'repressive conditions' suffered by children who were wards of state and lived in care homes. The letter generated intense public debate, leading to the establishment of the Curtis Committee of Inquiry into the care of children, and ultimately the 1948 Children Act. See Smith, H.L. 1996. *Britain in the Second World War*. Manchester: Manchester University Press
- <sup>32</sup> Murphy, C. 2011. 'On an Equal Footing with Men?' Women and Work at the BBC 1923-1939. Unpublished doctoral thesis, Goldsmiths, University of London. <http://eprints.gold.ac.uk/6536/>, accessed 15.3.13
- <sup>33</sup> Benzie herself had left the BBC in 1937 to get married, but returned in 1940.
- <sup>34</sup> Winnicott 2002, p.11. Winnicott admits that he had subsequently been teased about the phrase, and accused of idealising mothers but insisted that he was not ashamed of the words.
- <sup>35</sup> BBC RCONT1: TALKS - WINNICOTT, DONALD WOODS, DR. File 1b, 1960-1962 (hereafter TWb): IB to DW, 30.3.60
- <sup>36</sup> Scannell, P. and Cardiff, D., 1991. *A Social History of British Broadcasting*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell
- <sup>37</sup> Williams, R., 1974. *Television, Technology and Cultural Form*. London: Fontana
- <sup>38</sup> Matheson, H. 1933. *Broadcasting*. London: Thornton Butterworth
- <sup>39</sup> *ibid*, pp75/6
- <sup>40</sup> *ibid*, p77
- <sup>41</sup> Karpf, A. 1988. *Doctoring the Media: The Reporting of Health and Medicine*. London: Routledge
- <sup>42</sup> Scannell and Cardiff, op cit, p165
- <sup>43</sup> Winnicott 1993, p.21
- <sup>44</sup> Winnicott 1986, p.123
- <sup>45</sup> Winnicott 2002, p.23
- <sup>46</sup> *ibid*, p.112
- <sup>47</sup> Street, S. 2009. *The A-Z of British Radio*, p.218. Lanham, Maryland: Scarecrow Press
- <sup>48</sup> Hugh Gee, 'My experience of Winnicott', in Kahr, B. (ed.). 2002, p.142. *The Legacy of Winnicott*. London: Karnac
- <sup>49</sup> Winnicott 2002, p.193
- <sup>50</sup> Winnicott 1964, pp.15, 16
- <sup>51</sup> Bowlby, J. et al, 'Evacuation of Small Children', British Medical Journal, p.1202, 16.12.39
- <sup>52</sup> McDougall, J. 2003. *Donald Winnicott The Man*. London: Karnac
- <sup>53</sup> He later insisted that human beings had the right "to suffer, and even commit suicide, with the brain, the somatic basis for the psyche, inviolate." 'Ethics of Prefrontal Leucotomy', British Medical Journal, 25.8.51, p.496
- <sup>54</sup> Wellcome Library, PP/DWW/B/B/5/1 PUBLICATIONS: BBC, DW to IB, 24.1.49
- <sup>55</sup> Winnicott 1993, pp.1, 2
- <sup>56</sup> See Karpf 1988, op cit
- <sup>57</sup> Winnicott 1993, p.4
- <sup>58</sup> TWa: DW to Eileen Maloney (EM), 1.9.57
- <sup>59</sup> TWa: IB to DW, 27.3.50

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- <sup>60</sup> TWb: IB to DW, 1.4.60
- <sup>61</sup> TWb: DW to IB, 3.4.60
- <sup>62</sup> TWa: IB to DW, 5.2.52
- <sup>63</sup> TWa: IB to DW, 28.2.52
- <sup>64</sup> BBC Microfiche, script (as broadcast) of 'The Ordinary Devoted Mother and Her Baby - My Fan Mail', 20.2.52
- <sup>65</sup> TWa: DW to IB, 7.12.49
- <sup>66</sup> TWb: quoted in IB to DW, 13.4.60
- <sup>67</sup> Bollas et al in Winnicott 1993, p.xiv
- <sup>68</sup> TWa: IB to JQ, 29.8.56. Other listener feedback came in the form of demand for his pamphlets, such as 'The Child and the Family'.
- <sup>69</sup> Shaw 1954, quoted in Kynaston, D. 2009. *Family Britain*, p.598. London: Bloomsbury. She may have been referring to a 1952 broadcast on breastfeeding in 'The Ordinary Devoted Mother and Her Baby',
- <sup>70</sup> Winnicott 1964, p.64
- <sup>71</sup> *ibid*, p.67
- <sup>72</sup> TWa: DW to JQ, 21.2.44
- <sup>73</sup> TWa: JQ to DW, 25.2.44
- <sup>74</sup> Winnicott 1993, p.96
- <sup>75</sup> LR/61/409 'Parents and Children', BBC Audience Research Department, 28.3.61
- <sup>76</sup> D.W.W. on D.W.W in Abram, J. (ed.). 2013. *Donald Winnicott Today*. Hove, East Sussex: Routledge
- <sup>77</sup> Winnicott 1993, p.75
- <sup>78</sup> *ibid*, p.118 (in its published version the talk was renamed 'Now They Are Five').
- <sup>79</sup> Winnicott 1964, p.88
- <sup>80</sup> Winnicott 1993, p.133
- <sup>81</sup> Abram, op cit, p.75
- <sup>82</sup> Rodman, op cit, p.44
- <sup>83</sup> Schwartz, J. 1999. *Cassandra's Daughter*. London: Penguin Press
- <sup>84</sup> Benjamin Spock, 'Introduction', in Winnicott 2002, p.7
- <sup>85</sup> Thomas H. Ogden, 'Reading Winnicott', in Abram, op cit, p.214
- <sup>86</sup> Christopher Bollas et al, 'Editors' Preface', Winnicott 1993, p.xvi
- <sup>87</sup> BBC Microfiche script 'as broadcast', D. Woods Winnicott, 'Difficult Children: Return of the Evacuated Child', 23.2.45
- <sup>88</sup> *ibid*
- <sup>89</sup> Quoted in Phillips, op cit, p.14
- <sup>90</sup> Quoted in *ibid*, p.35
- <sup>91</sup> TWa: JQ to DW, 21.6.44.
- <sup>92</sup> TWa: IB to DW, 5.2.52
- <sup>93</sup> BBC RCONT 1 John Bowlby Talks 1946-1962, File 1, IB to John Bowlby (JB) (hereafter TBa), 15.4.46
- <sup>94</sup> TWb: JQ to A.D.S.B, 4.3.60
- <sup>95</sup> BBC Audience Research, 'Parents and Children', op cit.
- <sup>96</sup> BBC Audience Research, LR/62/1118, June 1962, 'Parents and Children: The First Five Years', 17.7.62
- <sup>97</sup> TWb: DW to IB, 7.3.60
- <sup>98</sup> TWb: IB to DW, 12.4.60
- <sup>99</sup> TWb: IB to JQ, 3.5.60
- <sup>100</sup> TWb: DW to IB, 26.4.60
- <sup>101</sup> TWb: IB to JQ, 3.5.60
- <sup>102</sup> Kahr, B. 1996. *D.W. Winnicott: A Biographical Portrait*. London: Karnac
- <sup>103</sup> Personal communication, Sally Thompson, 13.1.13
- <sup>104</sup> Quoted by Rachel Melville-Thomas, 'A Word in Your Ear: Winnicott on the Radio', p165 in Horne, A. and Lanyado, M. (eds). 2012. *Winnicott's Children*. Hove, East Sussex: Routledge
- <sup>105</sup> TBa: IB to Assistant Controller (Talks), 8.7.48
- <sup>106</sup> Quoted in Hennessy, P. *Never Again: Britain 1945-1951*, p.313. London: Jonathan Cape
- <sup>107</sup> Briggs, A. 1979. *Sound and Vision: The History of Broadcasting in the United Kingdom, vol.4.*, p162 Oxford: Oxford University Press
- <sup>108</sup> TWa: IB to ADT, 4.3.47
- <sup>109</sup> BBC R51/223 Talks Health: Psychology, Files 1 & 2, 1938-1950: IB to Mr Harding, 26.3.47

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- <sup>110</sup> *ibid*, IB to Assistant Director, Talks, 14.4.47
- <sup>111</sup> Briggs, *op cit*
- <sup>112</sup> *ibid*, p.543
- <sup>113</sup> MacGregor, S. 2002. *Woman of Today*, p.151. London: Headline
- <sup>114</sup> The BBC file on Anna Freud is almost comical: from 1941 to 1960 she resisted every attempt to get her on air - and there were many - on the grounds that "I am no good at publicity"[RCONT1: TALKS - FREUD, ANNA, 1941-1960, Anna Freud (AF) to JQ, 6..1.43] and did not want to be seen as advertising. Her only eventual broadcasts came in the form of four recordings of her answering questions put to her at a Study Group of the Study of Psychoanalytic Research in 1960
- <sup>115</sup> Phillips, *op cit*
- <sup>116</sup> 'Happy Children', Radio Times, 10.12.43, 4.2.44
- <sup>117</sup> 'How's The Baby?', Radio Times, 30.9.49; 'The Ordinary Devoted Mother and Her Baby', Radio Times, 9.1.52
- <sup>118</sup> 'Difficult Children in Difficult Times', Radio Times, 26.1.45
- <sup>119</sup> Graham Richards, 'Britain on the Couch: The Popularization of Psychoanalysis in Britain 1918-1940', *Science in Context*, 13, 2 (2000)
- <sup>120</sup> "We are grateful to find that psycho-analysis has caught hold of the tail of the Bloomsbury set," said Winnicott in 1966 (Rodman, *op cit*, p.312)
- <sup>121</sup> 'In Memory of Sigmund Freud', in W.H. Auden. 1966, *Collected Shorter Poems 1927-1957*. London: Faber and Faber
- <sup>122</sup> Dean Rapp, 'The Early Discovery of Freud by the British General Educated Public', *Social History of Medicine*, 1990 (3), p217
- <sup>123</sup> Richards, *op cit*, pp.183-230. Denise Riley has also challenged the idea that the popularisation was held at a safe arm's length from theory (Riley, D. 1983. *War in the Nursery*. London: Virago)
- <sup>124</sup> Chris Waters, 'Havelock Ellis, Sigmund Freud and the State: Discourses of Homosexual Identity in Interwar Britain', in Bland, L. and Doan, L., eds. 1998. *Sexology in culture*. Cambridge: Polity Press
- <sup>125</sup> Eli Zaretsky, "One Large Secure, Solid Background": Melanie Klein and the Origins of the British Welfare State', in *Psychoanalysis and History* 1(2),1999, pp136-154
- <sup>126</sup> Phillips, *op cit*, p.10
- <sup>127</sup> Quoted in *ibid*, p.48
- <sup>128</sup> I'm grateful to the anonymous reviewer of this paper for this suggestion.
- <sup>129</sup> Ogden, *op cit*, p.215
- <sup>130</sup> Riley, *op cit*, p.7
- <sup>131</sup> Thomson, M. 2006. *Psychological Subjects: Identity, Culture and Health in Twentieth Century Britain*. Oxford: Oxford University Press
- <sup>132</sup> Richards, *op cit*.
- <sup>133</sup> Personal communication, Louise North, BBC Written Archives, 19.3.13
- <sup>134</sup> Isaacs, S. 1929. *The Nursery Years*, p.24. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul
- <sup>135</sup> Personal communication, Louise North, BBC Written Archives, 19.3.13
- <sup>136</sup> Benjamin Spock, 'Introduction' in Winnicott 2002
- <sup>137</sup> John Watson, 'Children Who Misbehave', in *Childhood*, vol.1., no.4, Nov/Dec 1947
- <sup>138</sup> eg 'Two Case Histories', *Childhood*, vol.1., no.5, Jan/Feb 1948
- <sup>139</sup> Shapira, *op cit*
- <sup>140</sup> Rose, N. 1985. *The Psychological Complex: Psychology, Politics and Society in England 1869-1939*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul
- <sup>141</sup> Phillips, *op cit*
- <sup>142</sup> Mathew Thomson, 'Bowlbyism and the Postwar Settlement', paper given at the Institute of Historical Affairs, London University, 2012
- <sup>143</sup> Thomson 2012, *op cit*
- <sup>144</sup> Sally Alexander, 'Primary Maternal Preoccupation: D.W.Winnicott and Social Democracy in Mid-Twentieth Century Britain', in Alexander, S. and Taylor, B. (eds). 2012. *History and Psyche: Culture, Psychoanalysis and the Past*. London: Palgrave Macmillan
- <sup>145</sup> Winnicott 1964
- <sup>146</sup> Alexander, *op cit*
- <sup>147</sup> Doane, J.L. and Hodges, D.L. 1992. *From Klein to Kristeva: Psychoanalytic Feminism and the Search for the 'Good Enough' Mother*, p.22 Michigan: University of Michigan Press

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<sup>148</sup> Winnicott 2002, p7

<sup>149</sup> Winnicott 1986

<sup>150</sup> DW to Miss DD, 15.11.66, Donald Winnicott Collection, Oskar Diethelm Library, DeWitt Wallace Institute for the History of Psychiatry, Weill Cornell Medical College, New York (hereafter OD)

<sup>151</sup> DW to Robin Hughes, 9.1.67, *ibid.*

<sup>152</sup> Shapira, *op cit*

<sup>153</sup> Quoted in Rodman, *op cit*, p271

<sup>154</sup> Murphy, *op cit*

<sup>155</sup> Christopher Reeves, Introduction, Winnicott Collected Works, vol.2 (in press)

<sup>156</sup> Bollas et al, Winnicott 1993

<sup>157</sup> Correspondence in OD