Attachment *in* Therapeutic Practice

Sara Miller McCune founded SAGE Publishing in 1965 to support the dissemination of usable knowledge and educate a global community. SAGE publishes more than 1000 journals and over 800 new books each year, spanning a wide range of subject areas. Our growing selection of library products includes archives, data, case studies and video. SAGE remains majority owned by our founder and after her lifetime will become owned by a charitable trust that secures the company's continued independence.

Los Angeles | London | New Delhi | Singapore | Washington DC | Melbourne

Attachment *in* Therapeutic Practice

Jeremy Holmes
Arietta Slade

SAGE

Los Angeles | London | New Delhi
Singapore | Washington DC | Melbourne

Los Angeles | London | New Delhi
Singapore | Washington DC | Melbourne

SAGE Publications Ltd
1 Oliver's Yard
55 City Road
London EC1Y 1SP

SAGE Publications Inc.
2455 Teller Road
Thousand Oaks, California 91320

SAGE Publications India Pvt Ltd
B 1/I 1 Mohan Cooperative Industrial Area
Mathura Road
New Delhi 110 044

SAGE Publications Asia-Pacific Pte Ltd
3 Church Street
#10-04 Samsung Hub
Singapore 049483

First published 2018

Editor: Susannah Trefgarne
Editorial assistant:Talulah Hall
Production editor: Katherine Haw
Copyeditor: Sarah Bury
Indexer: Elizabeth Ball
Marketing manager: Camille Richmond
Cover design: Sheila Tong
Typeset by: C&M Digitals (P) Ltd, Chennai, India
Printed in the UK

Library of Congress Control Number: 2017939971

British Library Cataloguing in Publication data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN 978-1-4739-5328-4
ISBN 978-1-4739-5329-1 (pbk)

2

Attachment's Principals and Principles

When reading books with a large cast, a list of principal characters and their roles can be very helpful. We subscribe to Whitehead's (1916) aperçu that: 'science that fails to forget its founders is doomed', but believe that going back to the originators of a new paradigm helps us see ideas in their historical context, as well as highlighting the difficulties with which they were wrestling. What follows is a summary of some of the main attachment characters, themes, and concepts that inform this book.

John Bowlby

Like many cultural and scientific advances, attachment theory arose from juxtapositions: conceptually between ethology and psychoanalysis; professionally between John Bowlby and Mary Ainsworth. Nevertheless, the founding father was undoubtedly Bowlby, who claimed that: 'in 1956 when this work was begun I had no conception of what I was undertaking' (Bowlby, 1969: xi). This 'undertaking' turned out to be no less than a new paradigm, with implications for child development and childrearing, psychology, psychiatry, parent–infant research – and psychotherapy.

New scientific theories arise out of 'paradigm shifts', typically preceded by discomfort with existing theories' failure to fit the facts (Kuhn, 1977). Bowlby's preoccupation was the parent–infant bond, which he saw as fundamental to all subsequent relationships. He was dissatisfied with the prevailing psychoanalytic model, which saw relationships as arising out of feeding and/or infantile sexuality. Like Ainsworth, he was equally unimpressed with the behavioural view that mother love boiled down to associative propinquity. Both approaches, he felt, failed to account for *the primacy of relationships*.

For Bowlby the drive to relate – holding, clinging, playing, exploring, providing safety – was a dynamic in its own right, needing new theories and research.

Bowlby's initial aims were relatively modest. In 'The influence of early environment in the development of neurosis and neurotic character' (Bowlby, 1940), he presented his experiences of working in UK Child Guidance Clinics to his fellow-psychoanalysts, hoping, with a typical homespun trope, to persuade them that it was 'as important for analysts to study the early environment as it is for a nurseryman to make a scientific study of the soil' (1940: 155).

Even at this early stage he realised how vital the subtleties of the emotional atmosphere in the home were for children's well-being. More palpable trauma is addressed in his paper 'Forty-four juvenile thieves: Their characters and home-life' (Bowlby, 1944), earning him the nick-name 'Ali Bowlby and his 44 thieves'. This case-series suggested a link between delinquency in adolescence and early loss of mother. The separation theme was then developed in his joint paper with Robertson (Bowlby & Robertson, 1952) studying children in hospital with tuberculosis and so separated for long periods from their parents. In it they outline the now familiar phases of emotional response to unredeemed loss: denial, protest, and despair.

The three classic *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* articles (Bowlby, 1958, 1960, 1961) form the core of Bowlby's contribution, each of which was expanded into a volume of the 'trilogy' (Bowlby, 1969, 1973, 1980). In *Attachment*, he proposed the attachment bond as a primary motivational force, whose 'set goal' is physical proximity to a 'secure base' when a child is threatened, stressed, or ill. *Separation* set out a novel understanding of anxiety disorders in children and adults as responses to trauma and/or the failure of parents to provide safety. It also conceptualises anger and violence to self and others (see too, Bowlby, 1984) as pathological manifestations of healthy protest, part of the normal response to separation. In *Loss*, Bowlby described loss as an irreversible separation, proposing the then heterodox claim that children experience grief and mourning no less intensely than adults, and developing an attachment model of pathological mourning and depression applicable throughout the life-cycle.

Bowlby's trilogy remains the secure foundation for half a century of post-paradigmatic 'normal science'. Throughout, he remained true to his original objectives: opening psychoanalysis to cross-fertilisation with other disciplines such as ethology and cybernetics; acknowledging that real trauma and deprivation were as important in psychopathology as phantasy; helping build secure scientific foundations for the art of psychotherapy.

Bowlby's intellectual giants[1] were Darwin (Bowlby, 1991) and Freud. His own development and experiences as a teacher of disturbed children provided the seedbed for his later theories (van Dijken et al., 1998). As a psychoanalytic candidate in the British Psychoanalytic Society in the 1930s and 1940s, he was affected by Melanie Klein and her followers, if only to try to convert them to more environmentally sensitive and scientific points of view.

His open-mindedness made him a ready enthusiast for the ethological theories of Konrad Lorenz, which he encountered in a pre-publication draft of *King Solomon's Ring* (1961), given him by the evolutionary biologist Julian Huxley (Bretherton, 1992). Another major ethological influence was Harry Harlow (1958), who famously showed that infant monkeys sought out security and 'holding' from a cloth mother-substitute in preference to feeding from a milk-providing but comfortless 'wire mother'. This provided experimental support for attachment theory's fundamental postulate of the primacy of 'contact comfort' over feeding/oral drive-reduction as the basis for early relationships. Harlow's mantle has been carried forward by Steven Suomi, who in five decades of primate research has established beyond doubt the significance of early rearing on gene expression, stress regulation, neuroendocrine functioning, and socioemotional development (Suomi, 2016). Suomi's oeuvre, perhaps more than any other, provides empirical support for Bowlby's fundamental premise that early attachments matter and have long-range developmental implications. The ornithologist and later primatologist Robert Hinde (Van der Horst, Van der Veer, & van IJzendoorn, 2007) was another important colleague and mentor; he and Bowlby developed the Darwinian idea of the 'environment of evolutionary adaptedness', in which protection from predation through attachment conferred selective advantage for vulnerable human infants.

The most seminal of these collegial relationships was with Mary Ainsworth. Attachment theory can truly be said to be their joint creation, and could not have become the force it is today without their complementary skills and backgrounds.

Mary Ainsworth and the Strange Situation

Life is full of fortunate accidents. An American-born, Canadian-raised clinical psychologist and researcher, Ainsworth had a background in clinical diagnosis and psychotherapy, having collaborated with Bruno Klopfer on what was to become a classic textbook on the Rorschach (Klopfer et al., 1954). In 1950 she answered an advertisement in the London *Times Education Supplement* placed by John Bowlby, and was immediately hired to help with his studies of maternal separation at the Tavistock Clinic.

Ainsworth's autobiographical essay (1983) describes this eye-opening transition in her intellectual journey. At first sceptical about Bowlby's objections to drive theory and his insistence on the primacy of the mother–infant attachment relationship, Ainsworth was eventually fully persuaded. Like all good scientists, the decisive factor was data. She moved to Uganda in 1954, where she studied Ganda mothers and infants in everyday settings (Ainsworth, 1967). This groundbreaking work described in detail the evolution of the attachment system, culminating in fully developed attachment to the mother

around the first birthday. Her observations also underscored the crucial role of *maternal sensitivity* in shaping a child's sense of security and interest in the world around him.

In 1961 Ainsworth returned to the USA, joining the faculty at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, Maryland. Building on her Ganda observations, but in this very different environment, she followed 26 infants and their mothers from birth to one year. This gave rise to her greatest contribution, the Strange Situation Procedure (SSP), a tool for the assessment of the quality of infant–mother attachment (Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters, & Wall, 1978).

Ainsworth began by observing infants and their mothers in the home. Meticulous analysis confirmed the presence, from birth, of an increasingly complex behavioural system with which the infant signals his needs for comfort and safety to the caregiver. She identified systematic individual differences in the *quality* of the caregiving environment, particularly in mothers' sensitivity to, and acceptance of, babies' needs for contact and comfort. Ainsworth then devised a mildly stressful laboratory procedure, in which one-year-old children are separated from their mothers for three minutes and left, first with a stranger, and then by themselves (Ainsworth & Wittig, 1965). The SSP, an 'in vitro' separation paradigm, was designed to mimic everyday separations in which infants might be left with strangers or momentarily on their own.

The SSP laid the foundations for the now familiar attachment classification, dividing infants into one of three main groups. The securely attached had been recipients of sensitive and responsive care throughout the first year of life; their mothers provided them with a 'secure base' from which to explore; upon reunion they turned to their mothers – usually with appropriate but readily assuaged distress and protest – for comfort and safety. Children with somewhat rejecting parents tended on reunion to damp down their emotional responses, failing to protest, hovering inhibitedly near their caregiver, just out of arms' reach. These Ainsworth called 'avoidant' (also referred to here as 'deactivating'). The third group, 'anxious/resistant' ('hyperactivating'), had caregivers who were inconsistent in their responses; the children would cling to their caregiver but without being easily pacified, also failing to return to exploratory play upon reunion. Reunion behaviour in the SSP thus yielded vital information about the mother–child relationship and its history (Ainsworth et al., 1978).

This simple, elegant paradigm and the identification of the three patterns of attachment in her Baltimore sample have served as the foundation for four decades of attachment research. Ainsworth is responsible for two other key principles of attachment theory: (a) the notion that the caregiver provides the child with a '*secure base from which to explore*'; and (b) the '*attachment–exploration balance*', in which children find a path between the need for safety with the wish to strike out into the larger world.

Long-term Studies

Mary Ainsworth's development of the SSP, her discovery of the three primary patterns of infant–mother attachment, and her establishment of the links between early caregiving and individual differences in attachment organisation set the stage for attachment research as we know it today. The next steps came from Alan Sroufe at the University of Minnesota's Institute of Child Development. He learned about attachment theory from his graduate student, Everett Waters, who had joined him after undergraduate studies with Ainsworth at Johns Hopkins. Their collaboration (Sroufe, 1979; Sroufe & Waters, 1977) challenged the prevailing behaviourism in psychology, emphasising the 'coherence' of an individual life-history arising out of the interplay of developmental processes and the environmental context.

Waters (1978) and his colleagues established the validity and reliability of the SSP, based on their 20-year 'follow-along' study of a low-risk sample. They found links between infant security on the SSP and persistence, enthusiasm, cooperation, and positive affect in play during the toddler period (Matas, Arend, & Sroufe, 1978; Sroufe, 2005; Waters, Wippman, & Sroufe, 1978), providing the first evidence that attachment classification had long-range effects on adaptations and competencies well beyond infancy. Brian Vaughn, another Sroufe graduate student, replicated Waters' 1978 study with a high-risk sample (Vaughn et al., 1979). With his colleagues he found that the more unstable the caregiving environment, the more likely were children to be insecurely attached and to shift from secure to insecure in the face of environmental upheaval. This research was critical in identifying the risks to children living in high stress, disadvantaged environments. Sroufe and Byron Egeland went on to follow 200 of these families for over 30 years (Sroufe et al., 2005).

These and a wealth of other studies (see Grossmann, Grossman, & Waters, 2005) have established the predictive validity of the child's attachment classification. Taken together, they confirm the role of attachment in the organisation and stability of personality, and provide scientific underpinning for psychoanalytic emphasis on the importance of early relationships as a template for later development, healthy and otherwise. They provided strong support for Bowlby's emphasis on the role of the environment in promoting or compromising the children's psychological development and its likely long-term impact on mental health.

Mary Main and the Adult Attachment Interview

The early evolution of attachment theory and research can be thought of as a series of quantum leaps. Bowlby established the foundational theory, while Ainsworth developed observational and empirical methods critical to attachment's evidence base. Mary Main, originally Ainsworth's graduate student, took the field in two crucial new directions. First, she extended Ainsworth's research

on mother–infant attachment to the study of attachment in adults. Rather than adult behaviour, she studied adult attachment *narratives*, moving attachment study to 'the level of representation' (Main, Kaplan, & Cassidy, 1985). Second, she delineated a fourth category of attachment – '*insecure disorganised*' (D). Both discoveries radically altered the landscape of attachment, with major implications – to be explored in this book – for clinical theory and practice.

Main followed a cohort of mothers and infants longitudinally, having first assessed the infants' attachment classifications at one year. As the study proceeded, she became curious about the attachment patterns of the *parents* of the children she was following. Together with graduate students Carol George and Nancy Kaplan, she developed the Adult Attachment Interview (AAI) (George, Kaplan, & Main, 1996), which was administered to mothers and fathers when the study children were six years old. Like the SSP, the AAI was intended to *activate* the subject's attachment system – as opposed to merely describing the past – by asking the parents to re-live in their minds their early experiences with caregivers. From a therapist's point of view, the AAI is thus comparable to a psychotherapy assessment interview in which significant childhood experiences, including early losses and traumata, are described, affectively evoked and explored.

Main identified systematic attachment-related patterns in these adult narrative accounts of early childhood experiences that were comparable to Ainsworth's patterns of infant behaviours. Adults judged 'secure' in relation to attachment represented their early attachment experiences in coherent and affectively balanced ways, childhood trauma and difficulty nothwithstanding. Adults judged 'insecure', by contrast, revealed a range of defences against expressing childhood longings and disappointments; their narratives were contradictory, vague, incoherent, or dysfluent. Main identified two distinct insecure 'states of mind in relation to attachment': 'dismissing', in which the impact of early experiences is disavowed and minimised, leading to clipped, contradictory, and affectively barren narratives; and 'preoccupied', in which the affects and effects of early experiences are heightened, autonomy downplayed, reflected in chaotic, emotionally uncontained, and incoherent narratives.

This delineation of adult categories of attachment allowed Main and her colleagues to examine the relationship between child and parent attachment classifications. They found high rates of correspondence: infants judged secure at one year were more likely to have mothers secure in relation to attachment; those judged avoidant were more likely to have mothers who dismissed the impact of early attachment experiences; the resistant or anxiously attached were more likely to have mothers with preoccupied states of mind.

Internal Working Models

Main saw patterns in adult attachment narratives as reflecting distinct '*internal working models*' (IWMs) of attachment. This was Bowlby's term for the

representation of the self-in-relation-to-others that shapes a person's emotional life. In Main's view, the linguistic patterns noted on the AAI revealed representational models arising out of accumulated and recurrent real-life experiences of self–other (especially care-seeker/caregiver) interactions. IWMs are distinct, in important ways, from the 'internalised object representations' of object relations theory, representations shaped more by the child's unconscious fantasies than actual relationships and experience. Bowlby had been influenced in his thinking about IWMs by the psychologist Kenneth Craik's (1943) seminal notion of 'mental maps', which are needed by animals in order to navigate and negotiate their physical and social environment. IWMs are 'descriptively' unconscious (i.e., out of awareness but not due to repression) but nevertheless determine both how a person interacts with others, and the underlying assumptions that shape those interactions. IWMs can be formulated in terms of self-to-self statements (e.g., '*is this person trustworthy? Will they attend to me when I'm in distress?*'), etc.

Patricia Crittenden, another student of Ainsworth, makes an important psychotherapy-relevant point about IWMs:

> Internal representational models are postulated to assist individuals in two ways. First, such models can help an individual to interpret the meaning of others' behaviour and to make predictions regarding others' future behaviour. 'Open' models are open to new interpretations and predictions. 'Closed' models interpret all behaviour in terms of the existing model. Second, such models can facilitate the organization of a response. 'Working' models allow cognitive manipulation of possible responses. 'Nonworking' models do not allow cognitive exploration of behavioural alternatives. The responsiveness of the model to new information and the ability of individuals to use the model to organize their responses are relevant to the adaptiveness of the model. (1990: 265)

IWMs are thus the basis of the transferences which psychotherapists are adept at 'reading', and aim to bring into therapeutic discourse. Psychotherapy helps prise open these 'closed models', and jump-start those that are 'non-working', so that people begin to learn from experience and reach towards new ways of understanding themselves, others, and the world.

Disorganised Attachment

Main's second great contribution, made with the help of her graduate student Judith Solomon[2] (Main & Solomon, 1990), was the identification of a third insecure attachment type, 'insecure/disorganised' (D). This discovery arose from observing that a small proportion of children in their community sample could not be reliably classified in the SSP system. On separation and reunion in the SSP, this group showed some or all of the following behaviours: odd postures or behaviours (such as physical 'collapse'), apprehension, stereotypies,

contradictory behaviours, trance-like expressions, freezing, disorientation, and/or repetitive hand and head movements.

Main and her colleagues noted that this group of infants alternated between proximity-seeking and avoidance in a way that suggested that they were *afraid of their caregivers*. Main and Hesse (1990) then hypothesised that the caregivers of disorganised infants are – as a result of their *own* unresolved loss or trauma – either frightened *by*, or frightening *to* their infants. Such infants then face an insoluble paradox, in which the caregiver is both a 'source of and the solution to its alarm' (1990: 163). Follow-up studies have linked D classification, found to be the prevalent pattern in high-risk groups, with 'controlling/punitive' or 'controlling/caretaking' behaviours at age 6 (Main & Cassidy, 1988), and psychopathology in childhood, adolescence, and early adulthood (Carlson, 1998; Lyons-Ruth & Jacobvitz, 2016; van IJzendoorn & Bakermans-Kranenburg, 2009). Schuengel, Bakermans-Kranenburg, and van IJzendoorn (1999) provided meta-analytic support for the links between frightening maternal behaviour and disorganised attachment; Lyons-Ruth and her colleagues later expanded this to a range of atypical maternal caregiving behaviours (including, but not limited to, frightened/frightening behaviour) that predicted infant disorganisation, expanding the potential pathways for the emergence of disorganised attachment (Lyons-Ruth, Bronfman, & Parsons, 1999). These themes will be discussed in Chapter 10.

The observation that *fear of the caregiver* played a pivotal role in infant disorganisation led Hesse and Main (2000) to return to the AAI, and to add a fourth category, 'unresolved' (U), in which the effects of parental trauma or loss are manifest as lapses in narrative fluency and meta-cognitive monitoring (i.e., the capacity to reflect on one's own thought processes), as well as disorientation in time and space. Lyons-Ruth later linked a variety of disruptions in narrative fluency and voice to 'pervasively unintegrated mental states', manifest in the AAI as Hostile/Helpless (H/H) states of mind and even more predictive of infant attachment disorganisation (Lyons-Ruth et al., 2005) than U status. Clinically, manifestations in narrative of both U and H/H are highly significant.

Crittenden's Dynamic Maturational Model (Crittenden, 2006) reframes Ainsworth's and Main's attachment categories as self-protective strategies learned in interaction with caregivers, in the context of maturational and individual biological differences. Like Main, she noted that there were some infants who could not be classified using the organised insecure classification system. Rather than D, she proposed a fourth category: *combined* avoidant/resistant. Crittenden's circumplex model generates a range of attachment subtypes, attempting to capture individual differences – which is of course where psychotherapists' main interest lies.

Mentalising

As the twenty-first century dawned, a new attachment concept came to the fore: mentalising. Emerging from the groundbreaking work of Peter Fonagy,

Miriam and Howard Steele, and Mary Target, mentalising marks, in two distinct ways, yet another leap forward. First, it illuminates some of the *mechanisms* underlying the intergenerational transmission of attachment. Second, it provides a clinical slant on attachment theory, which was useful in understanding both the early roots of severe psychopathology and in guiding treatment (cf. Allen, 2012a).

Fonagy, Steele, and Steele (1991) initially set out to examine the link between prenatal parental attachment classification and infants' later attachment. They noticed that adults who were secure on the AAI were able to appreciate and reflect upon mental states (thoughts, feelings, and intentions) relating to their early childhood experiences and relationships. This contrasted with their insecure peers, who had difficulty imagining their own or their parents' minds. Their ideas extended Main's work on metacognition, and led to an AAI code of 'reflective self-function', later shortened to 'reflective functioning' (RF) (Fonagy et al., 1998). This then mutated into the more general concept of 'mentalising'.

Mentalising refers to the process whereby we *make meaning* of the interpersonal world; RF is mentalising in action. Fonagy and his colleagues found that the *meta-representational* process, whereby pregnant parents reflect upon their own or another's psychic experience, was predictive of their subsequent infants' attachment classification (Fonagy et al., 1995). Importantly, they also found that even highly stressed, developmentally deprived parents, *in the presence of high RF*, had securely attached children at one year, as compared with similarly traumatised low-RF parents (Fonagy et al., 1995). Other studies found that adults with good reflective capacities were less likely to develop borderline personality disorder following childhood trauma than their less reflective peers. Secure attachment in childhood provides the context for a reflective self and a theory of mind (Fonagy & Target, 1996, 1997), which in turn contributes to later resilience, in part because mentalising capacities are intimately linked with self-agency, a crucial component of psychological well-being (see Chapter 8). The finding of the protective effects of RF immediately suggests psychotherapy's role in enhancing mentalising skills.

Fonagy et al. (2002) pinpoint the role of impaired mentalising in child maltreatment. The child is exposed to the 'double whammy' of a maltreating caregiver, by definition unable or unwilling to mentalise the impact of the neglect and/or abuse they inflict, and unable to foster the very mentalising capacity that would help the child actively make sense of and circumvent the impact of their maltreatment.

Explicit in Fonagy and his colleagues' work was the notion that a parent's capacity to make sense of the *child's* mind is a crucial aspect of maternal sensitivity and suggests a mechanism for the *intergenerational transmission of attachment*. This led researchers to study how parents 'hold their children in mind' by examining the ways they speak with (Meins et al., 2001), or about, their child (Grienenberger, Kelly, & Slade, 2005; Oppenheim & Koren-Karie, 2013; Slade, 2005; Slade, Grienenberger, et al., 2005). Parents differ widely in

their capacity to see infants as sentient beings, with projects, desires, and affects of their own, and how good they are at factoring in their *own* states of mind when talking about their relationship with their child. Such differences significantly impact on infant attachment security and their subsequent attachment histories.

Ainsworth's formulations had from the start differentiated between mothers' capacity to respond to their infants' signals and the 'appropriateness' of that response, although that distinction got somewhat lost by later researchers. 'Appropriateness' assumes that a caregiver needs two skills: first, the capacity to 'read' her infant – i.e., to mentalise; second, to gauge and pitch her own responses in the light of those 'readings'. This goes beyond Main's (1995) notion of a 'fluid-autonomous' parental discourse style to a more interactive model of sensitive parenting in which the child's and the caregiver's actions and reactions are mutually cued. This is clearly relevant to psychotherapy, where the 'appropriateness' of therapists' interventions – the 'how' of their interventions as much as the specific contents and theoretical basis – may be crucial in determining outcome.

Fonagy and his collaborators have recently argued that the psychosocial 'purpose' of secure attachment is to create in the child a state of 'epistemic trust' (Fonagy & Allison, 2014). The caregiver creates an ambiance in which an infant feels accurately known and can rely on the relationship to be based on truthfulness and benign support, rather than exploitation. On this basis, children absorb the cognitive and emotional skills needed to flourish in the social context in which they find themselves, especially to learn from their own and others' experience. Epistemic *mis*-trust, arising out of insecure, especially disorganised, attachments, compromises this process, leading either to inefficient lone-wolf 'reinventing the wheel' strategies, or slavish and compliant imitation of bad models (cf. Laland, 2017). Psychotherapeutic 'techniques', however 'evidence-based', will be ineffective unless and until epistemic trust, via secure attachment, is first reinstated.

Conclusion

As a pointer to what is to come, we end this chapter with Bowlby's much-quoted invocation of how therapy should provide:

> …the patient with a secure base from which he can explore the various unhappy and painful aspects of his life, past and present, many of which he finds it difficult or perhaps impossible to think about and reconsider without a trusted companion to provide support, encouragement, sympathy, and, on occasion, guidance. (1988: 138)

Note Bowlby's characteristically cautious use of the negative, describing what is 'difficult' and 'impossible' 'without' a trusted companion, rather than what will happen '*with*' one. Our aim in this book, with the hoped-for collaboration and blessing of our readers, is to transform that negative into a positive.

Summary

- John Bowlby laid the observational and theoretical foundations of attachment theory. His *magnum opus* is his 'trilogy' – *Attachment*, *Separation* and *Loss*.
- Mary Ainsworth is the co-founder of attachment theory and research. Her Strange Situation Procedure (SSP) continues to be used to classify infants' attachments as secure, organised insecure (deactivating and hyperactivating), and disorganised. She also proposed parental sensitivity and appropriateness of response as key determinants of secure attachment, and observed the relationship between secure attachment and confident exploration from a secure base.
- Long-term studies of children's attachments were initiated by Alan Sroufe and Everett Waters.
- Mary Main moved the study of attachment to the 'level of representation' by developing the Adult Attachment Interview (AAI). Analysis of parents' narrative patterns when describing their own childhood leads to a classification of their attachment status as secure-autonomous, dismissing, or preoccupied. She identified a third type of insecure attachment in infants: disorganised ('D'), whose AAI analogue is unresolved ('U').
- Main saw 'D' as an 'approach–avoidance dilemma' in which children turn to a caregiver who is the very source of the threat that stimulates the attachment dynamic. Lyons-Ruth extended this to the idea of 'hostile-helpless' ('H/H') caregivers who are either frightened by their children's distress or frightening to them.
- Peter Fonagy, Howard and Miriam Steele, and Mary Target developed the concepts of 'reflexive function' ('RF') and then 'mentalising', which are typical of secure-making parents who are able to see their children as sentient beings with motives, projects, and experiences of their own. Despite adversity, mentalising mothers can still transmit security to their offspring. Important functions of psychotherapy include establishing a secure relationship, instilling epistemic trust, and enhancing mentalising skills.

Notes

1. Newton: 'If I have seen further it is by standing on the shoulders of giants.'
2. Note the 'intergenerational transmission of attachment' from Bowlby and Ainsworth to her students (Bretherton, Cassidy, Crittenden, Kobak, Lieberman, Main, Waters), and on to *their* colleagues and students as well.