Attachment 1.

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July 2003

An Account Of My Childhood from *"Orphans Of The Living": The Home Children NSW 1939-1965* Phd Thesis, Macquarie University, 1999.

I was born in Sydney in 1944, towards the end of the Second World War. My parents had married in 1941; on the wedding certificate my mother is described as a 'machinist', my father as a clerk in the Department of Air. When I was born they already had two children: my brother aged two and a half and my sister sixteen months. My father apparently had difficulty keeping jobs and when I was six months old my parents separated, my father leaving my mother to cope alone with the children. He ultimately left NSW and was not heard of for nearly twenty years. Later I gathered he had moved around Queensland, working as a storeman or in similar low-paid, unskilled jobs, apparently drifting and forming no ties. He died of a heart attack in 1968 and was found floating in the river at Townsville. It took the police two months to locate somebody - my mother - who had known him.

After my father left, my mother took my sister and myself to a Home for Children although she kept my brother with her. I was eight months' old, my sister just two. My mother had little family support. Her own father had died in 1919 (in the 'Asian flu' epidemic) when she was three, and her mother had remarried, so that my mother and her younger sister grew up with a stepfather and four stepbrothers. Her stepfather was a dogmatically religious man, a 'pillar of the church', and in line with his narrow, moralistic beliefs was unsympathetic to a woman who had been left by her husband. In this he was also reflecting the views of his time: it was the woman's responsibility to make marriage work and her shame if it didn't (Ludlow 1994: 32-3; Nicholson 1983).

If there was no family support forthcoming, what did women do in this situation, in this era? The only government pension available, the Deserted Wives and Widows' pension, was little more than a basic contribution to existence. What jobs were available for unskilled, untrained women? Wartime production had scaled down and women's work in most cases was low paid; but even if jobs were available, who would look after the children while she worked? In the severe housing shortage of the immediate post-war era, where would she live with her children? To 'put the children in a Home' was the solution of the day. There was no other, unless a woman had family support, independent means or professional status (rare in these times) and could afford a housekeeper and/or nanny. My mother was not in any of these categories. She kept my brother: he was the oldest and she had managed to enrol him in a kindergarten. Somebody told her about some women who had just started a Children's Home and this was where she took my sister and myself (we were their first intake). It was only for three weeks, while she 'got on her feet'. The weeks turned into months and then years, and my sister and I spent our childhood in the Home.

Like many women of her generation, my mother had no formal training or skills and had to work where she could. Eventually she got a job selling advertising space in magazines in order to raise her son and pay for the support of her daughters in the

Home, supplementing this with other similar casual jobs. She also worked as a waitress some nights to pay for her son to attend a private school. This was because, she told me years later, she wanted him to turn out better than his father and thought she would achieve this by giving him 'a good start'. She had little leisure time and the money she earned was never enough. She never told anybody that her husband had left her and that she was - ultimately - divorced. (Her story, when anybody asked, was that he was a tobacco farmer in Mareeba, North Queensland.) She visited us in the Home quite often, although I don't remember how frequently it was. It was always on a Sunday, her only day off, since she worked at the restaurant on Saturday nights. She had no car, and caught the bus to the distant beachside suburb where the Home was located, a journey of at least two hours each way.

This Home in which my sister and I spent our childhood was owned and entirely managed by two women, a mother and a daughter, who had established the Home as a business, to support themselves. That is, it was not a Home run by the state or by a church or charity. A Children's Home could then, as now, be a business: one of the few opportunities (others might be running a boarding house, or 'residential') for independence, employment and an income, for an unskilled widow and also for her unmarried daughter who had left school at fourteen in the Depression and who chose not to marry.

My mother's predicament is one dimension to this narrative: the difficulties which confronted women in this era with young children and few supports or resources. Another dimension is that of the carers: the people who ran the Homes. The mother and daughter who conducted my Home had previously run a sandwich shop in the city. Widowed in 1931, with two young teenage daughters and no assets, the older woman, a baker's daughter herself, had found a livelihood by employing on a business level the skills she had learnt in her family home. One of her daughters left home, trained as a corsetiere for a large retail store, and eventually married. The other remained with her and worked first in the sandwich shop and later as a partner in the Children's Home. This daughter chose not to marry, and bound her life to her mother's; but in setting up the Home she gained a *de facto* purchase on the traditional female role by being associated with children. Neither woman had any training in child care but one had had two children. They were female, and females looked after children, and the Department of Child Welfare in this period required nothing other in the way of qualifications. Training of any description is not specified in either the Child Welfare Act 1939 (NSW) or in its Regulations.

The lives of these women - my mother and my two 'foster mothers'[1] - were shaped by the deaths or desertion of men, demonstrating the importance in these years of having a male breadwinner and the limited life and work choices if none were available. For my 'foster mothers', the sandwich shop had been hard work[2], hence the decision to set up a 'Children's Holiday Home', as they called it. The Home also represented a way to consolidate a new status as property-owners, having until now lived in rented accommodation. They set up the Children's Home in the house which

[1]I use this term because I can think of no other simple term to describe them. They were not officially my foster mothers but the younger one of the two, as will become clear, attempted to take the role of 'mother' in my life.
[2]see Daniels & Murnane (1980: 196-197) for a description of just such a labour-intensive enterprise, in these same years.

they built on a piece of land bought some years previously on the Pittwater, about thirty kilometres north of Sydney. This is now a wealthy and exclusive area, but in the years before, and for some time after the Second World War, it was difficult to access and sparsely populated, which is why the land had originally been affordable. Establishing the Children's Home was an opportunity to both own their own home and use it to engender an income. As Daniels & Murnane (1980: 162) observe, the family has always represented an alternative workplace for women. In the case of a Children's Home, the domestic and familial work associated with women's 'traditional' role were merely expanded, and re-classified as 'business'.[3]

This Home was licensed, as all Children's Homes in NSW at this time were required to be, under SECTION 28 of the CHILD WELFARE ACT 1939, by the NSW Child Welfare Department, the government department which was responsible for the care of dependent children in the years immediately following the Second World War[4]. The Home was permitted to take twelve children at any one time, mainly girls, though boys were allowed as long as they were under five years of age. The number of children accommodated related primarily to the amount of available space and washing facilities, as well as number of personnel. There were two types of children in the Home. Many children passed through for holidays, when parents went away without them, common practice in this period. Some came for short periods while Mother went into hospital for an operation or a new baby. There were also four other long-term inmates like my sister and myself. These were two girls each of whom had working mothers separated or divorced from their fathers, and two other sisters who were war orphans, displaced persons from Europe placed in the Home by the people who had undertaken their care after they had left the camp. We grew up together, but apart from my own sister, I never saw any of them again except for a chance meeting with one, years later.

In the Home we lived under a totalitarian regime although obviously I would not have described it like this at the time.[5] Translated into experience, this meant that we - my sister and I and the other children there - lived according to an iron-clad routine, in constant fear of doing the wrong thing and of the threatened (catastrophic) consequences of such transgressions. Materially we were very well cared for. The younger woman was obsessive about cleanliness and spent much of her time in cleaning and laundry chores which she insisted on doing herself; she refused to have paid help because nobody would reach her standards. We had regular baths, clean sheets and clean clothes, and always went out the door looking immaculate, in spotless starched and ironed dresses or uniforms, and shining neat

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[3]The mother of one of my interviewees, Phyllis Stoker, ran a similar business in these same years in an inner northern suburb of Sydney. She however was a married woman who wanted some occupation that would allow her to be available at home to her own family.

[4]This was the name of this department from 1923 until 1956, when it was subsumed within the Education portfolio. In 1956 it became the Department of Child Welfare & Social Welfare, with its own Minister. (*Burgess Report* 1975, Appendix D).

[5]In *Banished Knowledge* (1991: 37-8) the psychoanalyst Alice Miller speaks of childhoods that 'resemble a totalitarian regime in which the only authority (is) the state police...'. This accurately describes the atmosphere of my childhood in the Home. I made this connection at the age of fifteen when I developed a fascination in school history lessons for the accounts of the Nazi regime and in particular of the concentration camps. I made, that is, an unconscious emotional connection which I could not afford to acknowledge consciously at the time.

hair. We were adequately, even well fed: the older woman enjoyed cooking and did it well.

Our playing area and play materials were extremely restricted and boredom is a very strong memory for me of my childhood. Living was a purely functional exercise, time was to be got through usefully with as least noise and fuss as possible. Books became my escape, not only from boredom but from the often unbearable tensions of the atmosphere around me. Reading was a form of dissociation from my surroundings: here I found an intimation that life operated according to reason and humanity, that it made sense. Although I did not realise it at the time, this provided an antidote to what I saw happening in my own life. We operated under strict and unvarying routines in which spontaneity and any signs of initiative were not merely disapproved of but punished. There was no refuge anywhere from the omnipotent system which was the Home, a closed system in which the adults had total power. The older woman was a relatively mild presence: it was she who encouraged my reading and bought me books. The younger woman however used this power to intimidate, terrify, and often brutally punish the children in her care. This created an atmosphere characterised by physical violence or the threat of it, the sort of atmosphere which in other contexts is described by the label 'domestic violence' and which psychologists compare to the experience of living constantly in a war zone (Herman 1992 *passim* and esp. chapter 5). 'I'll kill that child!' was commonly heard from the younger woman. I did not fear actual murder at her hands (although my sister told me later that she did) but I did fear annihilation in some unspecific sense, which seemed to be related to the security of my tenure in the Home. 'We should have left you in the gutter where you belong' implied possible alternatives too frightening to imagine, let alone risk by the wrong behaviour.

My sister was two years old when we entered the Home and her strong personality was already established. For this she was punished physically (by the younger woman) every day of her life in the Home. She was beaten with wooden spoons, slapped on the face, boxed on the ears, shaken and thrown about and once kicked down a flight of stairs. Other children were physically punished but not with this degree of violence (although I often heard the two women discussing how they would explain to a parent the bruises on a child, and 'what if the Welfare find out?'). Children were also punished by being forced to sit for hours on a stool, and younger ones were thrown into a cot and left alone to cry behind a closed door. Verbal abuse and personal humiliations were commonplace. Although we lived by strict rule and routine, there was also an arbitrary dimension to our experience since the younger woman would find fault according to her mood and often with no warning fly into explosive rages. This reinforced our feeling of powerlessness: there was never any possibility of having an effect on our environment and even following rules strictly could not guarantee safety. To this objective however I directed all my efforts.

I was not beaten as my sister was because my entire purpose in life was to be 'a good girl' and thus avoid the punishments inflicted on her. This meant the most minute self-surveillance over my every thought and action, an exchange of self for survival.

I believed for a long time that they could read my mind.[6] I did not dare identify myself with my sister in any way, in case I became implicated in her punishment. She had been labelled the 'bad' one and to distance myself I became the 'good' one, and as a child I believed in this dichotomy. We barely spoke. We lived in the Home as strangers and did not get to know each other until we were adults.

I lived in a house of women, most of the teachers in my single sex high school were women, and men were like visitors from a foreign country. I had one male teacher in my primary school years and the only other men I encountered were tradesmen who came to the Home, and occasionally, briefly, the fathers of girls in my class. The Child Welfare Department inspectors who came to the Home were always women.

It was an isolated and an insular life. I caught the bus from the Home to the local schools, along with the other girls who lived there permanently. We had no hobbies and no outside activities except Sunday school and church in my older years. Although I had no desire to do it, I was sent to learn tennis because I was a good girl and 'nice girls play tennis'. We had no friends to speak of and yet I have no memory of feeling stigmatised at school because I came from a Home. Perhaps this was because I interacted little with other children. This was partly out of fear of saying or doing the wrong thing; but also, perhaps, I did not want to see at close range what it was like to have a 'normal' life. I also dissociated myself from the other Home children while at school, for fear of being lumped in with them: I was the 'good' girl. In class my foremost concern was to anticipate and carry out to the letter the teachers' wishes. Since this type of compliance was rewarded in Australian schooling of the 1950s (Butts 1971: ch. 4), I was praised for this behaviour, thus reinforcing my conviction that being 'good' was the only way to survive.

Whilst the two women were our rulers, they themselves were ruled by a higher authority which the younger woman obviously feared: the Child Welfare Department. The 'Welfare' visits were unannounced and so could occur at any time and my sense of the necessity for strict personal vigilance over my own behaviour was mirrored in my awareness that the women, especially the younger one, were always in a state of alert over possible 'Welfare' visits. The sense I got from this was that what 'the Welfare' thought about the Home was fundamental and that, correspondingly, if the Welfare passed it, then it must be a good place for children. I was acutely aware, throughout my childhood, of the Department's involvement in the Home, that this was both momentous and important. What 'the Welfare' thought, so I believed, determined how the Home operated. I never forgot the names of the District Officers and I recognised them in the records of the Department when I was researching this thesis. When I was older I helped my carers to fill out the forms which had to be sent into the Department whenever a child arrived or departed the Home. That they time and again passed and even praised the Home reinforced my belief that the Home must be 'good'.

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[6]Children in such environments says Herman (1992: 100) 'attempt to appease their abusers by demonstrations of automatic obedience...many develop the belief that their abusers have absolute or even supernatural powers, can read their thoughts, and can control their lives entirely. On the other hand, it motivates children to prove their loyalty and compliance. These children double and redouble their efforts to gain control of the situation in the only way that seems possible, by "trying to be good"'.

My feelings about the Home were complex. It was all that I knew and having in effect lost my parents, it represented security. The older woman did not feature so strongly in my childhood as the younger one, her daughter. It is she therefore who features most in this account and throughout the thesis. I depended so completely on the approval of this woman that I felt I must love her; I was also very afraid of her. She bound me to her by guilt, impressing on me how good she and her mother had been to save me from 'the gutter', an act which no amount of gratitude could ever repay. This was complicated by the fact that my mother eventually did not pay for me, only for my sister. This was agreed upon at some early date, once I began to shape up as a child who would be 'good' and thus repay the younger woman's efforts. I did not see my mother often enough or feel free enough in her presence to get to know her, so that she did not seem a viable alternative, even if she had wanted to take us away. My father was a complete unknown. I had no sense of even having a father, no concept of what it might mean.

My mother was always presented as a 'bad woman' because her husband had left her. She was also a 'bad mother' because she had abandoned her children. She was somebody who, even had she kept me, would not have provided me with 'a good home', that is, one with the amenities of the Home I lived in: hygiene, good food, clean clothes, order and discipline. As opposed to the closed and upright world of the Home, my mother's life was presented as full of dangers to respectability, a status highly valued by my 'foster mothers' - and also by the outside world in the times in which we lived then. I therefore felt that I did not dare belong to my mother, and not being paid for in effect confirmed me as 'unowned' by my own kin. Since my 'foster mother' (partly to bolster her own claims over me) assured me that my mother did not want me, I also felt unwanted and this reinforced my belief that I did not deserve my care and was fortunate to have it.

When I was ten my mother had what was termed then a 'nervous breakdown' and the older woman (the younger woman left the house only to shop) took me and my sister on the tram to Broughton Hall, in Leichhardt, where she was hospitalised. The doctor asked us where we wanted to live: where we were, or with our mother? (My mother later said that she had told the doctor she would be all right if only she had her children with her). I felt terror at being taken from the Home. Although anxiety and dread were a commonplace of my daily life there I knew no other way to be, and so the idea of a 'better' life was literally inconceivable. The unknown seemed the worst thing imaginable. As it turned out, we remained in the Home.

Inadvertently, striving to be 'good' contributed to my ultimate release, because I worked hard at school to gain the approval of my 'foster mothers' and show them that their investment was worthwhile. Eventually I won a scholarship to a university education and I accepted it. However I had no idea how to operate outside an institutional setting and no sense of self to guide me. I was without identity or, more accurately, my identity was confused: I belonged nowhere. I spent time now with my mother and brother (my sister had her own life by then) but we were not like a family. These were people I had known slightly throughout my childhood and now got to know better. I did not feel that I belonged to *a* family, *this* family. I still felt I belonged to the Home and particularly to the woman who, as she stressed continually, had done so much for me. So I was a Home child but at the same time -

because I had striven so hard to distance myself from the other 'bad' Home children - I did not think of myself that way. I belonged nowhere.

My sister after leaving the Home went to train as a nurse but found another institutionalised environment insupportable and gave this up after a couple of months. I was bonded to the NSW Education Department because of my scholarship but I too balked at re-entering the institutional life (this time of a school), and once I was working I paid back the bond money rather than teach. For both my sister and myself, then, there was an idea that in order to establish some sort of identity in the world we had to resist the familiarity of the institution.

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Attachment 2 From DSM 4

301.83 Borderline Personality Disorder

Diagnostic Features

The essential feature of Borderline Personality Disorder is a pervasive pattern of instability of interpersonal relationships, self-image, and affects, and marked impulsivity that begins by early adulthood and is present in a variety of contexts.

Individuals with Borderline Personality Disorder make frantic efforts to avoid real or imagined abandonment (Criterion 1). The perception of impending separation or rejection, or the loss of external structure, can lead to profound changes in self-image, affect, cognition, and behavior. These individuals are very sensitive to environmental circumstances. They experience intense abandonment fears and inappropriate anger even when faced with a realistic time-limited separation or when there are unavoidable changes in plans (e.g., sudden despair in reaction to a clinician's announcing the end of the hour; panic or fury when someone important to them is just a few minutes late or must cancel an appointment). They may believe that this "abandonment" implies they are "bad." These abandonment fears are related to an intolerance of being alone and a need to have other people with them. Their frantic efforts to avoid abandonment may include impulsive actions such as self-mutilating or suicidal behaviors, which are described separately in Criterion 5.

Individuals with Borderline Personality Disorder have a pattern of unstable and intense relationships (Criterion 2). They may idealize potential caregivers or lovers at the first or second meeting, demand to spend a lot of time together, and share the most intimate details early in a relationship. However, they may switch quickly from idealizing other people to devaluing them, feeling that the other person does not care enough, does not give enough, is not "there" enough. These individuals can empathize with and nurture other people, but only with the expectation that the other person will "be there" in return to meet their own needs on demand. These individuals are prone to sudden and dramatic shifts in their view of others, who may alternately be seen as beneficent supports or as cruelly punitive. Such shifts often reflect disillusionment with a caregiver whose nurturing qualities had been idealized or whose rejection or abandonment is expected.

There may be an identity disturbance characterized by markedly and persistently unstable self-image or sense of self (Criterion 3). There are sudden and dramatic shifts in self-image, characterized by shifting goals, values, and vocational aspirations. There may be sudden changes in opinions and plans about career, sexual identity, values, and types of friends. These individuals may suddenly change from the role of a needy supplicant for help to a righteous avenger of past mistreatment. Although they usually have a self-image that is based on being bad or evil, individuals with this disorder may at times have feelings that they do not exist at all. Such experiences usually occur in situations in which the individual feels a lack of a meaningful relationship, nurturing, and support. These individuals may show worse performance in unstructured work or school situations.

Individuals with this disorder display impulsivity in at least two areas that are potentially self-damaging (Criterion 4). They may gamble, spend money irresponsibly, binge eat, abuse substances, engage in unsafe sex, or drive recklessly. Individuals with Borderline Personality Disorder display recurrent suicidal behavior, gestures, or threats, or self-mutilating behavior (Criterion 5). Completed suicide occurs in 8%-10% of such individuals, and self-mutilative acts (e.g., cutting or burning) and suicide threats and attempts are very common. Recurrent suicidality is often the reason that these individuals present for help. These self-destructive acts are usually precipitated by threats of separation or rejection or by expectations that they assume increased responsibility. Self-mutilation may occur during dissociative experiences and often brings relief by reaffirming the ability to feel or by expiating the individual's sense of being evil.

Individuals with Borderline Personality Disorder may display affective instability that is due to a marked reactivity of mood (e.g., intense episodic dysphoria, irritability, or anxiety usually lasting a few hours and only rarely more than a few days) (Criterion 6). The basic dysphoric mood of those with Borderline Personality Disorder is often disrupted by periods of anger, panic, or despair and is rarely relieved by periods of well-being or satisfaction. These episodes may reflect the individual's extreme reactivity to interpersonal stresses. Individuals with Borderline Personality Disorder may be troubled by chronic feelings of emptiness (Criterion 7). Easily bored, they may constantly seek something to do. Individuals with Borderline Personality Disorder frequently express inappropriate,

intense anger or have difficulty controlling their anger (Criterion 8). They may display extreme sarcasm, enduring bitterness, or verbal outbursts. The anger is often elicited when a caregiver or lover is seen as neglectful, withholding, uncaring, or abandoning. Such expressions of anger are often followed by shame and guilt and contribute to the feeling they have of being evil. During periods of extreme stress, transient paranoid ideation or dissociative symptoms (e.g., depersonalization) may occur (Criterion 9), but these are generally of insufficient severity or duration to warrant an additional diagnosis. These episodes occur most frequently in response to a real or imagined abandonment. Symptoms tend to be transient, lasting minutes or hours. The real or perceived return of the caregiver's nurturance may result in a remission of symptoms.