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Christopher Clulow

**PARTNERSHIPS IN CHANGE**

**Application to Middlesex University for PhD on the  
basis of published works**

**Submitted October 1997**

Christopher Clulow

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## **Abstract**

The theme of my research has been the relationship between partnerships in change and practitioners who aim to facilitate change in partnerships. The service delivery relationship, while being the principal object of my investigation, has also provided the means of accessing information about the preoccupations of couples and those who try to help them during periods of change. Through implementing and evaluating service initiatives I have illuminated dynamic processes operating within partnerships, and the couples concerned have provided an illuminating perspective on the services they received. The knowledge generated has been located within an interdisciplinary framework, creating unique and innovative opportunities to link and learn from the experiences of couples, practitioners and other contributors to the field.

## **Context Statement**

### **Introduction**

My primary focus has been on interactive processes affecting the capacity of partnerships to change. These may operate within the interpersonal and intrapsychic worlds of the couple, and in relation to significant others in their social environment. Within families, children have a particularly significant place: in a very direct way they affect and are affected by the partnership between their parents. I have paid particular attention to changes facing partners as they become parents, and as they try to continue to be parents in the face of the ending of their partnership. By adopting a couple perspective in studying parenting transitions, and by adding a dynamic dimension to knowledge about the impact of children on couples, my work has countered a tendency, evident at public, professional and personal levels, for parenting and partnering relationships to be addressed in isolation from each other.

Practitioners, although of less significance than children, also constitute a potentially important part of a couple's social environment at different times in the life of their partnership. This has provided the point of entry for my research.

My study has been undertaken over a twenty year period that has seen significant changes in roles and relationships between women and men generally, both within families and in the wider domains of work and community life. These macroscopic changes have affected the nature and definition of partnership, most notably in relation to the institution of marriage. They have provided the social backdrop to various predictable and unpredictable changes operating at the microcosmic level of the couple relationship.

I have used the term 'partnership' to denote a committed and relatively stable heterosexual relationship. The term permits the notions of commitment and stability to extend beyond the formal institution of marriage, and is preferable to the more generic word, 'relationship', that may include casual liaisons and transitory friendships. The partnerships studied have all been 'in change' in one or more senses: change may have

been internally generated as partners became aware of sufficiently uncomfortable differences in their relationship for them to seek outside help; or, it may have been triggered by external events requiring their relationship to adapt to altered circumstances. Whatever their nature, these personal changes will all have taken place against the background of significant social change. In addition, the qualitative research methods used for generating much of the primary data involved me and my colleagues, as researchers, also acting as change agents in relation to the research subjects. For these reasons, and because the focus of study was on processes rather than structures, it might have been more accurate to title the study 'partnering', rather than 'partnerships', in change. This option was discarded not only because it introduced an ambiguity of meaning and a certain linguistic clumsiness, but also because it might be read as overlooking the relevance of structure to any consideration of process.

My application is supported by the submission of 21 publications, contained in 3 books and 18 chapters or papers (see Appendix I). They are part of a larger body of work that I have published on partnerships in change (to which I refer in the text), and describe the key research and major themes arising from it. The publications link practice and research in a process that has generated hypotheses and contributed to theory building. It has involved collaboration between researchers and their subjects, and the linking of knowledge among different professional disciplines.

I wish to acknowledge the help and support of my colleagues inside the Institute over the years in which I have undertaken the research. I have particularly valued my working relationships with those who appear as co-authors and collaborators in my selected publications. They are all aware of, and in full agreement with, my using these publications to support this application.

## **Background To, Critical Review And Summary Of The Selected Works.**

Through implementing and evaluating innovative service delivery programmes my research has added to and linked together three interrelated levels of understanding about partnerships in change:

- the intrapsychic world of individuals in partnerships,
- the interpersonal world of the couple relationship;
- the social context of marriage and partnership.

My primary concern has been with the first two of these levels. As a psychoanalytically orientated couple psychotherapist my approach has been informed by viewing partnerships as open systems (affected, if not fashioned by, the states of mind of each of the partners and the environment in which they live) and as transference relationships (in which unconscious representations of past relationships are resurrected in current social transactions). This marks out the conceptual base from which I have started my explorations as a researcher, and from which it has been possible to relate to those who view partnerships in different ways. My intention has

been to develop understanding of the reciprocal influence exerted by the 'inner' worlds of partners and the 'outer' worlds of couple relationships as they act upon each other in times of change. Because partners inhabit a social world that extends beyond their relationship as a couple it has also been important to attend to the third level, and how it interacts with the other two. An important feature of my work has been to link different approaches to understanding key issues facing partnerships in change that are associated with each of these three contextual levels.

My selected publications are grouped under three headings:

1. the clinical study of partnerships in change;
2. action research into the transition to parenthood;
3. action research into the transition of divorce.

For ease of reference, the selected works are numbered, titled and italicised when first cited, and thereafter referred to by italicised number. Works that have not been selected to support this application will be referred to in the same parenthesis format used for citing publications by other authors.

## **1. The Clinical Study of Partnerships in Change**

### Background

My clinical practice and research stance are rooted in three related theoretical traditions:

*Object relations theory*, founded principally on the work of Klein (1960, 1975a, 1975b), Fairbairn (1952), Winnicott (1958, 1965), Guntrip (1961) and Bion (1963, 1967, 1970). The main divergence from traditional psychoanalytical perspectives represented by this school of thought is the conception of humans as object-seeking rather than instinct-driven beings. Personality is depicted as a matrix of internal relationships between the ego and its 'objects' (a depersonalised word, but one that allows the object of attachment to be represented in partial and phantasy terms). This inner world of relatedness is not only constructed from interactions with the world outside but also provides a template that maps on to and moulds that outer world. Processes of introjection, projection and projective identification provide key mechanisms whereby social reality and personal structures of meaning exercise reciprocal influence upon each other. These mechanisms act both to block and to realise connections between inner and outer worlds. Social learning is inhibited to the extent that internalised systems of object relations are split off and repressed from consciousness because of the threat they are believed to constitute to psychological and social viability. The more individuals have to resort to such defensive manoeuvres, the poorer their emotional and relational lives become.

Within this framework, repressed patterns of object relationships are understood to be constantly seeking expression and recognition through symptom formation, neurosis and 'acting out' behaviours. Psychoanalytical psychotherapy rests on the assumption that these patterns will be re-enacted in the therapy relationship because of its attachment-related associations and purposes, the therapist being open to taking on

and gathering in objects and their associated affects through the process of transference. Such re-enactments provide access to unconscious data about the inner world, as well as opportunities for development through the therapist containing what the patient finds uncontainable.

This conceptual model has particular relevance to understanding conflict in adult heterosexual partnerships. The physical and emotional proximity they afford will closely resonate with early family experience. Partnerships are therefore transference as well as actual relationships, incorporating parental as well as peer imagos. In consequence they may not only reactivate destructive patterns of relating but also 'contain' these patterns (Colman, 1993), promoting development through the support partners are able to afford each other and the degree to which they are able to process and reprocess conscious and unconscious experience. Here, partnering is closely allied with parent-infant interactions in which an infant's unprocessed thoughts, feelings and experiences are contained by the parent in ways that allow her or him to recognise and own them. In this sense, partners also 'parent' each other. The Tavistock Marital Studies Institute and the Marital Unit of the Tavistock Clinic have pioneered the understanding of marital conflict from an object relations perspective, and have explored the implications of this approach for psychotherapeutic practice (Pincus, 1960, and Dicks, 1967, were seminal works in this respect).

Secondly, *attachment theory* (Bowlby 1969, 1975, 1980) and its derivatives (see, for example, Ainsworth et al, 1978, Main et al, 1985, Hazan and Shaver, 1987, Fonagy et al, 1996 and Holmes, 1996) have become an increasingly important part of my conceptual apparatus, both as a marital psychotherapist and researcher. It has provided an empirical basis for many of the clinical assertions arising from object relations theory, and a bridge between these and other schools of thought. The object relations view of humans as essentially social animals, motivated primarily by the need to form and sustain attachments, is endorsed and amplified by attachment theory, and there are satisfying convergences of meaning between object relations theorists' concepts of the 'internal world', the 'internal working models' of Bowlby, and the 'mental representations' of more recent attachment theorists. Because the theory addresses attachment, separation and loss within an integrated conceptual framework, it not only has immediate applications to understanding behaviour in adult partnerships but also illuminates processes of change.

Finally, *systems theory* has influenced my approach to clinical practice and research. From the original contributions of thinkers like Bertalanffy (1968), Laing and Esterson (1964) and Bateson (1973) has developed a tradition of family therapy that is based on systemic ideas. Underpinning different schools of practice has been the unifying assumption that human behaviour can only be understood in a social context, and that the study of one system is always, in fact, the study of a sub-system of a wider system. This assumption is perfectly compatible with object relations and attachment theory, although the implications for therapeutic practice are different. Systems thinking has alerted me to keeping in mind social, legal, economic, cultural, and spiritual belief systems as relevant contexts for understanding patterns of behaviour in partnerships.



### Critical review of the work

Because of its intersubjective nature, psychoanalytical psychotherapy research has been dogged by methodological difficulties and criticised for lacking empiricism, not being open to systematic evaluation and failing to take account of the wider context of which it is a part. In the newer discipline of psychoanalytical couple therapy I have made progress in addressing these matters, and generated new knowledge in the following areas:

- the dynamics of help-seeking behaviour;
- measuring outcome;
- the impact of children on partnerships;
- locating clinical studies within an interdisciplinary framework.

#### • *The dynamics of help-seeking behaviour*

Two studies examine data from forms completed by couples applying to the Tavistock Marital Studies Institute for couple psychotherapy:

[1] Clulow, C. (1984) *Sexual dysfunction and interpersonal stress: the significance of the presenting complaint in seeking and engaging help*. *British Journal of Medical Psychology*, 57, pp 371-380.

This paper focuses on the ambivalence inherent in seeking and engaging help. An analysis of one year's applications concludes that the degree of match between agency orientation towards and couple judgements about the nature of the problems for which help was being sought was the most significant factor associated with engagement in therapy. The study highlights difficulties in categorising sexual problems and, from a case study, draws attention to the regulative function of sexual dysfunction for emotional engagement within the partnership and in relation to therapy. Practice implications from the study were drawn to the attention of marriage guidance counsellors in a related publication (Clulow, 1983).

[2] Cohen, N., Fisher, J. and Clulow, C. (1993) *Predicting engagement with psychoanalytical couple psychotherapy*. *Sexual and Marital Therapy*, 8, 3, pp 217-230.

This paper represents a systematic attempt to analyse written data from couples in a form that was compatible with the theoretical orientation of the therapists. Six factors were found to correlate positively with engagement with couple psychotherapy. As with [1], the paper illustrates the difficulties of trying to delineate a dynamic typology of presenting problems.

[3] Clulow, C. (1985) *Marital Therapy. An Inside View*. Aberdeen University Press.

This clinical study of a partnership in change is a detailed and rounded explication of psychoanalytical couple psychotherapy. The account tracks the dynamics of engagement in therapy from the perspectives of each of the key players in the 'triangle of referral'. The orientation and anxieties of each person in the system are seen as contributing to how, and in what terms, a problem comes to be defined. The study identifies the value of presenting symptoms in managing anxiety about emotional engagement in the marriage as well as in therapy. This teleological approach has important practice implications for therapists, suggesting that the nature of the presenting complaint rewards close study, and that work on the 'no change' aspect of

a couple's ambivalence about engagement might be a necessary precursor of and vehicle for achieving change.

[4] *Clulow, C. (1989/95) Help. In Clulow, C. and Mattinson, J. Marriage Inside Out. Understanding Problems of Intimacy. Harmondsworth: Pelican/Penguin.*

This chapter, which I contributed to a jointly authored book, outlines the dynamics of help-seeking behaviour in a way that has practical application for a general readership.

- *Measuring outcome*

[5] *Clulow, C. and Dearnley, B. (1986) Shared phantasy and therapeutic structure in a brief marital psychotherapy. British Journal of Psychotherapy, 3, 2, pp 124-132.*

[6] *Balfour, F., Clulow, C. and Dearnley, B. (1986) The outcome of a maritally focused psychotherapy offered as a possible model for marital psychotherapy outcome studies. British Journal of Psychotherapy, 3, 2, pp 133-143.*

These related papers describe a pioneering approach to assessing outcome in couple psychotherapy. On the basis of a dynamic formulation of the problem affecting a couple's difficulty in becoming more separate from each other, they describe and apply a method for testing the efficacy of therapy based on a model previously developed in relation to the practice of individual psychotherapy. This innovative approach to evaluating couple psychotherapy is elaborated upon in the research methodology section of this application.

The final chapter of [3] offers a critical review of approaches to measuring couple psychotherapy outcomes. Consumer satisfaction studies, while offering a valuable perspective on how therapy is experienced, overlook important dimensions of outcome measurement: the aims, orientation and experience of the therapists, and the dynamics of the therapy itself (Clulow, 1985, 1986). This chapter describes and applies the method described in [6] to the case study in the book, proposing it as a method that is sensitive to capturing dynamic properties of change.

- *Understanding the impact of parenting on partnering*

An assumption common to my clinical studies of partnerships in change is that representations of past parent-child relationships affect interactions within current adult partnerships. A uniting feature of the impact on partnerships of the different parental representations (and their attendant anxieties) contained in the case studies described in [1], [3] and [5] is the 'shared phantasy' that commitment involves loss of self, and that the price of difference is isolation. This phantasy has also been evident in studies of couples who have become parents, and whose presence in therapy was triggered by the transition to and pressures of parenthood. It provides a dynamic explanation for the 'dances' that occur within partnerships, whose purpose is to regulate physical and emotional proximity. At one end of a continuum there is the 'fission' of disconnection; at the other, the 'fusion' of merger.

[7] *Clulow, C. (1982/1989) To Have and To Hold. Marriage, the First Baby and Preparing Couples for Parenthood. Aberdeen University Press.*

Chapter 1 and Appendix II of this book contain an account and analysis of therapy with two couples shortly after they became parents. The cases highlight how past

traumas of separation and loss can impact on couple strategies for managing the experience of separateness introduced into partnerships by a baby. Clinical experience of this kind was one of the reasons for embarking on the programme of research described in the remainder of the book (see later).

[8] Clulow, C. (1991) *The chronically ill child and the parents' marriage: interactive effects*. *British Journal of Psychotherapy*, 7, 4, pp 331-340.

This study examines one couple's experience of coping with the chronic illness of their young daughter. Particular attention was paid to the meaning of disablement and potential death for each partner in relation to their representations of their childhood experiences and relationship as a couple. The study considers the partners' different responses to the emotional toll on their relationship, reviews the relevance of the concept of 'anticipatory mourning' to their situation (a link with the research described in the next section), and the role of therapy in enabling the parents to use respite care. The isolating effects of child illness are well illustrated by the study, as is the aversion of the communities of professionals, family and friends to engaging with feelings and anxieties associated with accepting the inevitability of future death.

- *Locating clinical studies within an interdisciplinary framework*

Much of my recent writing has been directed towards linking psychoanalytical perspectives of partnership with those of other disciplines (Clulow, 1988a, 1989a, 1990a,b, 1991, 1993a, 1996a, 1997). This has involved bringing together debates that are often conducted separately, for example:

- the nature of public and private anxiety about partnership change;
- the relationship between family structure and relationship process;
- the relevance of historical perspectives at macro and micro levels;
- the links between outer and inner realities in relation to continuity and change;
- the different threads that interweave the essence of marriage.

Three book chapters have been selected as original syntheses of these interdisciplinary perspectives:

[9] Clulow, C. (1989/95) *The Marriage Maze*. In Clulow, C. and Mattinson, J. *Marriage Inside Out. Understanding Problems of Intimacy*. Harmondsworth: Pelican/Penguin.

A chapter that I contributed to a jointly authored book that sets the context for a consideration of emotional dynamics in marriage. Romantic love, expectations of marital fulfilment and illusions of equality between the sexes are explored as relevant contextual factors for understanding interpersonal tensions in marriage.

[10] Clulow, C. (1993) *Rethinking Marriage*. In Clulow, C. (ed.) *Rethinking Marriage: Public and Private Perspectives*. Karnac.

In this chapter I enquire about the nature of public anxiety in connection with change in marriage. The editing framework that I adopted for the book was to ask the question *what is marriage for?* Within this framework I brought to the public as well as the private worlds of marriage a therapist's interest in identifying the nature of the perceived problem from different disciplinary perspectives.

[11] Clulow, C. (1995) *Marriage: A new millenium?*. In Clulow, C. (ed.) *Women, Men and Marriage*. Sheldon.

This chapter produces an original synthesis from a book that I commissioned and edited, condensing the main themes into four processes that describe and are relevant to understanding modern marriage. The chapter closes with a reflection on the paradoxical nature of marriage as personal relationship and social institution.

## 2. Action Research into the Transition to Parenthood

### Background

This section describes the first study of its kind in the United Kingdom to research the implications of adopting an approach to parenthood preparation that focused on changes in the couple relationship. It was undertaken for four principal reasons. In the first place, clinical experience accumulated within the Institute suggested that many couples who sought help did so in relation to difficulties that could be traced back to the time when they first became parents (two case studies of couples in this situation are described in [7]). Secondly, a critical review of related studies indicated that the transition to parenthood was a stressful experience for many more people than those who found their way to the doors of the helping professions. Thirdly, there was evidence from the literature review that the couple relationship, as well as being affected by change, was very important in influencing how change is managed. Finally, there was political impetus to undertake the work, following a speech by the then Secretary of State for Social Services in which attention was drawn to the intergenerational transmission of disadvantage through what was described as the 'cycle of deprivation'. The project also coincided with the time when I myself had recently become a parent.

The preventive intervention programme needed a conceptual basis to shape its form and content. The design of the programme was based on assumptions concerning the nature of mental health, an analogy with prophylaxis, effectively timed interventions as indicated by crisis theory (Caplan, 1961, 1964), the importance of continuity of care, and the transmission of work-related anxiety in professional systems (Mattinson, 1975, Menzies-Lyth, 1988, Skynner, 1989, and Obholzer and Roberts, 1994).

### Critical review of the work

At the time the research was being planned, knowledge about the impact of children on partnerships, and the significance of partnerships for children was underdeveloped. Services for new parents tended to be directed exclusively towards mothers (the notable exception to this was the then recent acceptance of fathers at ante-natal classes and on delivery wards); the couple relationship (as distinct from fathers) was overlooked in service provision. Care for new families tended to be fragmented. My research addressed these shortcomings, and has made five significant contributions to developing practice and theory:

- implementing and evaluating an original preventive mental health care programme for couples expecting their first child;
- effecting an innovative application of action research methodology;
- refining the debate about preparation for parenthood by redefining the meaning of prevention in the context of mental health interventions;

- generating new knowledge about psychological processes affecting couples during the transition to parenthood;
- locating this knowledge within an interdisciplinary framework.

- *Implementing and evaluating the programme*

I have selected the publications below to illustrate the first four claims to making a significant and original contribution to the field. Other publications address the experience of loss associated with becoming a parent (Clulow, 1979), its relevance to the work of health visitors and other health practitioners (Clulow et al., 1979), the social and professional contexts in which couples become parents (Clulow, 1982a) and research on the transition to parenthood (Clulow, 1987a). The first three of the selected publications describe the background to, description of and results arising from the action research project that forms the core of the work (the second of these, which is the main publication, has been cited earlier, thereby accounting for an apparent interruption in the sequence of numbering):

[12] Clulow, C. (1979) *The first baby and stress*. In Woods, C. (ed.) *Health and the Family*. Academic Press/Grune and Stratton.

[7] Clulow, C. (1982/89) *To Have and To Hold. Marriage, the First Baby and Preparing Couples for Parenthood*. Aberdeen University Press.

[13] Clulow, C. (1982) *Implications of a marital approach to parenthood preparation*. *Seminars in Family Medicine*, 3, 2, pp 73-76.

The study had two fieldwork elements. The first was a programme of discussion groups offered to couples from four community health centres, spanning the last trimester of pregnancy and the early months of parenthood, and conducted in tandem with ante-natal classes that were already being run from the centres. The second was a parallel series of research workshops offered to health visitors over an eighteen month period, and undertaken with the aim of studying the effects of a first child on the couple relationship through looking at the work of these key front-line health practitioners with young families and considering its implications for their role.

Experience showed that engagement with the groups was affected by the ways invitations were offered to couples and the degree to which health visitors were involved in running the programmes. Smaller centres, where health visitors issued invitations personally and were themselves involved in running the groups, did better than larger centres where there was more distance and anonymity in the approach. Overall, the take-up of the groups was not large, and reflected experience elsewhere that those least at risk were most likely to use available services.

- *An innovative application of action research methodology*

As well as pioneering a service, the programme constituted a novel research intervention for generating data relevant to developing services and understanding processes of partnering in change (see later).

- *Preparation for parenthood and the meaning of prevention*

Four useful findings emerged from the project that are relevant to the future development of services:

1. A selective deafness could operate during pregnancy to filter out information that conflicted with or threatened couples' pre-existing images of parenthood; the mind could create its own barriers to the serum of knowledge, and the analogy with prophylactic medicine had its limitations.
2. The value of crisis theory as an informing principle for the programme was re-evaluated against the timing and nature of the event. There were strong indications that the critical time for the couple relationship was not when the baby was born but considerably later. The prospective nature of the change, and anxiety about surviving the confinement and having a healthy baby, could inhibit 'worry work' and make the concept of 'grief work' feel alien and irrelevant.
3. The value of the groups was registered primarily in terms of establishing a network of relationships, formal and informal, that could provide general support and specific confidantes when needed. Prevention, in this context, was redefined as creating a social milieu that could be drawn on as and when required. It implied that assimilating related earlier experiences might be more helpful to couples in managing change than anticipating what they had not yet experienced.
4. The research workshops indicated that dilemmas affecting young parents could unconsciously be communicated to 'professional parents' - the health visitors - in the course of their visiting contacts. This raised questions about professional role boundaries, and opportunities for containing work-related anxieties through redefining the nature of supervision.

- *Psychological processes affecting the transition to parenthood*

From the process records of the group meetings it was observed that, during pregnancy, a fusion between couples dampened down differences and restricted access to potentially disturbing information and experience. The idea of the baby could hold couples together in the face of threatening aspects of confinement and birth. In contrast, the early weeks and months of parenthood were dominated by the nursing couple; the parental couple was more fragmented and often characterised by the absence of fathers. This supported clinical observations that while pregnancy unites, birth can divide the parental couple, and supplies another context in which the fission/fusion dynamic was seen to operate in partnerships in change.

- *Locating knowledge within and interdisciplinary framework*

[14] Clulow, C. (1991) *Partners becoming parents: a question of difference*. *Infant Mental Health Journal*, 12, 3, pp 256-266.

Experience from the action research project, and from clinical work with couples, is assembled to provide a dynamic hypothesis about why marital satisfaction can diminish with the roles and responsibilities of parenthood. The hypothesis challenges the static division of partnerships into 'companionate' and 'differentiated' categories (Feldman, 1971), and addresses the developmental challenge of balancing intimacy and separateness that faces partnerships at personal and public levels, especially when unconscious assumptions and conscious expectations apply pressure to merge.

[15] Clulow, C. (1996) *Introduction*. In Clulow, C. (ed.) *Partners Becoming Parents*. Sheldon.

[16] Clulow, C. (1996) *Are two parents necessary?* In Clulow, C. (ed.) *Partners Becoming Parents*. Sheldon.

These chapters result from my initiating an original interdisciplinary study of inter-related aspects of partnering and parenting. In the Introduction I comment on factors that both connect and disconnect partnering from parenting processes in contemporary western society, using this as the leitmotif for the subsequent chapters in the book. In the last chapter I address the question of whether two parents are, in any sense, necessary to healthy child development. Drawing on contemporary thinking about the Oedipus complex (Britton, 1989) I explore a psychoanalytically-oriented approach to thinking about the question.

### **3. Action Research into the Transition of Divorce**

#### Background

The dilemmas partners face in taking up their roles as parents may, in certain respects, be mirrored when marriage comes to an end: the transition in either case is likely to be impeded if former partnership patterns are hard to give up. The distinction between partnering and parenting is particularly likely to become blurred when the ending of a marriage is contentious and feelings are running high.

My research was motivated, in part, by an awareness that divorce between parents frequently results in a 'divorce' between children and one of their parents (usually their father), providing another example of the disconnection of parenting from partnering cited earlier. While there is ongoing debate about whether and when it is preferable for there to be no contact between children and non-resident parents, the research findings available at the time of the project indicated that the interests of children were best served by encouraging continuing contact with both parents, and by supporting parents in not recruiting children into conflicts that remained between them.

The research was also motivated by the emergence of conciliation services in this country. Despite the 1969 Divorce Reform Act having replaced 'fault' with 'irretrievable breakdown' as the sole ground for divorce, divorce procedures continued to be dominated by lawyers operating within an adversarial system. It was argued at the time that the adversarial system had the effect of amplifying and aggravating conflict between divorcing spouses, leading to some unnecessary, and many unhappy, divorces. Questions were asked about why courts needed to be prominent in adjudicating the ground for and outcome of divorce, and during the 1980s there was a growing tide of opinion favouring private over public ordering. This found practical expression in the setting up of conciliation (now mediation) services, non-adversarial associations of lawyers, the principle of non-intervention in the 1989 Childrens Act and, most recently, changes introduced by the 1996 Family Law Act. The conciliation movement was especially relevant to the process of disentangling future parenting practices from past partnership involvements (Parkinson, 1987).

The role of divorce court welfare officers was, and continues to be, centrally concerned with managing tensions between public adjudication and private ordering. By statute they assist the process of public adjudication. By practice they aim to maximise the responsibility parents can take for ordering their own affairs after divorce. Their work involves them with high conflict parents, and therefore with high

risk situations for children. Because of their key location in the professional network of divorce they were ideal collaborators for the research.

### Critical review of the work

My research was conceived during the very early days of the conciliation movement in this country, when the boundary between reporting and mediating functions was being vigorously debated in professional circles. It has shed light on this debate and made four main contributions to developing theory and practice:

- implementing and evaluating an approach to mediating child custody disputes in the context of court-ordered enquiries;
- effecting an innovative application of action research methodology;
- developing original hypotheses and concepts to explain the dilemmas of parents and welfare officers in relation to divorce and the enquiry process;
- applying the concept of mourning to processes of family dissolution and reformation;
- applying the results of the research to professional practice and public policy debates.

- *Implementing and evaluating an approach to mediating child custody disputes*

The major publication supporting the claims I have made about my contribution to the field is:

[17] Clulow, C. and Vincent, C. (1987) *In the Child's Best Interests? Divorce Court Welfare and the Search for a Settlement*. Tavistock/Sweet and Maxwell.

The research findings of this study were generated primarily by working alongside welfare officers in attempting to mediate disputes in a core sample of 30 enquiries for the courts undertaken over a two-and-a-half year period. The research set these enquiries in the context of other work carried out by the host unit, and monitored the working preoccupations of the resident team of welfare officers. Important findings of the study, and their predictive implications for settlement seeking, are summarised in:

[18] Clulow, C. (1989) *Child applications and contested divorce*. *Family Law*, 19, pp 198-200.

- *An innovative application of action research methodology*

As well as being a service, the programme constituted a novel research method for generating data relevant to developing better services and understanding psychological processes associated with the transition out of marriage. This study was the first in this country to conduct follow-up interviews to elicit consumer views about the experience and efficacy of being reported upon (see later).

- *Developing original hypotheses and concepts*

Unresolved attachments to a past marriage formed the context of (what were then called) child custody and access applications to the courts in five out of six of the core sample of thirty enquiries. Based on this dynamic, an original typology of divorcing families was drawn up which described and accounted for the behaviour of the adults and their children in the sample (see also Clulow, 1987b). The typology provided the basis for a predictive hypothesis about those most and least likely to be amenable to the private ordering of their affairs. I coined the term *necessary narcissism* to describe



the self-protective state of mind in which parents frequently found themselves, and its implications for others caught up in the divorce drama.

In this regard I made a connection between the state of mind of parents involved in conflictful divorces and a judicial system founded on adversarial procedures (see also Clulow, 1989b). While many had commented on the potential adverse effects of an adversarial system on the behaviour of divorcing parents, I observed that parents might have a psychological investment in that system, and in the concept of the matrimonial offence, when it supported this narcissistic structuring of experience.

A further hypothesis from the study was that parents who had most difficulty separating parenting from partnering roles were those coming from 'parentified' marriages. There was an association between the fusion of partnering and parenting roles at the beginning of marriage and difficulties in disentangling them at its close. There was also some observational evidence to indicate a link between cases in which parents looked to their children for support (instead of the other way round) and marriages in which there was a marked absence of 'peer-ness'.

The study aimed to capture some of the predicaments of welfare officers in relation to their clients and agency, as well as those of the families who were subjects of the enquiry process. I identified predicaments that were common in enquiry work (using an analogy with childrens' games), and put these alongside the results of follow-up interviews with the parents who had been reported upon. A social defence against professional task-related anxiety is articulated in the report, along with the positive value of reports when they helped people establish a coherent and adaptive narrative of how they came to be where they were.

- *Mourning, family dissolution and reformation*

Knowledge from bereavement studies about the stages of mourning was a valuable tool in understanding the behaviour of parents and their children observed in the main study (see also Clulow, 1989c, 1990c). My application of this concept to inform processes of forming, dissolving and reforming partnerships is described in:

[19] Clulow, C. (1991) *Making, breaking and remaking marriage*. In Clark, D. (ed.) *Marriage, Domestic Life and Social Change 1944-1988*. Routledge.

- *Applications to professional practice and public policy debates*

I have published about divorce processes and the work of lawyers on 17 occasions (Clulow, 1992a-f, 1993b-j, 1994a), and about processes that are likely to affect the efficacy of information giving under recent family legislation (Clulow, 1996b). Two publications of broader significance have been selected for this application:

[20] Clulow, C. (1990) *Training implications of the Children Act 1989. The 'check list' and divorce proceedings*. *Family Law*, 20, 263-266.

[21] Clulow, C. (1996) *Preventing marriage breakdown: towards a new paradigm*. *Sexual and Marital Therapy*, 11, 4, pp 343-351.

These publications address policy, practice and training issues associated with new family legislation. The final publication gathers up my research experience as a whole in discussing the meaning of prevention in relation to the marriage support aspirations of the 1996 Family Law Act.

## **How The Works Relate To Each Other.**

The twenty-one publications supporting this application relate to each other in five interconnected ways: the nature of the research subject, the methods adopted for conducting the research, the conceptual approach of the researcher, theoretical themes emerging from the research, and the relevance of the results to practitioners.

### The nature of the research subject

The core of my research has been the relationship between heterosexual partnerships in change and those who aim to bring about change in these partnerships. The couples in the study were all undergoing significant changes in their partnerships as a result of problems they had encountered or life changes they were going through. These private changes were taking place against a background of public change that has seen profound shifts in attitudes towards, and the structuring of, partnerships between women and men. My research has linked processes operating at micro and macro levels, and brought different perspectives to bear in understanding what is happening to and within these partnerships.

An emphasis of the research has been on the interplay between partnering and parenting processes at moments of change. My conceptual orientation has made this interaction a focal point, even when the couples concerned have no children of their own (the internal structuring of representations of past parent-child and partnering relationships have been studied to understand current relationship problems). However, the transitions into parenthood and out of marriage have constituted the most significant part of my research. They are both periods in which the juxtaposition of partnering and parenting roles are of especial importance for the future functioning of partnerships.

### Research methods

All the studies reported in this application are variants of the action research paradigm (see later). As researcher, I both observed and participated in processes that constituted the object of study. Whether acting as a couple psychotherapist, a parenthood educator or divorce court welfare officer, I balanced the roles of practitioner and researcher in accessing material that would not otherwise have been available. The publications therefore all represent research into practice. They are concerned with describing and evaluating help-seeking and help-giving processes. By studying couples and practitioners in this common context, each has provided a window on the other and, in consequence, opened windows on their own concerns and preoccupations.

### My conceptual approach

My work has been informed by a coherent theoretical framework that links inner and outer realities, a crucial juxtaposition for understanding the impact of change on partnerships. This juxtaposition is also crucial for understanding the experience partners have of each other and of those who try to help them, and the experience practitioners have of those they try to help. The concepts of projective identification, transference, countertransference, the reflection process and institutional defences against anxiety link the perceptions and experiences of different players in the service

delivery system (couples, practitioners and agencies), and provides tools for detecting and interpreting unconscious processes.

My theoretical and contextual orientation towards the couple as a focus for study, plus a systemic awareness that couple relationships do not operate in a vacuum, are reflected in all my publications. Together they have permitted a coherent interpretation of my own work, and a framework for linking it with other theoretical approaches. They have also provided a platform for engaging with professional, public and policy debates about services to families.

#### Theoretical themes emerging from the research

A central theme that emerges from my research is the significance of mourning processes to the satisfactory accomplishment of change. Clinical studies envisage the therapeutic process as one that is essentially concerned with managing perceptions and feelings associated with the experience of dis-illusionment. The unconscious elements of illusions in partnerships have been referred to as 'shared phantasies', and I have commented on the power of these phantasies to fuel strategies of 'fission' or 'fusion' in response to the challenges of change, both within partnerships and in relation to help providers. Evidence of these processes has come from my research conducted outside the setting of couple psychotherapy, and has thrown light on the nature of the challenges facing partnerships on the thresholds of parenthood and divorce.

#### Relevance of the work to practitioners

The practice-based nature of my work, and the different settings in which it has been conducted, give it a relevance and authenticity to practitioners that is sometimes not accorded to other types of research. By reviewing and amending theoretical assumptions that inform practice in the field, my research has also helped to frame, and sometimes reframe, the task of practitioners. The review comments in Appendix II illustrate its appeal across professional practice and research boundaries.

### **Evidence And Exemplification Of Claims To Making A Significant And Original Contribution To Knowledge.**

Clinical and practice-based studies of partnerships in change are frequently criticised for failing to describe adequately intervention processes and the assumptions on which they are based, for not providing evidence for interpretative assertions, for overlooking the evaluation of outcome, and for ignoring contextual factors relevant to understanding the nature of the problems being treated. I have illustrated how my research has addressed these criticisms, added new knowledge to the field by drawing together the results of studies that I have conducted in several professional settings, and synthesised perspectives from different theoretical and professional quarters. The novel application of existing research methods has provided approaches that are sensitive to picking up data relevant to the interpersonal and intrapsychic processes which has formed the core of my study. The results have contributed to developing the work of practitioners from a range of service delivery settings.

To summarise information detailed earlier, the main areas in which I have made a significant and original contribution to knowledge are:

- implementing and evaluating new approaches to helping partnerships in change;
- articulating, testing and revising assumptions underpinning these service delivery initiatives;
- generating concepts, typologies and hypotheses in connection with partnering, parenting and divorce processes;
- applying the concept of mourning to couple transitions;
- linking theory and practice to identify and synthesise processes affecting partnerships at macro and micro levels

Evidence and exemplification for my claims is drawn from five sources:

### 1. External funding.

The transition to parenthood study [7] was financed by the Leverhulme Trust Fund, and the divorce study [17] by the Joseph Rowntree Memorial Trust and the Baring Foundation. These are reputable and well-known funding bodies using external assessors for judging the merit of proposals and evaluating the outcome of funded work. On the basis of seeing the results of the divorce project, the Joseph Rowntree Trust funded me to design, commission and execute a training video (Rolf Harris Video, 1988) which has been used extensively for training practitioners in this country and abroad. The study on engagement in marital psychotherapy [2] was funded by the Family Research Trust.

### 2. Publications and writing commissions.

My work has been published by academic publishers and appeared in national and international peer reviewed journals. Penguin Books approached me to write for the general public, a commission I shared with a colleague (Clulow and Mattinson, 1989), and Sheldon Press have commissioned two edited works (Clulow, C. 1995a, 1996c). I was part of a consortium that wrote a booklet on parenting after divorce (De' Ath and Slater, 1992). Among recent commissions I have produced a regular series for *Family Law* (1992 a-f, 1993 b-h), a chapter for a health practitioner training manual (Clulow, 1995b), a review of contemporary publications on marital therapy (Shmueli and Clulow, 1997) and marriage and couple work entries for an international dictionary of pastoral counselling to be published by the SPCK in 1998. At the behest of the Lord Chancellor's Department I have drafted leaflets on ending marriage and parenting after divorce to be used at the Information Meetings set up under the new Family Law Act, and have produced copy now being used in the training manual for information providers. I have also consulted to the design of their information video.

### 3. Training and consultation.

Teaching requests have been numerous, and resulted in training/lecturing engagements with all the marital service and research organisations funded by central government under the 1996 Family Law Act, with university departments, with health visitors, midwives, doctors, social workers, family court welfare officers, lawyers, psychiatrists, psychotherapists, counsellors and a range of voluntary groups and organisations. In conjunction with a colleague I have pioneered a course on psychological processes in divorce that has run for five years and is now recognised by the Law Society as qualifying for continuing professional development points; it is also likely to become a

module for an MA degree. I have trained and lectured extensively overseas, and my knowledge has frequently been called upon and quoted in the national and local press, on radio and television.

#### 4. Academic and practice recognition.

My work has been recognised by researchers, academic publishers and policy makers. I served for five years on the Research Advisory Board of the (then) National Marriage Guidance Council, have been cited in an academic review of research on the impact of children on couples commissioned by the Home Office Research Unit (Chester, 1982), continue to serve on the editorial advisory boards of three international professional journals, and have most recently taken up the newly-created role of Therapies Editor on one of these, the leading UK-based international journal, *Sexual and Marital Therapy*. On the basis of my study of partnerships in change, academic publishers (including the Open University Press and Routledge) have used me to assess book proposals and manuscripts. I frequently review papers for publication in professional journals and published works. I have also been sought out by other researchers in my field to advise on and consult to their projects. I am a member of a National Stepfamily Association advisory panel, and of a training advisory group for Parents In Partnership Parent Infant Network (PIPPIN). For eight years I chaired the International Commission on Marriage and Interpersonal Relations of the International Union of Family Organisations (a body recognised by the United Nations and accorded 'category 1' consultative status), organising and reporting on conferences that linked matters of practice, policy and research in different international locations (see, for example, Clulow, 1988b, 1990d,e, 1993k-m, 1994b, 1995c).

#### 5. Reviewers comments on my published work:

My publications have been positively reviewed in professional journals, demonstrating the significance of the work to the fields in which it has been carried out. A selection of reviewers' comments is contained in Appendix II.

### **Evidence And Exemplification Of Claims That The Selected Works Are Equivalent To A PhD By The Conventional (Thesis) Route.**

My research has been conducted independently and in collaboration with colleagues and other agencies over a twenty year period. It has involved identifying research questions, drawing up research proposals for external funding, critically reviewing secondary sources, initiating and carrying out fieldwork, analysing data and preparing written reports of the results. In this process I have drawn on the research experience of colleagues inside and outside the Tavistock Marital Studies Institute, conducted my own reading on research methods, and attended and contributed to numerous research conferences. I have contributed significant and original knowledge to the field. From this body of work has come eight authored or edited books, and approximately seventy other publications linked to the overall theme of partnerships in change.

Much of the evidence cited in the preceding section is relevant to this section of my application. External funding, publication by academic publishers and in externally refereed journals, demands for training and consultation, recognition in the research

and practice communities and positive reviews of publications indicate the significant and original contribution my work has made to discussion, knowledge and practice in the field. *To Have and To Hold, Marital Therapy, In the Child's Best Interests?* and *Marriage Inside Out* have all been used as basic texts for courses run by those training practitioners to whom the publications principally relate.

In addition, I have initiated and/or consulted to practice-related research projects inside the Institute on infertility (Pengelly, 1995, Pengelly et al, 1995, Cudmore, 1996), engagement in marital psychotherapy [2], child death and marriage (Cudmore, 1995), divorce consultations (Vincent, 1995) and marital therapy (Shmueli and Clulow, 1997). I have successfully applied to the Economic and Social Research Council for the Institute to be registered as a research organisation eligible to initiate funding applications, and acted as rapporteur for this body in connection with a completed project. I have also developed and submitted a formal research proposal on domestic violence in the context of divorce (currently short-listed by the Lord Chancellor's Department for funding), and am taking over the project director role of a clinically-based attachment research project on patterns of couple interaction (also short-listed). These initiatives provide evidence of my development within the research community, and hold out the promise of further developing work on partnerships in change.

## **An Account And Critique Of Research Methodologies Used In The Research.**

The aim of my research has been to develop understanding of conscious and unconscious processes operating within partnerships and in relation to services offered to them during periods of change. The principal method deployed was to access this knowledge through programmes of intervention that aimed to bring about change.

My approach has been qualitative, applied, and within the tradition of action research. At the time I began my research career, the Institute was part of the Tavistock Institute of Human Relations, a body that has specialised in developing action research programmes in the context of work organisations (Trist and Murray, 1990). I have adapted this approach to the service delivery contexts of my study.

Action research has variously been defined as an activity that

‘is a form of self-reflective enquiry, undertaken by participants in social (including educational) situations in order to improve the rationality and justice of (a) their own social or educational practices, (b) their understanding of these practices, and (c) the situations in which the practices are carried out. It is most rationally empowering when undertaken by participants, collaboratively, though it is often undertaken by individuals, and sometimes in co-operation with ‘outsiders’.’ (Kemmis, 1988, p.42).

studies ‘a social situation with a view to improving the quality of action within it. It aims to feed practical judgement in concrete situations, and the validity of the ‘theories’ or hypotheses it generates depends not so much on ‘scientific’

tests of truth, as on their usefulness in helping people to act more intelligently and skilfully. In action research 'theories' are not validated independently and then applied to practice. They are validated through practice.' (Elliott, 1991, p.69).

A recent review of action research in the context of health and social care identified seven features distinguishing this approach from other research methods (Hart and Bond, 1995). It:

- is educative;
- deals with individuals as members of social groups;
- is problem-focused, context-specific and future-orientated;
- involves a change intervention;
- aims at improvement and involvement;
- involves a cyclic process in which research, action and evaluation are interlinked;
- is founded on a research relationship in which those involved are participants in the change process.

These features describe precisely the nature of my research.

#### Clinical studies of partnerships in change

Psychoanalytical marital psychotherapy is a form of action research. It is interested in generating insights from clinical activities with couples that can be used for their benefit. The processes of developing theory and practice are inextricably linked, and derive from testing hypotheses and propositions against the couple's experience within the clinical situation. Observation and experiment overlap; collecting and analysing data is an ongoing and reciprocal process. To be viable and credible, hypotheses about the couple must take account of different realities and viewpoints. The efficacy of the endeavour relies on a collaborative relationship between couple and therapists; the process of establishing that collaboration is part of the research data. The focus of study is therefore intersubjective and requires a reflexive approach: couples are called on to reflect on their own experience (including their experience of therapy); therapists likewise must reflect on their responses to the couple and the therapeutic situation in order to access data about unconscious processes.

The methods used in my study are described under the four subject areas summarised earlier:

#### *The dynamics of help-seeking behaviour*

Publications [1] and [2] describe an approach to identifying the nature of marital problems presenting at a specialist marital agency. In each case, written responses to an open-ended question about the nature of the problem for which couples sought help were analysed from application forms completed separately by the partners. In the first case, the aims were to identify what happened to referrals to the Institute, and whether and how sexual problems featured in the application forms completed by couples. In this study, letters of referral were submitted to the same screening exercise as the application forms. The intention was to allow categories of sexual problems to emerge from the words used by couples and referrers, although this proved difficult because of the complexities of defining what constituted a sexual problem. The source of the data

also had its drawbacks. People vary in their ability and willingness to write about what troubles them. The fact that mention of sexual matters was omitted in some application forms, and highlighted in others, provided no reliable guide either to the presence of sexual problems or their centrality in causing marital distress.

In the second study [2], the process of analysing data contained in applications forms was developed by devising an 'applications forms monitor'. This organised the material under five headings which related to the conceptual interests of the therapists. An informal, internal attempt was made to secure inter-rater reliability in completing the monitor. This led to improvements in its design. However, it remained a subjective instrument, and objective facts about length of marriage, or delay in returning forms, provided more reliable, if less interesting, positive associations with take-up of therapy. While data from application forms is restricted by constraints of subject literacy, and inclination or ability to commit problems to paper, it is still useful in representing the attempts of couples to describe their problems in the context of an application for therapy.

### *Measuring outcome*

A review of the experience of therapy is an ongoing concern of every therapeutic process. However, the problems of formally assessing outcome in the psychoanalytical psychotherapies are formidable, and have been sufficiently severe to dissuade most practitioners from attempting to grapple with them in any formal and replicable sense. Measures of symptomatic change, marital stability or consumer satisfaction reports are incomplete tools for capturing the state of mind changes that psychoanalytical psychotherapy aims to achieve. While statements can be taken as direct expressions of a person's state of mind, they can also conceal as well as reveal social and psychological truths. Because the endeavour of psychoanalytical couple therapy is to help couples revise, in Bowlby's terms, their 'internal working models', a suitable method for accessing these models is essential.

Publications [3] & [6] describe a novel application of an outcome method pioneered by Malan (1983) in relation to brief individual psychotherapy. The criteria for change were established from listing symptoms and complaints described by the couple and their referrer at the point of referral, and identifying/formulating an explanatory dynamic hypothesis for these conditions. In both cases, the concept of 'shared phantasy' was used to describe the couple as a unitary system and to indicate the dynamic phenomenon that linked them together. This became the 'window' through which it was possible to gain insight about the shared unconscious internal world of the couple. In [6], a follow-up interview was conducted and audio-recorded, from which raters independently assessed and scored on a nine point scale the degree of change they estimated had taken place in relation to previously agreed criteria. The raters then met to compare their scores and arrive at a consensus evaluation.

The approach in this case is open to a number of criticisms. The reliability of the scoring system was not tested before it was applied (although, in the event, the raters came up with remarkably similar scores). Two of the three raters were the couple's therapists, and because they were involved in formulating the outcome criteria, both the measures and the raters' scoring of them are open to the criticism of observer bias. Moreover, there was no means of knowing, other than through client report, whether



changes that had occurred were the result of therapeutic intervention or other factors. However, the method had the advantage of taking account of both couple and therapist perspectives. The study achieved its principal objective of demonstrating a novel method for measuring outcome.

#### *The impact of children on partnerships*

In the studies reported, couples were seen together at weekly interviews, each of one hour's duration, and within the context of a therapeutic relationship. The therapeutic method was such that the couples determined the subject matter of these interviews; questions followed rather than guided what they talked about. The therapists generated hypotheses from what was said, what was observed and how the sessions were experienced. Detailed notes were made of the sessions, and in the case of the main study [3] the sessions were audio recorded with the consent of the couple. Key themes and hypotheses were noted from these records and from discussions between the therapists, who also checked out their observations about and experience of the therapy with the couple as part of the therapeutic process. In all but one of the studies [1], the couples read and commented on the written account of their therapies, providing valuable feedback for the therapists.

#### *Locating clinical studies within an interdisciplinary framework*

Most of the research I have undertaken has involved conducting a critical review of secondary source material from disciplines other than my own, both prior to and during the fieldwork of the primary studies. Publications [9]-[11] and [14]-[16] locate the findings from my clinical and action research projects within an interdisciplinary context. In two publications (Clulow, 1995a, 1996c) this involved commissioning and editing papers given in lecture series that I designed with the specific purpose of generating cross-disciplinary perspectives for publication. This is another example of learning through doing.

#### Action research into the transition to parenthood

The problem to be addressed in this study was identified from clinical sources, a critical review of research in the field and a reading of the political situation. The nature of the intervention, and the premises on which it was founded, are detailed in [7]. A collaborative relationship was entered into with health visitors working in a London health authority and couples using their services. The experience of running groups was the vehicle for generating data about processes affecting the couple relationship and how the service was being received. Evaluation was an ongoing process, conducted with parent and health visitor collaborators, and involved documenting the recruitment process, keeping records of response and attendance, recording demographic characteristics of those attending the programmes, maintaining detailed observational notes of group meetings and intervening experiences, conducting follow-up meetings, distributing a postal questionnaire and, finally, discussing drafts of the report for publication with the health visitors and their managers.

The second intervention was directed at health visitors, who were identified as key workers in relation to the issues addressed by the study. Two research workshops were run concurrently over an eighteen month period with the task of studying the effect on the couple relationship of a first baby and its implications for the role of

health visitors. The workshops were a means of establishing a collaborative relationship with health visitors (who saw it as a kind of subsidised training and a willingness on the part of the researchers to engage with their work preoccupations), a vehicle for bringing about change in their practice, and the means of generating data. Health visitors self-selected themselves into the workshops where they had an opportunity to present their work as it related to the task. The focus of analysis was on what health visitors used the workshops to convey to the researchers about their work-related preoccupations over helping young families. We assumed that the work they presented was the vehicle for these communications, and that it would be misleading to infer too much about the actual dynamics within the families being presented (Clulow, 1982b). Although records were kept of the main features of the cases discussed, questions about why the workshops were used in the ways they were, which cases were presented, and what themes recurred in discussion were the main focus of attention. These threw light on the professional concerns of the health visitors who attended.

The reliability of the findings and validity of interpretations was linked with the degree of corroboration obtained from other sources. Detailed notes were kept of each research workshop meeting. A written summary was produced of all the cases presented, and themes identified from them were discussed with the workshop members. The results of this process were then discussed with senior managers in the organisation and, finally, the Council for the Education and Training of Health Visitors was invited to comment on the findings from an educational perspective. This feedback mechanism created its own research institution in the form of a project management group. Two indications of authenticity in the findings were especially valued by me: the endorsement of health visitors from the workshops who found the concepts useful to their work, and the request from the project management group at the close of the project that the pseudonyms of the clinics were replaced with their real names in the published report. This was particularly valued as it contrasted strongly with written evidence at the start of the project that indicated great anxiety about anything emerging from the study that would publically associate it with the area in which it was carried out.

#### Action research into the transition of divorce

Publication [17] records an intervention that attempted to promote privately ordered settlements among a high conflict group of divorcing families referred to a probation service for welfare reports. The intervention resulted from concerns about children losing contact with one of their parents after divorce, and professional practice dilemmas about how feasible it was to mediate in an investigative context. It was also the vehicle for generating data about families referred to welfare officers, the investigative-cum-mediating process in these cases, and the work preoccupations of practitioners

A literature review provided contextual information about families going through divorce and the professional network within which the service was to be offered. Divorce court welfare officers were selected as research collaborators because of the relevance of their role to the objectives of the study (practical considerations having blocked the original intention to work with mediators and so re-focused the aims of the study). To meet these objectives it was necessary to describe the population seen by

the Divorce Unit, to describe the Unit itself, and to give an account of the interaction between the two.

A questionnaire was devised for building a profile of the 110 enquiries undertaken by the Divorce Unit over a one year period. The questionnaire was structured to provide information about the process of referral, demographic features of the families, significant changes during the divorce process, the legal basis used for demonstrating irretrievable breakdown, reporting methods and outcomes. An additional 'core' sample of 30 enquiries were undertaken over a two-and-a-half year period by the research team working with welfare officers from the unit; details of these cases were added to data from the questionnaire.

Data about the Divorce Unit was gathered throughout the project. Most of this was formally derived from detailed notes extracted from audio-recorded business meetings held on alternate weeks which the research team attended. But as participants in the work of the unit we also drew upon observation, internal memoranda, informal conversations and our own experience of being 'honorary' members of the team.

The main body of material about the interaction between clients and welfare officers came from undertaking the core sample of enquiries. While there was no one procedure deployed in these enquiries, all aimed in their approach to help parents arrive at privately ordered settlements (this was signalled by offering joint interviews for first contacts wherever possible). The objective was to achieve settlements that could be presented as recommendations to the court, subject to the welfare principle test. Particular attention was paid to first meetings (which were audio-recorded when parents consented) because important 'position' statements were made by parents and welfare officers at this time. Detailed records were kept of the remainder of the enquiry process, and at its conclusion a case profile form was completed on each case. Further information about enquiry work was gathered from audio-recorded case discussion meetings, which alternated with the business meetings; a form was completed in relation to each presentation.

The core sample of cases was followed up eight months after completion of the enquiry. This was to gather client views about the experience of having been the subjects of the reporting-cum-settlement-seeking process, reactions to solicitors and the court process, and evidence of change from the time the enquiry had been ordered. These interviews were open-ended, unstructured, and audio-recorded where consent was obtained. In a few cases, a telephone interview or an improvised postal questionnaire was used to obtain some feedback from parents who otherwise refused to participate in the follow up. Pages 148-152 of the report [17] describe some of the problems associated with carrying out and interpreting the results of the follow-up study, particularly in view of its retrospective nature and the scope for displacement when problems remained.

A self-reflective stance was essential to the research process, and the research team met independently of the Divorce Unit to process their own experience of the work and to conference it with colleagues. We were aware of being in a situation with our

collaborators that unconsciously replicated some of the dynamics inherent in welfare enquiry work (for example, the participant observer stance at times could seem as if we were reporting on them; the pressure to resolve this by choosing for them or against them - that is, choosing between 'fusion' or 'fission' in our relationship with them - at one stage threatened the future of the research), and this constituted not only a situation to be managed but also data to be retrieved. We met frequently with our welfare officer collaborators to report on and to discuss findings, experiences and hypotheses emerging from the research as the project was going along. More formally, we set up a project steering group, consisting of the research and Divorce Unit teams plus the area's Chief and Assistant Chief Probation Officer. The purpose of the group changed at different stages in the project. At the end, it was the body that discussed and amended drafts of the report before it reached published form.

A more general critique of my research approach follows in the next section.

### Ethical considerations

Good ethical practice involves obtaining the informed consent of research subjects, and reaching agreement about how the data will be used. In the field of human relationships, it also involves providing a therapeutic safety net if subjects become casualties of the research.

My research has involved three kinds of subjects: the agencies within which the research was carried out, the practitioners who delivered the services and the clients who used them. The nature of my research, and the form in which it has been reported and disseminated, were fully discussed and agreed with those with executive authority in the three agencies concerned (the Tavistock Marital Studies Institute, the then Ealing, Hammersmith and Hounslow Area Health Authority, and the Probation Service that wished to protect the identity of its clients by remaining anonymous) and with the practitioners involved in the research. The therapeutic resources of the Institute underpinned the non-clinical projects, but in the event they did not have to be called upon.

Although the Institute's publicity makes clear that it is a training and research organisation, none of the couples were asked to give their consent to the clinical study of their therapy before it began. There were three reasons for this. In the first place, to introduce therapists in the role of researchers would have altered the nature of the encounter, the expectations of the therapists, and so the kind of material generated. The object of study would then have been fundamentally changed. Secondly, the focus of the research was as much upon the thoughts, feelings and inferences of the therapists as it was upon the couples themselves. Thirdly, as with most clinical studies, the decision to report the research outside the consulting room was taken retrospectively. At that point, all but one of the couples were consulted about the nature of the report and consented to its publication; the exception was where the couple provided a less detailed clinical example [1]. Obtaining the consent of couples for publication itself raised ethical questions about the responsibilities I and they were being asked to carry by re-opening a closed chapter in their lives. Many psychotherapists hold the firm view that it is unethical to ask patients for consent to publication, and that therapists alone should carry the responsibility for ensuring anonymity is preserved.

The couples invited to participate in discussion groups when they were expecting their first baby were similarly not informed that the service also constituted a research project, and for the same reasons. A research focus would have changed the nature of the groups and their response to them. The object of study was the service delivery system rather than the clients who used it; there was no case study of any individual couple (the case study was of the groups), and editorial control ensured that comments made by parents in the groups would not identify them in the publication.

When the core sample of divorced parents was contacted for follow-up, the research role of the interviewer was made explicit. Consent to use material from these interviews for publication was obtained verbally; no written contract was entered into, although it would have been better practice for this to have been done. The research purpose of the project was not disclosed during the earlier enquiry process for reasons discussed above and in pages 12-13 of publication [17]. When parents were asked to complete a questionnaire, and to consent to the first interview being recorded, the purpose of this was explained to them in terms of reviewing the service being provided by the unit. Consent was not secured to publish case illustrations, and the management group took responsibility for ensuring anonymity in the accounts. Again, the focus of study was the enquiry process rather than its subjects, although vignettes of individual predicaments featured clearly. The degree of persecutory anxiety and paranoia that frequently characterised the enquiry process would have made the business of obtaining informed consent almost impossibly complex in the context of the welfare officer role. Nevertheless, there is scope for debating the adequacy of this aspect of the ethical management of the study.

## **A Description Of The Limitations Of The Research**

The boundaries between practice and research, and between the roles of participant and observer, are finely drawn. Operating along them creates particular opportunities and hazards in social science research. Various criticisms can be levelled at the clinical study/action research approach that I have adopted. For example, it produces results that are unreliable as a basis for generalisation; it is subjective, raising questions about the validity of interpretations drawn from the observed 'facts'; and it is unsystematic in its approach to collecting and analysing data. I shall comment on each of these criticisms in turn.

### *Reliability*

The question of reliability is centrally concerned with the degree to which findings are independent of the accidental circumstances of the research (Bloor, 1997). The classical design of experimental research relies upon random samples and controlled trials to allow hypotheses to be tested in relation to clearly identified variables; predictive reliability is the desired outcome. Pantin (1968) observes, in his discussion of the relationship between the restricted and unrestricted sciences, that the cost of achieving deductive and predictive reliability may be the exclusion of much data that has a bearing on a rounded understanding of the subject under investigation. Dividing phenomena into smaller and smaller component parts risks losing sight of systemic and

dynamic properties that are essential to understanding why and how they operate in the ways they do.

The social sciences fall clearly within the domain of the unrestricted sciences. They are concerned with phenomena that are highly complex in nature and not easily subjected to controlled experiment within laboratory conditions. However, they offer many 'natural' opportunities for experiment, and in relation to these the key consideration is how methods fit with the nature of the phenomena being investigated and the objectives of the study.

My studies have been exploratory, and not experimental in design. Their objective has been to generate, rather than to test, hypotheses, and to provide information of value to practitioners. The services I have described constituted 'natural laboratories' in the sense that they were indispensable to the objectives of the research and provided data that relied upon a service delivery context to be accessed. Insofar as couples elected to talk because they needed help, determined their own agenda rather than responded to questions, and were seen in a confidential setting, the research provided access to a rich vein of data that would not otherwise have been available. Because they came as a result of change in their lives, and were seen within the context of a relationship whose purpose was to promote change, there were unique opportunities for observing their responses to change.

Given the non-experimental nature of the research, the fact that couples in the clinical and 'first baby' projects self-selected themselves into the study (and therefore cannot be said to be representative of those who selected themselves out - or, indeed, of other couples who opted in) does not comprise a mortal criticism. Nor does the fact that interventions (because of their intersubjective nature) would fail the replicability test between couples and programmes that some studies might demand. When interactive processes are the object of study, and when the aim is to generate hypotheses rather than to test them, efficacy is judged not by criteria of representativeness, generalisability or predictive power, but by the usefulness of insights within the context from which they are generated and to which they apply. Sociological approaches of the 'grounded theory' school (Glaser and Strauss, 1968) have provided impetus for research that endeavours to generate theories which fit the situation being researched, and which work when put to the test of practical utility.

The action research projects described in my study were all small scale, context-specific interventions that adopted a particular approach to initiating change. Other projects, conducted in other circumstances and using other methods may have produced different results. For example, there has been one very substantial couple intervention programme for new parents conducted in the United States that comes up with more optimistic conclusions than my own study (Pape Cowan and Cowan, 1992). Recent experience in this country has similarly demonstrated the value of self-help support for couples (Parr 1996). While it is therefore important not to draw hard and fast general conclusions from my research about the potential value of other related initiatives, the findings still have practical and theoretical utility for service developments in the field. My contribution has been to articulate questions and

generate hypotheses from a particular experience that can inform other research and service initiatives in the same field.

### *Subjectivity*

The tension between objectivity and subjectivity, and between the roles of observer and participant, is an inescapable dimension of the action research approach that I adopted. Some reference has already been made to this in connection with the reliability of the findings of my work. The helping relationship is intended to exert influence upon how couples behave. Practitioners come with their own personalities, procedures, preoccupations, theories and behaviours and cannot, in any sense, be seen as neutral, or even predictable, agents. Their attention will be selectively engaged by, and applied to, the work they are engaged upon, so that what they report upon is likely to be about themselves as much as the couples they see. This makes the practitioner/researcher role a complex one.

In the context of discussing the relationship between psychotherapy and research, Hobson (1991) draws attention to two alternative philosophical perspectives on research activities: one treats psychological and social facts as 'things', the other approaches them as 'processes'. With this second view, things are always in a process of change: you can never step into the same river twice, and the flow is altered by the very act of stepping in. This approach emphasises the relational and dynamic aspects of observation and experiment: observation involves observing the observer as well as others; it is taken as a given that each will influence the other even when there is no intention to exert influence. I remember, as a young therapist-cum-practitioner researcher, being struck by the similarity of practice and research dilemmas in connection with the thorny issue of involvement when reading a sociologist's account of research conducted through interviewing mothers in late pregnancy and the early post-natal period (Oakley, 1979). She was clear that by inviting these mothers to talk about their experiences she had changed their experience, and one can surmise that the beneficial - even therapeutic - effects of her research involvement may have had a 'distorting' influence on outcome. Within this frame, the boundaries between practice and research activities become less clear-cut than is often supposed.

Theory reflects what a person 'knows' and 'values' from being immersed in the field. By being a participant in the lives of practice-cum-research subjects, there is a sense in which this knowledge and value has accrued and gained authority because it has been tested and applied over time. However, there is always the risk that theory becomes closed and self-referencing. When evidence is only filtered through the lens of the observer, it can become self-confirming: square pegs are declared round as the result of being forced through round holes.

I have adopted four safeguards against the dangers of becoming self-enclosed in my work: firstly, declaring the assumptions that inform my approach to the research and the interpretation of the results; secondly, aiming to distinguish between observation and inference, so that others might draw their own conclusions from the data; thirdly, working towards being as systematic as possible in collecting and analysing the research material; fourthly, locating other-reference points to provide comparative perspectives, especially those of service users and other professional disciplines. In these ways the validity of the findings has been enhanced.

### *Systematic processes*

Part of my development as a researcher has been in trying to develop systematic procedures for collecting and analysing data. I have made attempts to capture appropriate quantitative measures to provide background for the central process-oriented thrust of the research. The service delivery experiences have been described as faithfully as memory and audio recordings allowed. Nevertheless, there is a 'messiness' that is inherent in the practitioner/researcher role that derives from the complexity of human relationships and the meshing of conscious and unconscious processes. My attention will have been selectively engaged, and may in consequence have resulted in significant oversights; my theoretical orientation (essential equipment for deriving coherence from a potentially overwhelming and amorphous body of data) may have introduced distortions through influencing the organisation and presentation of the results. In the research I have tried to avoid the dangers of either becoming too remote from the process to see and experience what was going on, or too involved to retain a sense of critical perspective. But there is always a risk that the balance may occasionally have been lost. These potential drawbacks have to be weighed against the benefits of an approach that gains access to often subtle and high quality data.

In the next section I describe developments that hold out the promise of providing a firmer empirical basis for future research, without losing the strengths that a psychoanalytical perspective can bring to bear on social phenomena.

### **A Critical Review Of The Candidate's Development As A Researcher Over The Period Of The Research.**

I entered the research community from a practitioner basis, a perspective which, combined with the experience of having been a research subject, led me to be critical of research approaches that overlooked the influence on outcome of processes operating between researchers and their subjects (Clulow, 1976). I joined the Tavistock Marital Studies Institute because it was one of very few organisations that attempted to promote a symbiotic relatedness between the activities of practice, training and research. At the heart of the work was clinical practice with couples, offering ample opportunity for single case studies of partnerships in change.

From this basis I have wanted to develop a dynamic understanding of the challenges facing partnerships in change, and their implications for professional practice, in ways that added to and built on clinical hypotheses. This has drawn me to examining other practice and research approaches to my area of interest, to considering how couples experience change outside the clinical setting, and to locating this experience in a wider social and professional context. As my research experience has developed, I have become increasingly aware of the need to combine a systematic approach to study in my field with an openness to and tolerance of the inherent 'messiness' of the enterprise.

I have also been on the look-out for research instruments that are sensitive to the influence of unconscious processes, and that might develop the systematic and



empirical basis of my work. The application of an individual psychotherapy outcome procedure to couple work provides one example of this. More recently, I have become familiar with the work of Luborsky (1990) on measuring transference, and with the Adult Attachment Interview (George et al, 1985), a research instrument that is rooted in the attachment theory of Bowlby and holds out much promise for accessing the inner world of adults and the couple relationship (Fisher and Crandell, 1997). It has, in the words of its author, 'a capacity to surprise the unconscious'. This empirical tool has been shown to have predictive reliability (Van Ijzendoorn, 1995), and permits movement from the hypothesis-generating activities of action research designs towards experimental methods that can test predictions in appropriately controlled conditions.

In 1995 I completed the intensive two-week rater training for coding the Adult Attachment Interview, and have almost completed the complement of 33 test cases that will establish my reliability and registration as a coder. The Interview is one example of the capacity of recent developments in attachment theory and its applications to bridge the worlds of practice and research, as well as to link different theoretical disciplines. I am particularly drawn towards it because of the account it takes of both internal and external systems of relationships (security is measured by the internal coherence of the narrative *plus* the capacity to collaborate with the researcher on the interview task). The instrument is the main methodological feature of two research applications that are currently short-listed for funding by the Lord Chancellor's Department, and to which I referred earlier in this application. I am also organising a major international conference on research and practice in couple work that will bring together leading attachment researchers and psychoanalytical couple psychotherapists in the field.

In addition to my personal involvement in research I have supervised and consulted to other projects inside and outside the Institute, and my recognition as a researcher has been referred to earlier.

While there is some chronological sequence to the ordering of this application, the pattern of my development as a researcher has not been uni-directional. My attention has moved between intra-psychic, interpersonal and contextual levels; attending to one level has increased my curiosity about the other two, and how all three relate to each other. I find I am now returning to questions that intrigued me earlier in my development because subsequent experience holds out the prospect of finding more satisfactory answers, or of better refining the questions. My developmental pathway is therefore more accurately described as circular rather than linear.

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### **Unselected Publications by the Candidate that are Cited in the Context Statement:**

- 1976 Impact: Some Experimental Effects. *Justice of the Peace.* Vol.140, pp 638-639.
- 1979 Now We Are Three. *Marriage Guidance.* Vol.18, pp 148-152.
- 1979 with Cleavelly, E., Coussell, P. and Dearnley, B. Love's Labour and Loss. *Health Visitor.* Vol.42, pp 74-76.
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- 1982b *Workshops as a research instrument.* Paper given at a Tavistock Centre Scientific Meeting, November 8th.
- 1983 Psychodynamic Sex Therapy. *Marriage Guidance.* Vol.19, No.2, pp 26-29.
- 1985 First Interviews. *Marriage Guidance.* Vol.21, No.3, pp 23-25.
- 1986 Research into Practice. *Marriage Guidance.* Vol.22, No.1, pp 7-15.
- 1987a *Being More than Two: Impacts of Children on Married Couples.* Monograph. Gloucestershire Association for Family Life.
- 1987b Petitioning for a Clean Break. *The Guardian.* July 1st.
- 1988a Marriage: Losing Our Illusions. *Values.* Vol 3, No.1, pp 8-10.
- 1988b Responding to Involuntary Childlessness. In Nederlandse Gezinsraad: *Responding to Involuntary Childlessness.* Den Haag: Nederlandse Gezinsraad
- 1989 with Mattinson, J. *Marriage Inside Out. Understanding Problems of Intimacy.* Harmondsworth: Pelican. (Revised edition reprinted by Penguin, 1995).
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- 1989b The Adversarial Ego. *Solicitors Family Law Association Newsletter.* No.26, p104.
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- 1991 Editorial. *Journal of Social Work Practice* 5, 2, pp 121-122.
- 1992a Only Connect. *Family Law*. Vol.22, July, p.277.
- 1992b Why Difficult Clients? *Family Law*. Vol.22, August, p.354.
- 1992c Why Difficult Solicitors? *Family Law*. Vol.22, September, p.398.
- 1992d Is it Catching? *Family Law*. Vol.22, October, p.454.
- 1992e Unconscious Communications. *Family Law*. Vol.22, November, p.502.
- 1992f Out of Bounds. *Family Law*. Vol.22, December, p.559.
- 1993a Good Enough Marriage. In Clulow, C. (ed.) *Rethinking Marriage: Public and Private Perspectives*. London: Karnac.
- 1993b Professional Distance. *Family Law*. Vol.23, January, p.39.
- 1993c Linguistic Dispossession. *Family Law*. Vol.23, February, p.91.
- 1993d Scene Setting. *Family Law*. Vol.23, March, p.155.
- 1993e Managing Feelings. *Family Law*. Vol.23, April, pp 242-3.
- 1993f Decoding Experience. *Family Law*. Vol.23, May, p.306.
- 1993g Containment. *Family Law*. Vol.23, June, p.359.
- 1993h Referral. *Family Law*. Vol.23, July, p.427.
- 1993i Making Sense of Marriage Breakdown and the Role of the Professional. *Australian Family Lawyer*. Vol.8, No.4, pp 17-20.
- 1993j Connections. *Australian Family Lawyer*. Vol.9, No.1, pp 22-25.
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- 1993m New Families? Changes in Societies and Family Relationships. *Sexual and Marital Therapy*. Vol.8, No.3, pp 269-273.
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- 1996c (ed.) Partners Becoming Parents. London: Sheldon.
- 1997 Roots of Irrationality in Marriage. *The Bulletin (Jnl. of Catholic Marriage Care Ltd)*. Vol. 37, No. 145, pp 8-17.
- 1997 with Shmueli, A. Marital Therapy: Definition and Development *Current Opinion in Psychiatry*. Vol. 10, No.3, pp 247-250.

## List and synopsis of Selected Publications:

[1] Clulow, C. (1984) Sexual dysfunction and interpersonal stress: the significance of the presenting complaint in seeking and engaging help. *British Journal of Medical Psychology*, 57, pp 371-380.

Focuses on the ambivalence inherent in seeking and engaging help. An analysis of one year's applications concludes that the degree of match between agency orientation towards, and couple judgements about, the nature of problems presented for help was the most significant factor associated with engagement in therapy. The study highlights difficulties in categorising sexual problems and, from a case study, draws attention to the regulative function of sexual dysfunction for emotional engagement within the partnership and in relation to therapy.

[2] Cohen, N., Fisher, J. and Clulow, C. (1993) Predicting engagement with psychoanalytical couple psychotherapy. *Sexual and Marital Therapy*, 8, 3, pp 217-230.

Represents a systematic attempt to analyse written data from couples in a form that was compatible with the theoretical orientation of the therapists. Six factors were found to correlate positively with engagement with couple psychotherapy.

[3] Clulow, C. (1985) *Marital Therapy. An Inside View*. Aberdeen University Press.

A detailed and rounded explication of psychoanalytical couple psychotherapy. The account tracks the dynamics of engagement in therapy from the perspectives of each of the key players in the 'triangle of referral'. The orientation and anxieties of each person in the system are seen as contributing to how, and in what terms, a problem comes to be defined. The study identifies the value of presenting symptoms in managing anxiety about emotional engagement in the marriage as well as in therapy. A novel method for assessing outcome is described.

[4] Clulow, C. (1989) Help. In Clulow, C. and Mattinson, J. *Marriage Inside Out. Understanding Problems of Intimacy*. Harmondsworth: Pelican. Reprinted by Penguin Books in 1995.

An application for the general reader of clinical findings about the process of seeking help for marital problems.

**[5] Clulow, C. and Dearnley, B. (1986) Shared phantasy and therapeutic structure in a brief marital psychotherapy. *British Journal of Psychotherapy*, 3, 2, pp 124-132.**

A clinical study of brief couple psychotherapy which assembles a dynamic formulation of the problem to be treated. This was used as the basis for demonstrating a method for testing the efficacy of therapy in a follow-up study.

**[6] Balfour, F., Clulow, C. and Dearnley, B. (1986) The outcome of a maritally focused psychotherapy offered as a possible model for marital psychotherapy outcome studies. *British Journal of Psychotherapy*, 3, 2, pp 133-143.**

On the basis of a dynamic formulation of the problem affecting a couple's difficulty in becoming more separate from each other, this paper describes and applies a method for testing the efficacy of couple psychotherapy based on a model previously developed in connection with the practice of individual psychotherapy.

**[7] Clulow, C. (1982) *To Have and To Hold. Marriage, the First Baby and Preparing Couples for Parenthood*. Aberdeen University Press. Reprinted in 1989.**

Combines clinical studies of the impact of children on marriage with an account of an action research project that aimed to prepare couples for parenthood. Undertaken in collaboration with health visitors, this account details the assumptions on which the programme was based, describes the groups run for parents, and the workshops run for health visitors. An evaluation of the intervention recasts a way of thinking about prevention.

**[8] Clulow, C. (1991) The chronically ill child and the parents' marriage: interactive effects. *British Journal of Psychotherapy*, 7, 4, pp 331-340.**

This study examines one couple's experience of coping with the chronic illness of their young daughter. Particular attention was paid to the meaning of disablement and potential death for each partner in relation to their representations of their childhood experiences and relationship as a couple. The study considers the partners' different responses to the emotional toll on their relationship, reviews the relevance of the concept of 'anticipatory mourning' to their situation and the role of therapy in enabling the parents to use respite care.

**[9] Clulow, C. (1989) *The Marriage Maze*. In Clulow, C. and Mattinson, J. *Marriage Inside Out. Understanding Problems of Intimacy*. Harmondsworth: Pelican. Reprinted in 1995 by Penguin Books.**

A contextual review of contemporary marriage and some pressures on couples.

**[10] Clulow, C. (1993) Rethinking Marriage. In Clulow, C. (ed.) *Rethinking Marriage: Public and Private Perspectives*. Karnac.**

An interdisciplinary enquiry into the nature of public and private anxiety about change in marriage.

**[11] Clulow, C. (1995) Marriage: A new millenium? In Clulow, C. (ed.) *Women, Men and Marriage*. Sheldon.**

An original synthesis from a book that I commissioned and edited, condensing the main themes into four processes that describe and are relevant to understanding modern marriage.

**[12] Clulow, C. (1979) The first baby and stress. In Woods, C. (ed.) *Health and the Family*. Academic Press/Grune and Stratton.**

Describes the background to the action research project to prepare couples for parenthood described in [7].

**[13] Clulow, C. (1982) Implications of a marital approach to parenthood preparation. *Seminars in Family Medicine*, 3, 2, pp 73-76.**

Summarises the results of a group approach to preparing couples for parenthood.

**[14] Clulow, C. (1991) Partners becoming parents: a question of difference. *Infant Mental Health Journal*, 12, 3, pp 256-266.**

Experience from the action research project, and from clinical work with couples, is assembled to provide a dynamic hypothesis about why marital satisfaction can diminish with the roles and responsibilities of parenthood. The hypothesis challenges the static division of partnerships into 'companionate' and 'differentiated' categories and addresses the developmental challenge of balancing intimacy and separateness that faces partnerships at personal and public levels, especially when unconscious assumptions and conscious expectations apply pressure to merge.

**[15] Clulow, C. (1996) Introduction. In Clulow, C. (ed.) *Partners Becoming Parents*. Sheldon.**

Outlines the territory of an interdisciplinary approach to understanding the relationship between partnering and parenting processes, at social and personal levels.



[16] Clulow, C. (1996) Are two parents necessary? In Clulow, C. (ed.) *Partners Becoming Parents*. Sheldon.

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[17] Clulow, C. and Vincent, C. (1987) *In the Child's Best Interests? Divorce Court Welfare and the Search for a Settlement*. Tavistock/Sweet and Maxwell.

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Implications from an action research project, and the application of the concept of mourning, are brought to bear on professional training issues associated with the requirements of new family legislation.

[21] Clulow, C. (1996) Preventing marriage breakdown: towards a new paradigm. *Sexual and Marital Therapy*, 11, 4, pp 343-351.

A review of different paradigms that have been applied to the concept of supporting marriage, a concept that has become an integral part of new family legislation. A consultancy paradigm is proposed.