

# Clio's Psyche

Understanding the "Why" of Culture,  
Current Events, History, and Society

**Symposium and Special Issue  
on the Psychology of the Changing  
American Family**

**Volume 17 Number 4  
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# Clio's Psyche

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## **The Family Romance Transformed: American Domestic Arrangements Since 1960**

**Ken Fuchsman**—University of Connecticut

The benefits of having the same two adults raise a child together from birth to adulthood do not have the same cultural value in the U.S. as they once had. How has this change been manifested, and what impact does it have? Over the last 50 years, America has seen an increase in the percentage of births to unwed mothers, the emergence of widespread cohabitation, a rise in employed mothers, and an increase in divorce, remarriage, and repeated divorce. In the contemporary West, we expect both more and less of intimate romantic entanglements; adult relational commitments are not as long term as they once were.

The transformation of families since 1960, particularly as it impacts children, is the focus of this article. While many resilient youngsters thrive with one resident parent or through family break-ups and reformations, others suffer significant emotional damage. The story of these familial alterations needs retelling. The first step in this narrative is to document the variety of ways the demographics of American family life have shifted.

### **Changes in American Family Life Since 1960**

A half century ago, more than two-thirds of households consisted of an employed husband, a stay-at-home mom, and their children. But not anymore; now, less than two in ten homes contain such families. Women with children are now more likely to work outside the home. A few years after World War II, few married mothers had a paid job; now more than three-fourths do. In March 2010, there were more American women employed than men, and women now hold slightly more than half of all U. S. professional and managerial positions.

Another major change is the frequency of divorce. Between 1960 and 1980, the American divorce rate more than doubled. While it has since declined, still at the turn of the millennium more than 40% of couples who had been married at least 15 years were

no longer together. The United States has the highest divorce rate in Western culture. Children "living with two married parents in the United States," Andrew Cherlin reports, "have a higher risk of experiencing a family breakup than do children living with two unmarried parents in Sweden" (*The Marriage-Go-Round: The State of Marriage and the Family in America Today*, 2009, 3).

American children in our current society are less likely to reside in the same home as their biological mother and father. In 1960, close to 90% of American children were living with their birth mother and father, but by 2002 it was only 60%. Much of this change is due to the number of infants born out of wedlock. In 2007, close to four in ten children were born to unmarried women. When their child was born, about half were living with its biological father. Five years later, while many of these couples had legally wed, more were no longer residing together. Given the high divorce rate and the rapid increase in less stable cohabiting unions, more children are experiencing parental breakups even while the divorce rate has gone down. These factors have led to a substantial rise in the number of single parent families. In 1960, less than 10% of children lived with one parent, but by 2006 it was 28.4%.

However, many divorced Americans find other partners. Three quarters of divorced women have married again within a decade, and by 2001, 15% of American children lived in blended families. Same sex partners, cohabiting or married, with or without children, also populate the American landscape, as do adopted children and those youngsters being raised by grandparents or in foster homes.

### **Dual Earning Marriages, Parenting, and Childhood**

Given the changing working lives of men and women, the conditions of marriage and parenting are remarkably different. First, the average woman marries later and gives birth to fewer children now than half a century ago. Daycare and extended family care are more prevalent than in 1960. Even when both spouses are employed, mothers are more likely than fathers to experience a full second shift at home. While husbands have increased the amount of housework and parenting they do, the bulk of these tasks still fall primarily on women. Nevertheless, husbands are more involved in their children's preschool and school years than before. The divi-

sion of familial duties has altered somewhat given the rise of two-income, dual career marriages.

Children's lives have changed in other substantial ways that impact family life. There is an amazing proliferation of new technologies of entertainment and communication permeating most childhoods. For some youngsters, this means playing endless video games; for others, the Internet has brought the world to their fingertips, expanding their horizons and social networks. Older children with cell phones often spend much of their waking hours talking to or texting their friends. The level of organized children's activities has increased exponentially. Growing up in sports-obsessed New York City in the 1950s, I had the opportunity to play Little League Baseball starting at age ten, but that was it. (Girls did not play in Little League.) By and large, kids organized their own recreation, but for today's children, there are instructional sports leagues for both sexes, starting at age four: youth soccer leagues, fall baseball, football, basketball, early swimming instruction, dancing, and even music lessons. Fifty years ago, when we played stickball in the streets, adults were far away. Now parents, grandparents, and other relatives are on the sidelines at league games. Children experience teamwork, formal competition, diverse forms of childcare, and the prevalence of social, secular organization to a greater extent than did earlier generations. Despite their benefits, these activities have the family going in very diverse directions.

### **Family Disruptions and Other Dynamics**

While there are many substantial improvements in the quality of American family life, the frequency of family breakups and the rise of single parenting do raise important psychosocial issues. The history of family life is always changing, often accompanied by nostalgia for a vanishing past. Is this period of domestic transformation equivalent to or more unsettling than others? This section of the paper looks at the emotional impact of divorce, single parenting and blended families on children.

The "frequent marriage, frequent divorce, more short-term cohabiting relationships," Cherlin writes, make "American families different." These "factors create a great turbulence in American family life, a family flux, a coming and going of partners on a scale seen nowhere else" (*Marriage-Go-Round*, 5).

Some scholars are worried about the level of family disruption and single parenting; they maintain that family stability and parenting by more than one adult are better for children. While in most primate species, the female is a single parent, humans have favored dual parenting and kin networks. We have been collaborative nurturers through most of our history; whether child rearing comes from the father, grandparents, or other offspring. With the spread of cohabitation, divorce, single parenting, and blended families, the way humans do this sharing is changing. How do these changes impact children?

There are numerous in-depth studies assessing the well-being of youngsters in various family permutations. In high conflict marriages where there is violence or abuse, children are much better off when the marital union is dissolved. When there is divorce in low conflict marriages, however, children's adjustment declines. Over time, many children of divorce bounce back, but others do not, and they may suffer issues of loss, anger, self-blame, and deflation of their expectations of their parents. Intimacy, conflict, neurosis, and bonding are the everyday elements of family life. Keeping the negative side of family life within boundaries is central. When family turbulence results in abuse and/or breakups, it usually indicates that the destructive effects have been less contained.

Divorcing parents may act more like children than adults. "Divorce often leads to a partial or complete collapse in an adult's ability to parent for months and sometimes years after the breakup...Caught up in rebuilding their own lives, mothers and fathers" can be blind to "the needs of their children" (Judith Wallerstein, Julia Lewis, and Sandra Blakeslee, *The Unexpected Legacy of Divorce*. 2000, xiv, 26). The disintegration of a marriage often is accompanied by a great deal of anger between the parents, which the children generally absorb. "In the early post-divorce years," E. Marvis Hetherington and John Kelly write, "the self which regulates behavior...breaks down," as "stable social roles (wife, mother, husband, father) and stable relationships (parent-child, husband-wife, friendships)" fall apart. Two "other hazards await children in the post-nuclear family. The first is 'parentification,' when...children become the caretakers...The second is continued

conflict between the divorced parents” (*For Better or For Worse: Divorce Reconsidered*, 2002, 44, 134). In both dangers, the parent is not providing the protection and generational boundaries children need for their own internal control. This parental stress is evident in that divorced men are likely to increase their alcohol use, and women are more likely to suffer from post-divorce depression (Paul Amato and Cassandra Dorius, “Fathers, Children, and Divorce,” in Michael Lamb, ed., *The Role of the Father in Child Development*, 5<sup>th</sup> edition, 2010, 182-183). A decade “after the breakup only one-half of the mothers and one-quarter of the fathers were able to provide the kind of nurturing care that had distinguished their parenting before the divorce” (Wallerstein, et al, 2000, xiv, 26). The disruption of good parental nurturance combined with role reversal and family breakups can be harmful for children of divorce.

Being raised in a single parent family presents a different set of challenges. Some claim that single female parents with extended support systems—family or otherwise—can be just as successful as two parent families. However, Kay Hymowitz does not believe research corroborates this view. She writes that regardless of race, sex, and previous marital status, “children of single mothers...are more prone to drug and alcohol abuse, to crime, and to school failure; they are less likely to graduate from college; they are more likely to have children at a young age, and more likely to do so when they are unmarried” (*Marriage and Caste in America*, 2006, 4). Wallerstein and colleagues find that “children from divorced and remarried families are more aggressive toward their parents and teachers. They experience more depression, have more learning difficulties, and suffer from more problems with peers than children from intact families” (xxiii). Amato and Dorius argue that “adults with divorced parents...report more difficulties in forming intimate relationships, experience more problems in their own marriages and are at a greater risk of seeing their own marriages end in divorce” (2010, 184). Adult children of divorce in 2001 had double the divorce rate of those whose parents remained married. If parents cooperate after the divorce and focus on children’s needs, there are better emotional prospects for their children than if they continue to fight and undermine each other (Paul Amato and Danelle DeBoer, “The Transmission of Marital Instability Across Genera-

tions: Relationship Skills or Commitment to Marriage?" *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 63 (4), 2001, 1038-1051). Getting the genie of rage and fury back in the bottle is a start, then reparation can begin, generational boundaries restored, and there then can be better prospects for children to heal.

The help of non-biological parents in raising children has long been a staple of human social life. Youngsters raised by an unmarried, unattached mother may or may not receive childcare from other relatives and friends, including father substitutes. Many children from single parent families develop quite well and find unique strengths, balancing within their support network. Still, for many fatherless or motherless children, there is an ache, a feeling of absence or emptiness. These psychological states may translate into behavior. While "many boys without fathers seem to develop quite normally," other boys "growing up without fathers seemed to have problems in the area of sex-role and gender-identity development, school performance, psychosocial adjustment and perhaps in the control of aggression" (Michael Lamb and Catherine Tamis-LeMonda, "The Role of the Father: An Introduction," *Role of the Father in Child Development* 4<sup>th</sup> edition, 2004, 6-7).

More than half of African American children are born to unmarried women. Jaipaul Roopnarine found that these children "had lower self-control, feelings of personal power, self-competence and perception of body functioning than did their counterparts in married households...those from father-absent homes were significantly more likely to repeat a grade...to be suspended from school, and to cut classes than were children from father-present homes." For African American females, there "is a lower risk of early sexual intercourse among girls in married than in single-mother households" ("African American and African Caribbean Fathers: Quality and Meaning of Involvement," in Lamb, *The Role of the Father*, 70). James Chisholm summarizes anthropological studies of fathers in non-Western and Western societies who are either absent or less involved with their children: "In both settings father-absent boys tend to reject authority, tend to exaggerate their masculinity and engage frequently in aggressive and other dangerous activities, tend to denigrate females and femininity, and to evidence an exploitive attitude toward sexual relations with women.

In Western settings father-absent girls tend to show a precocious interest in sex, tend to denigrate males and masculinity, and tend to exhibit little willingness to maintain a long-term sexual-emotional bond with one man” (“Putting People in Biology: Towards a Synthesis of Biological and Psychological Anthropology” in Shwartz, et al., eds., *New Directions in Psychological Anthropology*, 1992, 137). Are there human psychobiological needs for having multiple reliable adult caregivers, and finding both male and female adult role models?

Blended families bring out delicate issues of shifting alliances and overcoming loss and distrust. Mothers and their children form new family traditions after the divorce, but these patterns will alter and likely arouse strong emotions in the child when the custodial parent forms a new romantic alliance. “Remarried parents may...become a target of anger from the children because of the remarriage,” and children worry over what their new family will be like (Emily and John Visher, *Therapy with Stepfamilies*, 1996, 30). Another factor in the blended family is the relationship with the absent biological parent. If the non-custodial biological parent is actively engaged in the child’s life, the child may be wary of the stepparent, which can cause some tension as the stepparent may feel rivalry with the child for the loyalty of the new spouse. On the other hand, if the non-custodial parent has little or no contact with the child, this might make him or her receptive to the stepparent and make an allied blended family. If each of the remarried parents has children, this adds still another dimension to the adjustments.

Members of blended families have likely had experience with destructiveness and mourning. Children of divorce may worry that “marriage is not permanent, that a home is never stable, and that you cannot trust the people you love” (James Bray and John Kelly, *Stepfamilies*, 1998, 3). Finding ways to alleviate the child’s anxieties can be a major accomplishment of a blended family. If the stepchildren can witness deep love and commitment in the remarriage, this may provide a positive model for wounded children.

### **Psychosocial Explanations**

Why are more than two of every five American children now living separately from continuously married parents? The complex answers to this question include changing sexual, gender

and relational standards, the rise of female employment, the flourishing consumer culture, rising expectations for fulfillment and success, and less confidence in the stability of long-term relationships. I will focus on the relational side of these domestic transformations, mostly within marriage and romance.

American marriages in the 1920s began emphasizing companionship rather than separate spheres for spouses. Fulfillment and pleasure was to be sought in deep, intimate, sexual-spiritual marital unions. Modern western culture was moving toward a pleasure-oriented conception of life as the satisfaction of desires and longings, emphasizing the needs and aspirations of the self—whether in a relationship or not. Then, from the 1960s onward, there was a “transition from...companionate to individualistic marriage.” This meant that “contemporary marriage” was envisioned as providing “enhanced freedom, possibilities for self-development, and potential for egalitarian relationships” (Amato, et al, *Alone Together: How Marriage in America is Changing*, 2007, 17). These categories are fluid; some couples made the transition to individualistic marriage, others were more companionate, separate-sphere marriages still existed, and many were a mixture of these types. As the nature of marriage is changing, there is a “paradox,” for as marriage “has become more joyful, more loving, and more satisfying for many couples than ever before,” it has also “become more optional and brittle” (Stephanie Coontz, *Marriage: A History*, 2005, 306). Cohabitation as an alternative to marriage has also dramatically increased.

Some of these new wrinkles contain conceptions of romance and fulfillment within and outside of marriage. A romantic ideal of intimate relationships can lead to peak ecstatic experiences, maturing bonds, symbiotic attachments or severe conflicts. A popular conception of love as perpetual togetherness is parallel to an idealization of the mother-infant relationship as an inseparable union.

In both romantic and maternal bonds, there is fear of separation and loss. “Across all human cultures,” two psychologists write, “young and vulnerable infants tend to display a specific sequence of reactions following separation from their...caregivers. Immediately after separation infants often protest vehemently, cry-

ing, screaming, and throwing temper tantrums as they search for their caregivers” (Jeffrey Simpson and Jay Belsky, “Attachment Theory Within a Modern Evolutionary Framework,” in Jude Cassidy, ed., *Handbook of Attachment: Theory, Research, and Clinical Applications*, 2008, 131). The dialectic between belonging and dread of separation in childhood is often reenacted in adult sexual relationships. This can mean that individuals caught up in the dramas of their romantic entanglements are thrust back into infantile anxieties. The degree to which intimate relationships can confront primal anxiety, conflict, and fear illustrate how mature they are. Romantically intimate attachments are intrinsically complicated, as they can move back and forth between union and abandonment, security and loss, and commitment and self-preoccupation.

Within marital or cohabiting relationships, there can be an alternation between fulfillment and stress. The deep bonds of many couples help them successfully navigate through competing emotions, but others get caught in severe relational turbulence. Since the 1960s, a major increase in parents terminating their relationship has occurred, thus increasing the experience of loss and separation for all and placing some children at risk.

All adults bring unresolved conflicts into romance and parenting, yet when there are resident children, adults can perceive their desires for gratification as on the same plane as the needs of youngsters. Those spouses considering divorce “confront the basic dilemma of pursuing personal happiness versus meeting obligations to others” (Amato, et al, 2007, 18). The necessary boundary between generations can blur when parental happiness is in stark competition with commitment to their children. Many parents are able to balance their search for fulfillment with their children’s interests, and a mother and father’s well-being may be inextricably connected to the welfare of their children. Still, it is not infrequent in this day and age for the parent-child connection to get strained by troubled marriages, and for adults to become less effective as parents. Some troubled mothers and fathers can become more focused on their own needs than those of their children. The “concern in establishing and guiding the next generation” is what Erik Erikson calls generativity (*Childhood and Society*, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1963,

267). The rise in single parenting, divorce, remarriage and re-divorce often works out well, but may reveal serious malfunctions in the generative stage. Mothers and fathers needing support through marital or post-marital turbulence may "parentify" their children. Parents also may unconsciously act as if their children are sibling rivals, reengaging their own fury of not having exclusive access to a desired parent. Throughout history, parents have reenacted their own childhood dramas on their children. While switching roles can be found within most families, it is more difficult to guide the next generation when parents and children are going through the turmoil of family disruption and re-formation, or when a single parent does not have sufficient support from other adults.

Family conflict generally reactivates primal issues of anger, separation, loss, and mourning for all concerned. Human infants are designed to attach to intimate caregivers, usually their biological mother. The occasions that disrupt the infant's connection to the mother can "produce the utmost extreme of terror and rage, since the loss of mother is, under natural conditions, but the precursor of death itself" (Ian Suttie, *The Origins of Love and Hate*, 1988, 16). When the dread of separation turns into actuality with a family breakup, this actualizes loss and can psychologically endanger children. What distinguishes the period of family life after 1960 from prior eras is the contemporary increase in family breakups due to parental relational issues and the higher rate of unwed mothers.

In the past, there were social constraints that kept the likelihood of certain kinds of family dislocations at bay. Family disruption is now a way of life. With the dramatic upswing in the percentage of children experiencing familial dissolution, the scars and wounds for children can be both frequent and deep. A legacy of divorce for children, as Bray and Kelly articulated, is that it can become hard to trust the ones you love.

There are always a wide-range of responses to changing circumstances. When there is less continuity, trust, and stability within families, a number of resilient children find ways of profiting from adversity, while other youngsters suffer more loss than gain. For wounded children, their long-term relational prospects can be adversely affected by family disruptions or parental absence. As a country, the U.S. is accumulating a deep psychological na-

tional deficit for many of our children and their children.

*Ken Fuchsman, EdD, has been affiliated with the University of Connecticut since 1977 as an administrator, counselor, and faculty member, including as Executive Director of General Studies. Currently, he is Assistant Extension Professor teaching in both the Individualized and Interdisciplinary Major and the Bachelor of General Studies programs. One of the courses he designed is an interdisciplinary study of the family. His other areas of specialty include the history of psychoanalysis, trauma and war, the Oedipus complex and interdisciplinary studies. Dr. Fuchsman is a Research Associate of the Psychohistory Forum, on the Editorial Board of Clio's Psyche, and a frequent contributor to this journal who can be reached at ken.fuchsman@uconn.edu.*

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## An Exchange on Freud and the Family Romance

**Dan Dervin**—University of Mary Washington

**Ken Fuchsman**—University of Connecticut

**Dan Dervin:** I hesitate to comment on your “Family Romance Transformed,” as it starts off on the wrong foot and betrays an unawareness of a basic work of psychoanalysis. The stumbling block for me lays in the title’s implicit reference to Freud’s seminal concept of the family romance in “Family Romances” in 1909, which generated many studies, beginning with Rank’s *Myth of the Birth of the Hero* (1909). No question, Freud had tapped into a rich substratum of early emotional life, in both the individual and in the race. I felt that the present use was misleading, but having read through the paper, I might modify that to being distracting.

**Ken Fuchsman:** I use “family romance” in my title for a particular reason. Freud’s 1909 paper “Family Romances” assumes that there are two parents, and that the mother and father are both present throughout childhood. In that article, Freud talks about the importance of the child liberating him- or herself from the authority of the parents. My article alludes to Freud’s piece in that it is clear that the assumption that there are two stable parental figures, which

the child both identifies with and ultimately emancipates from, can no longer be taken for granted. It is hard to liberate oneself from the authority of both parents when only one is present—as with single parent families—or when the parent is acting more like a sibling or is looking for the child to be in the parental role. Parental authority is not what it was a century ago, and that is one reason why family romances are being transformed. Even if one assumes that the unconscious produces two parental figures no matter what, the conditions of childhood in this age of family turbulence make for complications beyond what Freud presented.

**Dan Dervin:** I would agree with your last sentence about current family turbulence, and I have found also that Freud for the most part is not interested in the vicissitudes of parenting, for example, changing parental modes (*à la* Lloyd deMause, “The Evolution of Childhood”) or such variants as single-parenting, gay couples, abuse, abandonment, or incest. Whatever of this he knew, his focus was elsewhere, preeminently on the early drives and their inevitable frustrations and conflicts. Parents were mostly a given, often stage props in the infantile/oedipal drama: an altogether interior drama, not the whole story, but one that had not previously been known or told.

**Ken Fuchsman:** A question for Freud's conception of the oedipal family configuration is to what extent it and the family romance are primarily an internal phenomenon and how much oedipality is altered by real-life circumstances. Freud does say that the Oedipus complex expands to a family complex when other children are born, so one side of Freud recognized that there is a connection between the actual structure and dynamics within a family and the nature of the interior drama. I agree with you that Freud was less interested in family variation. Freud was also less concerned with family dynamics where there was role reversal and crossing of generational boundaries, as happens these days in many families. He assumes mother and father retain their parental authority.

**Dan Dervin:** You have written a totally engaging and stimulating account of current disruptive changes in American family life. Drawing on wide-ranging studies, you have brought them into sharp focus and incorporated Freud's well-founded insights.

The problem can be termed semantic. For whatever his reasons, Freud chose the term “romance,” but what he had in mind is a foundling/adoption fantasy in which the child compensates for perceived parental lapses by imagining he/she is adopted and is in fact the true offspring of a nobler/divine/royal set. In the paper you deploy the term in its common literary, pop-cultural senses as an idealized form of later intimacy between the sexes. Thus the allusion to Freud’s usage is irrelevant to his own concerns and would take readers down an entirely different track. If otherwise ignored, readers will profit greatly from your study.

*Dan Dervin, PhD, writes prolifically on psychohistorical and other subjects. He is a Research Associate of the Psychohistory Forum and Professor Emeritus of Literature at the University of Mary Washington. Currently he is completing a history of childhood and may be reached at ddervin@umw.edu.*

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## Therapy and the Rearrangement of Domestic Life

**Michael Britton**—Forum Research Associate

Reading through the turbulent changes in family dynamics Dr. Fuchsman detailed, I began thinking about psychotherapy’s role in those changes. There has been a critique of much of current therapy as individual-centered at the expense of connection and relatedness (cf. Relational-Cultural Therapy, the Jean Baker Miller Center at Wellesley College), a bias perhaps more reflected in the work of less trained therapists and in popular culture translations of therapeutic thinking.

In the psychoanalytic world, Margaret Mahler linked “individuation” with “separation” (meaning psychological differentiation). Across the country, however, families were facing *geographic* separation as young adults left small towns for big cities. Recognizing that in urban areas the young could find a better economic future, therapists worked to help both parents and their offspring make the best of necessity, framing separation as all for their good. There was a not-always subtle view of the reluctance to let

go as being pathological, without giving recognition and dignity to the extended family (and non-Western) ethos that family is forever, forever here to help, forever to be cared for by you. While therapy could have been about sustained connection over distance, in practice it more often focused on letting go.

Fascination with individuation, self-discovery, self-articulation and making one's own decisions (*à la* Donald Winnicott and cognitive-behavioral assertiveness) led to seeing the task of parenting as facilitating children's discovery of their own wishes, talents, and choices, while overlooking an older focus on "what we as a family are about, what we stand for, how it is we go about life, what it is about us we're proud of," i.e. the transmission of values and responsibility. The new focus has blossomed into transporting children to "individuation" activities and mirroring their participation, while being too committed at work to be available as guides in the discovery of right and wrong, relationships and integrity. Paradoxically, the additional message to parents that "you as an adult have a right to individuate too" has not infrequently added to divorce the unintended consequence of leaving children under-parented if not parentified.

Marital therapy rightly focused on listening skills, but said little about the result of using those skills over time and the ways shared reflection grows spouses and lovers in wisdom, compassion, integrity and generosity over a lifetime. Marital tensions were frequently framed as negotiations by two independent agents, each pursuing their own interests and desires. The idea that attachment, devotion, generosity and a desire to help each other could be expressions of one's genuine self was little voiced; individuation meant self, not the interweaving of selves in love, family, and life. An entire theme, offering direction and meaning to love, had gone missing. In its absence, negotiations based on individuation often failed to provide the understanding and skills needed for love to survive (cf. Terrence Real's next generation of marital therapy thinking in *The New Rules of Marriage*, 2007).

This reframing of marriage and parenting was taking place amid a historical sea change in the institutional context of daily life that had been unfolding for centuries; therapy was giving little thought to that historical context or its *direction*. Instead of spend-

ing much of our waking hours immersed in an extended family and its connections, modernity meant spending most of the day in non-family contexts: business, government, school, media, and health-care facilities. The number of people in the family shrank to nuclear and sub-nuclear size, as did the hours of real contact among family members. Witnessing this outcome of civilization's "individuation project," psychotherapy began to rethink its understanding of "health" and reassert the value of love, intimacy, family, and parenting. The question of how we grow through loving and being loved, through thinking, reflecting, and making life with an eye to each other—not just an eye to ourselves—is considered an important therapeutic focus in a way it was not in the prior half-century. Individuation has begun to mean working out our inner emotional and mental gyroscopes through the dialogues of intimate life. Where once assertiveness was all the rage, today it is mirror neurons (cf. [www.ted.com/talks/vs\\_ramachandran\\_the\\_neurons\\_that\\_shaped\\_civilization](http://www.ted.com/talks/vs_ramachandran_the_neurons_that_shaped_civilization)).

Enter social networking and texting, inserting the presence of informally chosen, physically absent others into almost any setting. No one need be anywhere without his/her team. Will this mean a reinsertion of family dialogue into the worlds of business, school, etc.? A further invasion of what's left of family by peers? A shared swim in the commercially-created waters of consumerism, devoid of meaningful intimacy? How will connection in such terse and virtual form affect Generation Facebook's understanding of attachment, in-depth connection over time, face-to-face intimacy, and the nature of helping children grow into mature adults?

Our domestic arrangements are also targets of institutional de-differentiation. Each institution—family, economy, politics, religion, military—has its own way of thinking about life, who to consider, what matters, and how to act, and so engages our neurobiology differently. The more complex the institutional life of a society's members, the more neurobiological adaptive capacity is involved in appraising life and making choices. This does not guarantee societal wisdom, but it can help. Sometimes a society reduces the complexity of life to one institution's take on things, e.g. when every aspect of life becomes a venue for religion, as in fundamentalist states, or for commerce, as in the U.S., where businesses

work hard to colonize family life, parenting, sexual desire, romance and love to promote the purchasing-self. Invaded by commercial life on the one hand and calls to fundamentalism on the other, domestic arrangements in the U.S. have to find their way amid a press of messages saying all you need to know about love, sex and parenting can be found through shopping or prayer.

Professor Fuchsman has portrayed the disorganizing impact of changing historical forces on love, family and parenting with great clarity, empathic concern for the wounds being produced, and a sounding of the alarm for the “deep psychological national deficit” being created. The sub-culture of psychotherapy seems to have been responding to those changes as helpfully as possible, while in the process promoting them.

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## **Fuchsman and the Retreat from Marriage and Parenthood**

**Paul H. Elovitz**—The Psychohistory Forum

To a great extent, Professor Fuchsman's paper confirms so much of what we know impressionistically from living in contemporary American society. When current and former students occasionally stop in my office to show off their babies and young children, I've learned to inquire not about their husband, but about the child's father—unless it is already quite clear that this is another case of single parenting. I have quite a fondness for babies and find the image of a newborn at the mother's breast to be one of the most beautiful sights. However, I live in a society with a decreasing

number of babies born to the middle and upper classes, which are failing to reproduce themselves. Among my former students, who were raised overwhelmingly in the suburbs, there is a reluctance to bring new life into this world, which I regret, because most would make good parents.

This brings to the fore the issue of why population is decreasing in the developed world despite considerable efforts by many governments to nurture and reward parenthood through programs of childcare, parental leave, support for early childhood education, and tax credits. The reasons for this decline relate to issues of the spread of birth control, children as old age insurance, the economic and emotional costs of childrearing, fear of commitment, the decline of the ideals of marriage and sex restricted to marriage, changing values, and unrealistic expectations regarding marriage and childrearing.

For responsible human beings, parenthood represents an enormous and lifelong commitment that many avoid for the gratification of the individual rather than the group. Children are simply no longer the economic asset they were on the farm and, with the development of great geographical mobility and the welfare state, there is less of a sense that the enormous investment childrearing requires in our society will pay off in care-giving to the parents in old age. The ideal of sex restricted to marriage, a powerful force (although never close to a reality), has had a greatly diminished sway over the youth of the country since the 1960s. The system of social conformity pushing people into marriage, including the hypocrisy of the sexual double standard, has mostly broken down. The ideals of parenthood, as opposed to the reality, discourage some from this endeavor. In my courses, "Childhood and Youth in History," and "Psychohistory," so many of my students have the fantasy of being either perfect parents or evil, child-abusive ones. This "all good, all bad" parental fantasy puts such an enormous burden on them that it is little wonder that so many avoid bringing children into the world. A highly humanistic couple at a major university comes to mind: they would make wonderful parents, but have opted not to have children for fear that the would-be father might turn out to be an abuser, as his foreign-born and raised father has been to his mother. Childrearing and parenting are always a

work in progress in which there is no such thing as perfection. "All good, all bad" thinking is quite detrimental to the actual raising of children because it creates unrealistic expectations, but every individual and generation must struggle with different aspects of the parenting process. In recent years, the desire of homosexuals to marry and raise children has been a countercurrent to the general trend. It is of great interest, but it is not frequent enough to change the pattern described above.

As Professor Fuchsman points out, many Americans have given up on marriage even after bringing children into the world. Fortunately for our species, most people still are having children, although in diminished numbers.

Families are emotional hothouses. Raising children, with or without the bonds of marriage, usually brings to consciousness unresolved issues from the childhoods of the parents, conflicting ideals of childhood, and impulses within themselves that parents would rather not face or even know about. Children are inclined to act out parental conflicts and disclaimed emotions. Child and family therapists are familiar with the phenomenon of successfully treating one problem child only to have the role of the "family problem" assumed by a younger child. The impulse of some contemporary parents to want to abdicate their ultimate responsibility within the family by being "just friends" with their children can leave the children without the boundaries which protect them from the dangerous temptations of modern life, such as drugs.

Returning to Professor Fuchsman, the commitment of a scholar to his subject is an important issue. Throughout his career he has had an intense interest in the issues of childrearing, marriage and the family, leading him to research them intensely. His research, focusing on the modern family, has been enriched by his teaching of adult students, primarily online. As they dialogue on familial issues and write about them in their thought and research papers, they bring to his attention the tremendous permutations of the contemporary family in a very real, human way.

My admiration for the author of this symposium paper does not keep me from having differences in my approach to materials and of opinion. As a psychohistorian and editor, I prefer to focus

on case studies that present specific human examples of the real-life dilemmas confronting children, parents, grandparents, and members of blended families, rather than focusing, as Fuchsman does, on statistics and academic psychological, sociological, and interdisciplinary studies. I was impressed by his erudition but also frustrated by the absence of a sense of real-life people amidst the many quotes from leading authorities and his numerous statistics. His approach to providing the basic scholarly data has great merit, but we also need far more psychological and psychodynamic concepts, as well as case studies. Had he drawn on his deep knowledge of Freud and psychoanalysis, his paper would have been further enriched.

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## **The Effects on Children**

**Joseph M. Kramp**—Drew University

I find Professor Fuchsman's essay stimulating and agree with him that the increasing number of family breakups due to fractured parental relations exacerbates the increasingly fragile bonds of connection that we share as a society, not to mention the psychological instability it leaves behind for the children of these fractured unions to manage. It is also difficult to say what exactly causes each of these fractured marriages, as the causes must be diverse and numerous.

Nevertheless, Dr. Fuchsman suggests—and I agree—that the pressure on children to perform is symptomatic of larger cultural demands facing parents. I think it would be irresponsible not to suggest that the increasing volatility of world-wide financial markets is in some way one of many causes for the obsession with micromanaging children's lives and feeling a sense of overall uncertainty regarding the future of a marriage or cohabitation. I felt that this was one aspect of Dr. Fuchsman's essay that I wanted to

hear more about from him: how and why does economic instability relate to interpersonal instability, and if the two are related, what makes our current period of economic distress so different from previous periods of history when economic distress still allowed for families to contain their “negative side of family life within boundaries,” as Fuchsman worded it?

I appreciated Fuchsman's remarks on how the gender of a caregiver can lead to certain psychological traits or patterns in children. Nevertheless, I feel that arguments can also easily be made for the relational pathologies of children who come from relatively stable homes with parents of the opposite sex. In other words, I think it is very difficult to claim that there would be better mental health in a home of opposite sexed parents than in one of same sexed parents and vice versa. Dr. Fuchsman's overall posture led me to believe he may feel the same way and that the focus should be on providing an overall stable environment for the child to test out the inevitable idealizations and aggressions toward a number of different caregivers of either sex. I think that part of creating the kind of psychic stability that Fuchsman is calling for depends, in part, on legitimizing new forms of parenting beyond the traditional married household with parents of the opposite sex. Part of what is exacerbating the stability of children's psychic environment is the public refusal of policy makers to permit and celebrate new bonds of fellowship from forming between same-sex or transgender persons.

When particular sexed arrangements for parenting are prized over others, an unacknowledged conflict ensues in the child that makes interpersonal interaction demanding. This is part of what has led to the popularization of new forms of telecommunication that isolate persons physically, while connecting them electronically; this, I believe, has contributed to the deterioration of print media—exacerbating an already downward spiraling social order. The advent of three dimensional pictures (3-D), along with the decline of the businesses that have historically relied on the written word (such as news and publishing industries), signal to me a sabotage of intimacy with both others and oneself.

Reading and solitary study allows for creative expression and assists individuals in moving from projecting their psychic con-

flicts onto others to being able to manage them internally—what we call happiness (in the healthy personality) is merely a side effect of the internalization of this psychic process. The price of visual culture means losing this solitary space, which all of us need to varying degrees to emerge as complex individuals capable of managing all the various personalities and conflicts we have.

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## The Importance of Family Economics

**Florette Cohen**—College of Staten Island, CUNY

Ken Fuchsman outlines the change in overall family dynamics since the 1960s and its impact on children, particularly children of non-intact families. He points out that for many children in the U.S., the changing family, including family disruptions and parental absence brought about by working mothers, divorce, and single, unwed parents, has caused a “deep psychological national deficit for many of our children.” With this I do not disagree. Recent research conducted at CUNY’s College of Staten Island demonstrated that being of either a non-intact or intact family background significantly affects one’s perception of emotional support from family and friends (Victoria Porcell, Honors Thesis, College of Staten Island, 2010).

Fuchsman’s argument begins with a discussion of working mothers and moves on to the frequency of divorce. Much of what is implied in the essay, but never explicitly stated, is that family economics has played and continues to play a large role in the changing American family. While I do not disagree with any of Fuchsman’s key premises, I do believe that the omission of economics in relation to the changing family leaves a gaping hole in his argument. Many marriages are built on the foundation of money and have crumbled with financial downfall. Research indicates that 57% of divorces are due to financial issues (Daniel Kadlec, *Time*, June 28, 1999). Social-psychological research has

shown that money has psychological power. It activates peoples' feelings of self-sufficiency, thus making them less caring for others (Xinyue Zhou, Kathleen Vohs, and Roy Baumeister, *Psychological Science*, 2009).

In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, many believed that a marriage was, at least in part, an exercise in labor specialization. The husband was paid to work outside the home and thus had all of the financial power, while the wife ran the household and raised children. Psychologically, the results were twofold. First, women were often forced to remain in unhappy relationships because they did not have other financial means of support or the sense of efficacy to enable them to survive alone. Both financial and psychological dependency was inevitable.

The second encompasses the concepts behind social exchange theory and equity theory. According to social exchange theory (Richard Emerson, *Annual Review of Sociology*, 1976), the way people feel about a relationship depends on their perceptions of its benefits and costs, the kind of relationship they believe they deserve to have, and their chances for having a better one with someone else. According to equity theory (John S. Adams, *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*, 1965), people are happiest with relationships in which the rewards and costs a person experiences and the contributions they make to the relationship are roughly equal to the rewards, costs, and contributions of the other person. According to the theory, both partners (whether under- or over-benefited) are motivated toward equity.

With each spouse doing a specialized job within the marriage, the family was financially stable and the children and home were always cared for. Economist Gary Becker has argued that when the lines delineating the labor roles blur and both spouses have careers, the overall value of the marriage decreases and divorce is more likely (*A Treatise on the Family*, 1981).

With the rise of the feminist movement, women have been taught to depend on their own skills as a means of support rather than on a husband. Did this transform the face of the American family? As Fuchsman rightfully points out, it did. First and foremost, it transformed the wife's sense of self-sufficiency, and sec-

only outlined what a woman felt she deserved in a relationship.

Another problem in the modern marriage deals with rising housing, food, and fuel costs. In today's modern family, both spouses have to work just to make ends meet. The economic benefits of marriage, then, sum up to shared dwellings. The resulting psychological issues are stress and power struggle, especially if the division of money between the two spouses is unequal. For men especially, when the other spouse earns more it may ignite feelings of insecurity (*Jet*, November 18, 1996).

With more women working than ever before, it's a wonder that the divorce rate hasn't risen since the 1980s. On the contrary, as Fuchsman reported, it has since declined. In the same manner that financial considerations led to the earlier increase in the divorce rate, economic constraints have since forced people to stay together. Simply put, divorce is expensive. There are lawyer, court, state, and local fees. The costs of marriage and divorce have prompted many people to choose cohabitation.

Are they doing the right thing? The answer is not simple. Research has shown that remaining unhappily married is more psychologically detrimental than divorce (Daniel Hawkins and Alan Booth, *Social Forces*, 1998). On the other hand, some couples who recently remained married because they couldn't afford to divorce worked through their problems to resolve their marriage, thus living a happier, more satisfying, healthier and wealthier life than unmarried cohabitants (Lucy Flower, *The Case for Marriage: Why Married People Are Happier, Healthier, and Better off Financially*, 2000). Whether a couple remains married or decides to divorce, the economics of marriage and divorce should not be overlooked in a discussion of the changing modern family.

**Florette Cohen, PhD**, earned her terminal degree from the Social Psychology program at Rutgers University—New Brunswick in 2008. Dr. Cohen is the recipient of several research and teaching awards, including an Executive Women of New Jersey Graduate Merit Award and the Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues (SPSSI) Grants-In-Aid Dissertation Research Award. She is currently an assistant professor at the College of Staten Island of CUNY and may be reached at [florette.cohen@csi.cuny.edu](mailto:florette.cohen@csi.cuny.edu).

## **Consumer Capitalism: Removing Impediments to Oral-Narcissistic Pleasure**

**Donald Carveth**—York University

In “The Family Romance Transformed,” Ken Fuchsman asks: “Why are more than two of every five American children now living separately from continuously married parents?” The answers he suggests include: “changing sexual, gender and relational standards, the rise of female employment, the flourishing consumer culture, rising expectations for fulfillment and success, and less confidence in the stability of long-term relationships.” He writes that:

American marriages in the 1920s began emphasizing companionship rather than separate spheres for spouses. Fulfillment and pleasure was to be sought in deep, intimate, sexual-spiritual marital unions. Modern western culture was moving toward a pleasure-oriented conception of life as the satisfaction of desires and longings, emphasizing the needs and aspirations of the self—whether in a relationship or not. Then, from the 1960s onward, there was a “transition from...companionate to individualistic marriage.” This meant that “contemporary marriage” was envisioned as providing “enhanced freedom, possibilities for self-development, and potential for egalitarian relationships.”

I wish merely to underline the role of advanced consumer capitalism in generating this individualistic, “pleasure-oriented conception of life as the satisfaction of desires and longings.” Such desires are continuously stimulated by corporate advertising, which seeks constantly to provoke the oral-narcissistic cravings, envy and greed that drive the hedonism and acquisitiveness upon which consumer capitalism depends.

Such oral narcissism, envy and greed belong to what Melanie Klein called the paranoid-schizoid position, the most primitive level of mental functioning. In this position the “other” is not yet fully real for the narcissistic subject; relation to it occurs

only through identification in which, according to Freud, the other merely represents the self that I was, am, or would like to be. Mature love—in which the other is not me, but other to and different from me—is not attainable in this position.

Is it then any surprise that, in a consumer capitalist society dependent upon continuous stimulation of primitive oral narcissism, community disintegrates into a collectivity of self-seeking, competitive individuals? Here, striving to maximize personal pleasure, we are ready to abandon the others since they are barely real to us—perhaps even our children as soon as they confront our imperial and imperious selves with their annoying needs and differences.

In advanced consumer capitalism, what Marx described as “commodity fetishism” is extended to the personal and interpersonal spheres in which the “other” and even the self become commodities to be used, consumed, occasionally “refurbished,” but more often discarded when they no longer yield a significant profit over loss. Martin Buber’s “I-It” relations increasingly displace the “I-Thou.”

Just as global capitalism works to disintegrate local, national or international restrictions that inhibit market forces, as individuals we refuse restrictions upon or inhibitions of our free pursuit of gratification. We are often willing to make substantial financial sacrifices to free ourselves from obstacles to maximizing pleasures of various sorts. After all, we live in a consumer society in which money is not something to be saved, but rather spent in order to make annoyances go away and to purchase gratification and the freedom to pursue it.

Even those of us who ought to know better are somewhat disarmed by neo-liberal ideologists, the Ayn Rand-inspired Alan Greenspans among us. Their desire for an unregulated market echoes our own desire to be free of encumbrances in our individualistic pursuit of pleasure; their belief in an “invisible hand” ensuring that selfishness ends up serving the greater economic good mirrors our own self-justifying rationalizations.

In saying all this I do not wish to be misunderstood as moralistically justifying or celebrating the restrictions and inhibitions of

an earlier era (most of which I personally would find insufferable), or as nostalgic conservatism convinced that the past was superior to the present. I am merely emphasizing the degree to which changes in the nature of the family and relationships have been brought about by and reflect the dynamics of consumer capitalism.

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## **U.S. Military Families: Unrecognized Casualties of Modern Warfare**

**Jamshid A. Marvasti**—Psychiatric Practice

**Nina M. Dadlez**—University of Connecticut

U.S. military conflicts during the last 50 years have differed from previous wars. In WWII only 18% of military personnel were involved in ground combat, while in present wars almost 90% have been directly exposed to it. This increases the number of soldiers traumatized by war and thus the effects on their families. Traumatic brain injury (TBI), post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and suicide have been devastating our soldiers and veterans, and their suffering eventually transfers to their families. War trauma has been cited as a contributing factor in family violence, increased divorce, child abuse, addiction, unemployment, homelessness, suicide, and homicide.

In response to Ken Fuchsman's article, we will further address his comments in regard to family disruption, divorce, parentification of children, and single parent homes as they pertain to military families. In military families, when one family member is deployed, all of the family is symbolically deployed. The mission assumes precedence over the family, which is exemplified by the

cliché, “If the military had wanted you to have a family, they would have issued you one.”

The change in U.S. armed conflict during the last 50 years has caused changes for military families as follows:

- Multiple deployments, as many as eight for some, have caused frustration in families and extended trauma in veterans. The number and length of deployments have increased dramatically in comparison with previous wars. The result is that children lose consistency in parenting, which interferes with their normal development. Disruption of parenting causes reduced feelings of security and protection. Children are distracted by worry about the safety of deployed parents and parentification of children leads to role confusion. They become an emotional partner for the often-depressed parent left behind. When the deployed parent returns home, reintegration can be difficult; reassigned responsibilities are reclaimed while the children’s role of emotional partner cannot be reversed so easily.
- Unlike WWII, the distinction between armed combatants and civilians is murky, and one cannot differentiate friends from foes. Urban combat often involves entering the homes of civilians, and tensions are acute. As Edward Tick has said, “When women and children are willing to die to stop us, and an entire population resists us, then our soldiers’ belief in our goodness cracks—and so does their spirit.” Mistakes may be made; increased atrocities and “collateral damage” are carried out by soldiers. The result is often psychic pain (shame, guilt, remorse, PTSD, confusion), which eventually will impact and transfer to the family.
- The majority of soldiers are from young couples. The husband or wife has been deployed multiple times, and the partner is left at home alone for extremely long periods in these “endless wars.” This may facilitate affairs. “Dear John” letters can now be sent via e-mail, causing family disruption. The increase in the number of females deployed has led to an increase of sexual abuse perpetrated by colleagues or commanders. This too would disrupt families, as a traumatized mother will most likely use her psychic energy to deal with her own trauma, leaving

little for family.

- In recent warfare there have been situations in which both parents, or in some cases single mothers, have been deployed. Although this is a volunteer army, there is a prevailing lack of government concern and empathy for the infants and children left at home.
- Financial and employment problems for returning veterans today differ from those of WWII. Many modern soldiers were National Guard members before deployment; they were weekend warriors, and had jobs—possibly high-paying ones. When they return, by law, they should have their jobs back. However, some businesses are bankrupt when soldiers return home, the veteran's position could have been eliminated, or they can be hired at a much lower payment and status. This places new stress on the family system.
- While some military personnel continue to have faith in the ideology fueling their deployment, others have questioned the motives behind the wars they are participating in. During the Vietnam, Iraq, and Afghanistan Wars, some soldiers and their families have developed the idea that they were not fighting “just wars.” They learned that they were fighting to support a corrupt foreign government. The family then no longer views the mission as heroic, and may have moral questions and be divided on the basis of their ideology. Children may hear criticism of the war at school or in news media and have conflicted feelings about the deployed parent (Is Daddy a hero or a baby killer?). As a Vietnam War bomber pilot said, “We are not hated because we practice democracy, value freedom, or uphold human rights. We are hated because our government denies these things to people in third world countries whose resources are coveted by our multinational corporations.”

In general, military families have changed over the last 50 years. There are higher numbers of suicides, homicides, and drug addiction, including to psychotropic drugs. Many of these problems are due to the nature of modern warfare. With all of these problems, military families are left to pick up the pieces and are the unrecognized casualties of war.

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## Family Permutations Reconsidered

**Ken Fuchsman**—University of Connecticut

The transformations in American family life since 1960 have much to do with economics and gender. As a number of the responses to my article focus on these subjects, I will begin with them. It is commonplace to connect the rise in divorce and cohabitation to the changing role of women. In dual-income and dual-career marriages with children, parents may be split between the demands of career and domestic life. Of about 137 million Americans employed full time in December 2009, only about 7% (9.6 million) are self-employed (Bureau of Labor Statistics <http://www.bls.gov/news.release/empsit.nr0.htm>). The rest of us at work have to answer to someone else. Whatever our own level of authority and power on the job, we are also subordinates in a hierarchy. Career advancement, as well as remaining employed, can be dependent on good relationships with those to whom we report. While self-restraint is required on the job, home may be the venue where the tensions of work get acted out. If home was ever a haven from a heartless world, it is likely less so now.

The emphasis on material consumption brings another dimension to these tensions. Don Carveth stresses “the role of advanced consumer capitalism” in what I call the “pleasure-oriented

conception of life as the satisfaction of desires and longings.” Our hunger for objects to ease our cravings, according to Carveth, activates narcissism, envy, and greed. It makes others less real to us, as we become a “collectivity of self-seeking, competitive individuals” who “refuse restrictions upon or inhibitions of our free pursuit of gratification.” The wish to be unfettered, which consumerism unleashes, is bound up with the suppression demanded by fitting into a chain of command. We are divided souls. oedipal struggles, which may be fulfilled and/or frustrated at work, can get transferred to home with role reversals, regression, parentification, competitive narcissism, and projection onto one’s spouse and children. What Daniel Bell called the cultural contradictions of capitalism impact the bliss of domestic life (*The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism*, 1976). As a culture, our commitment to work values and ambitions often means containing emotions in the office and unleashing them at home.

Florette Cohen says that the omission of economics leaves a “gaping hole” in my discussion of changing families. I both agree and take exception. First, the exceptions. There are a number of changes in the structure of American families that are not primarily economic. The emergence of cohabitation as a substitute for marriage probably has as much to do with a belief that an emotional commitment may not last as it does with a cost and benefit analysis. Similarly, never-married mothers and blended families have become more prominent for a multitude of reasons, only one of which is economic. Cohen mentions the feminist movement, which is as much or more political than economic. Where economics comes to the fore in families is that the marital household is a financial unit, and women’s earning power makes them less economically dependent on husbands. The increased economic equality between the sexes substantially alters what marriage is like these days. This new marital balance is one of the greatest changes in the history of family life.

Professor Cohen states that early 20<sup>th</sup> century marriage was “an exercise in labor specialization,” as wives were financially dependent and unable to leave unhappy marriages. Cohen neglects to mention that the Progressive period was an earlier era of feminism, in which divorce was on the rise. In 1890, 4.5% of married Ameri-

can women held paying jobs; by 1920, the rate doubled to 9.0% (James Henretta, et al, *America's History*, 536-538). The divorce rate climbed faster: "in 1890, the first year with data by marital status, 3.0 couples per 1,000 were divorced; this rate increased to 8.0 in 1920, 8.8 in 1940" (U.S. Department of Health Education and Welfare, "100 Years of Marriage and Divorce Statistics United States, 1867-1967," 1973, 9). Divorce rose for reasons beyond finances. An economic analysis is not sufficient to understand domestic developments; other perspectives need to be incorporated. What worries me is that the rational self-interest perspective of much economics is often at odds with theories that focus on emotional and/or unconscious reasons.

Joseph Kramp wants to know if and how economic instability and personal instability are related, and makes reference to the recent recession. On the individual level, personal security may have as much to do with the attachment patterns established in families as do socio-economic factors. Personal resilience is a combination of experience and character. In a nation where economic success and personal worth are often equated, financial downturns might cause greater insecurity to those who are more other-oriented than inner-directed.

Kramp wants to legitimize new forms of parenting. I believe that in most circumstances, two parental figures are better than one. This can be within a heterosexual marriage, a same-sex union, among single parent homes or divorced, blended, and extended families. Anthropologist Sarah Blaffer Hrdy, among others, talks about "alloparenting," where a relative other than mother or father helps care for a newborn. We often tend to underestimate the centrality of the extended family in people's lives and overestimate the traditional nuclear family. It is also important for there to be both active adult male and female family-like models for children.

In a different vein, Jamshid Marvasti and Nina Dadlez discuss military families involved in recent American wars. Andrew Cherlin is concerned over the high degree of turbulence and disruption in American families. Certainly, American military families in a time of multiple deployments have turbulence and disruption as their middle names. In marriages with children, the soldier may be away for a year, come home, and then be sent overseas again. The

family develops one routine when everyone is home, another when only one parent is present, readjusts upon the return of the veteran, then back and forth again. It would not be surprising if these continuing adjustments exacerbate family tensions. Add to this the possibility of traumatic brain injury or post-traumatic stress and there can be a great deal for the family to endure. The authors mention “Dear John” letters from girlfriends and spouses, which brings to mind some events from my experiences in Vietnam. One of my married Army friends in DaNang went home for a 30 day leave, only to find out that his wife was pregnant by his best friend. He was emotionally devastated, and returned to Vietnam a “different man.” The wife of another married man in my unit had stopped writing him. I returned to the States when he still had most of his tour to finish. At his request, I called his wife, who was having the most difficult time without him and did not want to make things worse for him by letting him know. I told her the obvious, that she needed to share her feelings with him. Years later, I heard they divorced not long after his return. Another dreadful factor for military families is that in 2010—for the second straight year—more American soldiers committed suicide than died in combat.

Paul Elovitz correctly characterizes families as “emotional hothouses” where children often “act out parental conflicts and disclaimed emotions.” Elovitz adds that as a psychohistorian, he prefers case studies of family life to the statistics, academic psychology, and sociology that are featured in my article. He is “frustrated” by the absence of real people from my overview. I was seeking to present a macro portrait of families, and to show some of the consequences of changing family structures on children. He favors a more micro approach. In another context, Elovitz writes: “I define psychohistory as an amalgam of psychology, history, and related social sciences” (“How Do You Define Psychohistory,” *Appearance and Reality*, 2009, 2). The big tent of psychohistory needs a balance of the macro and micro approaches, the psychodynamic, the historical, and the academic social sciences. What is absent from my relatively short piece needs to be supplemented by other approaches. Psychoanalytic case studies should address, more than they have, the diverse family structures present in contemporary American families.

Dan Dervin has some concern about my allusion to Freud's term "family romance" in my title. Why Freud chose the phrase family romance is puzzling. The first reference to it occurs in a May 25, 1897 letter to Fliess: "A romance of being a stranger (e.g. in the family)...is found regularly, and serves as a means of bastardizing the relatives in question ...Thus a woman who will not go out by herself is asserting her mother's unfaithfulness" (Freud, *The Origins of Psychoanalysis*, 1954, 205). In Freud's first use of the actual phrase, on June 20, 1898, he writes to Fliess that the "so-called family romance" is both self-aggrandizing and a "defense against incest" of an affair with a sister. "If the sister is not one's mother's child, one is relieved of all blame" (Freud, *The Complete Letters of Sigmund Freud to Wilhelm Fliess*, 1985, 317). Freud seems to be equating romance with fantasy and imaginings used to denigrate another family member. These examples seem to include the unromantic as much as the romantic.

In the 1909 "Family Romances," he says the family romance is "an imaginative activity" that fulfills wishes that are "a correction of actual life" and have both "ambitious" and "erotic" aims. The child wants to be "free from the parents of whom he now has a low opinion and of replacing them by others," usually with a father who has higher social status. A son may fantasize that his mother has secret, extra-marital "love-affairs." The child is motivated by "revenge and retaliation" (Freud, "Family Romances," *S.E. IX*, 1909, 238-239). There is a sexual element in most of these examples, and one that fosters blame on another family member. These imaginings, too, are often unromantic. While it is true that I do not directly address the erotic and ambitious in "Family Romances," Freud's conception has more to do with fantasies of revenge than what is usually called romance.

As well, throughout this essay, Freud is assuming a family structure of biological mother, biological father, and their offspring. My aim is to show that this family structure is less prominent and what the consequences of these changes are. For instance, how would having a step-parent in a blended family impact the psychology of the family romance, especially if the mother did have an affair with a rich man, divorced the child's middle-class father, and then married her affluent lover?

I am much in agreement with Michael Britton that individuation need not be separate from intimacy, connection and commitment. We have had far too much of paranoid individualism, where others are demonized as hostile, devilish usurpers. Humanizing others and retaining the continuity between generations has value; the formation of personal identity can be a dialogue with one's family and diverse cultural traditions. Oddly enough, these concerns about individuation harken back to what Freud wrote in his "Family Romances" essay: "The liberation of an individual, as he grows up, from the authority of his parents is one of the most necessary though one of the most painful results brought about by the course of his development...Indeed, the whole progress of society rests upon the opposition between successive generations" (Freud, "Family Romances," 237). Freud backed away from aspects of this perspective after he experienced himself as the symbolically paternal target by his psychoanalytic sons. Still, the ambivalence between generations is built into the oedipal dynamic. In a rough and tumble world, where the forging of identity emerges from one's own benevolent and hostile feelings, it is still better when it includes self-respect and deep care for the well-being of others. Then parents can adhere more to Erik Erikson's generative stage and, amidst the mixed motivations of all family members, will keep their children's interests front and center. This would be a counter force to the strong cultural drives that promote self vs. other, and that can be less aware of the consequences of actions for children.

*Ken Fuchsman's biography is on page 285. □*

## **The Psychodynamics/Psychology of the Family**

### **Through a Lens Darkly: Transference in Today's Marriage**

**Eva Fogelman**—Child Development Research

**Peace Sullivan**—Training Institute for Mental Health

In a country in which the divorce rate is the highest of any industrialized country, it would pay to take a look at Freud's theory of transference to understand how attachments are formed. The question is why the people to whom we are romantically attached turn out to be those who may be so very wrong for us. Freud developed the theory of transference as he started to understand that his patients were relating to him as they would to a parental figure. In Freud's words, in *An Outline of Psychoanalysis* (Strachey translation, 1949, 31):

The patient is not satisfied with regarding the analyst in the light of reality as a helper and adviser who, moreover, is remunerated for the trouble he takes and who would himself be content with some such role as that of a guide on a difficult mountain climb. On the contrary, the patient sees in him the return, the reincarnation, of some important figure out of his childhood or past, and consequently transfers onto him feelings and reactions which undoubtedly applied to this prototype.

In today's world transference can be understood as a mostly unconscious effort to obtain in a current relationship what was missing from an earlier one. It is also a way of trying to master a past relationship in a current situation. This process distorts a relationship in many treacherous ways. An adult may use childish behaviors because he feels as powerless as an adult as he did as a child relating to an omnipotent parent. An adult may project onto a romantic partner qualities that a parent possessed. Unconscious transference also leads people toward partners who feel familiar. Unfortunately, these feelings can stop one from seeing another person clearly. A woman who was the daughter of an angry father may be unwittingly drawn to an angry partner, even though he may manage to hide that anger in the initial stages of a relationship. In a *folie à deux* both partners may relate to each other through a *mis*asma of past relationships that prevent them from being able to perceive each other clearly—as who they really are. Destructive ways of managing may ensue—from self-medicating to escaping from the relationship by having an affair.

In therapy, one can hope that partners can be encouraged to

inquire about what history they may be repeating. Is the daughter of a narcissistic mother constantly trying to obtain from her husband the attention and love she never received from her mother? Is the son of a castrating father always seeking to prove that he is better than others? Does the daughter of a martyr mother bear every difficulty in silence—leading to a failure of communication and possible resentment of her husband? Is she being the same good little girl who was never allowed to have an opinion as a child? Children of addicts often choose addicts as their partners—albeit unwittingly. People who were emotionally neglected as children may be drawn to partners who will behave in a similar fashion. The son of a mother with borderline personality disorder may find his partner's mood swings to be perfectly normal in the beginning. But ultimately those changes may prove too disruptive to bear.

In today's world where sharing one's experiences, emotions and personal traumas is much more the norm than previously, both women and men have more opportunities to understand that their experiences are not unique. The stigmas of alcoholism, extramarital affairs and even sexual abuse are not such taboo subjects. Therapy itself has lost its stigma. A greater percentage of people are becoming more aware that many experiences are not so unusual, and they begin to search for clarity sooner rather than later. What can become clear in that endeavor is that one is relating to a person not according to who he is but rather as to whom he is imagined to be. Furthermore, the current relationship itself is repeating a past dynamic.

Ms. L., a patient, came into treatment with her husband because she found pornography on his iPhone. It's worth noting that currently, with e-mail and cell phones, it is much easier for partners to discover such evidence. He was not responsive to her sexual overtures and rarely initiated intimate relations. She felt neglected and unwanted. Ms. L. had a variety of strategies to try to get his attention and she felt that she was a failure when he never reciprocated. She was initially attracted to his good looks, his business success and what appeared to be his warmth toward her.

In treatment the therapist learned that Ms. L. had a father who was quite distant, and as a child she constantly tried to get his attention and affection. Her husband, the therapist discovered, had

an overpowering and intrusive mother. His need was to set up protective boundaries that had never worked for him as a child. Viewing pornography and masturbating was a method for him to gain control without submitting to a relationship. The repetition in his marriage set up the very dynamic that Mrs. L. had lived as a child. Both partners were relating to each other in ways that had more to do with repeating the past than moving forward in the present.

Therapy cannot undo the past. But the process of shedding light on how the past intrudes into the present can help partners relate to each other in terms of their real selves. There are fewer inhibitions in today's world. The information highway is faster than ever. The shadows of the past turn up in unlikely places, such as cell phones and computers. Partners are more likely to learn things about each other that previously might have been able to stay under wraps. Today's high divorce rate may be partly a reflection of this increased knowledge. With instant access may come the wish for an instant solution. Since divorce itself is no longer seen as so socially unacceptable, it can be easier to run rather than try to understand and work out solutions. Looking at relations through the lens of transference should illuminate seemingly intractable relationships.

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We welcome Work-In-Progress Seminar  
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## **The Family Life of the Artist and the Cost of Fame**

**Tom Ferraro**—Psychohistory Forum Research Associate

Phyllis Greenacre (1894-1989) is an acknowledged genius in her own right, best known for her classic essay entitled “The Childhood of the Artist.” Her essays on Jonathan Swift and Lewis Carroll are still considered models in psychohistory. She was also director of the Payne-Whitney Psychiatric Clinic in New York Hospital and president of the American Psychoanalytic Association. As part of the Psychohistory Forum’s Work-In-Progress Seminars last spring, Nellie Thompson conducted a seminar on Greenacre’s work on artists. I would like to take this opportunity to expand on one of the concepts discussed in that seminar: the psychodynamics of the changing family.

Greenacre wrote at length about what she calls “collective alternates” in the childhoods of the gifted. She feels that thanks to genetic endowment, the gifted child has a greater than average sensitivity to all sensory stimulation, meaning they are apt to cathect and attach to the sensory world as strongly as they attach to their mother, the primary object. Greenacre feels that these attachments to collective alternates lead to profound consequences in their development, and that they will not go through oral, anal, phallic and oedipal developmental stages. She points out that this results in a deep love affair with the world at large and eventually, if all goes well, the gifted will find a particular domain to be trained within. She also emphasizes, contrary to seeing this along the typical narcissistic lines of development, that the works produced by the artist are not merely supplying narcissistic gratification to the self but are what she calls “love gifts” to the world, and that the artist’s work is truly fueled by a love affair with the audience. Greenacre was most respected for her refusal to pathologize artists in any way and for her attempt to understand their dynamics rather than to diagnosis them as either schizoid or narcissistic. Her unusual and unique interpretation of the early development of the artist suggests that the artist’s family life is qualitatively different from the average person’s. If one falls in love with collective alternates (sensory experi-

ences) rather than another human being, it may be predicted that the individual's life may be both turbulent and exhausting, and in ways chaotic as well. It is as if the artist has a vast, endless array of faceless lovers that he or she must satisfy and remain devoted to. This would explain the total exhaustion, burnout, and eventual death from which so many of our greatest artists suffer.

To assess the truthfulness of her theory about collective alternates and the love affair with the world, let us review a few of our most famous American artists through their childhoods and later lives, or through their obsessive love of the encoded symbols.

Truman Capote (1924-1984) described his childhood as one of unrelenting loneliness and isolation. One of his more vivid screen memories (a distressing childhood memory which is repressed and screened by another memory) is of being locked in a room and forced to wait for his mother, who frequently spent her evenings with a variety of men. Later in life Capote became an alcoholic and wrote his books by isolating himself from humanity to concentrate. He would often have a breakdown after a novel was complete.

Paul Taylor (1930-) is one of America's greatest living choreographers, who describes a childhood of loneliness and lack of family attachment. He would be moved to various homes and raised by distant relatives. The body of his work is all about the American way of life, and anyone with any knowledge of his dances can easily see his love affair with America itself rather than with a family.

Jasper Johns (1930-) is considered by many to be our most acclaimed American artist. He too was moved from home to home as a child, felt largely alone, and now lives a reclusive life in Connecticut. The symbols that he uses over and over include numbers, the American flag, the American map, and a blueprint of his childhood home. These encoded messages are all lovingly rendered, which gives them the luscious quality he has been noted for. His obsessive and loyal attachment to these symbols is a characteristic that all of these artists share. The symbols, or collective alternates, serve as mother substitutes. Johns' lonely, depressed childhood is being worked through as he obsessively renders these imprinted

images of childhood. He states the idea of drawing a flag came to him in a dream.

Jackson Pollock (1912-1956) was the first abstract expressionist to sell a work, *The She Wolf*, to the Metropolitan Museum of Modern Art. It is a largely abstract image based upon the mythological story of the wolf that suckled Romulus and Remus, the twin founders of Rome. When asked to describe the meaning of the painting, Pollock merely said, "*The She Wolf* came into existence because I had to paint it."

Pollock's response is a very good illustration of a screen memory for collective alternates in general. All these artists were suckled and fed by the world at large rather than by their mothers. This is what Greenacre meant when she stated that the gifted grow up in a different family than the rest of us. They are suckled by the world of sensation and perception rather than by a mother. This is why they all have a "love affair with the world" and why they produce their "love gifts" for us, the audience.

It is also why so many of them wind up dead or exhausted, or self-destruct. Consider Michael Jackson (1958-2009), Kurt Cobain (1967-1994), Janis Joplin (1943-1970), and Jimi Hendrix (1942-1970). Bob Dylan (1941-) had a breakdown following his first world tour in the early 1970s. When asked what he felt about audiences that booed his use of an electric guitar, he famously said, "Ah, I don't mind the boos at all. But they can kill you with kindness, you know." An artist in the world of sport, Tiger Woods has always been reclusive and shy in public. Yet he probably unconsciously orchestrated his own destruction to give himself a break from the galleries of fans. When I interviewed him at the 2002 U.S. Open at Bethpage, I was struck by how extremely perceptive and intelligent he was. At one point in that tournament, at the height of his public fame, he had to use a portable toilet on the course and when he emerged received applause from a thousand spectators. He was shocked by this, as well he should have been.

Gwyneth Paltrow remarked after receiving her second straight Oscar, "This much attention is just not healthy." How right she was! I believe Phyllis Greenacre's concept of collective alternates is quite correct. Due to great genetic endowment, the gifted

child, in certain respects, attaches more to the world at large than to their immediate family. This produces in them a love affair with the world and if they go on to gain success, wealth, and fame, they will experience extreme exhaustion, self-destruction, or early death.

These gifted artists have a love affair with the world and the result of this can be unbelievable wealth and fame. But this also means that the artist runs the risk of exhaustion and in some cases death. The artist is the hero of our times and they bring us, their family, what they have found in their giftedness, in their creativity. One can even see this dynamic in super hero myths. Superman, Spiderman, and Batman all work tirelessly for the public, but none are allowed to have families. This is more anecdotal proof of the profound discovery that Greenacre made.

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## **The Decline of Marriage Due To Psychosexual Motivations**

**Joel Markowitz**—Mount Sinai Hospital

There are significant psychosexual reasons for marriage's decline. Our collective resistance to psychodynamic thinking and to the importance of group-mind dynamics obscures these more fundamental causes. Psychohistory illuminates the changes that have taken place in the psychodynamic nature of Western marriage.

The initial and primary conflict of the Jewish and Christian group-minds was with the pagan mindset, which had dominated all major groups for thousands of years. The pagan mindset is active-oedipal (very similar to the competitive mindset of four-year-old boys), like that of pagan gods, kings, and heroes. All are competitive-aggressive and competitive-sexual, as are four-year-old boys and all higher mammals. The Jewish and Christian god criminalized pagan sexual (and other) practices. Unlike pagan gods, the monotheistic god could read our conscious minds. Guilt—the fear of their terrible punishment—made us repress those fantasies and impulses. Monogamous marriage supported that repression by

greatly limiting sexual expression. The Christian Era was our collective latent-oedipal stage (period of psychosexual development)—i.e., its mindset was very similar to that of preadolescent boys. It was sexually repressed; highly sublimated; focused on male activities (athletics, etc.) and focused away from women.

We are the only animals to have emerged from active-oedipal to latent-oedipal development, and thereby into ongoing psychosexual development. In emerging, we broke the pagan cycle of destruction, decadence, waste, and ruin; and our sublimation of the repressed libido led to ongoing progress. We are only recently emerging from “latency”: an asexual period during which sexual fantasies, feelings, and interests are heavily repressed and sublimated. It also led to sexual frustration and to much neurosis.

Many early Christian sects probably became extinct through the celibacy inspired by latent-oedipal principles. Although Jews and Christians condemned sexual pleasure as “lust,” they found ways to procreate. Celibacy was idealized and the most righteous people—Christ, his parents (the “Virgin” Mary and Joseph), his disciples, and Church monks and nuns—were asexual. The flawed populace was enjoined to reproduce but only under very special circumstances. Burdened by Original Sin and sexual guilt, they had to avoid lust and mate only with the goal of procreation under special dispensation from god. A couple could be sexual only through monogamous marriage.

The new groups benefited collectively from the sexual deprivation of their individuals. Frustrated sexual energies were invested in group goals, and those groups became in material ways more successful than the others. Their individuals benefited secondarily from group success. Sexual libido focused on the ongoing material, scientific, artistic, political, and social progress that has characterized the Christian Era.

Thus, the fundamental psychosexual reason that marriage is failing today is the same reason that youngsters, who avoided sex during the latent-oedipal period of preadolescence, mature into young adults who crave sex. Christian Era preadolescent innocence is similarly evolving into the sexual imperatives of early maturity. Sexual pleasure—initially present in oedipal four-year-olds—is

evolving into its mature forms as our groups are themselves becoming increasingly adult.

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## **Husbands and Wives: Men and Nymphs**

**Peter Petschauer**—Appalachian State University

Long before the "Holy Family" emerged as the ideal in the Judeo-Christian world, the Myceneans (Greeks) created their own version. While the Holy Family continues through the New Testament, church services, and the Nativity Scene, the Greek version was well known until recently because of the *Odyssey*; but over the last two to three generations it has been read less and less.

These are obviously very different interpretations of family. One is about a wily Greek hero, his dutiful wife, and their aspiring son. The other portrays an older man, an innocent mother, and a son whose arduous future is already known. Yet both are images of a nuclear family and thus have influenced the way westerners perceived and continue to identify ideal families.

As boys in monasteries in Europe, my fellow students and I read the *Odyssey* in Greek. Here was the story of the model Greek family; at least it seemed so to us. Odysseus was our favorite, probably because he went off to war against the Trojans and overcame the most amazing obstacles on an adventurous journey home. In the meantime, Penelope waited loyally at home, weaving on the same cloth for years; her tale was not nearly as intriguing to us, but we admired her willingness to refuse young suitors. We ignored their son as well, even though we sensed that he would accomplish great deeds in the future, just like his father.

As young students, we did not think of the grand, compara-

tive implications of these two stories even as we memorized large sections by heart. The unique connections between the ancient Greek family and the Holy Family were juxtaposed neither by our teachers nor ourselves. To us these two families existed in unconnected and different Mediterranean realities. Further, it was unrealistic for us to even consider the Holy Family as a realistic family model. They were *holy* and we were not. Their historical existence was made more real through images in various monastery chapels but we never looked at them as our ideal family because the father is permanently absent after the first few months, and the story centers on the experiences of the mother and son. In the *Odyssey*, despite the absence of the father from home, it is his story that we follow most. We knew every detail about Odysseus' return to his homeland of Ithaca. We were totally intrigued by every move and especially by his amazing victory, upon his return, over the nobles who courted his wife. Before the heroes of TV, films, and video games, this infinitely clever hero captured our imaginations. Conversely, Joseph's role was boring and dying on a cross was not a teenage boy's aspiration.

Similarly, we missed the other side of Odysseus. Our *patres* (monks who are also priests) never said much about the nymph Circe, who held him back on her island for ten years. Today, in this country, we know even less about Odysseus' struggles to leave this nymph. If we did, we would immediately recognize the situation. Circe is of course the younger woman who is endowed with the charms of a nymph, the same ones that attracted Odysseus to Penelope years earlier. Except maybe in the Greek case, she was a "good match" for a king; she would bear him many children and thus they could pass on the kingdom. We gingerly ignored that the "other" woman is as attractive to him as his wife was when she was of that engaging age when both were younger. More importantly, Circe is reminiscent of every secretary, administrative assistant, or "soul partner," who ever held a man with her youthful charms. The German word *bezirzen* originated with this unique past. The word "bewitch" misses the point; Circe was not a witch, a Christian phenomenon implying sinful behavior. She was a nymph, in the much older sense because neither she nor he was sinning when he spent a decade on her island. Also unlike the

witch, she does not become old or ugly. Odysseus continues his homeward journey not because she loses her charms, although he does seem to get tired of her, but because he feels duty bound.

There is no such family drama in the life of the Holy Family. After the initial excitement about Immaculate Conception (at that point we knew nothing about older siblings), family life seemed to settle into a routine. Jesus first learned Joseph's carpentry trade and then started to teach. Not only was this story rather simple, it wasn't even the profession we were interested in. We were to be priests, that is, gymnasium and university-trained men. If there was any similarity among us, it was that Jesus knew parts of the Old Testament as well as the scribes. We were all students trying to outsmart our teachers, and his chasing the merchants out of the temple is as close to a young boy's adventure as it gets.

Why retell these perceptions of a bunch of kids in a European monastery? In part, it is to show how earlier generations learned their perceptions. Also, it is to see how two seemingly related stories were, and still are, absorbed very differently. Only older, educated Americans may recognize the past I experienced. A child today will not know much about the nuclear Greek family, and he or she may know a bit about the Holy Family, although most of my students never read the Old or New Testaments and the imagery we had around us is for the most part missing from non-Catholic sanctuaries and temples. Their understanding of the world originates with television, games, movies, and social networking.

No doubt, American men for some time have not been thinking of Odysseus and Circe when they stepped away from their partners; if they knew of them, they might think of themselves as the wise Odysseus and see their wives as waiting, maybe even pining, for them. But they are like Odysseus in that they want to be on an island: far away, safe, and forever young. Men are also not thinking of the Holy Family when they "temporarily" release themselves from their marriage partner. Although Joseph stepped into the background, his story did not entail violating marriage.

It may surprise psychohistorians that many men violate their marriages even though they say they love their wives and do love them, just like Odysseus. So why violate the contract and trust that

binds them and thus risk everything that they hold dear?

One clue originates with the phone conversation that Governor Sanford of South Carolina tried to have with his wife Jenny after he announced his relationship with a woman in Buenos Aires. According to Jenny, he called after the public "confession" and asked her how well he had done. He was surprised at her response and she at his. He still trusted her to tell him the truth despite her loss of trust in him. It reminded me of another, albeit more famous, questioner, the Russian Crown Prince Peter, later Peter III, who asked his wife, later Catherine II, about his appeal to his red-headed mistress.

By any of the usual standards of American life, such questions are significant despite seeming naive. In both cases, it seems that the wife became the mother and the husband became the son asking for approval and consent for his latest relationship. It is almost as if he was saying, "Look at the nice girl I met; please approve?"

So, how do we explain Odysseus or a husband leaving his wife's side and bed?

First, we like to deny that the "other" woman may be as attractive to him as his wife was when she was of that same age when he courted her. The "other" is also somehow free and unencumbered, also usually free of children. That is the point of Circe in Odysseus' life.

Second, we are still a mainly Protestant country that remains somewhat publicly puritanical when it comes to sexual attraction; we are willing to deny that men (or women) might have sexual attractions after marriage, and may want to explore them with women (or men) other than the ones to whom they are already linked. It does not generally occur to us that the sexual instinct is more powerful even than the rather late invention of "love."

Third, we do not talk much about the deeper reasons that might bring a man to this point, namely that he feels young enough, maybe one last time, to explore other *opportunities*.

Because of a Christian heritage we emphasize the "affair," and in the process miss the important point of the ancient Greek

family and the Holy Family. That point was that family is more important than the individuals or the affair. The family was more important for many reasons, probably the most significant being their property and mission. If we were truly interested in *the family*, either as a propertied entity or as a mission for the son like that of the Holy Family, we would value it sufficiently not to let it be destroyed over an affair.

But the reality is that we value the individual above all and thus consider an affair an affront to another individual. In our world, we do not often welcome back the conquering hero who just happened to have come across a nymph. After all, he betrayed the almighty “me.” Never mind that he may long since have realized that his family is more important to him (and he to his family) than a nymph. Nor do we value the quiet man who steps into the background so that a son or daughter can fulfill his or her mission. If we did, we would cherish the success of our children more than the last outburst of our sexuality.

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## **Mr. Mom and Mrs. Breadwinner: A Personal Account**

**Audrey Falk**—Towson University

My husband and I are Mr. Mom and Mrs. Breadwinner. I work a full-time job and provide the medical and other benefits as an assistant professor at a metropolitan university while my husband, Jonathan, takes care of our sons, Benjamin, two and one-half, and Jacob, eight months. Jon works a few hours per week at a bookstore and occasionally as a personal running coach (via the Internet and the telephone); the second job is his passion and the

first gives him a needed escape to the world of grown-ups on a routine basis.

Jon and I assumed our roles for financial and ideological reasons. I was in a position to support our family; Jon was between professional roles and did not have a job that could support us. We both preferred the idea of having one of us home with our children over the alternative of sending our young ones to daycare. Thus, when our first son was born in 2008, we decided to try out the roles of Mr. Mom and Mrs. Breadwinner. We entered these roles cautiously and accepted that it might be a short time before we needed to come up with an alternative plan.

Although happy as a couple and as parents, we find being Mr. Mom and Mrs. Breadwinner uniquely challenging. Despite the fact that there are about 154,000 stay-at-home dads in the United States ("America's Families and Living Arrangements: 2010," U.S. Census Bureau, 2010, see <http://www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/hh-fam/cps2010.html>) as well as a growing number of dads who are more involved and engaged in their children's lives, when my husband goes out and about with our boys—to the playground, to the community center, to the library, and so forth—he does not feel fully included in the banter, commiserating, and laughter that flows seemingly effortlessly between the moms. It is not that he is mistreated; no one is blatantly rude to him, and perhaps it has more to do with his own introversion than anything else. But he often comes home from such activities feeling dejected, more isolated than perhaps he would have if he had spent the morning at home with our boys.

Sometimes when Jon is out with the boys he encounters other dads who are also alone with their children. Yet even the dads do not extend affection toward Jon. Are these dads too macho to extend a little warmth toward one another? In formal programming, Jon finds a proliferation of "Mommy and Me" activities with no corresponding "Daddy and Me" programs. He wonders if he is welcome at these programs and whether he should attend. Jon's experience suggests that stay-at-home fathers may experience isolation that is beyond, or at least qualitatively different from, the isolation often experienced by stay-at-home moms.

I, too, feel isolated. Although I know that more are out there, I know only one other Mrs. Breadwinner. While there are stay-at-home dad groups available on the Internet and face-to-face in some communities, I am not aware of any formal support networks for breadwinning moms. Yet, on average, women still earn about 80% of men's pay ("Highlights of Women's Earnings in 2009," Report 1025, U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, June 2010). Mrs. Breadwinners, unlike men who are the primary or sole providers for their families, are still the ones to become pregnant, birth, and nurse children.

Our families are accepting of our atypical roles. However, when we tell extended family, acquaintances, or people we happen to meet about our roles within our family, they sometimes appear uncertain how to respond. I have found that some individuals can only accept us if we put our situation in the context of the economy and pretend that the situation is only temporary, until the economy changes and Jon lands a great job. When these individuals see us as doing what we need to do to support our family, our situation makes sense to them. Some seem unable to believe that we are choosing a nontraditional arrangement because it works for us and when they begin to suspect that we derive satisfaction and fulfillment from our roles, they are confused and wonder what is wrong with us.

When we were expecting our first child, the books and articles we read about pregnancy and parenting foreshadowed some of the challenges that we have encountered. The parenting books we found were mainly written for women and about women. They didn't explain in a serious or equitable way the role of men. For example, one book we have at home includes tips for a dad in the sidebars. Examples include buying his wife a present or taking her out to dinner. Even before our boys were born, we knew that these texts were not speaking to us and to our situation in a way that made sense. My children's father is not a sidebar. We were both excited when we found a book written explicitly for expecting dads, but it was dumbed down to such a degree that it was laughable.

In some ways, my husband and I assume traditional gender roles. My husband pays when we go out to eat, for example; he takes out the trash and deals with gutters and mice. I, on the other

hand, wash the dishes, send cards, schedule doctor and other appointments, and maintain our social calendar. While we challenge some social norms, we embrace others as opportunities to be “normal.”

We fantasize about switching roles. I sometimes have the sense that Jon thinks whatever I am doing at the moment (working at my job, caring for the children at home, and so forth) must be the easier or better task. But we haven't given serious consideration to a role change.

As for our children, we believe they are fortunate to have two very involved parents. Beyond the love and nurturing that they get from both of us, it is hard to know how they will be different by virtue of our atypical arrangement. We hope that they will grow up to challenge stereotypes, embrace differences, and be open-minded to imagination and possibility.

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## **Back to the Future: Three-generation Families in a Changing Economy**

**Pat Oles**—Skidmore College

The era of the nuclear family is ending. Adolescents leave home later, delaying marriage, family, and career far longer than recent generations. In addition, with the elderly living longer, the middle generation must also care for their parents. With young adults staying or returning home and the middle generation caring for the elderly, the three-generation household is back.

The Generation X (Gen X—those born from the 1960s until about 1982) parenting style developed out of the experience this group had with divorce, work-family conflict, financial constraint, and ineffectual social institutions as children. An elevated psychological and financial investment in their children produced a parenting style some described as intrusive and over-involved. Competitive nursery schools and soccer moms became iconic representa-

tions of these parents, and armed with e-mail and cell phones, helicopter parents (hovering overhead) had trouble letting go and followed their children to college (Neil Howe and William Strauss, *Millennials Go to College*, 2007).

When students returned home after college, the popular press and some sociologists were quick to blame Gen X parents for producing immature young adults. Critics claimed young adults were ill-equipped for the adult demands of work and incapable of committed relationships. With parents providing care and financial support, and with sex readily available without the constraints of marriage, why would anyone want to grow up?

Jeffrey Arnett described this extended adolescence more positively, positing a new and distinct life stage, *emerging adulthood*, defined as a self-focused period of exploration wherein young adults experiment with different possibilities in love and work. In Arnett's scheme, birth control, changing gender roles, and demands for an extended and expensive education created social structures that permitted—required—adolescents to take up adult responsibilities at a slower pace (*Emerging Adulthood: The Winding Road from the Late Teens through the Twenties*, 2004).

An economic perspective yields a different view. Richard Settersten and Barbara Ray (*What's Going on with Young People Today? The Long and Twisting Path to Adulthood*, 2010) describe how 40 years of diminishing economic opportunity, exacerbated since the 2007-10 recession, undermine the normative schedule for leaving home, producing uncertainty and intergenerational dependence. The result is an uncertain set of social institutions struggling to come to grips with change both subtle and profound.

As adolescents, contemporary young adults carefully selected the college they would attend with an eye on the curriculum and the long-term benefits of the college's brand. However, the presumed benefits of these careful, thoughtful, and confident choices about school, work, and relationships have not worked out. Academic achievement, careful internship planning, and networking cannot overcome the desultory macroeconomic context this generation faces.

The anxiety, ambivalence, and uncertainty are evident in

conversations with young adults. Rick, a college graduate with honors in biology and music, reports three years after graduation:

I am 25 now and working as a freelance photographer. I looked for a job in my field for two years and the only time I was a finalist, a guy with a Ph.D. got hired. There is no way I am going back to school to get a doctorate, spend another \$80,000 to get a job that starts at \$50,000. At least this gives me some money and free time. My parents are cool, but living at home is a drag. We kid about it, they say I can't live with them after I get married or come with them when they retire, but I don't know when I will move out.

Rick smiles awkwardly, a little uncomfortable. He rationalizes, caught between my reaction, his expectations, and the difficult job market. Smart and accomplished, he made sensible decisions and worked hard throughout adolescence and college. His parents are not holding him home, unwilling to let go, and his stay with his parents is not a purposeful extension of adolescence.

Rick's judgment is good and he is competent. He has his own business as a freelance photographer, a good relationship with his parents, and talent, but he is not who he planned to be. He has time and money but not a sense of his future. Living at home makes sense, but it is not moving forward. Rick believes he should leave home, but there are no jobs. His business is not a calling and was not planned. Wages and benefits are declining. Recent health care reform allowing young adults to stay on their parents' health insurance suggests the solution involves continued dependence on parents. This solution, like living at home, is not really a solution.

Rick is deferring marriage and family, repressing concern about the future and minimizing anxiety about depending on his parents for care. Humor helps; it reduces the threat, but Rick and his parents sense the problem. What if he can never leave?

Rick's parents face a complementary economic squeeze and changing expectations about their life course. The cost of college and extended support of their son is a financial problem, their medical costs are increasing, poverty is a precondition or outcome of

care in a nursing home, and public pressure to reduce entitlement spending grows. The recession eliminated savings and countless home mortgages are “under water.” For this generation of parents, these are significant changes—not temporary setbacks.

Families depend on norms and expectations to envision the future and organize the present. New economic conditions threaten normative expectations about children leaving home and retirement. Families must adapt with new plans, structures, and narratives. The conversations with young adults temporarily living at home about rent, sex, alcohol, and drugs will inevitably move on to discussions about marriage, child rearing, retirement, and elder care. This generation must recreate adulthood; develop family structures that support members through a changing life course and narratives about what is normal and expected.

Twentieth century prosperity gave rise to the nuclear family and an ideology stressing independence and mobility. However, conditions have changed. Instead of living independently, forming nuclear families that outsource child and elder care, emerging economic conditions bring us “back to the future”—the three-generation household.

Nuclear families sacrificed the expectation that members would care for each other over the whole life course in service of economic returns that proved illusory. In *Third World America* (2010), Arianna Huffington argues that worsening income inequality in the United States is a harbinger of decline to third world economic status. The three-generation household is a proven response to such economic conditions and clinicians may have to relinquish contemporary expectations about young adults, career development, and developmental trajectories to serve families adapting to these conditions.

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## Two Streams of Polygamy in America

**Allan Mohl**—Psychohistory Forum Research Associate

Families throughout the ages have taken all shapes and sizes—particularly in patriarchal systems. For example, polygamy, the social arrangement that permits a man to have more than one wife at the same time, exists in all parts of the world. From our present knowledge, there are very few non-literate tribes in which a man is not allowed to enter into more than one union. In fact, some ethologists now believe that only one to two percent of all species may be monogamous ([www.megaessays.com/viewpaper/41489.html](http://www.megaessays.com/viewpaper/41489.html)). Among the 849 human societies examined by the anthropologist George Murdock (*Social Structure*, 1949), 75% practiced polygamy.

In America, we have moved from including the extended family under one roof, to the nuclear family, to the atomistic family (where the individual takes precedence over family ties). However, one branch of Mormonism, the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (FLDS), consists of some polygamous families that were once led by Warren Jeffs. These families believe in the *Book of Mormon* and see themselves as loyal followers of its sacred principle.

Most Mormon Fundamentalists believe that Armageddon is imminent. Warren Jeffs, the disgraced prophet of FLDS, was absolutely sure of it. In public statements Jeffs condemned the bloody work of Islamic terrorists, but viewed the attacks of 9/11 as a “magnificent portent and a cause for great hope.” Excitedly, he told his followers that the eruption of terrorism against the United States was an unmistakable sign that the “End Times” were indeed at hand, and very soon God’s chosen people would be lifted up to experience eternal glory (John Krakauer, *Under the Banner of Heaven*, 2003, 320).

In 2007, after a two-year manhunt that landed him on the FBI’s ten most wanted fugitives list, Jeffs’ reign was forcefully ended by his capture. He was convicted of rape as an accomplice for his role in arranging a marriage between a 14-year-old girl and his 19-year-old first cousin. (The conviction was overturned in July

2010 and a new trial ordered.) Jeffs still believes that he committed no crime and that he is a man—and in fact a prophet—of God. Stephen Singular, in his book *When Men Become Gods* (2008), pointed out that as a leader and self-proclaimed prophet of the FLDS, Jeffs held sway over thousands of followers for nearly a decade. His rule was utterly tyrannical. In addition to coercing young girls into polygamous marriages with older men, Jeffs reputedly took scores of wives, many of whom were his father's widows. Television, radio, and newspapers were shunned, creating a sheltered community where polygamy was prized above all else.

Singular traced Jeffs' rise to power and the concerted effort that led to his downfall. His arrest and trial were spurred on by law enforcement, private investigators, the Feds, and, perhaps most vocal of all, a group of former wives of polygamy seeking to liberate young women from the arranged marriages they had once endured themselves. Biographies by Irene Spencer, *Shattered Dreams* (2007); Elissa Wall, *Stolen Innocence* (2008); and Carolyn Jessop, *Escape* (2007) reveal the subservience of underage girls forced into polygamous marriages with older men, and how they broke away from emotional and sexual bondage.

In contrast, a TV interview that I watched on October 14, 2010 by Oprah Winfrey of TLC's reality TV show, "Sister Wives" stars Kody Brown and his polygamous family (consisting of his four wives Meri, Janelle, Christine, and Robyn, and their 16 children) indicated a fairly well adjusted, contented group. Only Meri, the wife of 20 years, confessed to sometimes having feelings of jealousy brought to the fore prior to her husband's marriage to Robyn, his fourth wife ([www.oprah.com/oprahshow/Inside-the-Lives-of-a-Polygamous-family](http://www.oprah.com/oprahshow/Inside-the-Lives-of-a-Polygamous-family)).

A separate sequence revealed a discussion between sometimes-jealous Meri and her husband. Meri questioned how he would feel if she had an affair with another man. Kody, insisting that he loves all his wives, declared that "the vulgarity of the idea of you with two husbands or another lover sickens me. It seems wrong to God and nature." He went on to say, "I understand this seems somewhat hypocritical and I don't know how to get around it," but asserted that he would not stop her.

Oprah also questioned two of the adolescents in the Brown family. The adolescent boy stated that he calls his biological mother "Mother" and the other women in the family by their first names. He reported that he has many friends in school who live in traditional families, and his primary goal is to do well in high school and go on to college. Both he and his "biological" sister report that they enjoy living within such a large family system. They both maintain that they all love each other and get along well.

In Carolyn Jessop's biography, *Escape*, she states, "Every woman in a plural marriage knows that her only power in life will come from her relationship to her husband...I felt hostile to Merrill. I hadn't wanted to marry him and never wanted to sleep with him. But I knew that my survival and the caliber of life I could provide for my children depended on my forging a relationship with Merrill. Pleasing him or at least not aggravating him was a skill I was determined to master no matter what it cost me at a personal level. Sublimating my needs to his, felt natural to me at twenty-two. I knew this was how generations of women had lived in my family" (178).

The Brown family interview would seem to reveal a sharp contrast to the polygamous families under the umbrella of the FLDS. If this is the case, it would appear that if coercion is not utilized and women are allowed to maintain choice and independence, the children of non-coercive polygamous families would be more apt to thrive with nurturing and love. On the other hand, it would be likely that offspring of women and girls who have been coerced into marriages may perhaps develop emotional and psychological problems. Any religious group that deprives its followers of the right to make choices, forces women to be totally subservient to men and brainwashes children in church-run schools is behaving in a criminal, or at least immoral, manner and needs to be exposed. More research needs to be done on the effects on children of polygamous families, even if they claim, as did the Brown children on Oprah, to be well-adjusted. This is especially the case for families in which women are totally subservient to their husbands.

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## **Family Crises and Healing by Nature**

**Ehor Boyanowsky**—Simon Fraser University

**Alexei Boyanoswsky**—Ship's Captain

### **A Father's Story**

In my childhood, there was a period—in retrospect, perhaps during her climacteric—in which my mother, usually a vivacious and fun-loving woman, would erupt into long spells of distressed wailing and manically-driven insomnia. If the episode occurred in our subarctic winter, my father's strategy was to repair to the bunkhouse at the mine where he worked. I found respite at age 11 in the open air hockey rink across the street where I would shovel snow, clear the ice, and play hockey, often by myself, far into the night, until I was so exhausted that sleep was assured, the wailing notwithstanding. I was afraid that so sleep-deprived, I might lose control. Though essentially a gentle soul, I had recently startled myself by lashing out at a bully who threatened me in the schoolyard. That uncharacteristically violent reaction alerted me to my sudden vulnerability to provocation. I wanted to avoid any such outburst in my home at all costs.

If the rink was not free, I would head out across the starlit lake, the crunching of the snow oddly comforting in the silence of the frozen winter night. Those were our only strategies of escape until spring came and my mother's turning the earth barefoot, planting seeds and bulbs, and weeding had a powerfully salutary effect on her emotional state.

A little later in the season, whenever my mother grew restive, my father and I would suggest heading into the woods to look for berries and mushrooms, and, although deathly afraid of bears, she would never turn us down. It was basically parallel activity: breathing in the spicy smell of spruce and pine in winter, and as the luxury of walking upon soft and comforting moss and the scent of the berries took hold, tension would evaporate and soon murmuring

conversation, then spirited comments, and even hearty laughter would follow. I still remember those transformative moments as mystical, magical. They crystallized for me the power of the environment to overcome family distress even in extremis.

As an adult, in a very different marital era in North America, I have followed the same formula during times of crisis, transporting my wife and children to a place in nature large and sensually overpowering that allows us to place our angst in perspective, letting the sea, the forest, or the river overcome us. They have always had the desired effect, at least until the return to the crisis environment of the home.

I have twice been a single dad of a teenager, once of a daughter and once of a son. Many times I have recreated those places as sanctuary: places where one can move and talk in the comfort of positive memories, and the environment overwhelms with positive associations, prompting a return to childlike peace of mind. Those places override the idiosyncrasies of individuals, their individual torments, effecting a return to personas within the family that are comforting through their positive associations even as the 21<sup>st</sup>-century modal family itself morphs into something unfamiliar. So far, that modus operandi appears more effective than drugs or even in-depth counseling alone (that is, without a major change in environment) over a wide spectrum of family issues that ranges from depression to existential crises.

For me the idea that changing the environment was a powerful therapeutic strategy, even for individuals in extreme psychic pain or physically dependent on narcotics, stemmed from the research of Bruce Alexander at Simon Fraser University. Realizing that the sterile existence of drug addicts parallels the sterile wire cage lives of rats made physically addicted to morphine, he divided addicted rats into two groups, one of whom also had unlimited access to morphine along with food and water, but could also interact, fight, procreate, and build nests. Those rats chose "cold turkey" to go through withdrawal symptoms rather than continue taking morphine. The wire-caged addicts, as reported in the medical literature, preferred morphine to food and water, unto death.

### **A Son's Story: Natural Healing of Personal Crisis**

As a young boy I was happy entertaining myself in the forest or on the beach while my dad was fishing, cooking, or setting up our campsite. I would occasionally participate in his hunting and fishing, but more exciting for me was the chance to explore the wilderness on my own, looking under rocks for crabs, spotting animals and fish. When I was 11 my parents separated, and I became a teenager more troubled than most. My infatuation with the wilderness waned. I accompanied my father less on his outdoor excursions.

The shock and conflict of the divorce fueled rebelliousness. Fighting and drug use followed. I was kicked out of every school in town. Left at home to work on courses via correspondence, I quickly became bored and depressed. I could not control my drug use and I was enveloped in a cycle of partying, insomnia, and oversleeping. In between I sat looking out the window in front of my desk either staring into the forest or over the ocean.

One bright spring day, when I was 16, I got up from my desk, left my correspondence textbooks, and walked out into that forest. My eight-month-old, very curious English setter accompanied me as we started up the steep mountain creek that ran through our yard during spring runoff. We hiked up the creek bed into the lush temperate rainforest and immediately my thoughts were transformed. My senses were lost in the atmosphere of the trees and the earth and the sounds of the birds that intrigued my dog.

Life became simple. Nothing mattered but my footing on the mountain, my next step on the creek bed, the next breath, drink: air and water. Guilt, depression, all the negative thoughts in my head deconstructed and disappeared. Only my new situation mattered: me, my dog, and the forest. After a full day of hiking and exploration, and the unexpected—a hermit I got to know whose abode I stumbled upon—my love for the wild, and the world, blossomed again.

It gave me something to be passionate about in my life. Looking forward to the next hike, I felt the depression lift, replaced with the anticipation of what I might discover growing or lying, living, in the forest. One day I came face to face with a cougar.

Coming across an animal like that alone would normally send most people into a state of panic. Instead, I was elated. I felt as if I had made a discovery, an ancient totem. I was closer to nature than I had ever been. Here was the wild personified. Another day I sat beside a deer for a half hour, trying to figure out why he was letting me sit so close. Those outings gave me time to think about life and gave me a new perspective on the world. Family and school problems were no longer relevant and taking drugs would only diminish the outdoor experience rather than enhance it.

I know now that families, especially children, that have a close connection with things wild can escape into a realm beyond the sometimes stressful world of social interaction, and soothe their minds, energize their bodies, and perhaps heal their souls.

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## Obama and the Hatred of Thought

**C. Fred Alford**—University of Maryland

Why has President Obama become so unpopular lately, at least in comparison to his early post-election popularity? There are many reasons, and not all have to do with the economy. One possibility infrequently considered is that much of the hatred toward Obama has to do with the hatred of thought. One can approach this possibility through the persistent theme of anti-intellectualism in American life, the topic of Richard Hofstadter's classic 1963 book of the same name. Yet, the anxiety about Obama's thinking is, for some, of a different order. Obama's thought, like Obama himself, seems to represent a way of thinking that is alien to genuine American thought.

This anxiety has recently been expressed by Dinesh D'Souza, once a reasonable conservative, and currently president of King's College in New York City. In "How Obama Thinks," D'Souza deconstructs Obama's thought about everything from the Gulf oil spill to NASA in terms of his father's anti-colonialism (*Forbes*, 9/27/10). "Incredibly," says D'Souza, "the U. S. is being ruled according to the dreams of a Luo tribesman of the 1950's"—that is, Obama's father. He writes, "The philandering, inebriated African socialist, who raged against the world for denying him the realization of his anticolonial ambitions, is now setting the nation's agenda through the reincarnation of his dreams in his son."

About this article, Newt Gingrich says that it is "the most profound insight I have read in the last six years about Barack Obama." The idea, of course, is that there is something strange, bizarre about Obama's thought, an intellectuals' version of the "birthers" belief about Obama as alien, born elsewhere.

One should not overlook the irony that both D'Souza and Gingrich approach the world in an intellectual fashion, relying not on the sound common sense of ordinary people, as an everyday anti-intellectual might, but upon a bizarre idea as key to unlocking Obama's mind. But of course Hofstadter always understood that the intellectual *idée-fixe* was at the heart of American anti-intellectualism (*Anti-intellectualism in American Life*, 1963, 22-23). Of course, one should also not ignore the possibility that for some, the problem is not just with Obama's thinking, but with the fact that he is a black man thinking. The combination seems toxic to a number of Americans, evoking a fear and hatred that is really quite striking.

For a short while, particularly in the wake of eight years of President George W. Bush, thought looked pretty good, and Obama was its master. His speech to the nation on race, made during his election campaign in response to Reverend Jeremiah Wright, was a model of thoughtfulness rarely seen in American politics. He talked to us like adults, and many listened like adults. Puzzling is that since he was elected, Obama has seemed less thoughtful. As examples of less thoughtful, more clichéd speeches, consider his recent Oval Office speeches on the British Petroleum (BP) oil spill, and on the United States' suspension of combat operations in Iraq.

Another perspective on thought might be helpful here, that of Wilfred Bion, a member of the British Object Relations School of psychoanalytic theory. While Bion might be described as loosely allied with Melanie Klein and her followers, his own work was strikingly original, belonging to no school. Bion writes about the hatred of thought, which he characterizes in terms of attacks on linking (“Attacks on Linking” and “A Theory of Thinking,” both in his *Second Thoughts: Selected Papers on Psychoanalysis*, 1984, 93-119). Attacks on linking are how we destroy thought. It’s easy to have thoughts; the trick is to know how to put these thoughts together without being overwhelmed by terror or despair.

Bion’s argument runs something like this: What children and adults both need, albeit in different degrees and in different ways, is for their unbearable emotions to be held and contained by another. What are unbearable emotions? They are feelings of such intensity that it seems as if the self is going to fall to pieces or explode, for the emotions are so intense and unstable they can’t be integrated into the self. If mother contains the young child’s unbearable emotions ten thousand times, eventually the young child will learn to do that emotional work for him or herself. (Kleinians still talk mostly about mother, not dual parenting.) At first mother contains these emotions simply by showing that she can experience them without retaliating or falling to pieces. Later she may help the child put words to these emotions, such as, “You look so angry that you’re about to burst. But I know you’re not, so let’s get on with making dinner.”

Attacks on linking occur when there is a failure of containment and holding. The attack on linking is the fragmenting alternative to being held, in which unbearable emotions are broken into pieces and disconnected from thoughts, so that thoughts become sterile, one-dimensional, bereft of the emotions that would invigorate thoughts and give them life. The result is thinking marked by a lack of curiosity, a hatred of emotion, and from there it is but a short step to the hatred of anyone who publically exemplifies thought. The outcome is not only contempt for thought, but the idealization of stupidity and mindlessness, including mindless passion.

Thought requires that we admit to ourselves not only that

we are ignorant, that we do not know. Thought requires that we die a little death, or at least risk it. When we are frightened, this risk is impossible, and everything that is the opposite of learning and knowledge will be valorized. Strength, vitality, and self-certainty will be championed as sources of power. Doubt and reflection, including the doubt and reflection that create the gaps that allow one to learn something new, become merely signs of weakness.

Thought is terrifying. Not just what we think about, but the process of thinking itself. In order to learn something new, we have to exist for a moment in a place where we know nothing at all, an empty moment of existence and experience. Bion understands thinking as itself a holding process in which one thought, called a preconception, holds another thought—a thought stimulated by experience.

With this in mind, let us look at Obama and the hatred of thought. One of the first things to say is that Obama is part of the problem. For whatever reason (his coolness, his reserve, his reluctance to “feel our pain”), Obama has not been an effective container for the intense anxiety that has marked the last several years, the result of terrorism, two wars, and economic collapse. Obama has not been publicly emotionally available, as Franklin Roosevelt and Bill Clinton were. Neither has Obama been particularly effective in articulating (that is, interpreting) our fears so that we know that someone understands and cares. Obama has failed in his holding function.

Two related issues are at stake: Obama’s failure to act as a container of our fears and Obama’s apparent inability to speak publicly in a thoughtful manner or at least as thoughtfully as during his campaign. They are related because the way in which Obama seemed capable of holding our fears during his campaign was not through his emotional availability, but through the perceived power of his thought. “Change we can believe in,” his campaign slogan, was also about the power of thought—his thought—after eight years of the devaluation of thought. Obama’s ability to make sense of an economy and world spinning out of control, to bring thought to bear on reality, was a significant part of his appeal.

Obama’s current inability to hold us in and through his

thoughts likely has to do with the fact that our nation's problems will yield to no quick and easy solution. In addition, both Obama and his advisors are the recipients of projective identification, in which anger and hatred of thought seek to destroy the ability of the recipient to think. Projective identification is successful when, in this case, the recipient finds his deeper thoughts unavailable to him, when in fact thought's complexity is only in hiding. That the lesser powers of Obama's thought might be, in part, the result of a conscious political decision by Obama and his advisors to render him more ordinary does not mean that projective identification is absent, only that it works at conscious and unconscious levels at the same time.

In closing, it will pay to look once more at the thought of Obama's critics, such as D'Souza and Gingrich. Thought may be destroyed in at least two ways. One is what Bion calls attacks on linking. Another is paranoid thought, in which everything is linked to everything else. Paranoid thought is an excess of thought, the links so tightly bound that nothing can come between them. Imagining that Obama's anti-colonialism explains everything important about Obama and his presidency is reinforced, in the thought of D'Souza and Gingrich, by the corresponding belief that anything that doesn't fit this explanation can be attributed to Obama's genius at pretending to be a normal American. Theirs becomes an irrefutable proposition.

Paranoid thought cannot tolerate the emptiness, the little death of not knowing, that genuine thought requires. Paranoid thought is *also* an attack on linking: all the links are already made, transforming thought into a fortress aimed at keeping nonconforming thoughts out. Paranoid thought is the process behind the *idée-fixe*. Interesting is whether D'Souza and Gingrich actually hold to a paranoid belief system, or whether they are deploying it cynically and strategically in order to render Obama an alien outsider, offering up a paranoid way of thinking to any who might be desperate for an explanation of a world in which the usual boundaries seem to be disappearing, such as divisions between black and white, or between genuine American thought and all that is foreign, alien, and other. If the reader is certain of the answer to whether D'Souza and Gingrich believe what they say, then the reader should reflect for a

moment about the status of his or her own thought. Does the imperative to reflect depend on whether the reader is certain the answer is “yes,” or “no”?

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## **All War Deaths and Suffering Are Memorable**

**Peter Petschauer**—Appalachian State University

Rudolf Kreis makes two unique points about the Holocaust in *Die Toten sind immer die Anderen: Eine Jugend zwischen den Kriegen* (*The Dead are Always the Others: A Childhood between the Wars*, 2009). Neither is new, but the second encouraged the following reflections.

His first point is that the exclusive assignment of the murders and suffering perpetrated on Jews closes the opportunity to address the murders and suffering of other Europeans before, during, and after the Second World War (WWII). Indeed, an emphasis on one group, be it Jews, Poles, Russians, or Germans, lessens our awareness of others who also died and suffered. The suffering of others is ignored or diminished.

Kreis maintains as his second point that emphasizing uniqueness does nothing to discourage future harm to ethnic or religious groups. Ironically, by elevating one group over others, we encourage others to follow suit and proceed to diminish other groups. Experience tells us that diminishing groups other than our own can and does lead to unwelcome consequences.

A psychohistorian must always ask: "How did I arrive at this certain point of view?" I first learned of the major atrocities of the 20<sup>th</sup> century at New York University, in connection with studies of Russian and Soviet History. I read and wrote about the imperial government's exiles (the famous Decembrists of 1825) and the first camps it created in Siberia in the later 19<sup>th</sup> century. With my interest sparked, the later Soviet camps and their economic impact became one of my areas of concentration. Sending generals and technocrats to Siberia made no sense to me; just as little as murdering hundreds of thousands of productive farmers in Ukraine to fulfill the Soviet leadership's ideological dreams.

Quite naturally, I next discovered WWII. I was torn between focusing on the Soviet/German side and the American/German side. The Soviet side intrigued me because I had studied Russian and Soviet history, economics, and government. The German side intrigued me because of my German parents and my childhood in German-speaking parts of Europe. The American side intrigued me because I had become an American citizen and a patriotic immigrant. So, I studied Georgy Zhukov and Konstantin Rokossovsky, Erwin Rommel and Hans Speidel, and Dwight Eisenhower and George Patton, initially overlooking the human and other costs of war. Only with time did the so-called casualties of the war become dead and maimed human beings.

The reality of the Holocaust first entered my understanding when I met fellow psychohistorians in New York City in the late 1970s; the ones with whom I enjoyed long conversations happened to be Jewish. The second contribution to my understanding was dealing with my father's position in the SS (the German *Schutzstaffel* unit most devoted to Hitler and associated with crimes against humanity) and therefore possibly having committed war crimes. The third was speaking many times with one of my colleagues, a hidden child from Poland, at educational and religious settings about our different experiences of the early 1940s in Europe. In the case of the first, most members of the families of some of these New York Jews had been killed in Eastern Europe. In the case of the second, my father turned out to be a loyal diplomat whose unit was taken over by Himmler's extensive machinery, but who committed no crimes. In the case of the third, I realized that being Jew-

ish in Europe meant not only concentration camps, but also having to emigrate, having to hide, and being shot in the middle of or near one's town.

The early exposure to the millions murdered and abused in the Soviet Union, the other millions in WWII, and the later recognition of the killing of civilians by the Nazis and their supporters led me to seriously reconsider Kreis' points. As my colleague Zohara Boyd (a hidden Jewish child during the Holocaust) and I spoke to various groups, I had already begun to realize that talking about the murdered six million Jews to the exclusion of others who were murdered does nothing to prevent other national or ethnic groups from engaging in similar activities again. Indeed, we must never forget, but finding a way to prevent such slaughter had become a key concern.

Exclusivity elevates the deaths of a selected group above all others. The dead would probably ask us, and we must say for them: Is my death less meaningful than that of another person's? Is the death of the Russian soldier who was shot upon arrival in a German prison camp less meaningful than that of a German prisoner who slowly starved to death in a Siberian camp? Or, asked more immediately: is the death of an Italian Jew in a truck from Milan to Bozen-Bolzano less meaningful than that of an American soldier who gave his life liberating a concentration camp in Germany?

Indeed, all Europeans who were killed in the name of fanatics and adherents to inhumane ideologies deserve to be honored; their deaths, and the suffering of all survivors, must be seen as a warning against extremists and others who would readily perpetrate similar mayhem. If they are not, then we allow them to abuse or kill this or that person or group because they are less "valuable." Unfortunately, as soon as the offenders have demeaned a person or group as "vermin" or "obstacles," that is exactly what happens. Thus, a German demeaned a Jew or Pole, and vice versa, a Frenchman demeaned a German or Italian; in each case, the "other" was portrayed as less than human and subject to prison, torture and death. As we know so well, almost all of those who died and suffered abuse were innocent.

In elevating the death of some, however well intended or

deemed necessary, one also tends to ignore the deaths of the soldiers and fighters who struggled against the Nazi regime and its assistants. While the Soviet soldiers committed all too many crimes and abuses in Eastern and Central Europe, the ten million of them who fell should not be pushed aside, nor should the deaths of the other soldiers who fought against the Nazi regime. We can argue against Kreis and not include the mostly draftees in the regular German Army and the SS tankers to whom he belonged as a 17-year old, but the death of these six million men was caused by the same fanaticism that enabled the deaths of civilians.

Something else is difficult with elevating the deaths of some individuals over those of others. In the process, we all too often ignore those who suffered as they did but survived. Many of these persons anguished all their lives, and some have said that they would have preferred to have been killed rather than live through the hell that followed from their exposure to the consequences of the evildoers. To live with the wounds that the perpetrators inflicted, physical and mental, was enough to have driven many to an early death through suicide and the familiar diseases of cancer, high blood pressure, and diabetes. Can we ever imagine the fear of being on a death march in Austria in the winter of 1945, as fellow prisoners were being shot for no reason or being trampled to death? This is the trauma that lingers for a lifetime.

Such a stance also ignores the suffering of all other contemporaries. Those individuals who lived in cities like London, Kiev, Warsaw, Nuremberg and Dresden would never be "the same." The bombing raids alone were horrific. One dramatic example is a woman in Düsseldorf, whom my mother and I knew reasonably well, whose featherbed caught a fire bomb and thus prevented it from exploding—but who saw her entire street burn down in a firestorm. Indeed she was never the same again, and we sensed her confusion in every conversation. Hunger, cold, exposure to the elements, unspeakable behaviors of occupational troops as well as other atrocities are imbedded in the souls of so many who survived.

Yes, the politics of death are offensive. Unless we honor all of the dead and the survivors, we give excuses in this country and others to say that this or that group deserves to be shunned, pushed aside, and maybe, given the "right" circumstances, put in prison,

reservation, camp, and even murdered.

In an odd way, the exclusive assignment of value to one death over another makes it easier to abuse Jews, Muslims, Roma, and even more relevantly here in the U.S., American Indians, African Americans and Mexicans. That is, we continue to argue, in vain, that “my” group is more important than “your” group and “my” group deserves to thrive more than “your” group. As Martin Niemöller told a professor in Kronenberg between 1950-54, who related the conversation this way:

When the Nazis attacked the Communists, he [Niemöller] was a little uneasy, but, after all, he was not a Communist, and so he did nothing; and then they attacked the Socialists, and he was a little uneasy, but, still, he was not a Socialist, and he did nothing; and then the schools, the press, the Jews, and so on, and he was always uneasy, but still he did nothing. And then they attacked the Church, and he was a Churchman, and he did something—but then it was too late. (<http://www.history.ucsb.edu/faculty/marcuse/niem.htm>).

Exclusivity made Niemöller ignore the commonality of plight. His later endeavor to pin down his reactions allowed Europeans to gain the lesson of the arbitrariness of abuse. The European Union exists as an outcome of this awareness.

*Peter Petschauer's biography is on page 321. □*

#### **New Member Profile**

**Alice Lombardo Maher, M.D.**, is a psychiatrist and psychoanalyst in private practice in New York City who graduated from the Albert Einstein College of Medicine. She received her psychoanalytic training at the Psychoanalytic Institute at New York University Medical Center and was a faculty member of the institute and medical school for 15 years. Dr. Maher believes that the same dynamics which underlie psychoanalytic theory and treatment are at work within the greater society. Popular culture tends to dismiss these concepts or use them as weapons to marginalize, trivialize and ridicule the humanity of others. By treating society as the patient and prejudice as the symptom, Dr. Maher believes that the psychoanalytic model can be applied in the struggle against stigmatization and hatred and in the service of human understanding. Her goal is no less than a Change in Our Consciousness.

## Book Reviews

### Binion's Masterpiece

Jay Y. Gonen—Independent Scholar

*Review essay of Rudolph Binion, Traumatic Reliving in History, Literature, and Film (London: Karnac Books, 2010), ISBN-13: 978-1-85575-743-1, i-xii, 148 pages, Paperback, \$37.95.*

An overall treatment of the topic of traumatic reliving has been way overdue. This new work is the most comprehensive by far. If only for this reason it constitutes an important contribution to our current state of knowledge. The work deals with reliving traumas in individuals and in groups as well as instances of interaction between the two. It distinguishes between sudden single traumas and episodic or continuous ones. It frequently puts an accent on cases of reliving in disguise, reliving unawares or reliving the traumatic affect while the original content is repressed. Navigating through such a rich array of subtle events in both history and art requires an enormous amount of erudition as well as a steady hand, and Binion's long experience in the field of psychohistory shows through.

Something else which impressed me very much is the clarity of the writing. This topic involves so many distinctions and nuances that in view of its whole complexity there was the inherent danger of readers getting lost in the midst of the maze. To my delight during the reading I found the path leading from one event to the other, from one distinction to the next one, always clear. He is almost ruthless in stating things in a precise fashion and in maintaining an understandable connection from one topic to the next. I therefore think of him as one of those superb writers who never forget that they are always there to serve their readers.

Space limitations permit me to elaborate on only two general issues. Binion maintains that Freud's insistence on a childhood and even an infantile origin as the developmental basis of neurosis has prevented him from all further insight into traumatic reliving. This highly important assertion on Binion's part may surprise some ardent Freudians. But I know that even though I myself was very

appreciative of a psychodynamic approach to human behavior, in my clinical experience I nevertheless gained the impression that Freud's persistent search for archaic (usually sexual) origins was not a model to be followed blindly. It could often lead clinicians astray in the search not only for causes but also for treatments. In this connection Binion makes an assertion which in retrospect seems self-evident to me but which did not occur to me before. He states that Freud himself mostly supplied the infantile component of dreams and that it was no insistence by dreamers, but rather the architectonics of Freud's dream theory in synch with his theory of neurosis that mandated an infantile wish fulfilled by every dream. What a penetrating analysis of the theory of psychoanalysis.

Another statement of Binion's which opens a can of worms is that group memory is an inescapable implication of the reliving of traumas by groups. Yes, of course. But it raises for him the sticky problem of group retention and transmission of trauma, which remains a mystery. Having distinguished between "the known fact of transmission and the unknown means of transmission," Binion momentarily tries to escape this dilemma by secretly suspecting some epigenetic mechanism at work but abandons this idea. He certainly is the type who sticks to his guns and dares to challenge orthodoxy on the basis of his own discoveries.

In my own explorations of the reliving of traumas in Jewish history, I have obviously attributed great power to the shared sacred lore and thought that it was being reinforced by group identification even more than by family upbringing. I believed that the myths carry certain action potential, which can lie dormant, especially during periods that lack direct or visible social transmission, but that the predisposition toward actions or reactions is revived and mobilized when new events become associated with it and reinforce it. This outlook treats the group brain, so to speak, as a mysterious entity which is imbedded in the web of culture, and treats culture as a combination of myths and social reinforcement.

My intuitive approach is not likely to satisfy Binion since for him, as he says in his book, "the inner experience of groups as such is inaccessible to us in our present conceptual poverty." And he is most charitable when in a private communication he reassures me that "together we'll solve that problem." The basic problem is

how to make the intangible tangible. Some people might call it how to turn group psychohistory into a science. In the meantime I urge readers not to wait for the answer to this question but to grab Binion's new book and read fascinating accounts of the reliving of traumas that depict the very stuff of life.

*Jay Y. Gonen, PhD's group psychohistory books are A Psychohistory of Zionism (1975), The Roots of Nazi Psychology: Hitler's Utopian Barbarism (2000), and Yahweh Versus Yahweh: The Enigma of Jewish History (2005). He recently completed a manuscript titled Self and World in Early Twentieth-Century Literature. He may be contacted at [jygonen@gmail.com](mailto:jygonen@gmail.com). □*

## **The Revolutionary Russian Origins of Modern Terrorism**

**Philip Pomper**—Wesleyan University

*Review essay of Anna Geifman, Death Orders: The Vanguard of Modern Terrorism in Revolutionary Russia (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, 2010) 229 pages, ISBN 978-0275997526 Hardcover, \$34.95.*

Anna Geifman has written a contrapuntal history of modern terrorism. She provides a late 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> century counterpoint to the bloody deeds of parties and individuals of the Russian Empire. The method involves scene-shifting and time-travel, from sites in the Russian Empire to the modern Middle East and back. She effectively portrays the misery and hopelessness of hostages and the single-mindedness of terrorists; for example, at Ma'alot in Israel, Beslan in North Ossetia, and the dreadful carnage in Moscow and Tel Aviv in places where people go to enjoy life—a theater, a disco. The treatment of hostages—of innocent women and children—especially brings home the mercilessness of contemporary terrorism. These extreme variations of terrorism differ from that practiced against Tsarist officials by some Russian terrorists in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, although those often had “collateral damage.” Geifman believes that the previous forms of terrorism were quickly replaced by something more akin to contemporary terrorism during the revolution of 1905 and its aftermath.

Geifman avers that the historical causes of 20<sup>th</sup> century forms of terrorism are what Robert Jay Lifton calls “historical dislocations,” which entail threats to a community’s symbolic immortality. Historical dislocations attend wars, civil wars, genocide, and mass traumas due to natural catastrophes; but the modernization process itself is an ongoing problem for all cultures. Modernization can be fertile soil for totalistic thinking, which in its denial of death sometimes paradoxically produces the thanatophilia and apocalyptic cults of Geifman’s narrative. Contemporary media spreads the pathology far beyond the actual sites of trauma to those susceptible to death imagery, and to anomic individuals vulnerable to recruitment into groups that perform murder-suicide missions. However, now the terrorists have been mobilized not only in service of secular socialist or communist doctrines but in the name of Islam.

One encounters in the literature on terrorism sympathetic portrayals of altruistic suicidal terrorists, but Geifman gives the category only a glance and focuses on “‘adventuristic, annihilatory’ terror that originated in the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century” (3). At the very base of “death orders” she finds thanatophilia, but surely this drives only some terrorists. Geifman throws out a large net and brings in a great many practitioners of terrorism, so there is a tension between the wealth of Geifman’s illustrations and her theoretical statement of focus. Geifman intensely studied the early 20<sup>th</sup> century in an earlier book, *Thou Shalt Kill: Revolutionary Terrorism in Russia, 1894-1917* (1995). However, she also studied certain Russian precursors. Sergei Nechaev, the inspiration for Dostoevsky’s *Devils*, stands out as someone who dehumanized his targets and helped create the “death culture” of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Ruthless creeds like the “Catechism of a Revolutionary” (1869) dramatized the notion that any means might be used in the service of secular and religious totalisms.

We recognize in this process something stubborn and pervasive in our species. We casually denigrate out-groups in the banal competitions of ordinary social life. Dehumanization of the enemy is a standard move in more serious struggles. Those readying themselves to kill often transform their enemies into grotesque caricatures, demons, vermin—pseudo species—and elevate themselves into heroes and martyrs. The ideologues set very high stakes: the

survival of one's community in a hostile world, the rewards of martyrdom. All of this seems to exist in human psychology, ready to be activated, as does the tendency to construct modes of immortality as rewards for our actions. Less totalistic forms of terrorism do exist, but Geifman argues that the totalistic variant dominates contemporary Islamic terrorism. Historical evidence suggests that the fires will burn themselves out; that cultures of death and destruction cannot be sustained indefinitely. But the population base for contemporary terrorism is potentially quite large because technology expands the reach of ideologues and practitioners of terrorism. Even if we know terrorism's typical patterns, the conjunction of non-state terrorist networks with easily deliverable weapons of mass destruction creates new nightmare scenarios. As of now, all of the casualties of this new era of terrorism are still miniscule compared to the concentrated slaughter of state-sponsored modern wars and genocides, but we do not know the end of the story. Although Geifman presents the hope that collectively we choose life in the ongoing dialectic of death and life imagery, her contrapuntal history of terrorist atrocities prepares us for the worst.

*Philip Pomper, PhD, who received his doctoral degree from the University of Chicago, is William F. Armstrong Professor Emeritus of History at Wesleyan University. He has written several books about the Russian revolutionary movement, the most recent is Lenin's Brother: The Origins of the October Revolution (2010). Pomper may be contacted at [ppomper@wesleyan.edu](mailto:ppomper@wesleyan.edu). □*

## **A Family History of Russian Revolutionary Terrorists**

**Juhani Ihanus**—University of Helsinki

*Review essay of Philip Pomper, Lenin's Brother: The Origins of the October Revolution (W. W. Norton & Company, 2010), xxvi, 276 pages, ISBN 978-0-393-07079-8, Hardcover, \$24.95.*

The Ulyanov family, with its professional revolutionary son Vladimir (Volodya, later known by his pseudonym Lenin), has been researched from different viewpoints, but the psychodynamics of the family have mostly been bypassed or only vaguely hinted at.

It is, of course, difficult to form a clear picture based on the rather few historical documents. Philip Pomper, Professor of History at Wesleyan University, has earlier written on Russian revolutionary intelligentsia. In his new book he gives a comprehensive biography of Alexander “Sasha” Ulyanov (1866-87), Lenin’s elder brother and a terrorist who was hanged in 1887 for taking part, with a small group of disillusioned students, in the failed assassination of Tsar Alexander III.

Pomper stresses that Alexander’s role and fate were important in shaping Lenin, who had strong sibling rivalry with his elder brother since being estranged from each other when Alexander was arrested. Unfortunately, there is no correspondence between the brothers, but their sister Anna’s memoirs provide valuable (albeit also biased) material of family relations and dynamics. After Lenin’s death, Anna tried to reveal the Ulyanov family’s Jewish background (the father of their mother had converted from Judaism to Russian Orthodoxy), but Stalin turned her down sharply. Pomper has also been able to use archival sources from Moscow and other Russian references, which gives his book and its narrative a well-balanced historical base.

According to Pomper, Anna and Alexander experienced the family atmosphere as secretive and secluded, hindering their “lifejoy” and producing “a kind of impacted anger, wordless and expressionless, but ready to explode” (29). Alexander has in every photo “the same morose face,” from the age of four to 21, when he was a soon-to-be-hanged prisoner. Alexander’s father had chosen him to follow strict standards of behavior and pursue his studies dutifully. Alexander was delegated his father’s ambitions. However, the younger brother Vladimir (Lenin) is described as more playful, outgoing, and self-confident; temperamentally more like his father, sharing his mischievous humor. The adolescent Alexander silently rebelled against his father and was worshipped by the whole family—except Vladimir, who was indulgently raised by a nurse and rebelled more against his mother.

The Ulyanov family seems to have led a kind of hothouse existence, the children socializing with their cousins and extended family. The Ulyanovs were neither poor nor well-off, but the father focused on learning and science and the mother esteemed literature,

music and drawing. There were traumas (for example, two infant deaths) and secrets (the suicide of their mother's brother) in the family. Father rarely praised the children and opposed "pampering." As developmental research has shown, every child has, psychologically, its own unique environment within the family. It is difficult to trace the family dynamics from multiple perspectives, and in the case of the Ulyanov family the documentation is too meager to show such perspectives. Anyhow, Alexander's temperament did not fit with his father's temperament and expectations; there were more reactive correlations than sensitive fits between the father and the son.

The relations between the Ulyanov family members are interestingly but somewhat impressionistically characterized by Pomper. Additions from psychological family theories, object relations theories and developmental psychology, for example, could have conveyed a more coherent view. Perhaps Pomper did not go into more detailed psychological argumentation in order to avoid very speculative interpretations. Actually, there are no references to psychological sources in Pomper's work. Pomper raises many intriguing questions that need further psychohistorical research. For example, what kind of bonding, or web of attachments, was created between the co-conspiratorial members of Alexander's group in such a short period of time? The passionately committed organizer of the group, Peter Shevyrev, was both charismatic and paranoid and managed to recruit the much more skeptical and rational Alexander, who subordinated himself to the group because of justified "scientific" reasons while also becoming more and more agitated for the "righteous cause."

There was even a brief romantic relationship between Alexander and co-plotter Raisa Shmidova, literally with bombs under their bed, just before the attack on the tsar! Such an enactment of love tells about mismanaged individuation and a violent attempt at separation. One could call Alexander's attachment style "avoidant." The adolescent Alexander expressed harsh opinions about women in a January 1887 letter to his female cousin. For him, women were too romantic and too individualist, mostly lacking critical and scientific thought as well as energy and initiative, and prone to accept prejudices. He clearly had poor skills of relat-

ing with women; with his careless behavior he even endangered his sister, who was not participating in the terrorist plot. His mother was sadly disappointed by Alexander's passion for terror, and not for reciprocal love. Alexander and Vladimir's father had died over a year before the attack. Another curious coincidence was the death of their mother in 1916, also a year before the October Revolution. Pomper does not dwell on these deaths, but he states succinctly, "Revolutionary morality required that one sacrifice loved ones, if the cause demanded it" (59).

Pomper's insights in Chapter 9 on Lenin's motivations for his revolutionary class struggle and revenge against the tsarist family, regime, and the whole bourgeois society deserve praise. However, Pomper is more elusive about Lenin's personality while working to launch the Revolution from abroad (1900-17). Such information has to be sought from other sources. For example, Helen Rappaport's work *Conspirator: Lenin in Exile* (2010) shows Lenin as gentle, engaging and modest and at the same time supporting brutal violence and mass-scale bloodshed. From another angle, Anna Geifman's works introduce the history of Russian revolutionary terrorism from 1897-1917. It seems that both Alexander and Vladimir had found a strong sense of existential/ideological purpose in fighting against the tsarist system and defending its victims. Alexander was more amateurish and conscientiously self-sacrificing, while Vladimir developed his more calculated and professional production of terror and revolution to the extremes and worked tirelessly (writing millions of words and maneuvering ideological power positions) for the collective Communist utopia and atheistic fundamentalism.

The cult of Stalin is gradually being deconstructed and the demystification of the October Revolution has started in Russia. Pomper's Russian friend commented, "In Soviet times Sasha was a revolutionary martyr; now he's just a fanatic and suicidal terrorist" (215). De-Leninization has not really begun, but it is Pomper's impressive scholarly achievement that the Ulyanov family, a kind of "holy family" in the Russian Marxist mythology, has now been reappraised by thorough historical research.

Besides portraying Alexander and the Ulyanovs, Pomper's highly readable and insightful work reveals several aspects of 19<sup>th</sup>

century Russian society, especially the university and its students, the legislative and the judicial systems, the underground terrorist plotters and the nihilistic doctrines behind terrorist acts. What I personally missed was a closer look at the tsarist secret police, the *Okhrana*, its methods of surveillance and its tactics of political policing. After having read Pomper's clear and exciting work, I sense that there are still many puzzles left for the psychohistorians who try to understand the childhood, adolescence, family origins, and the developmental niches and trajectories of the fundamentalist/terrorist mindset.

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## **Latin American States of Terror, Psychoanalysis, and the U.S.**

**Frank Summers**—Northwestern University

*Review Essay of Nancy Hollander, Uprooted Minds: Surviving the Politics of Terror in the Americas (New York: Routledge, 2010), xi-xvi, 403 pages, ISBN 978-0-88163-490-7.*

*Uprooted Minds* is a tour de force, a book that covers so much territory and has so many themes that a review of this length cannot possibly do it the justice it deserves, so I will limit myself to highlighting a small selection of subjects. *Uprooted Minds* is written on two levels, focused on the transition in and out of states of terror in the Southern Cone, i.e., Argentina, Uruguay, and Chile, in the 1970's and 80's and the relevance of this sordid period of South American history for the contemporary United States. To bring the reader into the world of these terror states, Dr. Nancy Hollander uses in-depth interviews with socially active analysts who lived through the transformation of the three nations from democracies to

brutal dictatorships. At a deeper level, the book examines the intersection of psychoanalysis and societal structures and practices, and presents a compelling case for a socially active psychoanalysis.

The horrors of living under states of terror are brought to life in Hollander's writing, most poignantly through the experiences of the protagonists. Each interviewee struggled to maintain his/her professional and personal identity in the face of massive repression. The anxiety of living under a state of terror entered the consulting room as each analyst realized "neutrality" is not possible when the patient is reporting terror that is all too real and the analyst's fears mirror the patient's paranoid dreads. The brave protagonists sustained their social activism to the point of danger by denying the immanence of the threat to the country and themselves. A Uruguayan analyst, Marcelo Vina, spent several months in jail, and an Argentine analyst, Tato Pavlovsky, lived in arrogant defiance of the military until armed, hooded men broke into a group therapy session he was conducting, forcing him to escape through a window and live underground until he could leave the country. Each protagonist felt the relief and suffered the guilt of exile. When they were able to return to their countries, all felt that they, their friends, and their country had changed so much after years of terror and repressive rule that they were not coming home, but departing once again. These uprooted minds remained as such as the legacy of the terror endured.

The compelling stories of the targets of oppression are a means for exploring the complex relationship between psychoanalysis and society. Hollander argues that the impact of the terror state and its supporting ideology on analytic patients indicates that the analyst cannot understand the subjectivity of her patient without grasping the extent to which the dominant ideology is internalized in the patient's experience. The success of the hegemonic ideology in penetrating the psyches of the citizens of each country played a major role in the acquiescence of the populous to authoritarian rule. That is a major reason for Hollander's argument for the analyst's involvement in activities beyond the couch. Analysis, in her view, requires societal freedom and respect for individual rights for the patient to elaborate her free associations and fantasies. Consequently, it is incumbent on the analyst to work for the kind of soci-

ety that promotes, rather than impedes, social justice, democratic values, and freedom. Furthermore, Hollander shows that social justice movements can benefit from analytic input, as for example in the worker takeover of the Grissinopoli factory in Argentina. Two analysts helped the workers deal with their timidity in opposing authority and uncertainty about whether they were, in fact, capable of controlling their working lives.

Hollander argues that analytic ideas shed light on societal ills. She understands the mindset of the state terrorists as a primitive splitting of the psyche as the dissenters are reduced to sub-human poisons from which the body politic must be cleansed. Hollander notes that this bifurcation of a nation's citizenry reflects a regressive paranoid-schizoid state of splitting and omnipotent control.

The implications of state terror in the Southern Cone for the U.S. are deftly portrayed. The contemporary consumer culture of quickly changing societal forms and needs is resulting in a loss of security and fosters anxieties of fragmentation and dislocation—fears that is, of uprooted minds. Hollander seems to be arguing that the contemporary consumer culture is a society of psychic homelessness and purposelessness, of vulnerable individuals desperate for a sense of security. She warns that the consequence may be a willingness to accept loss of freedom and even totalitarian practices. In the aftermath of 9/11 and the American economic crisis, there is a quickly growing political movement favoring the practices of a police state, such as torture and governmental spying. Those factors—along with the Bush Administration's successful exploitation of 9/11 to justify the invasion of a sovereign country—demonstrate the willingness of many American citizens to give up democratic rights and principles in favor of what they believe to be security.

But, Hollander argues, such tradeoffs rarely pay off, even in their own terms. Authoritarian takeover of the Southern Cone nations resulted in terror, not security. Hollander notes that when the 1973 Chilean military deposed the democratic government, former president Eduardo Frei supported the coup, thinking that he would be back in power. The military held onto its police powers for 18 years, committing large-scale torture and genocide. Hollander

notes that it is chilling to think of how easy it has been for the American people to acquiesce to torture and military aggression. Ultimately, then, this book is a call to American analysts to use their understanding to confront the authoritarian tendencies growing quickly in today's political culture. To refuse to do so is to assume the defensive stance of the bystander, denying oppression and collaborating in the erosion of democratic values and of their nation and profession as they know it. The powerful message of this book that there is no neutrality, that the psyche and the social cannot be separated, is demonstrated so well and interwoven with so many valuable themes that reading it is a must for all who have an interest in socially active psychoanalysis.

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## Obama the Conciliator

**Ken Fuchsman**—University of Connecticut

*Review essay of David Remnick, The Bridge: The Life and Rise of Barack Obama (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2010) ISBN: 978-1-4000-4360-6, Hardcover, \$29.95; James T. Kloppenberg, Reading Obama: Dreams, Hope, and the American Political Tradition (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011) ISBN: 978-0-691-14746-8, Hardcover, \$24.95; and Glen Jeansonne and David Luhrssen, Changing Times: The Life of Barack Obama (Oconomowoc, WI: Maven Mark Books, 2009) ISBN: 978-1-59598-82-3, Paperback, \$18.95.*

Barack Obama is the first President whose parents both earned graduate degrees and were both divorced twice. Neither parent lived beyond the age of 52. Separation and loss were part of Barack, Jr.'s life from infancy on. When he was born on August 4, 1961 his parents were living in Honolulu. Less than two months

later, his mother was registered for courses at the University of Washington in Seattle while his father was still completing his studies at the University of Hawaii. Ann Obama may not have returned to the island paradise until after June 22, 1962, when her husband left to begin a graduate program at Harvard. As president, Obama has maintained that his father remained with him and his mother until he was almost two years old.

None of the three books under review quite get this chronology, or its significance, right. James Kloppenberg repeats the family myth that Obama Sr. left Ann and Barry when the youngster was two, as do Jeansonne and Lührssen (Kloppenberg, 256; Jeansonne and Lührssen, 4). David Remnick, on one hand, has Ann Obama home in Hawaii with her infant son while her husband went to school and has Obama Sr. leaving his wife and two-year-old son for graduate school. On the other, Remnick places Ann and baby Barack in Seattle for the Winter 1961 quarter (Remnick, 55-57, 182). He does not notice the discrepancy.

Still, *The Bridge* is the most indispensable, richest biography of Obama yet published. Remnick, editor of *The New Yorker*, has interviewed the major living players in Obama's life, uncovered Obama's more obscure writings and interviews, found important commentaries on his subject, and woven it all together into an appealing narrative. His thesis is that Obama is the culmination and fulfillment of the 1960s civil rights movement; he is a "historical advance, the focal point of a new era, embracing America itself for all its tribes" (527). By the time 27-year-old Barack Obama entered Harvard Law School in 1988, he exhibited many of the qualities that have led others to see him as an African American of high promise. He had developed the unusual capacity to listen to all sides of an issue, give place to each position, and bring about a degree of reconciliation and cooperation. He is highly intelligent, and has a bearing of cool reserve and a strong sense of personal direction. When he returned to Chicago after graduating, and even before he ran for office, some who know him sensed that he could be the first African American U.S. President.

Obama sees himself as a person who can bring most everyone together. He attributes this capacity to his unusual background as a sort of universal everyman. "I have brothers, sisters, nieces,

nephews, uncles, and cousins, of every race and hue” (in Remnick, 523). This self-portrayal as a man who can transcend faction brings us into the paradoxical world of our 44<sup>th</sup> President. Remnick is aware of some of these contradictions, but not all. Barack Obama was primarily raised in multicultural Hawaii by his white mother and her parents in a state with few blacks. As I see it, his adoption of an African American rather than a biracial identity was, in part, a reaction against his white heritage and his feeling of being abandoned and isolated in the family who brought him up. Idealizing an absent African father gave the adolescent a familial alternative to his nearby kin. Upon finding out later that his father’s arrogance and confrontational manner had ruined his career and left him an alcoholic, dead in a drunken car crash at age 46, our future Chief Executive became disillusioned once again. Seeking reconciliation rather than conflict is Obama’s way of both avoiding his father’s fate and protecting himself from further loss. While Remnick makes abundantly clear the audacity of the ambition of the junior Obama, he does not see one of its sources in the reaction against his father. As Obama Jr. says of Obama Sr. and himself: “I felt I had to make up for his mistakes” (Barack Obama, *Dreams From My Father*, 1995, 227).

In his own political career, Obama has sought conciliation rather than conflict that may result in separation. Personally, as early as 1992, he told a reporter he wanted “a stable, solid, secure, family life,” something which he did not get from his own parents (in Remnick, 226). Seeking reliability rather than disruption, Obama campaigned on ending confrontational Washington politics, and as president made overtures to the Grand Old Party. Remnick remarks that by the end of 2009, Obama’s “visions of post-partisan comity had given way to the reality of prolonged battle with congressional Republicans” (Remnick, 581). Conservatives developed anti-Obama narratives; the President was not as intent on critiquing his opposition. The 2010 Congressional elections saw the biggest Democratic loss in the House of Representatives since 1938 and the Roosevelt recession.

Harvard historian James Kloppenberg’s *Reading Obama* places the President in the context of American intellectual history. The towering figures of William James and John Dewey, with their

philosophy of pragmatism, are to Kloppenberg the tradition in which Obama belongs. Philosophical pragmatism, Kloppenberg writes, “embraces uncertainty, provisionality, and the continuous testing of hypotheses through experimentation.” Obama’s “commitment to fallibilism and experimentation” shows “the conviction of a democrat committed to forging agreement rather than deepening disagreements” (xii, 222). The intellectual allegiances of Obama are also traced to Harvard historian Gordon Wood’s notion of civic republicanism, Harvard-trained anthropologist Clifford Geertz’s version of particularism, Harvard philosopher John Rawls liberal brand of justice as fairness, and Obama’s Harvard Law Professor Lawrence Tribe’s historicism in conceiving the Constitution.

Out of this mixture of influences, Kloppenberg describes Obama as a “partisan” of Dewey and James’ pragmatism and the “ideals of equality and liberty” become realized through the democratic forging of agreements, followed by critically evaluating the consequences of these political compromises (221-222). Tensions in this American liberal tradition are revealed between concern with equality and liberty on one hand and political compromise on the other. Kloppenberg himself stresses the threat to equality that between 1971 and 2001 the economic income of most Americans “remained flat” while the most wealthy Americans income jumped by almost “500 percent” (193-194). Kloppenberg says that Obama believes that “democracy requires at least rough economic equality” and the degree to which Obama is committed to these ideals will be “the defining features of his presidency” (191-192). Some may view Obama’s willingness to extend the Bush tax cuts for the most affluent Americans as an example of the pragmatic political compromise that is the essence of American democracy; others may see it as the familiar abandonment of democratic principles of rough economic equality by some liberal presidents.

*Changing Times: The Life of Barack Obama* is a highly readable, brief biography of the President by historian Glenn Jeanette and journalist David Lührssen. They mention that “Barry grew up with an absence, a gap in his family,” given his African father was not present and that his mother and her parents were white (4-5). As an adult Obama became a “conciliator, a reconciler of opposites, and a bridge over divisions” that derived “from the

particular need of a person of uncertain identity to get along with everyone” (52). While Jeansonne and Luhrssen admire Obama’s capacities, they are not sure that “all his countrymen share his level of civility or maturity” (141).

Much of what makes Obama extraordinary as a human being is his ability to understand and reconcile opposite perspectives; to give place and position to those whose views diverge from his own. He exhibits what the poet Keats calls “*Negative Capability*...when man is capable of being in uncertainties, Mysteries, doubts, without” loss of reason or balance (John Keats, *Selected Letters*, 22 December 1818, Oxford University Press, 2002, 41-42). The chance of reconciling opposites is most likely to be fruitful when the negotiating partners come to the table in good faith. In the rough and tumble world of American partisan politics, this good faith is not always present. The challenge for President Obama is how he can balance his personal need for conciliation, as a way to prevent further disruption and loss, with adherence to principles and policies that can promote equality, justice and economic recovery in a political system weighted more toward special than democratic interests.

*Ken Fuchsman’s biography may be found on page 285. □*

## **The Riddle of Avner Falk’s Obama**

**Paul H. Elovitz—Clio’s Psyche**

*Review essay of Avner Falk, The Riddle of Barack Obama: A Psychobiography (Santa Barbara: CA: ABC-CLIO Imprint of Praeger, 2010), ISBN 978-0-313-38587-2, i-xx, 335 pages, Hardcover (also available as an eBook), \$54.95.*

Upon receipt of this volume I made a point of not looking past the title page; instead, I decided to record what I expected to find between the covers. First and foremost, I anticipated that there would be a great emphasis on the role of the mother and issues of individuation, or lack thereof. This is based upon finding the maternal role to be a central concern in this prolific Israeli clinical psychologist and psychohistorian’s books on Herzl (1993), Jewish history (1996), and Napoleon (2007). The riddle of Falk’s Obama

would be how he would work in his usual maternal theme, especially since the President had important separations from the mother who birthed him in her teens.

Repetition is the second characteristic I predicted. I was sure that the book would be repetitious since that is very much the pattern of the author, who once responded to my statement that his work would be received far more widely if he edited it down much more carefully, "I am constitutionally incapable of editing my own work." My third prediction was that Falk would incline to be heavy-handed in his use of psychological terminology. Upon reading the volume I found that all three of my prognostications were on target. This is unfortunate, since a first rate psychobiography of Obama would be of great value.

Out of fairness to the best-known Israeli psychobiographer, I will start with the book's strengths. Falk utilizes his considerable knowledge of psychoanalysis, psychobiography, and psychohistory to probe our 44<sup>th</sup> President, providing a chronology of Obama's life. Here, he delves into the lives and personalities of his ancestors, grandparents, and parents, striving to give the reader a complete picture while probing the conscious and unconscious motives of our President. The author writes about Obama's early feelings of helplessness and sense of abandonment, dreams, identity struggles, his "fierce ambition," and much more. Falk's study puts forth many possibilities, some connecting Obama's personal psychodynamics and his interaction with the country. To his credit, he acknowledges his own transference to Obama: liking, empathy for, and identify with his subject (viii).

Unfortunately, the weaknesses of this volume outweigh its strengths. The author claims that his "book is the fruit of rigorous scholarship" (ix) and that he "uses all the available primary sources" (xvii), but I find the scholarship to be rather ordinary at best and to have significant omissions, partly because Falk relies too heavily on online sources. For example, he misses the valuable articles by Bulkeley, Fuchsman, Strozier, and me in *Clio's Psyche* on Obama, as well as others in different publications. There are primary sources I have come across that are not utilized, despite his claim to have used "all available primary sources."

Falk draws his materials overwhelmingly from Obama's writings, especially the autobiographical *Dreams from My Father* (1995), in which the young lawyer showed considerable self-awareness and some psychological acumen. He goes through the many well-known people in Obama's life and never fails to come up with some psychological explanation for their behavior, no matter how thin the evidence. The margins of my copy are littered with the word "Evidence?" Sometimes he is right in his suppositions but other times he goes well beyond his evidence.

The senior Barack Obama is correctly described as having "a narcissistic, arrogant, and self-destructive personality" (20). Stanley Ann Dunham is presented as "defiant," "empathetic," "idealistic," "immature," and much more. Stanley Armour Dunham, Obama's beloved "Gramps," is repeatedly declared to be boisterous, hypomanic, quick to anger, restless, and violent; Madeline Lee Payne, the boy's always devoted and loving grandmother who he called "Toots" or "Tutu" is derided as "a rigid, strict, and pedantic woman" (11) and given far less attention than she deserves. A strong case can be made for her being both the cornerstone of the family and a model of realism to her grandson. Falk attempts to cover himself with an endless string of "may, may, may," a fair number of "could, could, could," and, somewhat more understandably, quite a number of rhetorical questions.

He gets carried away with providing psychological labels and cannot resist generalizing beyond the evidence. As an advocate of the psychohistorical minimalist school when it comes to labeling, I continually found myself frustrated by his heavy-handed psychologizing. Falk goes to extremes in describing positive assessments of Obama, finding him to have "an incredibly mature insight for a 17 year-old" (64), to have "incredible emotional control" (70), to have "supreme" (71) self-confidence and self-control, to have "an exquisite sense of humor" (xvi), and so forth. After the author finds a plethora of evidence to the effect of Obama being arrogant, he declares that Obama "succeeded in conquering his arrogance" (145).

An element Avner Falk fails to deal sufficiently with is the audience for which *Dreams* was written. Upon being elected as president of the *Harvard Law Review*, Barack Obama was paid a

large sum of money to write a book about race relations in America. As a young black man who had been raised by Caucasians with white values, he certainly was not in a good position to expand on race relations. Quite sensibly, he chose to write about his own idea of blackness and his quest to know and understand the father who abandoned him. Consequently, what he writes in *Dreams From My Father* reflects not only this mission but also his desire to focus on his African ancestry and the African Americans he worked with as a community organizer in Chicago. As a source for understanding of his life, his autobiography is biased in favor of these elements rather than of the white world that he knew so much better.

Although there is much to criticize in Dr. Falk's *The Riddle of Barack Obama*, it is worth reading if you can tolerate the heavy-handed psychological labeling, repetitions, tendency to go well beyond the evidence from his sources, and overemphasis on the maternal issue. The latter even has its advantages as an antidote to the overemphasis on the father who was never there for our President.

*Paul H. Elovitz, PhD, a presidential psychobiographer since 1976, trained in history and psychoanalysis, may be contacted at pelovitz@aol.com. □*

## **Spector's Flawed Study of American Innocence**

**Jacques Szaluta**—U.S. Merchant Marine Academy

*Review Essay of Barry Spector, Madness at the Gates of the City: The Myth of American Innocence (Berkeley, CA: Regent Press, 2010), ISBN 13: 9781587901737, 521 pages, paperback, \$22.00.*

While Barry Spector's book demonstrates a prodigious amount of work and research, it reads like a polemic because it is highly personal and censorious. Essentially, *Madness* is an indictment of American society. It is a large book; well over 500 pages long, encyclopedic, cosmological, and impressive in its range of topics. This brief review can only mention some of the many ad-

dressed by Spector, which include patriarchy, family, religion, capitalism, consumerism, racism, militarism, imperialism, sexism, illegal (and legal) drug use, genocide, medical care, crime, civil rights, and education. The author's thesis is that the way these issues are dealt with contribute to the "madness" of American society.

I find two authors inspiring Spector to be problematic. Namely, Carl Jung, a person of poor moral character known for his split with Sigmund Freud, and Noam Chomsky, who has denounced psychoanalysis and is a harsh critic of the United States. These individuals set the tone for his work.

However, Spector also cites the eminent historian Richard Hofstadter's *Anti-Intellectualism in American Life* (1963), honored by the Pulitzer Prize in 1964. But unlike Hofstadter, he holds the Puritans responsible for all the ills in the United States, from the formation of America to the present day. They are his *bête noire*, as he rails against them throughout the text. Hofstadter had a more tempered view, finding that the Puritans are denounced in "odious" terms because they were "the first class of American intellectuals," and that it "is doubtful that any community ever had more faith in the value of learning and intellect than that of the Massachusetts Bay" (59). The author's observations on the contemporary United States are not without merit or foundation, but he curiously disclaims that he does this "not out of gratuitous America-bashing" (250). In line with his orientation, Spector's standpoint is that "as Jung taught, the society that emphasizes extreme Apollonian values and represses the Dionysian sets up a dynamic in which the god can only return in the symptom" (359). Although the author's aim is to study the United States from its beginnings, with emphasis on the last century and contemporary times, he inordinately and tendentiously spends several chapters (about 150 pages throughout the book) on ancient Greece. From this perspective, he considers the contemporary American predicament to be the unresolved interplay of the pervasive myth of Dionysius versus Apollo.

Spector gives an account of the American family that is grim indeed. He buttresses his views with telling statistics, demonstrating that children in the United States are medicated more frequently than children in other industrialized countries. The culprit is the pharmaceutical industry, with its vast army of lobbyists, who

outnumber the legislators in Washington and engage “the medical priesthood,” which then prescribes Ritalin (355). Physicians who receive payments from this industry are “five times more likely to prescribe drugs to children than those who have refused such payments” (355). Furthermore, he reports that the United States produces and consumes “90% of the world’s Ritalin” and that approximately eight million children receive such medications for mental conditions. American physicians prescribe a variety of anti-depressants to children “five times more likely than British doctors do” (355). The use of such drugs is therefore employed to tranquilize children, especially boys. The author contends that rather than striving to eliminate conditions of poverty, “madness is big business under capitalism” (355).

The history of ancient Greece, as described by Spector, was particularly violent and family conditions were marked by hostility. The story of Oedipus grew out of a concept that has universal validity and is central in psychoanalytic theory. The modern American family, too, manifests dysfunctional characteristics and the victims, in unprecedented numbers, are children. The statistics that he provides are appalling indeed. In the patriarchal family children are at times idealized, but they can also be abused, leading them to later, as adults, become oppressors themselves. These influences stem not only from the Greeks, but also from the Old Testament, the rise of Christianity, and the Middle Ages. To illustrate this attitude, Spector quotes Martin Luther, who asserts, “I would rather have a dead son than a disobedient one” (106). Another momentous development that markedly changed family relationships and especially affected father-son relationships was the rise of factories in the Industrial Revolution. Previously, when America was more of an agricultural and rural nation, fathers interacted with their sons much more (177). Women, according to the author, are scapegoated, too, “no different in any respect from similar girls in the Middle East” (303). The author asserts that “family rape is the source of forty percent of teen pregnancies” (303). In other words, America is producing children who become immature adults. The above issues notwithstanding, there is in the United States a vibrant feminist movement and conditions for women in this country certainly bear no resemblance to that of women in Muslim countries.

The renowned French historian Michel Foucault contributed in a groundbreaking way to the exploration of dysfunctional behavior in society, as is explicitly stated in the title of his book *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason* (1961). Essentially, he researches and describes how society, from the 16<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, responded to those people deemed to exhibit aberrant behavior. Surprisingly, Spector does not cite him.

Barry Spector ends up being overly judgmental in denouncing America's foreign policy in general as one that looks for enemies. He negates that so often in American history, beginning with the Revolution, American armies have been armies of liberation—uniquely so since the rise of nation states. It is not that there aren't serious problems in this country. Many of the issues he raises are well-founded, but presented in their totality amount to a *potpourri* of condemnations, lamenting as though it were *Weltschmerz* (sadness over the state of the world). Actually, Spector is not radical, as much of what he writes is common knowledge, especially to psychoanalytically informed historians. Rather, he is cynical. He describes well, conventionally, *what* has happened, rather than *why* it happened, despite his denunciations of corporate America and its Puritan background. He also mentions *Civilization and Its Discontents* (1929), in which Freud writes as a critic of society. But Spector just does not rise to his level. In his final pages, he argues for reconciliation and national atonement, for this would bring an end “of both Puritanism and its predatory shadow” (441). In spite of its shortcomings, this work has merits, namely in being informative and alarming on the grave current social and psychological issues confronting this country.

*Jacques Szaluta holds a PhD from Columbia University and is Professor Emeritus of History at the United States Merchant Marine Academy. He has published widely in the field of modern European history and psychohistory. Dr. Szaluta is a graduate of the New York Center for Psychoanalytic Training and may be reached at SzalutaJ@usmma.edu. □*

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## **Letter to the Editor**

### **Reflections on Anti-Semitism**

Dear Editor,

The “The Psychology of Anti-Semitism and Judeophilia Special Issue” (Vol. 17, No. 3, December, 2010) of *Clio’s Psyche* offers an important window into one of the most crucial aspects of a phenomenon that has existed for at least two millennia, and is still of great concern today. It may be of particular interest to those interested in psychohistory because the founder of psychoanalysis, Sigmund Freud, was a Jew who wrestled with his own awareness of being Jewish, and because the detractors of psychoanalysis at their most virulent wound up calling it a “Jewish science.”

One aspect of contemporary anti-Semitism manifesting among Western European intellectuals is the re-casting of the agonies of the Shoah by equating Israeli actions with Nazism, so that victim and persecutor are reversed, the Jews becoming Nazis. In this schema the Palestinians are the only victims, and therefore are Jews. In this way Western Europeans rationalize and justify their historical anti-Semitism, in effect saying, “You see, we were right. The Jews have always been virulently dangerous, they are vermin, and should have been exterminated.”

This is a manifestation of a complex system of defenses, including denial and projection, in an attempt to ward off the shame and guilt occasioned by the genocidal psychopathic rampage of the Shoah, which was initiated by Germany and which involved massive cooperation in occupied countries such as Poland and France. Even Resistance fighters cooperated in persecuting Jews. Thus the Western European exonerates Europe, attributes the repudiated murderous actions to the Jew, and regains self-esteem. (The efforts of those called “Righteous Gentiles” to rescue Jews must be acknowledged as courageous and extraordinarily moral.) What is notable is that whatever atrocities take place anywhere else in the world, whatever genocidal actions are initiated by repressive regimes and terrorist organizations, the pejorative “Nazi” is reserved for Israel.

Jews, although only one quarter of one percent of the world's population, are disproportionately represented among Nobel Prize winners in science and medicine and literature. Jesus Christ, Karl Marx, and Sigmund Freud all were Jews whose contributions to world thought initiated major world movements. Yet Jewish contributions to world culture are described pejoratively by anti-Semites, who are fond of asserting that Jews "dominate" entertainment, the arts, literature, and finance, and want to take over the world.

Why has such a minute fraction of a world population been the target of so much hatred? The articles in this issue approach the question with eloquence and sensitivity.

Sincerely,

Merle Molofsky

*Merle Molofsky, NCPsyA, is a psychoanalyst in private practice, serving on the Board of Directors and as Chair of the Ethics and Psychoanalysis Committee of the International Forum for Psychoanalytic Education (IFPE). She is co-editor of IFPE's e-journal Other/Wise, and is on the Editorial Board of The Psychoanalytic Review. Molofsky is an active participant in the Psychohistory Forum's online discussion group and her article, "My Mother is My Ego Ideal," appeared in Clio's Psyche's March 2010 special issue on The Psychology of Ego Ideal, Heroes, Mentors, and Role Models. She may be contacted at [mmpsya@mindspring.com](mailto:mmpsya@mindspring.com). □*

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## BULLETIN BOARD

**CONFERENCES:** In **April** the next **Psychohistory Forum Work-In-Progress Seminar** will be the **Psychology and Foreign Policy of American Exceptionalism** with **Paul Elovitz** presenting. Papers and invitations will be mailed to Forum members. On **March 25-27, 2011** in Oslo, the Norwegian Psychoanalytic Society is sponsoring the conference, "Psychoanalysis and Politics: Nationalism and the Body Politic." On **April 13-17**, Division 39 on Psychoanalysis of the American Psychological Association (**APA**) will be having its meeting in Manhattan at the Park Sheridan Hotel. The International Psychohistorical Association's (**IPA**) next meeting is on **June 8-10, 2011** at the Lincoln Center Campus of Fordham University. On **July 7-10, 2011**, the International Society of Political Psychology (**ISPP**) is holding its annual conference in **Istanbul**. The International Forum for Psychoanalytic Education (**IFPE**) will be holding its next meeting on **November 11-13, 2011** at the Lago Mar Resort in Fort Lauderdale (<http://www.ifpe.org/conference.html>). **PUBLICATIONS:** **Glen Jeansonne, David Luhrssen, and Dan Sokolovic** announced their new book, *Elvis Presley: Reluctant Rebel*, which will be available February 28, 2011 (ABC/CLIO-Praeger, \$44.95 hardback). Signed discount copies may be obtained by writing the author at [gsj@uwm.edu](mailto:gsj@uwm.edu). *The Individual in a Social World: Essays and Experiments*, written by **Stanley Milgram** and edited by **Tom Blass**, was published by Pinter & Martin Ltd. on August 31, 2010. **NOTES ON MEMBERS:** Professors Andrew and Louis Marvick have established a website with the last work of their late mother, **Elizabeth Wirth Marvick** (1925-2005). It is entitled *Washington, Jefferson, and Madison: Family Experience and Personality in the Lives of Three Virginian Founding Fathers*. A Featured Scholar Interview of this distinguished psychohistorian may be found in the June 2002 issue of this journal and a memorial in the March 2006 issue. **Irene Javors** celebrated the publication of her book, *Culture Notes: Essays on Sane Living*, with a Coming Out (book) Party in January in Manhattan. Congratulations to **Denis O'Keefe** on the birth of Chloe Violet on December 1, 2010. **Joseph M. Kramp** passed his comprehensive exams with distinction and earned a Master of Philosophy as well as a graduate certificate in gender and sexuality. In

the fall **Norman Simms** (nsimms@waikato.ac.nz) of New Zealand would like to house-sit or house swap with someone from metropolitan New York. **MODERATING:** Our appreciation to **Jacques Szaluta** for moderating some sessions. We welcome new members **George Brown, Alice Maher, and Philip Pomper.** **OUR THANKS:** To our members and subscribers for the support that makes Clio's Psyche possible. To Benefactors Herbert Barry, David Beisel, David Lotto, and Peter Petschauer; Patrons Peter Loewenberg, Alice Maher, and Jamshid Marvasti; Sustaining Members George Brown, Tom Ferraro, Eva Fogelman, Ken Fuchsman, Mary Lambert, and Philip Pomper; Supporting Members C. Fred Alford, Rudolph Binion, Sander Breiner, Judith Gardiner, Susan Gregory, Carol Lachman, Lee Solomon, Hanna Turken; and Members Michael Britton, James David Fisher, Molly Castelloe-Fong, Glen Jeansonne, Marvin Leibowitz, Margery Quackenbush, and Ken Rasmussen. Our special thanks for thought-provoking materials to C. Fred Alford, Alexei and Ehor Boyanowsky, Michael Britton, Don Carveth, Florette Cohen, Nina Dadlez, Dan Dervin, Paul Elovitz, Audrey Falk, Tom Ferraro, Eva Fogelman, Ken Fuchsman, Jay Gonen, Juhani Ihanus, Joseph Kramp, Joel Markowitz, Jamshid Marvasti, Allan Mohl, Merle Molofsky, Pat Oles, Peter Petschauer, Phillip Pomper, Jacques Szaluta, Peace Sullivan, and Frank Summers. To Caitlin Adams for editing, proofing, and Publisher 2003 software application, Nicole Alliegro and Devin McGinley for editing and proofing. To Professors Ken Fuchsman and Paul Salstrom as well as Joseph Kramp and Lauren Seregransky for proofing. Our special thanks to our editors and to our numerous, overworked referees, who must remain anonymous. □

*We Wish to  
Thank Our Prompt, Hardworking,  
Anonymous Referees and Diligent  
Editors*

## ***Call for Papers***

### **The Psychology of American Exceptionalism**

**June 2011 Special Issue**

*Psychological/Psychodynamic Insights on Aspects of American Exceptionalism reflected in:*

- A contemporary or historical case study/studies
- A psychobiographical exploration of the roots of this identification: Jackson, Jefferson, Lincoln, FDR, and so forth
- Justifications for American imperialistic behaviors
- Justifications for international capitalism and special interests
- Religious aspects now and throughout the years: America as “the shining city on the hill”
- Its patterns and the emotional climate of invocation
- Uses in war time and the preparation for war
- Politicians, as well as talk show and television commentators
- Psychogeographical projections onto countries and states
- Films, flags, songs, and other artifacts
- Comparisons with the exceptionalisms of other nations
- Inspiration for humanitarian efforts such as disaster and food relief, foreign non-military aid, the Peace Corps, and so forth
- Scientific and technological innovation and leadership
- The creation of the League of Nations, major contributions to the creation of the United Nations, the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (1948), and so forth
- Setting an example for human kind, in Lincoln’s words, “America as the last best hope for mankind” (as in parts of the Arabic world in 2011)
- Book and movie review essays

**Due April 15, 2011**

Articles of 500-1500 words are welcome.

Contact Paul H. Elovitz, Editor, at [pelovitz@aol.com](mailto:pelovitz@aol.com)

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### ***Call for Symposium Responses***

**On the Foreign Policy of American Exceptionalism  
and its Contemporary Manifestations**

by Frank Summers and Paul Elovitz

Requests for the papers and the subsequent commentary of 500-1000 words are welcome and should be mailed to Paul H. Elovitz.

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