

**Sherman's Rage, Sherman's War:  
The General as  
Society's Delegate**

**Melvin Kalfus  
Lynn University**

William Tecumseh Sherman keeps turning up in the strangest places and the strangest ways. Who would think that he would be a presence at the 1996 Olympic Games in Atlanta? But, as Alexander Stille demonstrates in his fine article in *The New Yorker* ("Who Burned Atlanta? The Real Story of the All-new City," July 29, 1996, pages 52-58), the ghost of Sherman still haunts the

*(Continued on page 40)*

**The Cry of a Child:  
The Unabomber Suspect's  
Explosive Family Boundaries**

**Paul H. Elovitz with Michele O'Donnell  
Ramapo College**

The torment of Unabomber suspect Theodore John (Ted, Teddy John) Kaczynski's family is intense and tragic. His mother Wanda wonders what went wrong in the early development of her older son. She does not want to believe that her precocious offspring used his education to frighten, hurt, and kill people: in her mind the bomb he had helped other boys build in chemistry class at age 13 was just a childhood

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prank. Mrs. Kaczynski, after all, had been an extremely devoted mother who even kept a diary of her child's early life, and had encouraged his development as a genius. His brother David, who looked up to his older brother's "purity," wonders now if he is partially responsible for the destruction by unknowingly helping to finance the Unabomber suspect's crimes. David, a social worker who believes in the Biblical injunction to be his brother's keeper, wonders if he will be indirectly responsible for another death — his brother's: if Ted is found guilty of the Unabomber crimes, he probably will face the death penalty. This tormented family, while wanting to protect the legal position of their loved one, struggles to determine where the story of the Unabomber begins. The answer already is clear to us: it begins with the cry of a frightened child.

On February 27, 1943, nine-month-old "Teddy John" screamed in agony, but nobody seemed to listen. During his week-long stay at the hospital, he was strapped down so that photographs could be taken of his hives. In the mind of this terrified nine-month-old, his usually loving parents had abandoned him. His mother left him at that terrible place, and although she came back once to see him, she did not rescue him. Teddy John was miserable during his stay, he was lonely, and his skin itched horribly. The explosive anger that he could not verbally express was imprinted on his psyche. What could that little nine-month-old do? His options were quite limited. The sense of powerlessness which the Unabomber has carried with him has its roots in this hospital stay, and in other traumata of childhood.

Rage is a central issue in the life of Ted Kaczynski — arrested on April 4, 1996, as the probable Unabomber who had been terrorizing and murdering for almost 18 years — and in the Unabomber's "Manifesto." There is the rage he felt as a nine-month-old strapped to the doctor's table and denied the comfort of his parents. There is the rage he experienced as a seven-year-old when his mother left him to go to the hospital to bring back his brother David and the sense of abandonment he felt when he was left alone in the hospital waiting room while his father and aunt went up to see the new baby. (Their aunt said Ted seemed crestfallen at having to share his parents' lavish attention with his new brother.) There is the rage he felt as a ten-year-old demanding that his father release a shrew (a type of mole, the size of a mouse) he had trapped. There is the rage he felt as

a man at the very existence of a sister-in-law he had never met. There is the rage and hurt he felt at his father having once said Ted had "the brain of a 2-year-old." The rage in the Unabomber's "Manifesto" takes the form of the desire to overthrow "the economic and technological basis of the present society." On at least one occasion, his frustration was not even cloaked by ideological verbiage when he declared that "it would be better to dump the whole stinking system and take the consequences."

When the Unabomber writes that "modern man is strapped down by a network of rules and regulations," our first thought is of the nine-month-old Teddy John strapped to the doctor's table. This thought is reinforced when he goes on to declare, "and his [modern man's] fate depends on the actions of persons remote from him whose decisions he cannot influence," since it rings true to his hospital experience as well. Is he blaming

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his parents for abandoning him in the hospital when he writes, "this [modern man's helplessness] is not accidental or a result of the arbitrariness of arrogant bureaucrats"? In these statements Ted is transferring his old horror of the hospital experience to the controlling social laws of the modern technological society he faces.

As an adult, Ted has a deeply ingrained fear of the sense of powerlessness which, he states, is the result of "the regulation of our lives by large organizations." Even as a precocious student he certainly felt straight-jacketed by modern society. Later on he came to feel that "the system HAS TO [sic] regulate human behavior closely in order to function" and "[this regulation is] necessary and inevitable in any technologically-advanced society." In his mind technological society had become the enemy. Why?

As psychohistorians, we wonder who in his life is associated with technology? When he was a child, his mother, Wanda Dombek Kaczynski (born 1917), read *Scientific American* to him and in many ways encouraged his inclination to become a child prodigy in the fields of math and science. She was a high school dropout who aspired to know, and eventually became a teacher. While the father, Theodore Richard Kaczynski, wanted his sons to do well in school and in life, he also took the boys camping for days at a stretch — they lived off the land. (We need to know more about the genesis and the impact on the family of the father Kaczynski's suicide in 1991, a suicide precipitated by the cancer within his body. We do not yet know if the elder Kaczynski killed himself to avoid pain, or mostly to avoid the invasion of his body by scientific, institutionalized medicine which Ted had begun war against in 1978.) When young Professor Ted Kaczynski left the Mathematics Department at Berkeley in 1969, eventually to go live in nature, was he rebelling against his mother's values and dreams for him in favor of nature which he associated with his father's values and dreams? We suspect so. In the "Manifesto," nature is set up as an ideal:

The positive ideal we propose is Nature. That is, WILD [sic] nature: those aspects of the functioning of the Earth and its living things that are independent of human management and free of human interference and control... Nature makes a perfect counter-ideal to technology for several reasons. Nature (that which is outside the

power of the system) is the opposite of technology (which seeks to expand indefinitely the power of the system)... Nature is beautiful... Only with the Industrial Revolution did the effect of human society on nature become really devastating. To relieve the pressure on nature it is not necessary to create a special kind of social system, it is only necessary to get rid of industrial society (paragraphs 183-184).

Given his exultation of "Nature," it became easy for Ted Kaczynski to "advocate a revolution against the industrial system." His mother said that he abruptly quit Berkeley because of environmental concerns and his father said that Ted could not accept teaching the nuclear bomb builders of the future. He returned home, became a gardener, worked in a foam factory, and then went to the backwoods to live in the wild. "Nature" was the great healer which would bring the family, or at least the men of the family, together. Yet, in the end, "nature therapy," much like "travel therapy," does not work since we carry our conflicts within us — wherever we go. There was no escape for Ted in the wilds of Canada and Montana from the turmoil of the his days in the 1960s as an undergraduate student at Harvard, a graduate student at the University of Michigan, and a disliked professor at the University of California at Berkeley. The explosive rage that he experienced in the Chicago hospital and at home traveled with him — wherever he went. In the backwoods, living on \$200 a year, technology became all the more clearly "the Enemy." In fighting technology, Ted felt he was fighting for his very humanity: if only he could destroy the technological monster, he could somehow restore himself to the oneness with his "good mother" — the mother of the first nine months of his life.

Ted lived in the world, but was emotionally isolated from it. Though he is an intellectual genius with an IQ level of 170, he is emotionally-stunted with a very low "emotional IQ." As an adult he blamed his parents for valuing "his brain" more than his happiness. Throughout his life Ted seemed only able to relate to animals, younger children, drunks, and the vulnerable — not to his contemporaries. He needed his younger brother David and his mother Wanda to link him with the outside world because of his withdrawal as a young man. Without them present, he was separated from the world by his eccentricities, fears, and rage.

The title of his award-winning mathematical dissertation, "Boundary Functions," reflected his own inability to establish proper boundaries with the people and the world around him. Ted Kaczynski voluntarily lived in a 10 by 12-foot cabin, built with his own hands in Montana, and now lives in a prison cell because he does not know how to relate to others. He is separated from the world by his own uneasy boundaries and the murderous rage within him. Beneath this rage is the frightened child within, yearning to be reunited with the loving, adoring, and ever-present mother of the first nine months of his life.

*Authors' Note: Our main sources were various articles which appeared in the Washington Post and the New York Times from April to June, 1996. We took our copy of the Unabomber's "Manifesto" from the Internet. This essay reflects preliminary explorations, not completed research. Also, it is up to a court of law to determine if Ted Kaczynski is in fact the Unabomber.*

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## Thoughts on the Apocalypse

**David Redles**  
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As I sit here, the two-year anniversary of the immolation of David Koresh's Rancho Apocalypse has passed, along with the one-year anniversary of the Oklahoma City bombing that was intended to avenge it. Simultaneously, the Aum Shinrikro "doomsday cult" trial has begun, apocalyptically-minded Freemen are holed up in Montana, and two Georgia militiamen have been arrested for bomb-making (ostensibly to "protect and prepare" themselves from the coming American dictatorship of Jews and evil Federal workers). As someone who has been investigating apocalyptic thinking for over ten years

(specifically regarding Hitler and the rise of Nazism) I am left with mixed emotions. I feel a sense of detached bemusement and intellectual satisfaction as the many predictions I've made to friends and colleagues about the proliferation of such incidences have come true. However, the often brutal reality of apocalyptic thinking made manifest harkens darkly for our future.

While researching my PhD dissertation ("Nazi Apocalypticism as a Response to Rapid and Radical Change," Pennsylvania State University, 1995), I discovered four aspects of apocalyptic thinking that needed to be addressed. The first concerns its ubiquitous nature. Apocalyptic thinking, and the movements behind it, has arisen all over the world for over two thousand years. It is neither solely the intellectual spawn of Judeo-Christian beliefs nor, as Norman Cohn recently proposed, Zoroastrianism. Secondly, contrary to widely-held belief, apocalyptic movements are most often socially heterogeneous and do not originate solely or even usually with the oppressed of the world. Thirdly, scholars have mistakenly proposed that varying stimuli such as war, natural disaster, economic upheaval, or culture contact, in varying social situations, have somehow generated strikingly similar symbolic thinking. Finally, the psychological link between messiahs and their followers has yet to be adequately explained. These problems elicited four fundamental questions. How do we explain a phenomenon that transcends cultural and temporal barriers? How do we explain a phenomenon that transcends social determinants such as class, occupation, gender, and religious background? How can we explain a recurring phenomenon that appears to be caused by radically different social events? And finally, how can the individual psychology of messianic figures possibly be linked to that of a large heterogenous group? I concluded that the only common element shared by movements from dramatically different times and places, by a heterogenous segment of society, and by individual messiah figures and their collected followers, is a phylogenetic brain structure — one that has changed little for millennia. And to understand those phylogenetic aspects of the brain I turned to the psychological theories of C. G. Jung.

I further concluded that it is not any specific stimuli like war, natural disaster, or culture contact, that gives rise to apocalyptic movements, but the rapid and radical change that each engenders. It is this radical change, perceived as a

state of chaos approaching the annihilation of being, that stimulates the brain to reconstruct a sense of order via the production of a standard set of unifying symbols. I have termed this process the "apocalypse complex." The ego normally adapts to external change by creating new relationships of order and, consequently, new patterns of meaning. However, when change is so radical and occurs so rapidly, the ego may be incapable of restructuring its perception of external reality. Order appears to have become chaos, and all sense of meaning — a subjective perception of order — is lost. It is at this point that the Self, what Jung called the archetype of wholeness and order, asserts itself. Without such a compensatory mechanism for reconstructing a sense of order, humans would be incapable of adapting to change.

The symbols of the apocalypse are those of eternity, immortality, and invincibility — and therefore of immutable order. The messiah figure is that individual whose particular expression of this symbology not only accurately conveys the archetypal, but clothes it in ways that strike a contemporary or culturally-specific chord — for Hitler it was his soteriology [salvation doctrine] of race. Large numbers of individuals searching for a new conception of order to replace their perception of chaos may accept this visionary as their longed-for savior — the messiah figure itself being a symbol of the Self. Therefore, while most individuals who feel the call of the apocalyptic project it outward and look for a savior to create the new order, the messiah is that rare person who introjects the messiah symbol, identifies with it, and accepts the call as his or her own. Seen in this light the apocalypse complex is not so much a psychopathological response to rapid change, but an instinctual attempt to reconstruct a sense of order in a chaotic situation. The apocalypse complex, therefore, can have therapeutic results. Unfortunately, the dualistic vision of a battle between good and evil (the forces of order and chaos), combined with a fear of change and a heightened paranoia, often leads to tragic consequences.

When prophesized apocalyptic events fail to occur, true believers often enact, consciously or unconsciously, the End Time scenario themselves. Hitler's Armageddon, the final battle for world domination between Aryans and Jews with the extermination of the losing race, became a horrible reality with World War II and the Holocaust — both the *Endkrieg* and the *Endlösung* were

conceived as eschatological events. For David Koresh and the militiamen who see in him a kindred spirit, it was and is the fear of being attacked by evil government forces. In Waco the stockpiling of arms in preparation for the apocalypse led directly to the ATF [Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms] assault. One could argue that the assault justified the arming, but in reality it was the stockpiling for an event that was never going to happen that precipitated the event's actually occurring. In the same way, Asahara Shoko, obsessed with Hitler's gassing of Jews, developed a paranoid delusion that the CIA (it could just as well have been a secret association of Freemasons and Jews) were about to gas his compound and, consequently, he struck first. The mass suicides at Jonestown and, recently, the Solar Temple, as well as Charles Manson's attempt to precipitate the "coming" race war, likewise followed the induced-apocalypse pattern.

When I hear about militiamen who justify their arming and bomb-making because they believe that a conspiracy of Jews and government officials will one day line them up and shoot them into trenches — they often betray a fear of having done to them what their hero Hitler did to the Jews — it sounds frighteningly like the reasoning of Asahara Shoko. The next step to getting "them" before they get "us" is a short one indeed. The need to understand this apocalyptic mentality is more important now than ever. For, if modern life is marked by anything, it is the ubiquity of rapid and radical change. Apocalyptic thinking may become more a social norm than a social aberration.

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## **Why Stalin Couldn't Stop Laughing**

**Ralph Colp, Jr.  
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Alexander Orlov was an officer in the Soviet secret police force in the 1920s and 1930s, when it came to be called the NKVD. He subsequently defected, and in 1953 published a book, *The Secret History of Stalin's Crimes*. In it

he presented a succession of oral recollections by himself and several of his NKVD acquaintances, showing how Stalin organized the arrests, trials, and executions of many Russian Communists.

One of *Secret History's* recollections is of the events at a banquet that Stalin gave on December 20th, 1936, the 19th anniversary of the creation of the NKVD. Those present included Karl Pauker — who for years had been head of Stalin's bodyguard — and other NKVD chiefs, some of whom had witnessed the executions of Zinoviev and Kamenev, two formerly prominent Communists. In August, 1936, Zinoviev and Kamenev had confessed to falsehoods in a public trial in Moscow, on the promise of Stalin that if they made these confessions he would spare their lives. After the trial Stalin had broken his promise and had them shot in the NKVD cellars on August 25th (Orlov, pages 122-143, 169-177).

In Stalin's December banquet, after those present had become moderately drunk, Pauker gave an impromptu performance of how Zinoviev, as he was being dragged to his execution, grabbed the legs of one of his guards and implored that Stalin be called so that the promise to save his life could be honored. Stalin's reaction to Pauker's performance is described in *Secret History* as follows:

Stalin watched every move of "Zinoviev" and roared with laughter. When they saw how Stalin enjoyed the scene, the guests demanded that Pauker repeat the performance. Pauker obliged. This time Stalin laughed so boisterously that he bent down and held his belly with both hands. And when Pauker introduced a new improvisation and, instead of kneeling, raised his hands to heaven and screamed: "Hear, Israel, our God is the only God!" [which is, traditionally, the final utterance of Orthodox Jews before death], Stalin could no longer bear it and, choking with laughter, began to make signs to Pauker to stop the performance (page 350).

When the events of the above episode are collated with information in several biographies of Stalin (Medvedev, *Let History Judge* [1989]; Radzinsky, *Stalin* [1996]; Tucker, *Stalin as Revolutionary* [1973] and *Stalin in Power* [1990]; Vaksberg, *Stalin Against the Jews* [1994]; and Volkogonov, *Stalin: Triumph and Tragedy* [1991]), it seems likely that Stalin had his fit of

laughing because Pauker's re-enactments of Zinoviev's death, along with the effects on him of alcohol, and the support and mirth of his NKVD guests, stimulated him to have intensely pleasurable thoughts about sadistic acts that he had done, and that he contemplated doing.

Although Stalin had been beaten by both his parents in his childhood, engaged in many violent acts in the years when his political power was growing (Radzinsky, pages 24-5, 60-64), and had sometimes impressed his political comrades as a "touchy character" displaying "arrogance, aloofness and uncomradely behavior" (Tucker [1973], pages 84, 163), I know of no record that he had openly displayed sadistic behavior towards those whom he had contacts with prior to the following incident.

In 1923, when he was drinking wine with Kamenev and Dzerzhinsky, then head of the NKVD, and discussing personal tastes and predilections, Stalin said, "The greatest delight is to mark one's enemy, prepare everything, avenge oneself thoroughly, and then go to sleep" (*Trotsky's Diary in Exile* [1976], page 64). Later in the 1920s an acquaintance called this Stalin's "theory of sweet revenge," and viewed it as his need to vindictively revenge himself on those individuals who had opposed him and whom he envied (Tucker [1973], pages 211, 423). Two such individuals were Zinoviev and Kamenev, whom he had defeated politically in 1927, and envied as writers and speakers, for their knowledge of European languages and cultures, and for the closeness of their relationships with Lenin.

After securing absolute power in the 1930s Stalin revenged himself in phases on Zinoviev and Kamenev: imprisoning them on false accusations in 1935, coercing them into agreeing to confess to new false accusations by promising not to execute them, staging their August, 1936, Moscow trial, secretly observing their debasing confessions at the trial, and then receiving reports from their executioners on their last minutes. Afterwards, having experienced the "greatest delight" of a "thorough" revenge, Stalin went on a holiday. With the executions having broken a taboo against killing Communists, he began anticipating new vindictive acts against other Communists (Tucker [1990], pages 366-73 and Medvedev, pages 354-56).

Four months later, in December, 1936, Pauker's re-enactments first caused Stalin to laugh

twice over the delight he had experienced in August. When Pauker (who was Jewish and therefore acquainted with Jewish customs and the anti-Semitism of his boss) acted out Zinoviev's declaration of faith in the God of Israel, his emphasis on Zinoviev's Jewishness further humored Stalin, perhaps because it made his victim appear more hateful and more helpless. It has been suggested that Pauker, while accurate in his other details about Zinoviev, invented the latter's Jewish declaration because he knew that it would please Stalin (Vaksberg, pages 40-43).

As Stalin laughed over Pauker's re-enactments of his past vindictiveness he may also have been laughing over his anticipations of future vindictive acts that had now evolved into plans, and over the likely fate of his bodyguard. His plans became realities in the years 1937-1938, with arrests, trials, and executions of Communists. As Stalin daily signed lists of those to be executed — including many individuals whom he knew well — he showed his outward feelings by continuing his usual pleasurable routine of going to the theater, watching movies in his dacha, and having midnight suppers, sometimes with friends (Volkogonov, pages 292-3). (No record is available of the talk at these suppers.)

At this time there were also arrests and executions in the NKVD, involving the replacement of the older group of agents by a newer group that was more willing to torture prisoners than its predecessor had been and that was "responsible only to Stalin personally" (Tucker [1990], pages 376-78). Because he belonged to the older group, Pauker was arrested on April 21, 1937, and executed on August 14, less than eight months after he had acted out Zinoviev's execution. Stalin's only known reaction to the killing of his ex-bodyguard, who had long carried out his "most intimate errands" and become "almost a member of his family" (Orlov, pages 338-42), was to accuse the Jewish Pauker of having been a spy for the Gestapo (Vaksberg, page 42). Stalin's cruel actions against those he ruled over would continue for the rest of his life.

Tucker has offered an explanation for Stalin's cruelty by speculating that there was a mental conflict between Stalin's idealized view of himself as a great leader and his many negative qualities — including his "failures, faults, errors, miscalculations, shortcomings, ugly traits, [and]

wrongdoings" — that he hated and repressed; and that in hating others he projected onto them "all that he hated within himself, including the very fact that he felt this hate" (Tucker [1990], pages 163-65).

While Stalin may have feared that his negative qualities made him vulnerable to criticisms from others, and while he may have defended himself against this fear by aggressively hating these others, it is questionable whether his hatred involved a projection of feelings of self-hate. Such hate is produced by a conscience which, along with self-punitive thoughts, also produces feelings of guilt, doubt, and remorse. The evidence indicates that Stalin lacked any manifestations of a conscience. When he was signing the lists of those to be killed he displayed an "absolute lack of feeling" or, as has been seen, feelings of pleasure which suggest sadistic pleasure. He never, at any time, expressed doubts or remorse over any of the individuals who had been executed (Volkogonov, pages 292-3).

Similar objections to the concept of Stalin's self-hate have been made by George Kennan in a letter to Tucker. Kennan argued that Stalin did not have pity and other humane qualities that are the opposite of hate, and that while he could give

a good performance of respecting ... these qualities when he thought this might be useful to his purposes ... he was devoid of the emotional background out of which they could have found real basis in his behavior (quoted in Kennan, *A Century Ending*, pages 240-44).

While the unconscious meanings that Stalin attached to his cruelty are unknown, his main conscious motivations for being cruel were his unlimited ambitions for gaining and holding power, which were combined with his vindictive feelings of envy, suspiciousness, and anger — feelings that he expressed through his control of others. His methods of control ranged from verbal rebukes and imprisonments to killings. Sometimes he would intimidate individuals in his entourage by arresting and imprisoning their wives or relatives, while continuing to have the individuals work for

**The Communism: The Dream**  
that Failed Research Group probes the  
psychological dimensions of what drew

him and meeting with them officially and socially (Medvedev, pages 547, 863). His "misanthropic" need to maintain the smallest degree of control was shown in the case of Alexander Svanidze, his boyhood friend and his (then deceased) wife's brother. When he learned that Svanidze has been sentenced to death as a German spy he said, "Let him ask for forgiveness." Svanidze refused, saying "What's there to be forgiven for? I haven't committed any crime," and was then executed. Afterwards, Stalin said, "See how obstinate he was; he'd rather die than ask for forgiveness" (Medvedev, page 549 and Volkogonov, page 340).

Since the occasions when Stalin imposed his controls onto others were often the realizations of some of his longest-held political and vindictive wishes — increasing his political prestige and power, and destroying those whom he envied because they made him feel inferior — these occasions may have frequently stimulated him to experience delight and laughter. Kennan has observed that whenever he "encountered the slightest evidence of superiority to himself on the part of any other person ... in any field," and he could not impose his controls on that person, an "insane and clearly uncontrollable jealousy and resentment ... took possession of him..." (Kennan, page 241). Often Stalin's reaction was to kill what he could not control and on at least one occasion to then laugh uncontrollably with pleasure.

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## **Sherman's Rage, Sherman's War: The General as Society's Delegate**

*(Continued from page 33)*

commercial capital of the New South. In preparation for the Olympic Games, Atlantans were in the process of restoring the apartment building in which Margaret Mitchell lived when she wrote *Gone With the Wind*, only to see it destroyed by arson for a second time. Bill Campbell, the latest in a series of African-American mayors of Atlanta since 1980, distressed over this second arson at the Mitchell home, offered it as a symbol for contemporary Atlantans.

"We've been scarred by fire in the past," Campbell said. "We've risen from it and we'll go forward again." Stille reports that Pearl Cleage, a black playwright, responded in print: "He can't be talking about that time Gen. Sherman marched through Georgia as part of the effort to defeat the Confederacy, and with it, the institution of slavery, can he?"

Atlanta, Stille points out, is both the birthplace and home of Martin Luther King, Jr., and the location of the Stone Mountain Monument, the Southland's version of Mt. Rushmore, only with the likenesses of Jefferson Davis, Robert E. Lee, and Stonewall Jackson carved thereupon. The descendants of the Confederacy who built the monument were responsible (along with Margaret Mitchell's novel) for indicting General Sherman, from generation to generation, as the nation's first war criminal. In the last two decades, a number of historians and journalists have come to agree with that indictment, adding to it the charge that Sherman was either the progenitor or the precursor of "total war" as it has been practiced in the twentieth century.

The events that were to make General Sherman an icon for Northerners and a villain to Southerners after the end of the Civil War all took place within a period of less than six months, from September, 1864, to February, 1865. By mid-summer 1864, the Army of the Potomac, under U.S. Grant, was bogged down in the siege of Petersburg, Virginia, after a two-month campaign, from the Wilderness through Spotsylvania and North Anna to Cold Harbor, that cost more than 60,000 Union casualties. Southern hopes depended upon Northerners' giving-in to war weariness and refusing to bear the human costs any longer. When General Jubal Early raided Pennsylvania and burned Chambersburg to the ground on July 30 after the town was unable to pay the ransom demanded, Lincoln himself began to anticipate his defeat for re-election in November by the Democratic candidate, General McClellan, running on a platform of a negotiated peace.

In May, as Grant's troops had become enmeshed in their ghastly war of attrition in the Wilderness, Sherman had moved his 100,000-man army from the outskirts of Chattanooga to begin his march on Atlanta. Engaging in a frontal assault only once (a costly attack at Kenesaw Mountain which Sherman broke off after two hours since he was unwilling to take further losses), Sherman

engaged in a series of flanking movements that pressed the Southerners under General Joseph Johnston relentlessly back toward Atlanta, the second most important city in the Confederacy, suffering less than half the casualties that Grant had sustained. "My enemy is the most cautious that ever commanded troops," Johnston said at the time (quoted in Charles Royster, *The Destructive War: William Tecumseh Sherman, Stonewall Jackson and the Americans* [1991], page 326). On September 2, Sherman notified Washington that Atlanta had been occupied. Jubilation swept the North, Sherman eclipsed Grant for a time as its hero, and Lincoln's re-election, and the ultimate fate of the Confederacy, was never again in doubt. What was in doubt was how much time and how many lives it would take, to induce the Confederates to give up the struggle and accept Northern terms of surrender. Surely it was Sherman who, more than any other, supplied the answer.

On September 7, Sherman ordered the evacuation of the remaining civilian population of Atlanta (464 families were affected), an order which the mayor vigorously protested as being against the laws of civilized warfare. Sherman's response is more instructive than his famous (and mis-quoted) "war ... is all hell" of 1880. "War is cruelty and you cannot refine it; and those who brought war into our country deserve all the curses and maledictions a people can pour out," Sherman told the hapless mayor (quoted in B.H. Liddell Hart, *Sherman: Soldier, Realist, American* [1929, 1993], page 310). What Sherman meant was that after civilian populations have clamored for all-out war, calling on the generals to bring them total victory, it was ridiculous for them to assume that wholesale destruction could be confined to the battlefield and on the young men they sent off to fight for their "cause." For Sherman, it was hypocritical and futile to talk of "law" in warfare, since war itself represented the breakdown of law. When law is no longer the guarantor of peace, then any means necessary must be used to re-establish a peace based upon the supremacy of law. In his view, military might was the ultimate foundation of law, that is, the effectiveness of law rested in the power of a central government to impose it upon the population and make it stick. "You cannot have peace and a division, too," he told the Atlanta mayor. "If the United States submits to a division now it will not stop ... until we reap the fate of Mexico, which is eternal war" (Hart, page 310).

For Sherman, the ultimate achievement of man's attempt to provide a lawful society resided in the U.S. Constitution. Peace, prosperity, and progress were only possible through social cohesion, which only submission by every citizen to the Constitution could bring about.

The "March to the Sea" and his subsequent march through the Carolinas represent Sherman's attempt to induce the people of the South to re-submit themselves to the yoke of constitutional law. To this end, on November 15, Sherman's troops burned those public buildings of Atlanta that still stood and on the next day, cut off from his own communications and traveling with the lightest possible supplies, Sherman led 60,000 men on a month-long campaign of 220 miles of destruction along a path of up to 50 miles wide before occupying Savannah in mid-December with little or no destruction to that great port city. A month later, he set off on a march northward through South Carolina, culminating another month later in the capture of Columbia, aflame when his troops entered it and almost totally destroyed by the fire and Union demolition within 24 hours. Less than two months afterwards, the Civil War ended at Appomattox.

Arguably, the Civil War had been brought to an end by Sherman's sapping the Southerners' will to fight on, through a consciously-crafted campaign of the massive destruction of property, *not* of lives. Even then, as Brooks D. Simpson points out, Sherman did not "destroy the South economically so much as he did psychologically, striking at white Southerners' morale" (Simpson, essay review in *Civil War History*, Vol. 39, No. 4, December 1993, pages 336-339). What drove terror into the heart of the Confederacy is not so much what Sherman's troops actually did — property destruction and harassment of civilians — as what they had it in their power to do: slaughter large numbers of Southerners and lay total waste to *all* their homes and cities. By making it very clear to Southerners that he had such absolute power over their lives and property, and proclaiming his willingness to exercise it, Sherman, according to Michael Fellman in his new biography, had taken on the role of "the Grim Reaper" and "implacable warrior." "This enormous terrorist had come to understand both his enemy and the inner meaning of war as has no other American soldier" (Fellman, *Citizen Sherman: A Life of William Tecumseh Sherman* [1995], page 189).

What sort of man was this “implacable warrior” and “enormous terrorist”? Though his analysis is often judicious and occasionally sympathetic, Fellman is, on the whole, damning, early on painting a portrait of Sherman as characterized by “fear of betrayal and abandonment, bouts of depression, and diffuse and frequently explosive rage” (page 5) and at times seething with “envy, resentment, and grievance” (page 19). Moreover, Fellman hammers away at Sherman’s sins of racism, Social Darwinism, anti-Democratic views, and even Caesarism so relentlessly that the hapless reader is likely to conclude, as did one reviewer, that Sherman was “a nasty piece of work”, “a proto-fascist” whose attitudes and depredations may well have laid the ground for “the convulsions of our century” (James Adams, *Toronto Globe and Mail*, August 28, 1995, page C19).

The argument that Sherman was a racist war criminal, perhaps acting under the impulse of severe emotional disturbance, is put most forcefully by Janann Sherman (“The Jesuit and the General: Sherman’s Private War,” *The Psychohistory Review*, Vol. 21, No. 3, Spring 1993, pages 255-294). She writes:

Sherman’s overzealous prosecution of the war in the South was clearly the act of a disturbed man and a direct response to previous failures. Feelings of inferiority and an obsessive need to prove himself compelled him to push the limits of retribution well beyond justice. General Sherman saw himself as an avenging angel sent to punish the South for her rebellion.

She describes Sherman as manic-depressive, a problem that, she suspects, had dual causation. First, there was genetic disposition, since depression and mental instability appears to have run in the Sherman family. Second, there were acute “environmental factors,” especially his “abandonment” as a nine-year-old boy, resulting from his father’s death and his mother’s decision to give him over to the foster care of the family of Thomas Ewing, a wealthy, conservative Whig and future U.S. Senator. (Clearly, there were powerful, unresolved pre-oedipal and oedipal issues that impacted strongly upon General Sherman’s personality and life choices, some of which are raised by Janann Sherman in her study, but a discussion of these are beyond the scope of this article.)

In the enormous volume of official records, memoirs, personal letters, and family letters that Sherman left behind, one can certainly find enough evidence supporting such views (and Fellman seems to have found it all). The problem is that too often the focus upon Sherman, his actions, and his beliefs is presented with very little of the much-needed social, intellectual, and military context. To obtain this perspective, the interested psychohistorian may wish to turn to the classic, and vastly admiring, study by Hart, a study that also displays considerable awareness of its hero’s many flaws and troubled psyche; John T. Marszalek’s more balanced and sympathetic account that stresses Sherman’s life-long struggle against chaos and dependency, *Sherman: A Soldier’s Passion for Order* (1993); and, especially, Royster’s superb book, a powerfully-written military, intellectual, and social history in which context is superabundant.

Where others have seen Sherman’s military and commercial failures in California during the 1850s only in terms of humiliation and loss of self-esteem, Royster sees them as a powerful learning experience, to be applied more in cold calculation than displaced rage:

Sherman could hardly have contrived a range of experiences better calculated to intensify his preoccupation with social stability, governmental power and rule of law.... Though Americans had to have a war to teach them their lesson, they could have seen it all in California: the collapse of civic virtue into self interest, mob action, and defiance of government would eventually destroy a society (page 135).

The distillation of Sherman’s attitude is to be found in his comment during the secession crisis of 1860-61 (as cited in Fellman, page 78):

It is not slavery, it is a tendency toward anarchy everywhere. I have seen it all over America, and our only hope is Uncle Sam. Weak as that government is, it is the only approach to one.

Royster further depicts a Sherman who was cool and courageous in the midst of crisis, standing his ground and rallying his troops at Bull Run and at Shiloh, when the front was collapsing all around under Confederate attack. He was twice-wounded at Shiloh, with three horses shot out from under him (Grant saluted Sherman’s bravery, Fellman discounts it as a foolish concern with honor [Fellman, pages 114-116]). During the campaign for Atlanta, Royster

notes, Sherman made great use of topographical maps of the area, maps that he had created twenty years earlier to keep himself busy during a governmental bureaucratic errand. Planning his march through Georgia, he turned to the census of 1860 "describing the population, livestock, and agricultural produce of Georgia, county by county," thus assuring himself that his army could subsist off the land. "His successful campaign had the inevitability of a design supported by science" (Royster, page 329).

In directing our attention to a more rational and objective Sherman, we cannot discount the role played by his inner rage, a role suggested by the extremity of his language about the horrors of war he expected to visit upon the South, as well as the colossal destruction he actually did visit upon Atlanta, Georgia, and Columbia, South Carolina. Yet the extremity of Sherman's rhetoric is not to be taken as the full measure of the man. For psychohistorians perhaps the single most important factor to be taken into consideration is the context in which Royster places Sherman's words and deeds, that is, the public and private rhetoric that was overwhelmingly prevalent in both the North and South both prior to and during the Civil War: an apocalyptic rhetoric that called for ever-increasing levels of violence and destruction, even annihilation, of the enemy. Even Sherman's brother, Senator John Sherman, generally depicted as a moderate man of considerable restraint, was moved, in mid-1862, to say about the war against the Confederacy, "You cannot conduct war against savages unless you become half-savage yourself" (Royster, page 81).

Disparate and mutually contradictory visions of nationhood had been embraced by each side. The indissoluble Union that God had destined for continental greatness that was embraced by the North was incompatible with, and threatened by, the unique and independent civilization based upon state sovereignty embraced by the South, and vice versa. Almost from the start, each side understood that the only way to get the other to surrender its vision and submit to theirs was by all-out and unrestrained force of arms. "Americans did not invent new methods of drastic war so much as they made real a version of the conflict many of them had talked about from the start," Royster writes, adding, "Two internally contradictory stories of myth-making thus became justifications for a bitter war" (page 145). For Royster, William Tecumseh Sherman and

Stonewall Jackson served as "apt representatives of the extremes to which war had gone" (page 287). In psychohistorical terms, each was the designated delegate for realizing the terrible group-fantasies of his society.

In his fine psychobiography of Lincoln, *Lincoln's Quest for Union: Public and Private Meanings* (1982), Charles Strozier notes that "loss of cohesion in the self generates rage in its wake." Americans in the 1850s, he observes, struggled to hold together their society, their group self, even as the slavery and secession crises fostered fragmentation. When that fragmentation finally came in 1861, he writes, "the rage that this process generated in the end could only be absorbed by war itself" (pages 201-202). It is certainly easy to believe that it had taken great willpower for William Tecumseh Sherman to ward off feelings of inner-fragmentation, particularly whenever, as in California, chaos and anarchy surrounded him, echoing the chaos and anarchy locked in the depths of his mind. The fragmentation of the Union threatened fragmentation of his self, and his rage served the useful purpose of binding the Union and his inner-self together, making him an ideal delegate for the related group-fantasy of Northerners. Moreover, Sherman's abhorrent views regarding blacks, Jews and Native Americans, as well as his anti-democratic tendencies, basically reflected the society that had nurtured him. As Royster notes, such views were axiomatic among the Northern gentry elite (to which my own work with Frederick Law Olmsted and George Templeton Strong also attests). Despicable as they were, Sherman's sharing of these views further equipped him to play the role of the delegate of that society.

As psychohistorians, let us then assume for all the reasons that Fellman documents that fragmentation of self was a great problem for Sherman, and that this problem was exacerbated by periods during which either his local or the national society gave way to violent group conflicts and even chaos, such as the 1855-1856 financial collapse in San Francisco, the fiasco of First Bull Run, and the near-collapse of Union forces at Shiloh. What is truly remarkable, then, is the evidence of Sherman's considerable ego-strength — his ability to hold himself together in times of tremendous stress — much more remarkable than the far fewer instances in which he failed.

There was perhaps a circularly-reinforcing dynamic involved in this. The material in Royster and Fellman suggests that his remarkable ego-strength was sustained in great part through fulfilling his role as delegate, while at the same time it made possible his many successes in that role. In regard to his war-time experiences specifically, Fellman observes that Sherman "had found moral affirmation through organized violence, learning that war could provide a legitimate, even a constructive, outlet for his primal rage" (page 237).

For me, Sherman's remarkable ego-strength is most apparent in the military action for which he is best known, his march through Georgia. Even if we assume that displacement of rage played a significant role in the destructiveness of this campaign, over-emphasizing that aspect can blind us to the tremendous inner strength required to cut oneself off from one's home base and march through the heart of enemy territory, living off the land. Indeed, some Southerners proclaimed that Sherman's fate would be the same as befell Napoleon when he marched on Moscow. It should be noted that in undertaking these campaigns, Sherman exhibited the inner courage and self-confidence that had failed General McClellan in the Peninsula campaign of 1862 and General Meade after Gettysburg in 1863. Issues of dependency were certainly, as Fellman argues, important aspects of Sherman's personality given his upbringing by the physically and socially imposing Thomas Ewing (note the photographic portrait of Ewing in Royster, in the illustrations following page 210). But the important thing is that Sherman *did* have the ego-strength to strike out on his own, time and again, sometimes after bitter failures and humiliations.

With these issues in mind, we can ask: Did Sherman, in his role as a delegate for acting out Northern rage against the Confederacy, make himself into the precursor or even a progenitor of "total war" as it has been experienced in our century? Interestingly, his greatest admirer, Liddell Hart, comes very close to suggesting such a connection. But Royster demolishes a variety of arguments that historians and others have put forth promoting this concept, noting that it was Sherman's words and not his actions which have supplied these writers with arguments for such a connection. Fellman also takes pains to point out that Sherman *threatened* but did not *make* total war, not in "the twentieth-century Nazi sense."

Rather, he sees Sherman as evolving toward a "moral totalism," a most interesting concept that Fellman touches on a few times but could have explored in much greater depth (see page 179).

Sherman strongly believed that a society that has "sown the wind, must reap the whirlwind," that such a society could not avoid the destruction it has lusted to impose on others. It easy for one who has lived through the Second World War to find merit in this sort of "moral totalism" and to not weep unduly for the destruction ultimately visited upon the Axis powers. It *is*, however, a slippery slope, as contemplation of the fire-bombing of Dresden and Tokyo makes all too evident. (The introduction of atomic weapons is a whole other subject!) But Sherman did not introduce "moral totalism" into Western history. As psychohistorians, we can, for example, reflect upon Cromwell in Ireland and the civil war in the Vendée during the French Revolution. Shakespeare has Henry V warn the civic leaders of Harfleur, which his troops are besieging, that if battle is rejoined, his troops, "rough and hard of heart, / In liberty of bloody hand shall range," committing horrible atrocities. Henry adds,

What is't to me, when you yourselves  
are cause....  
Therefore, you men of Harfleur  
Take pity of your town and of your  
people,  
Whiles yet my soldiers are in my  
command.

The language is Shakespearean, the text virtually the same as Sherman addressed to the civic leaders of Georgia and South Carolina.

Were I to seek a connection between the horrors which the Civil War introduced to the modern world and what we have witnessed in the twentieth century, I would look not to this complex and brilliant man Sherman, but rather to Grant and Lee, who were also the delegates of their societies, making the demanded blood sacrifices in the horrifying body-counts on the battlefields of Virginia. In them, I see the trench warfare of World War I, and the beaches of Tarawa, Normandy, and Iwo Jima. If Sherman was filled with rage because of his particular life history, were not Lee and Grant and all the generals who came after also filled with rage because of *theirs* (as indeed we all are)? Is that not what makes *any* general become the willing delegate of society's on-going need to sacrifice its youth? Mary

Coleman has observed:

Ritual sacrifice of those killed in war becomes an attempt to control internalized rage by external ritual at regular intervals, set up by groups whose members share this unconscious need for the mock omnipotence of war (Coleman, "Shame: A Powerful Underlying Factor in Violence and War," *The Journal of Psychoanalytic Anthropology*, Vol. 8, No. 1, Winter 1985, page 76).

Indeed, Sherman's behavior, despite his words, indicates that he did *not* share this need. In this, it is easier to connect Sherman with American military leaders such as Generals Powell and Schwarzkopf in their conduct of the Gulf War. Faris Kirkland has written:

The Folks Back Home may have supported the [Gulf] war because of unconscious needs to sacrifice young people, but the commanders in the field provided substantial evidence that they would go to great lengths to avoid such sacrifices,

using air power extensively to weaken the Iraqi military before committing ground troops, an "intelligent minimization of risks while maximizing damage to the enemy" ("Childhood Psychopathology and the Gulf War," *The Journal of Psychohistory*, Vol. 19, No. 1, Summer 1991, pages 58-59).

Grant at least had the need to press the fighting so long as Lee's armies were still in the field, although this hardly excused the cold obtuseness with which he sent wave after wave of Union troops to their deaths in frontal assaults on the Confederate trenches at Cold Harbor, ceasing only when his troops refused further orders to attack. A war of attrition had seemed the only logical choice to Northerners at the time. When challenged as to how McClellan might have handled the 1864 offensive, were he in charge instead of Grant, a veteran Union soldier remarked dryly, "Well, he would have ended the War in the Wilderness by establishing the Confederacy" (cited in Royster, page 339).

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Lee, the demi-God, is generally excused from such indictments, but consider this: How much death and destruction followed upon the battlefields and countryside of the South because of his willingness to commit his army until the bitter end? Faris Kirkland has written extensively on the role of a "trusted leader" in establishing the morale that is absolutely essential in motivating the average "foot soldier" to engage in battle, let alone to kill another human being. (See, for example, his essay review, "Psychological Purposes Served by War: Three Perspectives," *The Journal of Psychohistory*, Summer 1996, pages 53-63.) Did not Lee betray such a trust, in which he was clearly held by Confederate officers and troops throughout the war, because of his failure to envision a better role for himself in bringing the slaughter to an end? Royster notes that after a disastrous battle on April 6, 1865, a Confederate leader urged Lee to disband his army, to send his soldiers home. When Lee asked: "What would the country say to that?", the other replied, "There is no country. There has been none for many a day. You are all the country there is" (page 188).

But, after all is said and done, it is neither Lee nor Grant, but rather William Tecumseh Sherman who symbolizes for so many contemporary writers the genesis of total war in the modern sense. But Royster has it right:

Sherman did not make anyone in the twentieth century do destructive things. He only made some people think about what their belligerents were doing. They looked at their wars and saw him (page 359).

Of course, to keep things in perspective, the connection between Sherman and total war as practiced in our century is an issue that is of interest mainly to historians, nostalgic Southerners, and Civil War buffs. There has been a recent revival of yet another image of Sherman, that of the famous general who steadfastly rejected the Presidency, declaring in 1884, "If nominated, I will not run; if elected, I will not serve." Journalists, especially, have been wont to ask General Colin Powell if *his* refusal to be considered for the Republican Presidential nomination was "Shermanesque." (It was, for 1996!) Powell, of course, was the first black man to become Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Ironically, Sherman had adamantly opposed enlisting black freedmen in the Union Army (although late in the day [1880]. Sherman did turn against the

prevailing views of the gentry elite to champion voting rights for black men).

To paraphrase Pogo, we has confronted our mythic symbols and they is us.

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*Editor's Note: Since this interesting article focuses in part on how Sherman in his march was the delegate of the North, I think the point should be made explicitly that in 1884 he refused to be the delegate of politicians who would have had him march to the White House. The same strength of character that allowed him to march through the South, cutoff from his own base of support, enabled him to resist a new form of delegation fraught with many dangers for a former general, as the unfortunate political career of U.S. Grant illustrates. □*

## Phyllis Grosskurth on Writing Psychobiography

Bob Lentz  
Psychohistory Forum

*Phyllis Grosskurth was born in 1924 in Toronto, Canada. She received her PhD in 1962 from the University of London. At the University of Toronto, she was Professor of English from 1972-1989 and Professor in the Humanities and Psychoanalytic Thought Programme from 1987-1995. Grosskurth's books include John Addington Symonds: A Biography (London: Longmans, 1964), Havelock Ellis: A Biography (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1980), Melanie Klein: Her World and Her Work (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1986), Margaret Mead: A Life of Controversy (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1988), The Secret Ring: Freud's Inner Circle and the Politics of Psychoanalysis (New York: Addison-Wesley, 1991), and Byron: The Flawed Angel (Boston: Houghton & Mifflin, forthcoming 1997). She was awarded the Canadian Governor General's Literary Award for non-fiction in 1965 for her biography of Symonds, a 19th century English*

*literary critic. Her biography of Havelock Ellis was short-listed for the National Book Award (UK) in 1980. We ("BL") spoke with her ("PG") at her home in Toronto this past July.*

BL: Do you feel you write psychobiography?

PG: I feel I write biography infused with psychological ideas. I'm enormously interested in a person's inner life and relationships, more than a biographer who is more interested in the political and social context of a person's life.

BL: What are you working on now?

PG: I've just finished a biography of [Lord] Byron [(1788-1824), English Romantic poet], to be published in the spring of 1997. Next I'm going to be writing a biography of [John] Ruskin [(1819-1900), English art critic, writer, and reformer].

BL: What are some of your insights into Byron?

PG: Most people either hate Byron or they adore him. But I am fascinated by him, and by aspects of his life that haven't been explored in the past, which I think is much more important for a biographer. What I've done is separate the man that I found from the mythological Byron: a sex-crazed Don Juan. He was remarkably indolent and, I suspect, not very highly-sexed. He was a manic-depressive. There were these cycles of mania followed by periods of deep depression, which were certainly affected by the seasons. I found him to be a very complex person.

My main theme in the book is that he was an outsider — an exile — all his life. He had this sense of being an outsider from birth because he was born with a deformed foot. He had an obsession that he was a flawed angel, that he had been expelled from Paradise, and that the lame foot was a visible reminder that he was not one of the Elect, that he was someone different from other people. His sense of "difference" really distinguished him from other people. It is what made him a celebrity, too.

Very often those who become celebrities are people who are seeking some kind of acknowledgment, admiration, praise — they want to be singled out. This drive is sometimes so compulsive that it impels them onto center stage, seeking the nurturing they missed. Generally, they're insatiable — no matter how much praise or

applause they get, it's never enough.

Byron was always enormously hard-up. When he had no money, he spent lavishly -- it was a fantasy. When he finally did get some money at the end of his life, he became terribly miserly -- he was terrified he would lose it again. I think his attitude toward money came from a lack of adequate nurturing in his very early life -- the money was some kind of nourishment.

BL: How did Byron handle his manic-depressive tendencies?

PG: Unlike some depressives who become paralyzed, work for him was a form of cathartic release. He would sit up writing all night and his rate of productivity was absolutely extraordinary. Very often when he was most depressed he would write -- this was a method of controlling his black moods: just the sheer physical energy necessary in putting those words down on paper.

BL: Why have you selected Ruskin as your next subject?

PG: I've wanted to write about Ruskin for at least 30 years. It's like a responsibility I have evaded until I thought I was mature enough to handle it. I had to do a huge subject like Byron before I had the courage to do Ruskin because he is simply immense. Byron died when he was 36, Ruskin lived until he was close to 90. Ruskin's was an enormously busy and productive life that covered such vast areas. He was the first of the great art critics. I'm most interested in him because of his visual sense -- I have never encountered anyone else who looked at things with such intensity. But just to say that diminishes him because his criticism embraced social issues, too. It would be impossible to go to a place like Venice now and see it without knowing something about Ruskin. Whether we have read Ruskin or not, we are influenced by him in the way we look at places.

Also, the story of his inner life and his relationships is just utterly fascinating. He was an only child, coddled, and something of a prodigy. He married, but the marriage was never consummated for reasons I shall explore, and there was an annulment which caused a tremendous scandal in the middle of the 19th century. Ruskin could not allow women, females, to grow up beyond age 12 -- he felt that after that they deteriorated by becoming sexual beings. So, somewhat like Lewis Carroll, Ruskin had this passion for young, fresh, virginal, exquisite girls.

He fell madly in love with one in his late years. His passion was so vehement that he really drove her mad. His final years were totally tragic because he had one attack of madness after another in his frustration at losing her. It's an absolutely extraordinary story.

BL: Of which of your works are you most proud?

PG: The Melanie Klein biography because it was the most intellectually challenging. I knew nothing about Melanie Klein's theories when I started, so I had to master all that body of theory. Klein's ideas are very disturbing because she makes us face aspects of human nature which we would prefer not to see: very archaic and fundamental aspects of the human psyche. I'm talking not just about infants, but about adults because none of us ever really fully grows up. One of the most disturbing aspects is that we are all capable of destructive feelings, especially of envy. Having to confront that darker side of ourselves helps us to behave more responsibly, more maturely, and to develop into real grown-ups.

BL: How did you come to the psychological in biography?

PG: I've always just been enormously interested in people. When I see people in restaurants I want to know what they do and where they live. It's impossible to write good biography without really being interested in people. I've always been a voracious reader of a very general, very wide range of books. When I was asked to write the biography of Symonds, I had never been interested in biography. I signed the contract because the publisher had heard that I had uncovered quite a lot of unpublished material. Then I went off to Spain that summer and I took a lot of biographies with me. I read through them to see what I liked in biography. I liked George Painter's *Marcel Proust: A Biography* (1959) very much. I liked biographies that were well-written and had significant detail, and in which the subject emerged from the context of his particular, historical moment. I was always very interested in relationships. I knew a little bit of Freud when I started, but after writing the Symonds book I began studying Freud more thoroughly because I didn't think any biographer could ignore Freud. There was a long period after the first book when I didn't write because I was so totally preoccupied with teaching and bringing up my children. But in that interval I did read Michael Holroyd's *Lytton*

*Strachey: A Biography* (1971) — it impressed me so much. If I read it again now I would probably think it should be cut. But I loved the grace with which he wrote and I loved the way he described relationships.

BL: What training should a biographer, a psychobiographer, have?

PG: The very, very best training I had for writing biography was writing a PhD thesis. It was a very exigent training in which my supervisor used to say to his students, "Do not say anything unless you are prepared to go the stake." In other words, you have to be prepared to document everything. You rein in speculation. If you do speculate, you make it very clear to your readers that you are speculating, but that it is an educated form of speculation — this is a responsibility. Desmond MacCarthy said that the biographer is an "artist on oath."

I have always maintained that a good biographer, like a good analyst, is born. One can go through all kinds of training, but I think there's a kind of instinct, an intuition, an ability to communicate. There has to be that very close observation of human nature and a close understanding of one's self. Of course, it doesn't do any harm if one has been analyzed, had a good analysis.

BL: You have written that a biographer must "maintain an attitude of wary scepticism."

PG: It's the kiss of death to start out writing a biography because one admires someone immensely, uncritically — it's like blinders. One must be willing to suspend judgment, to weigh up all the evidence, to listen to what other people say, both friends and enemies of the subject. For instance, with my Melanie Klein book I went to John Bowlby and others to get varied perspectives on Klein.

BL: You've also written that a biographer "bears responsibility for *interpreting* character."

PG: You cannot just present the facts — you have to discuss and analyze decisions, actions, and motivations. Good biography is the interplay of the subject with the perceptions of the author. But, I have read some biographies where the authors were very, very steeped in the work of Freud and where I felt Freudian interpretation was pushed beyond acceptable limits. And, I am a bit surprised and quite disturbed by some of the biographies that are admired — biographies that

are more a form of the author's self-indulgence: there's far more of the writer, and the subject being a creation of the writer, than the subject being created out of the facts.

BL: How intrusive can a biographer be?

PG: That is a difficulty — it's like penetrating someone's bedroom. If one is weighing the evidence — one is intruding. If one is interpreting, if one is analyzing — one is intruding. It's a matter of intuition, of taste, and of feel when it's time to draw back.

BL: How does a biographer get the knowledge, the self-confidence, and the judgment to be skeptical, to interpret, and to not be overly intrusive?

PG: By becoming totally immersed in the subject's life and work, so that it feels as though one knows the subject as well as, or even better than, one's self.

BL: How should a subject's sexuality be presented?

PG: I think it should be handled frankly but with good taste. This is one of those areas where the biographer has to be content, and the reader has to be content, that there are all sorts of things that we don't know and will never know

BL: Do you feel that you presented Symonds' homosexuality properly?

PG: I could hardly believe the amount of coverage that the book got at the time [1964] because it was the first psychobiography of a homosexual. The implications didn't really strike me at the time — that was my naiveté. When occasionally I've looked at that book I've been quite stunned that I was as frank as I was. Indeed, my parents were absolutely horrified. I'll never forget that my father wrote me a letter and said that I had disgraced the family. That was my parents' generation. I don't think now I would find it easy to write as frankly about someone's sexuality as I did about Symonds'. Now I would think it was intrusive.

BL: What do you think of Havelock Ellis, pioneer sex researcher?

PG: Ellis still eludes me — there's something I didn't quite get to grips with in that book: why he had a hollow core. I wish there was time so that I could write that book again. I would go into his very strange relationship with his mother — it probably colored his entire life. Now

that I've read Melanie Klein, I think I would see much more in Ellis. I would have done more interpreting, but I didn't have the confidence then.

BL: What do you think of Margaret Mead?

PG: I think she was a fraud. I did not enjoy writing that book because she was someone I couldn't admire. (It was in between big books and I was asked to contribute to this series on women.) She drew an entirely fanciful picture of Somoa which I think Derek Freeman [*Margaret Mead and Somoa* (1983)] has effectively demolished. She wrote what she thought the gullible public would want to hear.

BL: What recollections do you have of teaching the psychological in biography?

PG: For many, many years I taught a course on biography and autobiography. I started with Homer's *Odyssey* because I thought that it was the first biography, in a sense, because it is the story of a human quest. Then we went on to *Plutarch's Lives*; we did St. Augustine's *Confessions*, Rousseau's *Confessions*, the *Autobiography of John Stuart Mill*, Boswell's *Life of Samuel Johnson*, Freud's *Leonardo da Vinci*, Lytton Strachey's *Eminent Victorians*, and Erikson's *Gandhi's Truth*. We would analyze these biographies and autobiographies with our knowledge of Freud. People like St. Augustine and Rousseau are gorgeous subjects.

BL: What influence did Erikson have on you?

PG: I was enormously impressed by Erikson. I liked his ruminative, reflective, and, I would say, responsible attitude toward his subjects. One of the most interesting aspects of *Gandhi's Truth* was the way Erikson would latch onto certain themes and trace them through Gandhi's life — for instance, Gandhi the Tease. He was a tease as a little boy, and Erikson takes the theme and shows how he teased the British Raj in his civil disobedience. It's brilliantly done! Erikson's *Young Man Luther* is a more difficult book to read. It's not as accessible. Perhaps he overdid the scatological interest.

BL: Are there any recent psychobiographies you'd recommend?

PG: Maynard Solomon's biography of Mozart [*Mozart: A Life* (1995)] has impressed me the most. It's an extraordinary book in which Solomon delves into the fascinating relationship of Mozart with his father: the father's attempt to keep

Mozart infantile to prevent his fully growing up and becoming independent. I am encountering the same thing with Ruskin. Then there's another interesting phenomenon: the kind of person who does not *want* to grow up; that was Byron.

If you look at the arc of my career, and the sort of subjects I have chosen, I think they all share something: a complexity. I would not undertake a major biography unless the subject was complex, unless that person presented all kinds of challenges, and was sort of like a fortress that you somehow have to penetrate. I wouldn't be writing Ruskin's biography if he hadn't been dark and complex and contradictory. All of my subjects have been enormously interesting to me psychologically. That has always been my first criterion. □

## Free Associations

Paul H. Elovitz  
Ramapo College

### American Politics

**Butt Man and Joint Man:** In June, Bob Dole, the Republican candidate for President, declared that "to some people, smoking is addictive. To others, they can take it or leave it." He went on to tell Peter Jennings of ABC News on June 27: "my own nonscientific view is that it's [smoking is] a habit ... some people who have tried it can quit easily. Others don't quit. So I guess it's addictive to some and not others." These statements, however accurate, were political poison: for two weeks the Kansan couldn't seem to get away from an issue his advisors told him to avoid like the plague — or lung cancer. On the campaign trail Butt Man (a man dressed as a cigarette, with an evil carcinogenic look on his face, paid by Democratic Party supporters) followed Bob Dole around. Republicans threatened to have Joint Man (a man dressed as a marijuana cigarette) follow Clinton around to highlight the President's youthful use of marijuana and his less than forthright answers about it.

My concern is for the personal roots of Bob Dole's difficulty in letting go of the issue of tobacco's not necessarily being addictive. My thought is that he struggles with his unresolved feelings over his ability to walk away from the cigarettes that killed his younger brother. Kenny

Dole, addicted to tobacco, died of emphysema in 1995 at age 68. Though the former Senator privately acknowledged that Kenny's death was from smoking, he continues to support the agenda of the tobacco lobby and defend it publicly (see Hilton, *Senator for Sale*, page 260.) The *Washington Post* says he stopped smoking around 1983 and according to *Newsweek* he smoked Luckies (Lucky Strike cigarettes) until 1982. But Dole told Lawrence Altman, *The New York Times'* medical reporter, that he stopped after the Surgeon General's first warning in 1964 and "it was not easy" — he had stopped several times. Recently, Dole reported he was such an inept lefty that he could not smoke easily due to the problem of lighting up, which made it less difficult for him to give up the habit. He said that smoking "was always hard for me — I had trouble getting the matches lighted ... if I had two good hands, I might have smoked [until now]." Obviously, he does not like to attribute his shaking the cigarette addiction to his having greater will power than his baby brother with whom he shared a bed in childhood throughout the four year period of a debilitating illness of the younger Dole.

**Lefty Presidential Candidates:** Right-wing conservatives have a case when they argue that our politicians have turned to the left. Given their current choices, American voters will be forced to select from a crop of left-leaning candidates in 1996. Bill Clinton has long been suspected by the right of using his claim to be a "New Democrat" as a cloak for Hillary's left-wing agenda. When I read quotes from Newt Gingrich calling former Senator Dole the "tax collector of the welfare state," I am reminded that he has a strong class consciousness and grew up on the wrong side of the tracks during the Great Depression in a family that voted for "Franklin D. [Roosevelt]." As county attorney Dole would have had to sign welfare checks for his own impoverished grandparents. Ross Perot, by opposing NAFTA, aligned himself with the American trade union movement. Am I asserting that Clinton, Dole, and Perot (who said he would run if asked and created a new party to ask him!) are socialists who want to turn the country to the left? Certainly not. In fact, all three have recently turned well to the right, mostly in response to the so-called "Republican Revolution" of November, 1994.

These men all lead with their left hand: Clinton and Perot were born as left-handers and

Dole was forced to become a lefty as a consequence of war injuries incurred on April 14, 1945, when machine gun bullets or mortar fragments struck him. (Dole was in no shape to determine which changed his life and his doctors were too busy doing triage medicine to figure out what tore into his collar bone, lung, shoulder, and spine.)

America has had few left-handed Presidents, certainly fewer than the ten percent of the population that are naturally left-handed. According to Herbert Barry, a psychologist at the University of Pittsburgh and Co-director of the Forum's Research Group on the Childhoods and Personalities of Presidents and Presidential Candidates, there were only two left-handed Presidents prior to the current spate of them: James Garfield, who was assassinated by a disappointed office seeker in 1881, and Harry Truman, who was converted early in his life to be a righty, but who stayed loyal to his "leftist" politics.

Can America survive a choice among left-wing Presidential candidates? My answer is a resounding "Yes." After all, in 1992 we had the choice between left-handers Bush, Clinton, and Perot. Despite Clinton's abortive attempts to turn the U.S. to the left with national health care (which Dole thought was inevitable until the Republican conservatives turned the tide in 1994), the political movement of the last four years has been towards the right. But my prediction is that campaign promises of lefties and righties alike will not be kept and that the national debt will increase.

Left-handers are certainly born into a world set up for right-handed people. The impact of this may be to set them apart from others and to enable them to see the world a bit differently. Bill Clinton has certainly shown enormous flexibility and one wonders if his left-handedness contributes to this ability.

**The Rhetoric and Reality of Welfare Dependency:** I am forever hearing politicians complain about the growth of welfare dependency, and about people who abuse the welfare system and for years live off the sweat of others. On the first day of last September, in a debate recorded on C-SPAN, Phil Gramm argued that "the battle against welfare, is a battle for civilization" and that it had to be won in the name of the children. His solution was to throw such freeloaders off the societal wagon in order to teach them to make it on their own. By way of addressing the Texas

Senator and then-Presidential contender's point, let me start by describing the type of welfare I see and hear about from associates, colleagues, family, and friends. I hear about able bodied young people, who have never worked a day in their lives, driving late model cars, having their own apartments, and taking Caribbean vacations.

In one case a young woman had two children out of wedlock while maintaining a relationship with the father of the children who earned a good salary and paid nothing, or next to nothing, to support his offspring. The devoted parents of the young woman who had the two beautiful children did not want their grandchildren or daughter to suffer while her boyfriend took a long time to accept the responsibility of marriage and parenthood. So they bought a condominium for their daughter, put her through college, and allowed her to maintain a middle class standard of living including vacations. Eventually, the patience of the young mother and the desire of a little child not to have to go to school without the name of his father domesticated the young man sufficiently so as to bring him to the altar and to accept full financial responsibility. The young family is now thriving.

The welfare described in the case above is the classic, most significant welfare system in America, the family welfare system. Some suburban parents will do almost anything to keep their children in college including buying them new cars, setting them up in apartments and paying for Club Med vacations. Weaning these people off welfare dependency is no easy matter, yet it has been accomplished in most cases

The reality of the human condition is that we need enormous welfare. Newborns, children, students, retirees, the disabled, sick, unemployed, indigent, and insane all need enormous societal help. Legally, we tell children they must go to school at age five and stay until sixteen. Socially, middle class America, and those aspiring to it, urge their kids to stay in school through college, MBA's, and even doctoral programs: "Get your degree before getting married and having kids" is what they hear. The children are torn between their families' call for postponed gratification and the instant gratification represented by television, the movies, and the youth culture. Many "kids" (between 12 and 40) have discovered they can enjoy the pleasures and pains of parenthood themselves, with or without marriage, long before

these goals are achieved. Instant gratification is the message of TV: If you don't like the feeling, click the channel. With remote control channel changers you don't even have get up and walk to the TV to find the feeling you want. Since most members of the younger generation spend more time with television than with their parents, instant gratification often wins out.

The conservative ideological attack on the entitlement of the fragile of society was extraordinarily intense in 1995 which is partly why Leroy Newton Gingrich has become the least popular major politician in America. Most people recognize that an enormous need for care is built into our human situation: it is a complex and expensive issue to wean people off it. The psyches of many people crave the pleasures of dependency long after their bodies can take care of themselves in our high-technology world. For example, the twenty-one year old daughter of a colleague in Des Moines had an excellent job, secured through family connections. Every morning's commute was an agony since she hated to face the world on her own. When her mother moved to beautiful Arizona without her, though she was invited to come, she was resentful. Within six months this young woman quit her job when her boss became a little difficult (aren't most bosses at least a little difficult?). Now she "temporarily" lives with her mother, who wisely knows this is not the best love, plaguing this devoted parent with the unresolved angers of her childhood: one of the daughter's apparent unconscious scripts is to be thrown out by her mother so she will be forced to face life on her own. Of course, should she give birth to a child the mother's reaction would change.

Phil Gramm notwithstanding, the "battle for civilization" means we both give and withhold welfare to those we care about, according to their needs, our needs, and the need to wean people away from infantilizing dependency. Many adult children of the middle class remain dependent partly because they are unconscious delegates of their parents' needs to justify working, have a purpose for staying married, relive their own childhood through their children, or just feel needed. It is certainly true that much governmental involvement in welfare is inappropriate because it is insufficiently individualized and over-bureaucratized. But could it be that it is so often punitive because society wants it that way? Perhaps. The fragile balance between meeting the dependency needs of the young and the need to

help them out of the nest at the appropriate time will, in most cases, not be assisted by the recent welfare legislation. When President Clinton combined with Republican conservatives to pass automatic cutoffs of welfare after two years with a five-year maximum, I worried about the needs of children. It is noteworthy that most people on the public dole do not have an adequate family welfare system. Many have none at all.

**Crying Politicians:** Bill Clinton often appears misty-eyed in public situations. His Republican rival, Robert Joseph Dole, is also known for becoming emotionally choked-up in front of the public on at least a half-dozen occasions, and his tears or moist eyes do not seem to have hurt his career — indeed, they may have even helped it since, in the words of a friend from his home town, “crying shows he’s got a heart.” This is in sharp contrast to Senator Edmund Muskie’s being forced out of the 1972 Democratic Presidential primary because he shed tears in New Hampshire when he became so enraged by Republican sabotage of his campaign and attacks on his wife. Tears in Dole’s eyes are associated with President Roosevelt’s death during the Second World War, D-Day commemorations, and Richard Nixon’s funeral. They welled-up when he spoke of his father (who had swollen feet) coming to visit him in the hospital in 1945; when his beloved Armenian-American doctor died; when he thanked the people of his home town of Russell, Kansas, in front of President Ford who had just selected the Kansan as his Vice Presidential running mate; when he told his family about his impending prostate surgery; and, some people thought, when he announced his resignation from the Senate.

In the instance in 1976, Dole said in Russell, “If I have had any success, it is because of the people here. I can recall the time when I needed help and the people of Russell helped.” Then, with his shoulders shaking, he sobbed for a minute until President Ford stood up and joined the applause of the crowd. Dole was then able to conclude with the words: “That was a long time ago. And I thank you for it again.” It is noteworthy that Dole’s becoming emotionally choked-up or crying before others is associated with his injury, his father, father surrogates, and his leaving or returning to communities — his hometown and the Congress he served in for thirty-five years. Since he was not defensive about his tears — which seemed appropriate, genuine, and

not excessive to most observers — they helped to humanize a very private man who has lived his life in the public eye. These tears also reflect a reservoir of depression, common in people who have suffered major trauma, which is touched at certain moments in his life.

**Workaholic Presidents:** If Bob Dole should replace Bill Clinton as President in January, 1997, we will have an even more devoted workaholic in the White House. The Kansan is a man without hobbies (though his handlers may invent a few to win the hobbyist vote) who is an incredibly devoted worker in his chosen profession, politics. He comes from a hardworking family who even competed with each other as to who worked hardest. Elizabeth (Liddy) Dole is a workaholic like her husband. They have competed as to who works harder and who gets home later — not getting home is a sign of really working hard! When they campaign together it has the quality of “parallel play” as they greet other people while looking in opposite directions.

The issue with any workaholic is: What is the person running from? What doesn’t the individual want to face so that work becomes all encompassing? Sometimes it is a fear of relaxation. A secondary question is: What is its impact on the interpersonal life of the individual? In the case of Dole, there is a hint regarding both issues in the jokes he made after his wife became head of the American Red Cross. The punch line was that he woke up in the morning with his blood drained for Elizabeth’s American Red Cross blood donation program. In speaking to some Republicans at a fund raiser, in the presence of his wife, he said, “She wants your blood and I want your money.”

Bob Dole is a man who expresses a lot of counter-dependency needs. He is bound and determined not to ask for help. While still recuperating from his World War II wounds he would not let his first wife Phyllis help him off the floor. But, what if he has no choice — if he must, ever so reluctantly, ask for help? When he was injured his mother came to the hospital and all but moved in before taking him home to nurse him herself. Is it an accident that three important women in his adult life — Phyllis, Elizabeth, and Sheila Burke (his Senate chief of staff who he did not fire when he resigned) — have been associated with the helping professions? Are they like his mother, being kept in waiting in case of another

catastrophe? He certainly has had a deflated sense of self after his devastating war injury of April 14, 1945.

**"The Vision Thing":** George Bush lost the 1992 Presidential election partly because he could not convey a clear vision of the America he wanted for his grandchildren. His advisors and critics so often talked about this need for a clear-cut, inspirational view of the future that he knew it was a problem which he called "the vision thing." Bob Dole, despite the clarity of some of his one-liners, seems to have a similar problem. Many think he won the Republican Party nomination more because of who he is not than who he is. Dole is not Pat Buchanan — the only candidate who has lived virtually his entire life in Washington, whose anti-immigrant, anti-Semitic, anti-Washington, protectionist, and racist tendencies scare off more Republicans than they attract. Dole is not the political novice Steve Forbes with the untried flat tax as his main platform, though he started to act like him at the Republican Convention. Dole is not Lamar Alexander, who seemed too much like Clinton, and whom conservatives did not trust to really act conservatively. Dole is not Senator Phil Gramm of Texas who kept wanting to throw welfare mothers off the societal wagon to morally improve them and balance the budget. Dole is not the serious and sensible Senator Richard Lugar who put voters to sleep. But does Bob Dole have a clear-cut vision of America? If he does, can he convey it to the electorate? The jury is still out on these questions.

**Transference to C-SPAN?:** C-SPAN, two public service cable channels which about 40 percent of adult Americans report watching sometime in the last year, is an indispensable tool for following politics, as I learned in the 1992 Presidential campaign. Consequently, I have watched it daily since the beginning of the 1996 election last fall and have been struck by just how many values the callers project on the bland, rather impartial hosts led by Brian Lamb. In reading the *Washington Post* Weekly Edition, I noted the article "Hooked on C-SPAN" by Blaine Harden which deals with this very point and tries to explain it in psychoanalytic terms. To quote from the article (May 27-June 2, 1996 Volume 13, No. 30, page 11):

Yet out beyond the Beltway, C-SPAN junkies — both conservative and liberals — are fascinated by what they call "Brian's

bias." They always bring it up. [Note that the lack of transition is in the original.] In Freudian psychoanalysis, the analyst — by being an unrelievedly blank and noncommittal presence — can enter into what is called a "transference" relationship with a patient. When the transference kicks in, a patient projects onto the analyst the personality of a pivotal character from his or her past.

In the mass political therapy that C-SPAN practices with its obsessive viewers, something similar may be happening with Lamb. His dogged refusal to be partisan allows viewers to see him as an embodiment of their own political views. Viewers are never quite sure, but they suspect that Brian is secretly on their side.

Harden then goes on to give the example of two viewers of opposing political viewpoints who are positive that Brian Lamb is "on their side."

Since viewers form transference relationships to the regular performers on television (and of course to Presidential candidates), I was surprised by the noting of the phenomenon rather than to its happening. It is also my impression that Brian Lamb carefully follows the shift in political direction by choosing interviewees who will represent the views which are becoming more prevalent. To what extent this is done on a conscious basis, I cannot say. Moderate and liberal voices became much more commonplace early this year after Newt Gingrich and the Republican Revolution group lost out in the showdown with Bill Clinton over closing down the government to balance the budget. This was a disappointment to some conservatives since they identified C-SPAN as their vehicle since the late 1980s when Gingrich and the conservatives used it most effectively as a platform for their ideology. On June 14th I was surprised to hear Brian Lamb, in the course of a discussion, refer to "my bias." Of course it was a safe bias, since it was bias in favor of a journalist (Ben Stein) who wrote a positive column about his father and son right before Father's Day. This was a bias in favor of the family and the eternal verities of love and responsibility. Not quite the confirmation of the political bias his viewers yearn to hear, but a safe bias on Flag Day.

Viewers' transference relationship to C-SPAN and Brian Lamb were not in doubt for years.

Viewers often began the morning call-in program with the words: "Thank you for C-SPAN." But this positive transference to C-SPAN may be disappearing even as I write these words. Recently, because of the long-standing predominance of conservative calls on the morning news program, callers began to be asked to use separate telephone lines labeled Democrats, Republicans, and Other. Many conservative callers are furious at the segregation which allows the interviewer to alternate Republican, Democratic, and Other calls to take callers more representative of the American population. It is as if conservatives felt talk television, on which, like talk radio, so many found their political voice, was being taken from them. Some have tried to subvert the system by using the Democratic telephone line and then proudly declaring "I am a Democrat for Dole" or Buchanan.

**Olympic Women:** The emergence of an enormous number of gold, silver, and bronze medal-winning women in the summer Olympics in 1996 is matched only by the intense media attention to and acclaim for these wonderful athletes. As a sports fan I marvel at female athletic achievements; as a psychohistorian, I am attuned to shifts in attention to the genders. In 1992 so many women were elected to Congress that the media heralded it as "The Year Of The Woman" which was ushering in a new age leaving male domination behind. But, in the Republican Revolution Congressional victory two years later, women were not especially noticeable and the spirit was that of the traditional boys club that has permeated politics since the beginning of the Republic. In the 1996 Presidential election there is enormous attention to the Republican gender gap which threatens to result in substantial losses of Republican Congressmen and Senators and the defeat of Robert Joseph Dole, even though the latter has been far more willing than most of his colleagues to appoint women to important positions on his staff.

**The Constitutional Amendment Frenzy:** This reached its peak as the Republican Revolution reached its height in 1995. There was a frenzy of proposed constitutional amendments to assure balancing the budget, banning flag burning (always a hot issue on the right!), prayer in the schools, and a myriad of other changes in a document that has existed with only seventeen amendments since the first ten amendments, the Bill of Rights, which are rightfully seen as part of the Constitution itself. As

a student of constitutions I shudder at the thought of all these amendments. The older I get the more reluctant I am to tamper with the oldest constitution in the world, even if it was the brainchild of imperfect slaveholders who had little regard for the rights of blacks, or women and children. As I sit at my computer listening (I listen more than watch) to a C-SPAN program called "The Constitution and The Contract with America," I wonder less about the advantages and disadvantages of particular amendments than about the political and psychological basis of the current interest in passing them.

Proposing constitutional amendments makes political sense. A Senator or Congressman can get voter support with certain groups without really giving them much, especially since the amendments are not likely to pass. Psychologically, proposed amendments are quite reassuring since they engender the utopian fantasy that everything can be made right by a single, almost immutable, legislative act. A generation raised on television who are therefore inclined to click the channel if something doesn't feel good wants simple answers to complex questions. No wonder that Dole is calling for an amendment to balance the budget and Clinton proposed one protecting victims' rights. The most positive aspect of this current interest in such amendments is as a means of educating people to the pros and cons of particular issues.

**Cheerleading the Senate from Mississippi:** Two Mississippians, Thad Cochran and Trent Lott, were the chief contenders to replace Bob Dole as Senate Majority Leader. Each was a graduate (Class of 1959 and 1963 respectively) of Ole Miss [University of Mississippi] who achieved distinction as captain of the cheerleading team. What does it say about American politics that we are choosing our Senate leadership from outstanding cheerleaders rather than from the captains of the debate, chess, or football teams? A staunch conservative Republican might comment that at least the Senate leader is not chosen, like Bill Clinton, from the high school marching band!

Perhaps, leading the cheerleaders is excellent training for politics. What, after all, must a captain of cheerleaders do? The answer is to create a black and white picture of reality, keeping his team enthusiastic even at the bleakest moments. The visual and verbal picture created must be

summarized by a few succinct, emotionally-laden words that make your team look all good and the other team all bad. Then it must be sold to the crowd so they will cheer the team on to victory: winning or losing is what it is all about. I wonder if the captains of cheerleading squads see themselves as being like the quarterbacks of the football teams? Bob Dole, a former football player, once said, "I think they're looking for a cheerleader. My view is that leadership is more important than cheerleading." Like it or not, the former Senate leader has turned Senatorial power over to the cheerleaders, but has selected as his Vice Presidential running mate "the quarterback" with whom he has had a tumultuous relationship. I do not know if Jack Kemp and Trent Lott have ever debated the merits of football versus cheerleading as preparation for politics, but I do know the former New York Congressman said, "Pro football gave me a good sense of perspective to enter politics" since "I'd already been booed, cheered, cut, sold, traded, and hung in effigy."

Senatorial power is not just in the hands of *any* former cheerleader, but of Trent Lott. What does it mean that this new Majority Leader is the man who Newt Gingrich called his mentor? Will there be a much more coherent working of House and Senate? Will the Southern leadership reflect the values of the intense conservatism of the South? Certainly, many Southern conservatives have the strident, true-believing quality of the newly converted.

**Our Southern Leadership:** I smile at the so-called wisdom of politics. In graduate school I was taught by bright political science professors that a Southerner could not be elected President of these United States. Then Jimmy Carter won in 1976. Twenty years later, the President (Clinton), Vice President (Gore), Speaker of the House (Gingrich), and Senate Majority Leader (Lott) are all Southerners. Unless the Kansan wins or the Democrats regain control of the House and Senate we are destined to have an unusual lack of geographical diversity in the next two years. Now, I wonder what else these Southern men hold in common besides being very close in age — they are in their late 40s and early 50s. Elsewhere, I have made much of Clinton and Gingrich both being popularly viewed in 1995 as political twins — cigar and pot-smoking, draft-dodging, prevaricating, smooth-talking, and womanizing Southern politicians. Watching and listening to Republican National Committee Chairman Haley

Barbour at the convention in San Diego (in Southern California), I note his Mississippi accent and wonder when I will have enough information on the psychogeography of Mississippi Rising (and the South) to make some generalizations. For now, I note how often different regions and leaders of the country are delegated tasks of acting out different societal desires.

**Family Values:** It was an ideal family values scene, a father and son driving through the Florida Everglades on a warm afternoon. Shoulder to shoulder they sat at 75 miles per hour. But then I looked at their bumper sticker which read, "My child can beat your honor roll student." I wondered what went through this father's mind when he placed this on his well-polished car. Was it to "beat" at sports? "Beat" with his fists? I and others driving behind are left guessing. The violence implicit the big letters jarred me. Violence will only subside in America when fathers and sons can bond without enemies. But how will this be achieved so long as we and our media focus our attention on violence?

**The Republican Revolution's Thermidorian Reaction:** Last week (in mid-June) I taught my Western Civilization students about the Thermidorian Reaction (1794) in the French Revolution which spelled an end to the radicalization which had been continuous since 1789. Today (June 21) on C-SPAN, the National Press Foundation was conducting a live review of the 104th Congress in which Knight Ridder Newspapers reporter David Hess argued that the Republican freshmen had moderated — had a "Thermidorian Reaction" — as a result of being in Washington for one-and-a-half-years. Why cool off? What is there about all movements that causes them to eventually moderate? The first word to come to mind is "ambivalence." Americans and all other people are profoundly ambivalent about politics and have every reason to be.

This moderating process is also apparent in the denunciation of Democrats. Let me start with some background. The harshness of the 1994 Republican Revolution political rhetoric was in keeping with the greater proclivity of men, and especially conservative men, to be combative and punitive in politics. A reflection of this is the Republican practice of dropping the "ic" from "Democratic," as in *Democratic* proposal, *Democratic* Congressman, and *Democratic* Party, and of sometimes saying "Democrat" with such

derision that it is as if an insult, a dueling challenge, was hurled across the room. Stanley G. Hilton, one of Bob Dole's biographers, credits the Kansan with an early use of this term. At the current Republican National Convention a move to substitute all references to "Democratic" with "Democrat" passed unanimously by a voice vote. But the intensity has begun to wear off to the point where even Democratic Party senators and congressmen have begun to adopt the shorter word.

*Credits: Some of the materials on Dole's smoking, politicians crying, and the use of "Democrat" as an insult, appeared or are forthcoming in The Journal of Psychohistory which has published my writings on politics for 20 years. See Paul H. Elovitz, "Taking Conservatives Seriously: Childhood Punishment, Denial, Anger and Rage at Politicians," Volume 23 (3) Winter 1996, pages 269-275, and Paul H. Elovitz, "Work, Laughter and Tears: Bob Dole's Childhood, War Injury, The Conservative Republicans and the 1996 Election," Volume 24 (1) Fall 1996, pages 147-162. Terry O'Leary kindly volunteered some research materials.*

## International Free Associations

**Obituary:** In Moscow on July 30th *Pravda* died in its 84th year of life. *Pravda*, officially registered in the Soviet Union as born in 1912, was renowned for its loyalty to the principles of its parents, Vladimir Ilich Ulyanov (aka V.I. Lenin) and Joseph Stalin, also its first editor. The paper, which served as the mouthpiece of Lenin, Stalin, Khrushchev, and Brezhnev, expired of natural causes, leaving behind 200,000 bereaved readers. On July 30th, two Greek capitalists removed the life support system they had affixed in 1992. The Greek brothers, with the eternal optimism so often found among capitalists, sought to use organ transplants on their acquisition. However, the staff, protected from removal, but not bankruptcy, by Russian law, refused to accept heart and liver transplantation, and even resisted plastic surgery. (In 1988 the writer of these words became a member of the Advisory Board of the Organ and Tissue Sharing Network of New Jersey.)

Among the survivors are *Izvestia*, a sister made over in the post-Soviet period into a popular newspaper, and millions of depressed children (Stalinists all!) who are in mourning after their recent electoral loss. *Pravda*, which means "truth"

in Russian, was known for its prevarications, omissions, and mangling of the Russian language in its columns. Regrettably, it had a characterological inability to live up to its name. It will *not* be missed by lovers of a free press.

Postscript: With the assistance of Ralph Colp of the Forum's Communism: The Dream that Failed Research Group we have been able to establish that *Pravda's* real age and parentage are in question. *Pravda* may, in fact, have expired at the age of 88, or even 91, according to reliable printed sources. In 1905 an Ukrainian nationalist group established the paper *Pravda* and published it sporadically. In 1908 none other than the brilliant Leon Trotsky became editor of *Pravda*, publishing it in Vienna and making it into a substantial revolutionary newspaper. Lenin, a firm believer in the expropriation of the property of his enemies, had Stalin re-establish *Pravda* in St. Petersburg and refused to answer Trotsky's angry letter denouncing the usurping of the name, and in the end, even the existence, of this many-parented child. □

## Prozac, Psychiatry, and Social Activism

Christian Perring  
University of Kentucky

With the phenomenal rise in the use of Prozac in the last few years, many commentators and critics of psychiatry have raised the worry that the new antidepressants do not cure people's problems, but rather, at best, simply enable them to put up with more, and, at worst, do physical and psychological harm. Are psychiatric drugs such as Prozac being prescribed with sufficient care and thought? Are they the easy and cheap way out, with economics taking precedence over the well-being of patients and society? Is the administering of psychotropic drugs inevitably politically disempowering, robbing people of their anger and motivation to change the world? Or, is it a good way to increase people's happiness and help them deal with the pressures of modern life? Must psychiatry have a conservative effect on society, supporting the status quo?

A critique from the left is that psychiatry has taken a fundamentally wrong turn: rather than enhancing the quality of people's lives, the

widespread use of antidepressants just serves the aims of capitalism and greater corporate profits. A different, more individualist sort of criticism is that people are relying on drugs rather than dealing with their problems on their own — taking responsibility for their own lives. Similar worries accompany the widespread use of Ritalin (taken by one in twenty males between the ages of five to fourteen) to treat attention deficit disorder (ADD) and hyperactivity in children: the education system is increasingly underfunded, and crumbling inner cities produce children who are angry and alienated from society; parents and teachers prefer to medicate difficult students rather than teach them the skills of concentration and manners. Criticism of the widespread use of medication is not new. Reservations were voiced about the prescription of Valium and other tranquilizers to dissatisfied women in the 1950s and 1960s. Then, women were stuck at home, socially isolated from their extended families and other women, and kept from career opportunities and the workplace that had been available during the Second World War. When they went to doctors about their unhappiness, they were not encouraged to voice their anger and change their situation. Rather, they were tranquilized so they didn't complain so much.

The behavioral consequences of taking a drug depend partly on how a person identifies the source of his or her unhappiness and alienation. There is an alarming tendency to infer from the effectiveness of drugs that the original problem was just "biological." The growing movement to identify mental illnesses as brain diseases downplays family and societal factors, and emphasizes heredity and "bad luck" in being dysfunctional. The fact that drugs that can treat symptoms of illness does not mean that the causes of illness are biological. Take an analogy with back pain. While the hurting can be reduced by taking aspirin, it is still possible that the pain was caused by unhealthy, unsafe working conditions in a factory. Similarly, the success of drugs like Prozac and Ritalin should not lead us to automatically identify mental illness as a purely biological phenomenon. Furthermore, while drugs can reduce the symptoms of anxiety, depression, delusion, and mania, they cannot completely stop the negative feelings that people experience from their environment. Dealing with these feelings requires more than taking pills, and may also require more than simply coming to accept life as it is. When people can see that the cause and course

of development of their distress is also related to social conditions, then they may well be motivated to change those conditions.

The political consequences of psychiatry come not only from what therapy or drugs are given, but how they are given. It is not just psychopharmacology which can lead to an apolitical treatment: talk therapy can focus on the person's past, current family interactions, stress-reduction techniques, or problem-solving. But a therapist can also encourage a patient to see a societal dimension to his or her problem, and this is compatible with simultaneously using drugs as part of the treatment. If a woman is in an oppressive relationship with a partner, put it in the context of the oppression of women. If an African-American suffers from anxiety attacks, explore racism's role. If a Jew is depressed, examine how anti-Semitism and the history of the persecution of the Jews have played a role in the sense of hopelessness and anger of the patient. If a Japanese woman has paranoid fantasies that she is being bathed in radioactive rays, trace this to her emotions about the dropping of atomic bombs on Japan at the end of the Second World War. Patients are normally motivated to end their unhappiness by removing or altering the causes of their unhappiness, and if they see that social conditions are involved, then they may be motivated to work for social change.

But, should psychiatrists and therapists be bringing social conditions into psychological treatment? Generally, people do not want to be told how to think about social issues, and they want the easiest, fastest, and cheapest cure. Doctors usually see their job as curing individuals, not society. But social conditions very often cause and propagate individual illness. Psychiatrists and therapists have a wider responsibility to the well-being of communities in which they live. (An example is the obligation of doctors to break confidentiality with patients who are a serious danger to others, who are committing incest, or, in some cases, transmitting communicable diseases.) The distinction between telling people *how* or *what* to think about social problems and *to think about them at all* is important. Ignoring harmful social conditions can only perpetuate and worsen the problems.

I believe that the prudent use of medication is perfectly compatible with social and political activism. The conclusion that medication is

overprescribed and should be resisted ignores the fact that in a large proportion of cases medication does help people get over their symptoms and get on with their lives. It is this which is under the short-term control of the patient, while the larger societal structure that plays a role in the patient's unhappiness is less susceptible to change. (Besides, if someone is depressed and preoccupied with personal issues, there is little chance he will be of much use in a political movement.) It would be a dereliction of duty for a psychiatrist not to prescribe medication in the knowledge that it has a strong chance of helping the patient, and no other options for equally swift help are currently available. The intellectual and emotional investigation of personal, familial, and social causes of a person's problems generally takes a long time. The ideal at which we should be aiming is combination of psychotropic medication and wider awareness of the social issues relevant to individual happiness and competency. With greater understanding of the causes of mental illness in all their complexity, there is strong potential for harnessing people's energy to work towards changing both themselves and society for the better.

*Christian Perring is a visiting assistant professor in philosophy who recently completed his PhD at Princeton University. He focuses on issues in the philosophy of psychiatry and teaches in personal identity, medical ethics, and morality. □*

## **George Steinbrenner and the Yankees: Personality and Sports Psychology**

**Paul H. Elovitz**  
Ramapo College

Sports feel like a life and death affair to many fans because of the strong emotions they elicit. As I write these words in late July I hear the Yankee baseball announcer declare "the hitter stays alive" as he foul tips a pitch rather than striking out. Yesterday's the *New York Times* headline on the Yankees declared, "Rogers [the pitcher] can't cure what ails [the] Yankees," who had lost four out of the last five games. Today's headline reads, "Yankees and Gooden's [the pitcher's] arm come back to life." The language is from illness to health and death to life. Sports feels

good or bad. It is one arena of modern life where people can express themselves freely without worrying about being politically correct. At the moment over a billion people around the world are glued to their television sets watching the Olympic Games in Atlanta.

The New York Yankees, the "Bronx Bombers" (at least until Steinbrenner moves them to New Jersey or Manhattan!), are the most famous, richest, and most victorious baseball team in history. Yankee fans have fond memories of feeling like a single entity as 40 and 50 thousands of them in the stands of Yankee Stadium yelled "WE ARE NUMBER ONE" in unison after a great playoff victory. This loss of psychic boundaries, so often encountered in sports enthusiasms, is reminiscent of the nationalistic feelings evoked by war. No wonder that early in this century William James looked to sports, especially the Olympics, as the "moral equivalent of war."

Today the Yankees, despite their fears of "ailing" and "death" precipitated by their recent losses, are leading the American League by a wide margin. Yet, only last fall I remember muttering for the thousandth time in the last ten years that the Yankees needed a new owner to be able to win the pennant and the World Series. Under 60-year-old George Steinbrenner, the principal owner of the Yankees since 1973, the team had some success for the first eight years and then became demoralized: the Yankees have had the most expensive players, the most frustration, and the fewest victories in their modern history. The principal owner of the New York franchise has a positive genius for antagonizing almost everyone including Yankee fans, managers, and players. The unconscious principles underlying Steinbrenner's behavior, usually in opposition to his conscious desire to win at all costs, appear to me to be the need to re-enact scenarios involving acclaim, betrayal, control, grandiosity, humiliation, punishment, and the salvation of "losers."

The situation last fall illustrates Steinbrenner at his worse. In his unique, indirect way, the owner forced out Buck Showalter. In 19 years with the Yankee organization, the only employer of his adult life, Buck had worked his way up from a minor league player to the status of a highly successful, well-respected, and beloved big league manager. In four years he built the Yankees into pennant contenders and took them to the playoffs (where they lost). Yet, Steinbrenner has a

recurrent urge to change the personnel and punish anyone who loses — it was Buck's turn. Steinbrenner's idea was to replace the manager, but keep him around just in case the new one (Joe Torre) did not work out. The owner had done this five separate times with one manager (Billy Martin). It was a demoralizing scenario Yankee fans had watched many times. However, Showalter had too much dignity and too many options to twist and turn in the breeze while "the boss" played this dreary tune once again. Before he signed a contract, the manager wanted to know the status of such equally well-respected veterans as Don Mattingly (team captain and legendary player) and Wade Boggs, as well as the coaching staff he had nurtured. Steinbrenner's response was to tell reporters he was inclined to fire the coaches (he likes to have his own "spies" in his manager's office) and to continue his negotiations with another potential manager. When Steinbrenner undercuts his own staff and even sees them as his enemies, it reminds me of President Richard Nixon's inclination to do the very same with his cabinet. It should be remembered that George Steinbrenner was the only person to be convicted, fined, and sentenced to community service for illegal contributions to President Nixon in 1972.

The fans were outraged by the confirmation that Showalter and Mattingly would not be leading the team in 1996. They felt talent, skill, intelligence, and an excellent record should have been rewarded — not punished. A typical caller to a sports radio station declared his desire to be able to root for the Yankees "without an absolute crazy man at the helm." When I turned to the sports page of *The Bergen Record* after the playoffs, the words describing the owner were: "the Mad Shipbuilder ... the bloated ego [Steinbrenner] ... surreal standards ... during the George Steinbrenner Era ... mercurial owner ... Steinbrenner's act gets old.... George Steinbrenner as the lead huckster ... It's not funny anymore.... It's pathetic." The new manager was advised that "what every new Steinbrenner employee needs is eyes in the back of his head. Then at least he will see it coming when he gets stabbed in the back." The anti-Steinbrenner mood remained strong throughout the rest of the year. When a tireless Yankee public relations worker was fired three days before Christmas, the headlines read: "The Boss [Steinbrenner] stole Christmas." *The New York Times'* coverage was almost as negative.

I was so discouraged by Steinbrenner's

antics of last fall that this spring, unlike the previous two, I did not join a psychoanalyst friend in going to the home opener. (I was lucky I stayed home because it was freezing and snowing, but unlucky because the Yankees won seven to three!) But hope springs eternal and the Yankees are playing league-leading baseball under a veteran manager who knows he must win games and worry as much about managing Steinbrenner as about any of his players.

There are certainly people who have had good things to say about Steinbrenner. He is a big spender (quite free with his checkbook) when it comes to hiring expensive players. He has a big heart since he appears to go out of the way to hire players who have had repeated illicit-drug convictions. He will give a minor league or little-known manager a chance. Obviously, I am not one of the people who say these things. I think Steinbrenner spends so much money on big contracts to make himself look and feel important. He prefers hiring unknowns and alcoholics as managers since he can feel superior to them. I worry about drug-addicted and/or self-destructive baseball players as role models for our young.

What is so infuriating to fans, players, and managers about Steinbrenner is his need to intrude into situations that would be better left alone. Baseball is a sport in which the best team is going to lose about 60 games a year. When the Yankees start losing, he complains publicly about his manager and players, undercutting and demoralizing them. The favorite targets of his chagrin are well known: slugging, black outfielders whom he declares to be lazy. This intrusion usually makes the players' slumps deeper. He likes to be considered a "good guy" and spends much time, energy, and money justifying his actions and pinning the blame on others. The bottom line is that he can not trust the judgment of his players and managers since he does not trust his own judgement. He speaks and acts so inappropriately and rashly that he was banned from baseball for two-and-a-half years. This was a blessing for Buck Showalter who could build the team without meddling interference. Steinbrenner endlessly searches for a new slugger, a great pitcher, a winning manager — but he always ends up frustrated since he is unwilling to share the spotlight with men of great talent. The issue comes down to the following: Can the eternal loser Steinbrenner, while consciously doing everything he can think of to make the Yankees

world class winners, unconsciously allow the Bronx Bombers to resume their winning tradition? This fall both the boy within me, who daydreamed of being a baseball hero, and the psychohistorian adult I have become will be listening or watching to see the outcome.

Group psychology, as well as the owner's individual need "to reenact scenarios involving acclaim, betrayal, control, grandiosity, humiliation, punishment, and the salvation of 'losers,'" should also be considered. There is a strange dance the fans, in conjunction with the sports reporters, do in looking to Steinbrenner when they are disappointed in or angry at the team, manager, or particular players. In the course of many seasons, I have been able to correlate increased references to the owner to fan discontent. Because of his own needs for acclaim Steinbrenner is a wonderful delegate of fan discontent. He acts out on feelings others have not even acknowledged. But he remains a delegate of the group. When he does less of this, as during this season to date (I am holding my breath!), I wonder if he has gotten some effective psychotherapy that frees him from falling into some of his same old, self-defeating patterns. Or has Steinbrenner been simply so focused on the Olympics (he is on the Olympic Committee) that he has had little time to play his old, self-defeating games with the Yankees?

The reader should note that in writing the article, in the spirit of this publication, I have sought to avoid psychopathological terminology in describing George Steinbrenner. When angered, the fans already do this in excess.

*Paul Elovitz, a native New Englander, rooted for the Boston Red Sox while growing up and became a New York Yankees fan while teaching at Temple University in the late 1960s. □*

## Fantasies Behind the "Realities" of History

Robert A. Pois  
University of Colorado

Book Review of Peter Loewenberg, *Fantasy and Reality in History*. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995. vii and 235 pages, hardcover, \$35.00.

If, in the history of the development of the psychohistorical method to this moment, it were deemed necessary to single out one individual whose work has been of predominant significance, in my opinion that person would be Peter Loewenberg. Certainly, there are a number of persons whose contributions to the development of the psychohistorical method have been of immense importance. Yet, in reflecting upon the definition (s) of psychohistory, and applications of such to the discipline of history per se, it is plain that Peter Loewenberg's work has been of guiding significance to such an extent that even those who have taken issue with it, as this writer has on occasion, have had to engage this UCLA history professor and psychoanalyst on grounds the configurations of which have been determined by him.

*Fantasy and Reality in History* is a collection of essays most of which are appearing in print for the first time. Loewenberg starts out with historiographical considerations, concerned as he is with relating psychoanalytical concerns to broader ones of historical analysis. It is in the first essay, "Why Social Sciences Need Psychohistory," that the author establishes a crucial relationship between problems of childhood eroticism and later political concerns:

If this ["debasement"] is so for erotic life, how much more is it so for political life? The avid quest for power and its accoutrements is compensatory for the traumas caused to the child by a familial political situation that relentlessly drives home his or her lack of power, impotence, and vulnerability due to smallness and weakness (page 11).

Most of the essays which comprise Parts II, "Political Leadership and the Irrational," and III, "Psychodynamics and The Social Process," of the book are, to varying extents, informed by this salient observation.

Part I, "Psychoanalysis, Social Structure, and Culture," is comprised of the historiographical essay mentioned earlier. Part II is concerned with Freud's own psychosocial identity, and the accomplishments and underlying tensions engendered by the Swiss Burghölzli "scientific community." In this context, by the way, the Freud-Jung relationship is described and analyzed in some detail.

As can be seen, Professor Loewenberg, in a

kind of refurbished historicist fashion, proceeds from particular to general concerns and, in keeping with the tenets of this approach, is always concerned with determining the relationships between the two. Thus, we move from considerations of Freud himself; to what can be described as "psychobiographical" issues, with attention devoted to William Gladstone, Walter Rathenau, Karl Renner, and Vladimir Zhirinovskiy; and then to yet more general concerns — "Anxiety in History," "Racism in Comparative Historical Perspective," "The Psychodynamics of Nationalism," and "Crisis Management: From Therapy to Government and from the Oval Office to the Coach." In the last essay, we have moved, somewhat, from regulative to constitutive hypothesizing, i.e., into that realm informed by those more predictive qualities associated with the "hard" sciences.

In my opinion, the most effective of the psychobiographical essays is the one concerned with Gladstone. Loewenberg successfully relates the statesman's public positions on Turkish atrocities in Bulgaria to his own "instinctual drives and defenses, ones greatly colored by the bourgeois Victorian culture of the late nineteenth century" (page 103). Plainly, Gladstone's own concerns and fantasies, as captured by his personal diary and in his protesting-too-much efforts to "reform" prostitutes, were played out in his deprecations of the "cruel, raping, butchering Turks in whom he could see no positive functions for British diplomacy nor any good human qualities."

In "Racism in Comparative Historical Perspective" Loewenberg does a masterful job of demonstrating the crucial role(s) of projection — in both Western and non-Western contexts. In "The Psychodynamics of Nationalism" he shows why any hypothesizing on the subject which does not link the psychodynamics of nationalism as grounded in familial concerns to broader issues must appear to be flat, one-dimensional, almost jejune [deficient]. This writer always has thought that the more structurally-organized approaches to nationalism presented by Eric Hobsbawm and Ernest Gellner were shallow and, ultimately, unsatisfactory. Now, he knows why.

The last essay, concerned with how issues and solutions raised in psychotherapeutic contexts could be applied in areas of international crisis management situations is perhaps somewhat

utopian. Certainly, one cannot argue with Loewenberg's assertion that "the impulse to resort to force as a first response instead of the last is a sign of inner weakness and low self-esteem, and it will not be effective in conferring security" (page 223). Yet, in earlier essays he demonstrated that senses of "inner weakness and low self-esteem" were and are compelling forces in history, seeming to link what Robert G.L. Waite called "private neurosis to public policy." The application of the compelling logic of Loewenberg's impassioned statement would appear to be doomed almost from the start until human beings are able to engage in a form of psychodynamic transcendence which, up to this point, is unimaginable. Also, at times, the linkages between individual psychoanalytic concerns and more general ones, obvious to one who combines psychoanalysis and history, could have been rendered a bit clearer to those who will be introduced to psychohistory through this otherwise excellent work.

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## Peter Loewenberg Feted

David D. Lee  
UCLA History Department

On Saturday, June 22, 1996 Peter Loewenberg's thirty-year career as a teacher, graduate advisor, and mentor in UCLA's History Department was celebrated by his colleagues, former and current students, family, and friends. This event was organized, in part, to celebrate Peter's recent retirement from full-time duties at UCLA to enable him more time to write, lead the Los Angeles psychoanalytic community, and father his young son, Jonathan. Peter is best known for his pioneering psychohistorical essays collected in *Decoding the Past* and the just-published *Fantasy and Reality in History*. During his tenure at UCLA he guided a wide range of dissertations and decisively proved the value and feasibility of a dual-track career as historian and practicing psychoanalyst.

Peter Loewenberg's role as a founder of modern psychohistory was recognized by Geoffrey Cocks (Albion College):

In 1970 Peter was on the verge, to borrow an English football term, of 'doing the double,' that is, publishing articles in consecutive issues of *The American Historical Review* — an unprecedented and, I believe, still unmatched feat. Moreover, those essays on the Nazi youth cohort and Heinrich Himmler's failed adolescence anticipated the evolution in studies of the Third Reich toward rich yet minatory findings in social history.

Several attendees spoke on Peter's mentorship and friendship. Mauricio Mazon (University of Southern California) gained wide concurrence when he observed that "everything I have achieved professionally as historian or psychoanalyst — I owe in part or whole to him." Expanding on this theme, Geoffrey Cocks touched on how Peter integrated psychoanalytic insights into his didactic work, "I owe my career to Peter — and to the creative self that Peter allowed to develop." The continued relevance and brilliance of his articles on graduate education, "Emotional Problems of Graduate Education" and "The Graduate Years: What Kind of Passage?" (in *Decoding the Past*) was repeatedly emphasized.

This group of noted and talented historians testified to the impressively varied paths Peter's students have taken. As examples, Prof. Mazon defined the psychodynamics of racial prejudice in wartime Los Angeles, Prof. Cocks continues to work on the history of psychoanalysis and psychotherapy in Nazi Germany, and I seek to convey my psychohistorical insights on psychoanalysis' and religion's stormy relationship to non-psychoanalytic audiences. Yet, as Peter himself observed, the common feature of all our work is the way each of his students has created a professional identity composed of two or more ostensibly separate fields, testing and redefining borders.

The thoughts of Peter's mentor and Modern European intellectual historian Carl Schorske (Princeton-Emeritus), conveyed by letter, encapsulated succinctly our fond feelings for Peter: "I was especially happy to see that you are being celebrated as a mentor. It is something more than a teacher — or at least requires some very human, affective qualities that some fine teachers do not

have."

*David D. Lee, a teaching fellow, is currently finishing his doctorate in history on the Protestant pastor-analyst Oskar Pfister and his remarkable thirty-year friendship with Sigmund Freud.* □

## Brink's Pioneering Study of Sexual Obsession in Modern Fiction

Dan Dervin  
Mary Washington College

Book Review of Andrew Brink, *Obsession and Culture: A Study of Sexual Obsession in Modern Fiction*. Madison, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1996. Hardcover, \$39.50.

In *Obsession and Culture* Andrew Brink conducts an original and well-informed investigation into the ways that male sexual conflicts over women in fiction can be read as indexes of entrenched social disorders. He examines the work of such authors as H.G. Wells, Hermann Hesse, Vladimir Nabokov, John Fowles, and John Updike. In our present context of serial monogamy, domestic violence, deadbeat dads, and rearguard or vanguard attempts to reconstitute masculinity, Brink's contributions are especially timely, provocative, and incisive. Advancing these discourses on far deeper and more elusive levels than other studies, he is able to cast new light on the roots of these problems.

In tackling this task, he formulates and connects three models, each of which offers an original means of organizing the material, although unavoidably raising certain difficulties. The Psychohistorical Model perceives writers as delegates for "wishes latent in society" who strive to "solve emotional problems central to the group." These problems intersect with the writers' conflicts and needs for self-expression while legitimizing otherwise taboo subjects in fictions that help members of the group "work out their own anxieties" (pages 14-15, 50-51). Brink fits this process to deMause's evolutionary model of the psychoclass in which writers mediate for the group between generational parenting and resultant sexual practices.

The Psychodynamic Model draws on Freud's pathbreaking studies of childhood obsessional struggles over love/hate for the same object, the anxiety aroused over hostile or guilty thoughts, and the defensive countermeasures of isolation, undoing, and reaction formation (pages 16-19). Splitting displaces this emotional ambivalence onto women who are then typecast as whores/madonnas and treated accordingly. As Freud reported in another pioneering study, "The Most Prevalent Form of Degradation in Erotic Life," males who try to reconcile this dichotomy through marriage typically suffer psychic impotence — the emotional currents of tenderness and sensuality being separated due to incest fears. Thus, where they feel passion they disallow feelings of affection, and where they feel affection they negate passion. The same male dilemma was recently delivered in the film *When Harry Met Sally* as though it were news. Since these are traditional conflicts that the selected male novelists represent and attempt to resolve, one has to allow for generous elasticity in the obsessional model. It may be accepted that the writers' overtly "taboo subjects" of "promiscuity [Don Juanism], pedophilia, and bisexuality" (page 15) are displacements of incestuous wishes, with the oedipal triangulation of conflicts then being regressively relocated in the dyad of love/hate instituted during the anal period.

The Attachment Model pushes these conflicts to earlier stages of infant/mother interaction. Of the various resultant styles — secure, anxious/avoidant, anxious/resistant, disorganized/disoriented — however, Brink is constrained to admit that the open/obsessional novelist under scrutiny is at best a hybrid (page 25). Attachment theory does offer empirical data for variants in early parenting modes, but there are also liabilities in its tendency to slip from psychodynamic process to a behavioral model of input/output parity and to override other developmental phases that structure the psyche throughout childhood and beyond. While a balance between urges and objects (loved ones) is needed, the emphasis is on mothering, often accompanied by scenarios of seduction and trauma. This diminishes Freud's original contributions to early drive theory and paradoxically produces a more culturally-attractive mode of victims/oppressors. (Russell Jacoby's *Social Amnesia* [1975] is a good antidote to post-Freudian meliorists). Nonetheless, I was pleased to find

Brink dusting off and putting to good use a related concept of "Jocasta mothering," in which the son becomes the delegate for fulfilling the mother's repressed sexual and hostile wishes (pages 36-40).

Thus, Brink's three models exist in an uneasy but generally fertile tension. Brink's own position emerges from his situating obsessional conflicts in the preoedipal period of mothering as variously disruptive, or in psychohistorical modes, intrusive. "The writers studied here speak for what might be called the sexually ambivalent unconscious of an overmothered psychoclass." Attachment theory clarifies this "emotional overloading" that leads to anxiety, gender confusion, object splitting, and the male's defensively controlling women (pages 198, 204). The solution lies not in the "countercontrol of controlling mothers," but in more enlightened parenting (page 50). In this respect, writers function as early warning systems that sound the "actual erotic and punitive wishes that inhibit harmonious relations between the sexes" (page 198).

Though I might opt for more emphasis on the drive and less on the object, giving more attention to oedipal issues, and proposing poor-mothering rather than overmothering as a problem in the preoedipal periods, I find Brink's account of sexual obsession revealed through modern fiction intriguing, stimulating, and thoroughly engaging. For the first time, he effectively demonstrates how literature, child development theories, and psychohistory can be fruitfully combined. Thus his study deserves to be called pioneering.

*Dan Dervin teaches literature and is the author of numerous publications. His Enactments: Modes and Psychohistorical Models has just been released by Fairleigh Dickinson University Press. □*

## Limited or Unlimited Partners?

**Paul H. Elovitz**  
Ramapo College

Book Review of Elizabeth and Bob Dole with Richard Norton Smith and Kerry Tymchuk, *Unlimited Partners: Our American Story*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996. 380 pages, \$24.00.

The marital relationship of the President and his wife (when will I be writing "the President and her husband"?) comes to mind because of the constant barrage against Hillary Rodham and the

title of the Doles' joint autobiography, *Unlimited Partners: Our American Story*. When reading the 1988 version of this book, *The Doles: Unlimited Partners*, I noted my casual reference to it as the "Limited Partners book." On issues vital to him, Bob Dole seemed to confide in nobody: not his first wife Phyllis, not his second wife Elizabeth (Liddy), and not the many people who claim to be his advisors. According to Gail Sheehy, when he suffered his 1976 Vice Presidential defeat, he made only one reference to this painful event to his life's partner. Bob Dole plays his cards so close to the vest that even he seems not to be able to read them until the absolute last moment. The Kansan also has been quite reluctant to accept help from either of his wives, or anyone else for that matter. Consequently, I expected to find little that is revealing about his marriage as I read the new edition.

Setting my expectations low did save me from disappointment. When Elizabeth Dole writes of "pillow talk," it turns out to be about a subject dear to her heart as Secretary of Transportation, rather than as a woman. This is not surprising for a couple who compete over who can work longer, harder and come home later. Elizabeth appears to have figuratively married not her father, but her brother. This North Carolinian adored her big brother, who was born 13 years before her, and married a man an equal number of years older. The Doles are a most political couple — some of their friends thought Elizabeth would be on a national ticket before Bob. She is extremely ambitious and has served four Presidents in cabinet-level positions. The one thing they do not have is a close personal relationship, but then Dole is a loner who appears to be close to no one.

Anyone seriously interested in Dole should start with this volume which has about as much information on Dole's childhood and personality as any of the four early biographies that have been published from 1988 to the present day. And, it is my feeling that it is always best to get the information directly from the candidate since there is than less chance of distortion. (I wish that Bill and Hillary Clinton would meet the challenge of the books and write their autobiographies.) Though the Doles' book is as superficial and self-serving as most political autobiographies, it does show the patterns of associations of the subjects, however much they has been neaten up by the editor (a former Dole speech writer) and the current speech writer who were in charge of the

actual writing. Almost all of the new materials are from the period since the first edition came out in 1988, the year of Bob's second attempt to get the Republican nomination for President. One note of warning: do not trust the index.

If you want a negative view of Dole, read Stanley G. Hilton (a former Dole aide), *Bob Dole: American Political Phoenix* (Chicago: Contemporary Books, 1988) and *Senator for Sale: An Unauthorized Biography* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995). Another book that will hurt Dole is Tanya Melech, *The Republican War Against Women: An Insiders View From Behind the Lines* (New York: Bantam Books, 1996). Melech, a life-long Republican, has abandoned her party in disgust at its treatment of women and children. The Republicans must, and they are working quite hard at this at their convention, win over millions of doubting female voters if they are to win on November 5th. In Gail Sheehy, *Character: America's Search for Leadership* (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1988), see chapter four, "The Whole Bob Dole," for an interesting chapter on the former Senate Majority Leader. Sheehy asks some of the right questions, even if she makes mistakes of fact and opinion in the process.

If you want views friendlier to Dole, read Jake H. Thompson, *Bob Dole: The Republican's Man For All Seasons* (New York: Donald Fine Books, 1994) and Richard Ben Cramer, *Bob Dole* (New York: Vintage Books, 1995) which is extracted from Cramer's earlier best seller, *What It Takes: The Way to the White House* (New York: Vintage Books, 1992). □

## Whitewater and the Clintons

Paul H. Elovitz  
Ramapo College

Book Reviews of

Roger Clinton with Jim Moore, *Growing Up Clinton: The Lives, Times and Tragedies of America's Presidential Family*. Arlington, TX: The Summit Publishing Group, 1995. 195 pages, \$19.95.

Paul Greenberg, *No Surprises: Twenty Years of Clinton-Watching*. Washington: Brassey's, 1996. 256 pages, \$23.95.

Gene Lyons and the editors of *Harper's*,

*Fools For Scandals: How the Media Invented Whitewater.* New York: Franklin Square Press, 1996. 224 pages, \$9.95.

Stanley A. Renshon, ed., *The Clinton Presidency: Campaigning, Governing, and the Psychology of Leadership.* Boulder: Westview Press, 1995. 261 pages, \$19.95.

James B. Stewart, *Blood Sport: The President and His Adversaries.* New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996. 479 pages, \$25.00.

Bob Woodward, *The Choice.* New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996. 462 pages, \$26.00.

Whitewater is a lucrative industry with investigations costing well over \$30 million. There has been more time and money spent on hearings on Whitewater, as Bill Clinton recently complained, than time devoted to hearings on health care, immigration reform, Social Security, and welfare. Stewart's *Blood Sport* takes its name from the words in Vince Foster's suicide note declaring that in Washington ruining people is a game. The author, winner of a Pulitzer Prize, gives the reader a "you are there" feeling but no footnotes. There are some valuable materials on Vince Foster and, especially, on Bernie Nussbaum's warning to not try to appease the media. Clinton wished he had followed the advice of the Presidential Counsel who he threw to the media sharks. My pleasure in reading this well-written book was lessened by the sense that content was sacrificed for dramatic effect. In the end, when all is said and done, this reader feels that if Stewart were Whitewater prosecutor, rather than Kenneth Starr, Clinton would be home free.

When researching Jimmy Carter before his election to the Presidency, I paid little attention to his critics of him as governor and only realized my error at a later date. Determined not to make the same mistake with Clinton, in April of 1992 I spoke to Paul Greenberg who branded the Governor "Slick Willie." Greenberg had won a Pulitzer Prize for his reporting of the Arkansas desegregation crisis and is well-respected. He is a conservative Southerner who did most of the work for a doctoral degree in history at Columbia University. In *No Surprises* he has collected his columns of 20 years into a book that says lots about Clinton's character or lack thereof. While it will not be a best seller, it does provide much insight for those who have an historical sense, even if there is little psychological awareness.

On now to the last of the Whitewater books, *Fools for Scandals*. I had seen Gene Lyons interviewed and found his attack on the Whitewater industry to be refreshing, if not totally convincing. His argument that the media, especially the *New York Times*, invented Whitewater has some merit. But just as others are too quick to find the Clintons guilty of any and all unsubstantiated charges, he is too quick to exonerate them in defense of Arkansas.

Stanley Renshon, editor of *Political Psychology* and a professor in the Graduate School of the City University of New York, has been extremely prolific as of late. This year he released books on assessing presidential candidates and on Clinton's personality, and last year he edited one on campaigning, governing, and the psychology of leadership in the Clinton administration, *The Clinton Presidency*. The 1995 book contains interesting articles by twelve authors, including well-respected members of the International Society of Political Psychology which sponsors the publication Renshon edits. It provides a useful, initial, and academic appraisal of the Clinton Presidency.

On the Clintons there have been an enormous spate of books, which helps to compensate for the fact that Bill Clinton is the first President to get to the White House since Gerald Ford without having written an autobiography. The President's half brother, Roger Clinton, writes about "Bubba" (brother); Virginia Kelley (their mother); and his own cocaine addiction, prison time, and entry into fatherhood. Though this thin volume is of far less value for understanding Bill than Virginia's posthumously published autobiography, *Leading With Your Heart*, it has some value. This, however, is mitigated by idealization of Bill the big brother who is depicted as saving their mother from being choked and stabbed with a scissors by her drunken husband. Though Bill's stepfather's abuse of Virginia and her youngest son and namesake was quite real, the danger of being choked or stabbed seems greater to the six-year-old running next door to fetch his big brother than to this reader. Little Roger Clinton feared and hated the father who died of cancer when this younger Roger was only 11 years old.

Bill Clinton fulfilled an almost maternal role, taking his baby brother on dates and looking out for him at every opportunity. He comes across most admirably in the crisis of Roger's arrest as a

cocaine dealer. Feeling quite sorry for himself, Roger threatened suicide and the Governor literally shook him out of it, declaring, "How dare you be so selfish! You're the most precious thing in the world to your mother and me, and you'd dare to think about taking that away from us?" The rage in Bill's eyes shocked Roger and he writes that his big brother "saved my life that day."

Roger seems extremely self-involved and oblivious to most of his own character faults. His prison diaries reveal a most immature, needy, and spoiled young man who gained some self-discipline while being incarcerated in a prison in Fort Worth. At times he seems to think his "jail house journal" showed how tough he had it, while this reader sees it as an account of special treatment in a country club type of prison and of a young man's emotional life: like his brother he desperately seems to need the acclaim of others. He also confirms that he was spanked by both his mother and teachers. While I would recommend that those interested in the Clintons read this book, I would recommend you put it lower on your list than *Leading With Your Heart*.

Finally, Bob Woodward's *The Choice*: is about both Clinton and Dole. It has already created a stir because it released information on Hillary's being encouraged by Jean Houston, a mass market New Age motivational speaker and therapist, to have imaginary talks with Eleanor Roosevelt. (Rita Ransohoff, a Roosevelt expert, will be writing about these conversations for our next issue.) Woodward is remarkable for the number of Washington insiders he is able to get to speak on or off the record. As usual, he is far more interested in Washington influence than in the personalities of his subjects, yet some of his materials are of considerable interest to psychohistorians. □

## **The Psychohistorical Ideal of Empathic Even-handedness in *Dead Man Walking***

**Dan Dervin**  
Mary Washington College

The manner in which the film *Dead Man Walking* was represented in the media and in popular culture confirmed for me that it contained two distinct subjects which were not only linked

but also reversed. A *New Yorker* review doted on Sean Penn's acting career to the near exclusion of everything else, yet it was Susan Sarandon who won the Oscar. Such splitting made me wonder if audiences weren't responding to two different movies, and in fact the two powerful themes — anti-death penalty and victims-reconciliation — elicit very different and conflicting responses.

On its face, opposition to capital punishment puts us on the side of the angels, protecting the sacredness of life from government intrusion. But, since everyone's motives are prone to being mixed as they are displaced onto the political sphere (as we know from psychohistory), we should not be surprised to find reaction formations and superego defiance at work — liberals have psyches, too. The lust-killer Poncelet (Sean Penn) behind bars and in chains, struggling to light a cigarette, assumes the victim role, while the victims' families in their lust for revenge assume the role of aggressors. Penn plays on our sympathies; the redneck relatives elicit contempt.

Yet the film does not foster any alliances. By claiming a spiritual dimension for character, Sister Prejean (Susan Sarandon) facilitates our sympathies for Poncelet the sinner as worthy of our compassion and divine mercy. Her special status and capacity for empathy also enable her to mediate between the two plots' distinct worlds. But her conflicted feelings for the angry, cold-hearted relatives, unresolved until the end, form for me the more probingly original quality of the film. The debate over capital punishment is long-standing and tends to split everyone into easy affiliations — pro or con identification with victims or victimizers. But the value of empathizing with those who appear to be seeking cold-blooded revenge and being able to recognize the validity of their feelings, without validating their wishes, transgresses the dominant convention of vengeance movies and opens new pathways of cinematic sensibility. □

## **America Under Siege**

**Henry Lawton**  
International Psychohistorical Association

*The New York Post* (July 28, 1996) ran a striking headline: "America Under Siege." What is going on in America today? Things appear peaceful, yet there seems a sense of menace, an

increasing undercurrent of anxiety. We seem in danger, but from what? Consider recent news stories about Olympic organizers trying to keep the Games safe from "terrorists," then a bomb exploded in the one unsecured public area near the games. Consider TWA Flight 800. Was the plane downed by a terrorist bomb? A missile? Despite understandable anxiety, why the emphasis on terrorism in the absence of direct evidence so far? *Time* and *Newsweek* ran cover stories (July 8, 1996) on a "new" fascination with aliens and the paranormal stimulated by the new film *Independence Day*, probably the major box office film of the summer. Psychohistorians interested in the communication of group fantasy should pay attention!

Popular media, especially film, is a major way by which shared fantasies and emotions are unconsciously communicated. There have been three hit films this summer: *Twister*, *Mission Impossible*, and *Independence Day*, all of which deal with the general theme of "the enemy." For 40 years, the Soviet Union (Reagan's "Evil Empire") was our enemy. But, since the end of the Cold War, we have been adrift, looking for a new enemy. There have been many candidates — Arabs, Iraq, serial killers, Bosnians, militias, terrorists — but none seems to have caught on. Now, we are considering more abstract choices. In *Twister* the enemy is nature in the form of tornadoes. In *Mission Impossible* the old-time Cold Warriors do not seem to know the enemy, but we see that it is ourselves. Perhaps it is no wonder these films are quickly fading from view.

But *Independence Day* may be another story. Its inspiration is the 1950s' science fiction films, where the evil aliens are repelled by a brave few who make the earth safe. The current power of group-fantasies about enemies can be seen in *Time* (July 8, page 60):

Brisk and churning *Independence Day* offers no grand vision, other than the fact that, in this post-Cold War era, it looks to outer space to find new enemies worth hating.... "The U.S. is desperately in search of an enemy," says [film director] Paul Verhoeven.... "The Communists were the enemy, and the Nazis before them, but now that wonderful enemy everyone can fight has been lost. Alien sci-fi [science fiction] films give us a terrifying enemy that's politically correct. They're bad. They're evil. And

they're not even human."

The aliens want Earth's natural resources. When the President asks the telepathic alien their purpose, its reply is direct, "We want you to die." When the aliens destroy Earth's major cities, the President responds that we will destroy the invaders and achieve our Independence Day via an apocalyptic struggle! Despite the surface claims of *Time* and *Newsweek*, fascination with the paranormal is not the point; it is the overcoming of fantasized danger symbolized by a powerful, dangerous enemy that is the point. By his very nature, the alien is an excellent enemy, so easy to hate. We need feel no moral qualms about killing him: the Marine fighter pilot says, "I just want to get up there and kick E.T.'s ass, sir." We destroy them and feel good. Bloody, but unbowed, we are revitalized and overjoyed.

Think about this for a minute. What *Independence Day* seems to say is that we can only be revitalized, save ourselves, and feel good again as a culture through apocalyptic destruction of our way of life! Insane, you say. Irrational, you say. Well, yes, it is, and that, sadly, is the point.

*Henry Lawton is author of The Psychohistorian's Handbook and founder of the Group for the Psychohistorical Study of Film. □*

## **Blowing Up the White House and Other Apocalyptic Violence in *Independence Day***

**Paul H. Elovitz  
Ramapo College**

In the summer "blockbuster" movie, *Independence Day*, apocalyptic flames devour and blow up the White House. The movie shows the aliens destroying Washington, New York, and Los Angeles in great fireballs and tells us there was a simultaneous, world-wide assault against other major cities.

Clearly, this movie celebrated the Fourth of July with a bang. It made a financial and political bang as well: six days after this extravaganza of violence, costing 65 million dollars, was released on July 2nd, it was being touted as already having taken in 100 million dollars at the box office. The

movie even drew political audiences. In the last week of July, Bob Dole, in preparation for facing Hollywood the next day, went to see *Independence Day*. It was his kind of movie since there was an alien enemy to hate — he proclaimed it to be the type of movie which “lifts up our country instead of dragging it down.” The next week, in unleashing his supply-side economic package (which he previously denigrated), he drew on the film to make Bill Clinton the “economic enemy of all Americans.” He then turned on the IRS, promising to free the American people from IRS “tyranny” and “eliminate the IRS as we know it.” This is probably why the message of blowing up of the White House and the capital city fits in with the political campaign of Republicans who have been running against Washington even while occupying it.

Besides spectacular special effects suitable for Fourth of July viewing, the film has something for everyone: A black (Will Smith) and a Jew (Jeff Goldblum) team up to save the world, and each's family will be healed and reunited in the process. (In a summer with a host of black leading men, Smith, in promotional materials, boasts of being the first black to save the world.) There is lots of comic relief. There is male bonding, with cigars, and female bonding of black and white. There are the children's stories of the little black boy searching for a father and of Munchkin, the President's daughter, who would lose her mother and be in danger of losing her father as well. A family's pet dog is saved — while the people of Los Angeles perish.

The spectacular violence of the film almost necessitates comic relief. Judd Hirsch, as Jeff Goldblum's father and a genuine New York Jewish character, puts a smile on the faces of the audience. Most smiled or smirked at is Randy Quaid as the drunken crop-duster suffering from Vietnam War-induced post traumatic stress syndrome and the aftermath of being “abducted by aliens.” He is the goat, but also comic, and in the end sacrifices himself to save his children and the world with a Kamikaze-type attack on the alien base. The audience laughs when Harvey Fierstein says “Oh, shit!” as he is about to be devoured by the New York City fireball while caught in traffic.

There is lots of implied sexuality in *Independence Day*, but none of it is genital or explicit. Harry Connick, Jr., and Will Smith are two pals who love each other as comrades in arms and joke about bisexuality. Harvey Fierstein, the

drag queen type in the news room, cares so much for others that he is killed before he can escape. Will Smith's girlfriend Vivica Fox, an exotic dancer, is a dynamic action woman who saves many, including the President's wife (Mary McDonnell), who still dies in the end, off camera. When Bob Dole praised *Independence Day* specifically in opposition to Demi Moore's *Strip Tease*, he obviously did not have her profession in mind.

There is much love in the film. There is the profound love the President has for his daughter and that Smith's girlfriend has for her son. The audience is shown as much male-male and female-female love as opposite sex love. The whole family can go to the movie since there is no genital love even if the violence is so great millions of people die and the world is left with vast nuclear fallout. It is noteworthy that the deaths, which are clearly implied to be in the millions, are referred to as in the “thousands.”

The alien enemy is ant, octopus, and robot-like as well as enormously powerful and resilient. Somehow, it must be seen up close so its weaknesses can be uncovered. Access to the first alien comes when Will Smith, like a tough ghetto black, punches out the enemy. No such movie is complete without a crazy scientist type and this one's is killed examining the alien, without the audience shedding any tears for him. There is great distrust of the U.S. government as having all sorts of secret information on aliens which it is withholding from Americans, including the President, ably played by Bill Pullman. The Secretary of Defense is an unsympathetic, caricature of a hawk. The President is a most sympathetic human being who is at the mercy of his advisors. The film starts out with his being denigrated as a wimp, much like Presidents Clinton and Bush, even though he is a hero fighter pilot from the Persian Gulf War (presumably of 1991). His older-looking wife is a professional woman, like Hillary Clinton or Elizabeth Dole, with whom he appears to have an excellent relationship and who is away on business at the time of the invasion. By the end the President has become the warrior chief as if he were a leader of a tribe or of the Roman Empire.

The success of the American warriors at the grand finale, just split seconds before human destruction, leaves the world cheering: bushmen, Arabs, Russians, Brits, and everyone else join in celebrating the victory of Earth. Though one hero, Jeff Goldblum, shows enormous sensitivity to

environmental issues, the question of nuclear fallout is glossed over by presenting it as July 4th fireworks. The seven-year-old and his family sitting near me seemed untroubled by this danger and the mood of the audience on July 3rd was exuberant. America again saves the world at the end of the movie and our Independence Day becomes the holiday of the entire world.

The film's message is that the family, racial strife, and the world can be healed if only we have an external, alien enemy to bring us together. The popularity of the film demonstrates the success of this message in a world where the distinction between fantasy and reality is increasingly blurred. Already, I am looking forward to next summer's movies, wondering if our emotional needs will dictate that extraterrestrials will be enemies or friendly, helpful creatures like E.T. □

**In Memoriam:  
Raphael Patai  
(1910-1996)**

**Paul H. Elovitz  
Ramapo College**

On a much more serious note than our pseudo-obituary on *Pravda* in "Free Associations," I was saddened to note the death of Raphael Patai, caused by cancer, on July 20th. Born in Budapest, he took doctoral and rabbinical degrees at the University of Breslau and the first doctoral degree, in 1936, of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. Among the numerous places he had taught were Dropsie College in Philadelphia, the Herzl Institute in New York and Fairleigh Dickinson University in Rutherford, NJ. For his 80th birthday he received a word processor which he mastered and used to subsequently write eight books before his death at age 85. This prolific anthropologist was the author of three dozen books, mostly on ancient Israel and the modern Middle East: *The Arab Mind* (1983, revised) and *The Jewish Mind* (1977) were among his best known books. On a personal note, the Editor had the good fortune of meeting this scholar and popular writer in the late 1980s and I can attest for his being a gentleman and a scholar in the best sense of the term. Our condolences to his daughter, Dr. Jennifer Schneider of Tucson, and his long-time companion, Simone Boy of Forest Hills, as well as other members of the family. □

**Letter to the Editor**

June 6, 1996

Dear Paul,

This note to you has been on my mind since returning from Italy last fall. Thanks for mentioning my excursion to Verdi's home in Busseto in *Clio's*. In addition to two weeks of spectacular weather, food, and scenery, it was extraordinary to finally see Verdi's "home" territory. In such subtle ways even geographical features suddenly appear in his operas. What was most fascinating, however, were two central conflicts in his life and operas which live on in his hometown to this day.

You may recall that Verdi's life and operas are full of conflict, frequently between fathers and sons. During his lifetime he fought with many people, including the residents of the town of Busseto. He stayed nearly all his life, yet cursed the townspeople frequently. Some 150 years later, the ambivalent relationship remains. The town doesn't seem to know quite what to do with their famous "maestro." A fine statue of him looks over the town square, yet behind him is the Verdi theater, which has been closed for repairs for ten years — a theater he fought against bitterly, and never attended! A small Verdi singing contest is held every year — outside! There are pictures of Verdi everywhere, most frequently used in the selling of "products," but little of his music — and by Italian standards the town [, by and large,] seems "closed" — not too friendly. The Verdi museum seems neglected — and the whole town not especially set up for visitors: all traits which Verdi fumed about at various times.

Second, an important theme in Verdi's life and opus was freedom, liberty — he wanted to be left alone above everything else. The battles with his parents and townspeople led him to move out of town when he built Sant' Agata, his villa (with a moat around it), to which few were admitted. And, the same holds true today. The hours are quite limited, admittance is controlled by a militaristic woman barking orders at visitors, and no provision is made for tours in languages other than Italian. Also, Verdi's family still lives in most of the property. Therefore, visitors get hustled through a very small portion of the property. Verdi's personality seems alive everywhere, still begrudging people their admiration of his life's work.

I am now taking Italian lessons in preparation for another trip [in the fall of next

Sometimes those craving their 15 minutes of media attention or fame turn to violence as the only way to be heard. But why are we so drawn to negative attention?

**Death Wish or "Watch Function"?:** Neither I nor my teachers in psychoanalytic training were ever fans of the idea of a universal death wish. When one turns to Freud's writings you discover he overwhelmingly focused on death wishes against fathers, mothers, uncles, sisters, and other specific individuals. I long ago decided I would have to turn elsewhere to explain why suicide is so much more prevalent than homicide in our society and why we are obsessed with bad news and danger. Mass media news programs have 20 negative, violent items for every happy news item. And now there has been a proliferation of news sources on cable television with others rushing to emulate CNN's great success with a 24-hours-a-day, seven-days a-week news format.

News coverage of the TWA Flight 800 disaster serves as a good example of the focus on danger, tragedy, and bad news. Reputable news organizations, such as National Public Radio's "Lehrer News Hour," even abandoned their scheduled news and devoted their entire program to the tragedy. Radio coverage of the New York Yankees baseball game was interrupted by Curtis Sliwah and the ABC news staff who gave news coverage to speculations and the eye witness accounts by people who saw very little. (Curtis Sliwah is/was head of the Guardian Angels, a New York City subway vigilante group, and a talk radio personality who fabricated attacks on himself to increase his ratings.) The real issue is: Why do we — the listening, reading, and viewing public — focus so on these tragedies? Clearly, there are many reasons, but I will focus on one that helps to explain this behavior over time.

For tens of millions of years our human and primate ancestors needed to know about danger and to work together to survive. Food and shelter came after the needs of survival in the face of common dangers. To survive, our ancestors had to be vigilant, to keep watch. I call this the "watch function." Despite our much-talked-about individualism, we still look to each other in times of crisis. Television and other means of mass communication have created what Marshall McLuhan called the "global village." Crisis restores our sense of community in a world of

anomie. As I learned 20 years ago from one of my teachers of psychoanalysis, disruptions always take precedent over the official program, because that is what our emotions are focused upon. Terrorists rely on this process to disrupt our peace of mind and no amount of security will stop their inroads into that peace.

- My own "vision thing" began in a computer lab on March 14th as I worked hard to get a book proposal off to a literary agent. There was something floating around in my left eye which I was unable to blink out, but I was too busy to pay much attention to it. At home, flushing the eye did no good. When I closed the eye I realized I could still see the floaters. The next morning as we boarded the plane for Florida, my spots were still with me. One was large and circular, kind of like a tiny cloud constellation of stars around a planet. There was a small black spot which appeared to move in conjunction with it. While I could not see through the black spot, I could see through the misty cloud formation -- however opaquely. My wife suggested it was a floater which often happens to people in their 60s or 70s, not usually in the 50s. But, in dealing with this medical surprise, denial was not my first line of defense. The ophthalmologist in Florida advised me that I would get used to and pay less attention to this cloudy vision and her prognostications are proving to be accurate. I will have to rely on psychohistory to see more clearly.

## Phyllis Grosskurth on Writing Psychobiography

*Phyllis Grosskurth was born in 1924 in Toronto, Canada. She received her PhD in 1962 from the University of London. At the University of Toronto she was Professor of English from 1972-1989 and Professor in the Humanities and Psychoanalytic Thought Programme from 1987-1995. Grosskurth's books include John Addington Symonds: A Biography (1964), Havelock Ellis: A Biography (1980), Melanie Klein: Her World and Her Work (1986), and Byron: The Flawed Angel (1997). She was awarded the Canadian Governor General's Literary Award for non-fiction in 1965 for her biography of Symonds, a 19th century English literary critic.*

"A good biographer, like a good analyst, is born. I think there's a kind of instinct, an intuition, an ability to communicate. There has to be that very close observation of human nature and a close understanding of one's self. Of course, it doesn't do any harm if one has had a good analysis.

"The very, very best training I had for writing biography was writing my PhD thesis. It was very demanding — my supervisor used to say to his students, "Do not say anything unless you are prepared to go the stake." You have to be prepared to document everything. You rein in speculation. If you do speculate, you make it very clear to your readers that you are speculating, but that it is an educated form of speculation.

"It's the kiss of death to start out writing a biography because one admires someone immensely, uncritically — it's like blinders. One must be willing to suspend judgment, to weigh up all the evidence, to listen to what other people say, both friends and enemies of the subject.

"I've written elsewhere that a biographer 'bears responsibility for *interpreting* character.' You cannot just present the facts — you have to discuss and analyze decisions, actions, and motivations. Good biography is the interplay of the subject with the perceptions of the author.

"[A biographer gets the necessary knowledge, self-confidence, and judgment] by becoming totally immersed in the subject's life and work, so that it feels as though one knows the subject as well as, or even better than, one's self.

"[How intrusive a biographer can be] is a difficulty — it's like penetrating someone's

bedroom. If one is weighing the evidence — one is intruding. If one is interpreting, if one is analyzing — one is intruding. It's a matter of intuition, of taste, and of feel when it's time to draw back. [A subject's sexuality] should be handled frankly but with good taste. This is one of those areas where the biographer and the reader have to be content that there are all sorts of things that we don't know and will never know.

"If you look at the sort of subjects I have chosen, they all share a complexity. I would not undertake a major biography unless the person presented all kinds of challenges. [Of recent psychobiographies by others,] Maynard Solomon's biography of Mozart [*Mozart: A Life* (1995)] has impressed me the most. It's an extraordinary book in which Solomon delves into the fascinating relationship of Mozart with his father: the father's attempt to keep Mozart infantile to prevent his fully growing up and becoming independent." (Interview by Bob Lentz, **Clio's Psyche**. Excerpted from September, 1996.) □

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