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# Clio's Psyche

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

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## A Conversation With Charles B. Strozier

Paul H. Elovitz  
Ramapo College

*Charles B. Strozier was born in 1944 and received his PhD from the University of Chicago in 1971. He is a professor of history and Co-Director with Robert Jay Lifton of the Center on Violence and Human Survival at John Jay College of Criminal Justice, City University of New York, and founding editor of The Psychohistory Review. Professor Strozier is the author of Lincoln's Quest for Union: Public and Private Meanings (New York: Basic Books, 1982), The Leader: Psychohistorical Studies with Daniel Offer (New York: Plenum Press, 1985), and Apocalypse: On the Psychology of Fundamentalism in America (Boston: Beacon Press, 1994). He served as editor and collaborator on Heinz Kohut, Self Psychology and the Humanities: Reflections on a New Psychoanalytic Approach (New York: Norton*

## Immigrant Psychology Issue

Personal Perspectives from the  
Forthcoming Forum-sponsored Book

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### An Emigrant's Journey Between Europe and America

Olga Marlin  
Charles University in the Czech Republic

Nostalgia is a return to that  
which we never had.

(Ivan Blatny, Czech poet)

Emigration is a stressful and traumatic situation which tests an individual's coping capacities and overall personality integration. To navigate emigration, one must be able to take considerable risks, face many losses, and be prepared to change some attitudes and values. So,

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why then do people emigrate? What propels them to make this difficult choice? In addition to conscious economic, political, or religious reasons, less apparent unconscious motives usually underlie a person's decision to emigrate. Depth psychology shows that hidden, unconscious feelings and fantasies are normally intertwined with conscious reasons. I will discuss these unconscious motives by grouping them into three categories: separation from parents, identification with parents, and fantasy of paradise lost.

### Separation from Parents

If separation from parents is difficult, leaving to go far away to another country can provide an illusory sense of separation and independence. Emigration may be a way of abandoning one or both parents or even a sibling. It may serve to take revenge on a demanding or controlling parent, as well as express a desire to free oneself from an oppressive relationship. A person leaving may feel something like this. "I will not be here anymore to serve you, or to be used by you. You won't be able to control me anymore. I will be safe from you and you won't be able to get me."

Great physical distance becomes a way out. It is an escape from confronting the parent and working out separation in the relationship. Emigration can be a route of escape from any dependent relationship. In these situations a person is trying to avoid and replace the gradual and complex internal work of separation by moving away. The fantasy of escape is usually connected with realistic career, educational, and other goals.

### Identification with Parents

A conscious and unconscious identification with parents, their attachments, values, visions and fantasies, can play a crucial role in the person's desire to emigrate. To illustrate this point, I will tell of my own experience with my father.

I was born in Prague into a bicultural, bilingual family. My father, a Russian émigré, settled in Czechoslovakia in the 1920s. He had grown up in an intellectual family in Kiev where my grandfather was a university professor. At age eighteen, during the Civil War following the Russian Revolution of 1917, my father secretly left his family and enlisted in the White Army fighting against the Bolsheviks. After several years, the defeated anti-Bolshevik forces were evacuated to

Turkey to avoid retribution. There he lived through enormous hardships. He was fortunate to receive a university scholarship from the Czech government and he came to Prague with a group of Russian students. My father learned to speak Czech fluently and obtained a doctoral degree in engineering from Prague's university. However, he never fully adjusted to Czech culture because he considered it inferior to his native Russian culture and chose, instead, to maintain close ties with the Russian immigrant community. My father lived until the age of ninety-one. Before he died as the oldest Russian émigré in Prague, in 1992, it was especially meaningful for him to witness the political change in Russia and in Czechoslovakia.

My father's native Russian language was spoken at home in his presence and even my Czech mother learned to speak it fluently. My brother

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627 Dakota Trail, Franklin Lakes, NJ 07417

Telephone: (201) 891-7486

Fax: (201) 891-6866

e-mail: Pelovitz@aol.com

Editor: Paul H. Elovitz, PhD

Associate Editor: Bob Lentz

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and I were baptized in the Russian Orthodox Church against my mother's wishes. My father talked about his Russian childhood with intense feelings and profound nostalgia. I listened eagerly to his fascinating tales and to the beautiful Russian poems which he recited to me. As a preschool child, I knew many of Pushkin's poems, especially my father's favorite, *Eugene Onegin*. The beauty of the Russian landscape, the joys and celebrations of its people, the dreams, and the sadness of Tatiana's unrequited love for the mysterious Onegin, expressed my father's mourning for his past. They became a part of me.

Russian religious hymns and prayers, with their great beauty and sadness, were a vivid part of my childhood. I felt my father's and his friends' grief in the church where they held onto their loved and lost past, with a deep melody of perpetual mourning. They could not go back. Psychologically, this painful situation is like balancing on a tightrope: the past and the present are like two dangerous spaces that are not connected, and both feel unsafe. The dialectical process of development, the moving between progression and regression, is interfered with.

But, as a youngster I identified with my father's longing for his country; I always wanted to go to Russia. After Stalin's death in 1953, when travel became possible, I was allowed to visit my grandmother in Kiev. My relatives welcomed me warmly, but I was shocked at how restricted their lives were: domestic travel within Russia was disallowed, the oppressive police were everywhere, and the people were ill-informed and dependent on propaganda for information. After several visits to the Soviet Union, I became totally disillusioned with the Communist regime and its destructive influence on the Russian people. My father's Russia was dead. It existed only as a part of him, other émigrés and their loved ones, including me. His Russia existed only as a fantasy of return to everything good that was lost.

### **Fantasy of Paradise Lost**

Fantasies about a place of milk and honey, of love and peace, and of freedom and happiness abound. Unconscious longing for a lost paradise, the imagined happy childhood where all needs are fulfilled, is universal. So we are all susceptible to projecting these Garden-of-Eden fantasies — fantasies of paradise lost — onto an unfamiliar culture or place. There we wish to find what we have lost, never fully had, or never had at all —

such as parents' love, friends' loyalty, lovers' devotion, and the glory of success or the freedom from pain and conflict.

Such fantasy wishes are involved in most people's hope for finding a better life somewhere else. The initial stage of immigration can be marked by euphoria: the dream has been fulfilled, the fantasy has come true, obstacles have been surmounted. However, like the beginning of a love affair, this stage usually does not last very long. Idealization cannot hold, so the reality brings disillusionment.

For people escaping oppressive political regimes, the fantasy may be intertwined with the realistic motivation to free themselves. For example, immigrants from the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, who grew up in totalitarian regimes, often saw the Western World as the polar opposite to their own system. They saw it as a dream-like world of freedom and unlimited possibilities. Since realistic information about the outside world was scarce and distorted in the Soviet Union, and travel to the West was very limited, the idealization of the Western World was further reinforced. For instance, some of the recent Russian-Jewish immigrants in New York, having had no previous experience in living or traveling abroad, had such fantastic expectations of America that they expected to acquire everything magically upon their arrival in the USA. They came with attitudes formed by their culture and political system, including dependency expectations about the government and other local authorities. They harbored a conscious or unconscious fear of punishment by an authority, coupled with hidden resentment toward them. In addition, a lack of initiative and responsibility for their own actions was combined with a certain rigidity and a tendency to see the world and people in black and white polarities. Therefore, these immigrants often cannot appreciate the value of resolving conflict, genuine differences of opinion, dialogue, or compromise. Such attitudes and characteristics tend to be developed when people grow up in a system where free expression is impossible and dangerous, where initiative is severely punished, and where authoritarian rule prevails. Such attitudes become deeply entrenched and very slow to change. Many immigrants came here unprepared to face realistic challenges. Even many educated people coming to the "New World" failed to study English and were totally unprepared for living

abroad. Their past experiences were limited and focused on what they hoped to leave behind rather than what they wanted to build in a new country.

### **Emigration as Trauma and Challenge**

Emigration is a stressful process. It involves massive losses of beloved people and of a familiar culture left behind. Comfortable patterns of living and relating to people are disrupted. Lost is the sense of belonging, epitomized by being intuitively understood in the native language and culture. Lost is the subjective feeling of safety and connectedness. These multiple and profound losses are burdens to bear while striving to achieve adaptation in the new country. This effort to adapt is accompanied by mourning for the abandoned culture. Gradually, over a period of some years, the emotions evoked by the painful losses have to be worked through for the successful adaptation to occur. Usually this lengthy process begins after an initial period of culture shock. Immigrants find themselves in an unfamiliar environment peopled by strangers. The usual ways of relating to people may no longer be appropriate nor understandable in the new culture. The impact of an unknown culture upon those newcomers who attempt to merge with it arouses anxiety and confusion in them and profoundly tests the overall adequacy of their personality functioning. A sense of discontinuity severely threatens their identity.

### **Mourning Versus Nostalgia**

At a great distance from our native country we often long for relationships which in the past eluded us. "Nostalgia is a return to that which we never had," is the way the Czech poet Blatny put it. We may fantasize about people, who in reality could never be close to us or fulfill our needs, as being available or loving. We create them anew in our imagination and they live in our dreams. Some of these nostalgic feelings are universal because we all carry in ourselves our unfulfilled needs and desires. However, if these fantasies become strong and entrenched in our minds, if they serve a function to deny our losses, they can block our development and growth. We then live inside of them as if in a dream, rather than beginning to face our losses and mourn them. Mourning is a necessary and freeing process in life and also in emigration.

But I observed that some emigrants are blocked in this process because they find it too difficult to sustain conflicting feelings and desires: their wishes to belong to the new adoptive country

and their longing to return to their native land. They are trapped in immigrant communities, living in their past, rejecting the new way of life. In the Russian-Jewish community in New York City's Brighton Beach, called Odessa by the Sea, many older residents speak limited English, live according to their old customs and habits, and keep to their own friends and relatives. Older people experience more difficulty in adjustment, while younger people usually become assimilated. Personal history and personality structure play a decisive role in this process.

Since my permanent return to Prague in 1994, I personally have had to do the complex work of mourning, to appraise my relationships and values. I strive to make it an integrative experience of feeling my losses while internally holding on to positive attachments to the cultures, languages, and people I love. Successful mourning and adaptation can enrich and partially transform one's identity as new attitudes and skills are integrated. Thus, paradoxically, this life-long mourning also can become a freeing process. Nevertheless, the love for one's native country and the longing to return remain a wish, a fantasy, and a sorrow. I have heard people say that the heart of an emigrant is always divided between the old and new countries, and that the struggle with this division continues throughout life. Even in my new life, back in the land of my birth, I certainly feel this split.

*Olga Marlin emigrated from the former Czechoslovakia in 1966 and for 23 years lived in the United States where she was a psychoanalyst in private practice in New York City. She has now returned to her native city of Prague and her alma mater of Charles University where she teaches clinical psychology and psychoanalysis. This article is excerpted from her chapter, "Fleeing Towards the New and Yearning for the Old," in the forthcoming book, Immigration Psychology: Personal Narrative and Psychological Analysis (Madison, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1997), edited by Paul H. Elovitz and Charlotte Kahn and sponsored by the Psychohistory Forum. □*

## **The Sadness of Emigration Without Leaving Home**

**Charlotte Kahn**  
**City College and NPAP**

One day in 1990, East German [German Democratic Republic] legislators decreed that they and their sixteen million fellow citizens would abandon their state for another, without ever leaving their home. They were wrenched out of their "holding environment," and as a result have endured some of the same emotional trauma suffered by the German Jews who fled from the Nazis a half century earlier.

The East Germans whom I interviewed in 1990 and 1991 — with a focus on family and personal history, on past and current attitudes — expressed feelings integrally related to experiences of emigration. But why? They were neither forced to cross the borders of their fatherland nor to give up their mother tongue. They did not have to part from the bosom of their families, or bid farewell to their neighbors. They did not have to get used to new customs, eat strange foods, or find new friends. However, many former East Germans felt disoriented by the abrupt, forced, and irreversible changes wrought by German unification. They grappled with a sense of betrayal, with the disruption of their familiar way of life, and with the effects of sudden, involuntary, and irreversible change.

I finally realized that emotionally they were emigrants — without ever having left home. My experiences emigrating from Nazi Germany as a ten-year-old girl in 1938 helped me understand the plight of the East Germans when they lost their homeland and were virtually displaced into another culture. My experiences of migration have coalesced within me. They seem concretely to occupy a place within my body, as if they were held there in a box — a box resembling that steamer trunk I watched my mother pack with the necessities for long seaside vacations, when I was two and three-years-old. But this trunk is not sealed. Independent of my volition, the stored memories float to the surface of consciousness and bring with them traces of the disturbing contradictions, painful humiliations, and frustrating paradoxes of identity: the anxiety my worried parents transmitted to me because as Jews we had been disowned by Germany and declared "stateless"; the frustration at being reviled as a "dirty Kraut" by the Belgians; the suspicion as a German by the British who labeled me an "enemy

alien"; and the rejection by the teenager in a New York synagogue, who declared, "You can't be a Jew because you speak German and don't know Yiddish!" I hung a tag on my steamer trunk, marked: "Content: culture shock. Handle by mourning and integration. Destination: synthesis." Day by day, year by year, as the swatches jumped out, I became more mindful of the information on the tag and tried to integrate my multiple identities: German, Jew, American.

In 1990, East Germans looked toward their future with both high hopes and trepidation. As they told their life stories during the interviews, East Germans quite spontaneously addressed many of the practical issues and the emotional turmoil associated with the political change. They worried about the effects of the currency revaluation, pensions, women's rights, health insurance, and rents. They tried to balance their disappointments in their Communist leaders with hopes for the future. They tried to sort out their ideological confusions and political identities. Were they [still] Communists? Will they be second class citizens [in reunified Germany]? Unprepared for competition, can they embrace the feared capitalism?

In the East, everyone's sense of identity has been shaken, even those who welcomed and worked toward the reformation of the former Communist state. Like every other individual in the world, German citizens in the East are both motivated by forces within themselves and adaptively rooted in the ideals and demands of their society. Their sense of worth is partially predicated on their identification with their society. To the extent that the Communist ideology has been discredited and the German Democratic Republic revealed as corrupt and bankrupt, the individuals, as members of a devalued group, are now at risk of taking on a personal identity of undesirability. Continuing pride in Marxist ideals and commitment to firmly held ideals of peace do not necessarily inoculate them against self-deprecation. Former East Germans harbor a sense of failure, because they did not achieve the desired reform of their society. Instead, their efforts resulted in the demise of their State, coupled with a virtual capitulation to the West. The lives of two women, Helga and Greta, are used to illustrate these developments.

Helga had never thought that she had an "East German consciousness," but in 1990 she

realized that West Germany is "a different country with which I am absolutely not identified." She had spent her whole life in the East and considered it her homeland. "Munich or Frankfurt could never be home for me ... despite the fact that I have friends there ... and that's a surprise to me." Even now she is really glad when she returns from the West Berlin subway station — "when I am here among us, again. For me, 'over there' is still 'over there' and 'among us' is here, among us."

Greta spoke bitterly, of having been "forced into early retirement. After forty years' work, we were dismissed without a settlement." Helga described the "revolution" as a personal catastrophe for herself and for her friends. "I am afraid that ... at age sixty I'll be retired and I'm [already] living off the money I saved [to] augment my pension." The fear that the state-owned and subsidized apartments soon would be privatized and become unaffordable was pervasive. Helga said, "I am giving up my apartment. I am giving up my [artist's] studio," because when people visit her gallery, they "wring their hands and say, 'for God's sake, no, we cannot buy anything; we have [very little money]' and no one buys art."

Indeed, the erstwhile East Germans perceive themselves as having minority status in the "new" country, the unified Germany. In their new currency, the purchasing power of their savings and their modest pensions is insignificant. They look upon the affluence of their Western neighbors with a combination of awe and critical suspicion. In comparison, their own living quarters and attire take on a shabbiness, which they regard with the shame of the newly poor. Helga said, "If we take money from the West, we will have to make concessions." So they are "the stupid ones, because we'll always be Germany's poor."

East Germans had to exchange their familiar ideals and practices for unfamiliar ones so suddenly that they remained in a state of unreadiness. Their culture shock was further complicated by the paradox of a wildly idealized image of rich, sympathetic West German brothers coupled with unrealistic expectations of ruthless capitalistic exploitation and poverty in the West German society. Gerd felt that his [East German] homeland was a socialist state committed to ideals of "humane development." Visiting friends in the West, Helga was asked why, at first, she had hesitated to come. She answered quite

spontaneously, "Well, quite honestly, somehow I was afraid of capitalism." The friends were astounded. But she explained that her whole life long, "capitalism was portrayed as evil, with negative consequences for the people." The impressions had grown in the vacuum created by the Berlin Wall and by other strict limitations on contact and information exchange with the Western world.

Then reality blew away images and expectations. The discrepancies between this real, external, new world and their internal representations of the abandoned culture became apparent to the former German Democratic Republic citizens. Disillusionment reigned. And the realization is beginning to dawn, that "certain parts of [their] psychic baggage no longer mesh smoothly with [the reality of the new] external world." In the absence of expected affirmations to accustomed behavior, anxiety, hostility, and a "sense of discontinuity of identity" emerge. The experience of loss of the old culture becomes intensified. Helga heard the news about the Wall on the television in the evening. The next morning she went to an elegant Berlin shopping area and looked around. Yet, she was suspicious that "somehow this couldn't continue like that." She felt that it was "eerie ... euphoric yet eerie.... [and] bawling, I went across." Soon after she felt miserably unhappy. "I don't want to bear it.... If it were a simple matter, I would commit suicide, [but] I am a coward.... I can't tell you all the things I am afraid of." She admitted to being "filled with hate," even if that might indicate that she does not "have a decent character." Openly crying, she declared that "the hate also belongs, [along with] the anger.... [But] even if one takes one's life, it wouldn't change the problem." Greta also appeared depressed. Her feelings are marked by disappointment, hate, and impotence. "I can do nothing," she said. Then, with more energy in her voice, "Yes, I have a rage, colossal rage. Sometimes I am afraid I'll choke on the rage ... I can't very well scream or have a tantrum." Gerd, her husband, was opposed to rage, but understood his wife. He declared, "It's the impotence."

Another possible response to such a cultural encounter is an attempt to fill the void quickly with new heroes to emulate. Old values are discredited and familiar patterns discarded. Applying an instant veneer of the new culture results in a remarkable assimilation. This pseudo-

adaptiveness is an attempt to circumvent the mourning process. In 1990 Bernhard declared, "Today we are faced with the scrap heap of our history. I see chaos approaching." As a boy he had been an enthusiastic member of the very youngest group in the Hitler Youth, and he enthusiastically embraced the Nazi ideology as a young man. He had not mourned his father, who died when he was nine years old, nor his stepfather who was killed in battle. Then, after Germany's defeat, he did not mourn his *Führer*. Instead, he immediately joined the Free German Youth organization, the Communist counterpart of the Hitler Youth. "I had to find support somewhere ... to construct a new view of the world." Very worried about the future, he asked himself rhetorically, "Did you, for forty years, dedicate yourself to a cause, did you for forty years devote yourself to people, who, today, can no longer represent you? Yes!" Tears rolled down his cheeks. [But] in 1991, during a follow-up interview, Bernhard seemed much less worried, even content. He informed me that he has made his adjustment. Smiling somewhat sheepishly, he said, "Now we have democracy, don't we?"

However, the depression and loneliness caused by the actual loss of the accustomed life cannot be evaded, and, in fact, may be intensified by the scornful trashing of one's own former identifications. It may manifest itself in intense nostalgia, a version of homesickness. Under certain circumstances, as for instance, when an individual has experienced a series of losses, mourning may ensue and sometimes turn into a protracted despairing, depressive mood with symptoms of withdrawal, decreased energy, reduced interest in others, diminished efficiency in work, appetite disturbances, and psychosomatic symptoms. Such was Greta's mood which seemed much worse in August 1991 than the year before. She had grown flabby and overweight, had lost some teeth, and her hair looked unkempt. She thinks "It is so unjust. Twice we were betrayed: in 1945 as child[ren], and then — after many doubts [and] we developed trust [in the socialist system] — then *such* betrayal." She is aware that the disappointment has taken its toll. "I'm so preoccupied with it that I developed angina pectoris," she declared, "and I don't sleep well.... [I] often have to take sleeping pills." Helga, the artist, who was sufficiently depressed to consider suicide, also felt paralyzed by this "upheaval." She

reasoned that "every change requires its time ... but when the conditions cause insecurity, you can't sit down to paint."

In managing uprooting, emigrants must transplant a known configuration by assessing its essential stability and then adjusting it to the new environment. Recalling past good relationships and relying on one's solid strengths, including a temporarily accentuated "previously acquired identity," are helpful steps in the process of adaptation to the new culture. Often favorite foods from home become a solace. Old jokes in the familiar dialect evoke the homeland and relieve the tension of constant uncertainty and insecurity. For example, respectful of their former status and attempting to maintain a sense of dignity, German immigrants to Palestine, the future State of Israel, told the following joke: A traveler was approaching a pioneer community when he became aware of an insistent noise, resembling the humming and hissing of a swarm of bees. When he came closer, he saw not a swarm of bees, but a group of immigrants engaged in building their new houses. They were lined up to pass the cement buckets. As the men, former academicians, physicians, and lawyers, passed and received the many buckets, each one repeated, "*Bitte sch'n, Herr Doktor. Danke sch'n, Herr Doktor.* [Please, Doctor, Sir; Thank you, Doctor, Sir.]"

Eva addressed the issue of adjustment to her new environment both in terms of actual relocation and in terms of changes in her home environment. Her stepsister had moved from East Berlin to West Germany, into a strictly Catholic region. In her early letters the sister wrote that she "can't survive here," that "it is terrible. We are Protestant; we are not acknowledged here ... I don't feel comfortable here." This was decades ago. Now Eva's sister goes to the Catholic church and participates in church activities. She sings in the choir and is active in the citizens' union, the bowling association, and the rifle club. Eva concluded that her sister's family is "fully integrated and well taken care of there ... the same way we grew into" socialism. "We didn't want to [adopt socialism] at the beginning. We were not in accord with everything the way it was in our State [East Germany] ... that we had no property any more ... that they wanted everything to belong to the people and put everything into the same pot." Yet, "when I review my life ... I actually made it very pleasant."

The German-Jewish professionals and academicians who metamorphosed into Israeli masons, the Protestants who accommodated to the Catholic community, and the reluctantly socialist Eva have all accommodated to the demands of their new environments. Within the parameters of their respective social orders, they seem to have found a way to assert their personalities and to provide for their needs — even to make “it very pleasant.”

Returning to the analogy of the steamer trunk, I succeeded in mending myself, feeling whole within myself. It has become clear to me that the emigrant's ultimate task is to avoid throwing the packed steamer trunk into the depths of the ocean; that is, to avoid the pitfall of dissociation from the past. The further tasks for the uprooted — those who are immigrants in another land and those who are emigrants without having left home — are to mourn, to identify selectively with aspects of both the old and the new cultures, and then to integrate the bounty and complexity of diverse cultural identifications into a rich and comfortable patchwork.

*Charlotte Kahn, EdD, is a marital and family therapist as well as a psychoanalyst in private practice in New York and New Jersey who did extensive interviews with former East Germans after the collapse of the Communist regime. This article is adapted from her chapter, “Emigration Without Leaving Home,” in the forthcoming book, Immigrant Experiences: Personal Narrative and Psychological Analysis (Madison, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1997), edited by Paul H. Elovitz and Charlotte Kahn and sponsored by the *Psychohistory Forum*. □*

## **My Motivation: Patterns and Secrets of an Immigrant Family**

**Paul H. Elovitz  
Ramapo College**

### **Introduction**

As I reflect back on my life I am struck by two things. First, how much I was shaped by my Eastern European immigrant parents and, second, how these normally honest people tried to hide things from their three children. Some examples will reveal the specific impact of my parents'

immigrant experience and their multicultural identity, while others reveal general issues of the human condition. In describing my past, at times I have opted to share the feeling tone of my childhood experiences.

I became a historian to discover my family secrets. When this did not reveal the truth I became a psychohistorian. My own analysis enabled me to probe more deeply and not become deterred, as I previously had, by my family's code of silence and my father's attempts to hide the truth from me. This freed me to look more clearly and compassionately at my parents. As a result I became closer to my loved ones and could get to the facts much more readily. The demise of Russian Communism and the death of my mother in 1959 and my father in 1987 have allowed me to speak and write much more openly about political aspects of my family's history.

### **Identification With My Parents**

In retrospect, I realize my interest in history and my choice to study the English Industrial Revolution were determined by my family's experiences and my curiosity about them. I grew up in the family workshop and as a child I played among the machines, tools, and furs. Some of my hobbies are rooted in the surroundings in which I was raised. Today my garage walls are filled with the tools I collect, including a display from our fur shop. My joy in using tools is related to my being raised as a bookish kid with a mother who often told me I had “two left hands and two left legs” and that I would forget my head if it were not sewn on to my body.

As a young boy, while hoping to fulfill the American dream of becoming a baseball hero, I would find myself in right field in grade school, certain that I would drop the easy fly balls that came my way. When I got that sinking feeling in my stomach and dropped the ball, I simply thought I was a terrible athlete without realizing the degree to which I had identified with my father, who, amidst the chaos of his childhood in war-torn Europe and work as an adolescent in America, never learned to catch a ball. His embarrassing inability somehow seemed “un-American” so I kept it a secret from my playmates. My mother, Rose, said I did not have to worry about being a good athlete since it was my mind, not my body, I had to develop. She implied sports were for Gentiles, not the son of immigrant Jews. Playing baseball was a waste of time, but learning would



be with you forever. She was in awe of people who were well educated while my father, Michael, delighted in pointing out their foibles.

The Eastern European Jewish tradition of denigrating physical labor influenced our family when something mechanical broke. Though an expert furrier, Dad was extremely hesitant whenever he or his sons had to use or repair something with which he was not thoroughly familiar. My older brother was quite adept and confident mechanically, but when he lifted up the hood of the car, dad became anxious and started yelling. My big brother sought to prove his mechanical competence by studying industrial engineering in college and I do large scale construction projects around my house.

In my sophomore year I quit college to allow myself to be drafted in the Army because I wanted to have a life as adventurous as my father's. Like him, I wanted to struggle and to overcome adversity. In the same spirit, as befitted a son of radicals, I wrote my doctoral dissertation on the condition of the working classes and did extensive research on radicalism in Europe and America. I went on to study the Russian Revolution, on which I now teach a course, because I wanted to know more about a monumental event that resulted in my father having to flee Europe as a political refugee at age fifteen.

As was common among Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe, my parents were political radicals in their youth. Despite his socialist leanings, my father wanted me to fulfill the Jewish immigrant's dream and become a medical doctor. This was not only to achieve a high professional status and help people, but also because I would have "my own cash register." He concluded from his own experience and from history that Jews have to have their independence since they might have to emigrate at a moment's notice. This had also been the experience of a large number of his friends who fled from Hitler. I came closest to living out his dream by becoming a psychotherapist which gave me "my own cash register."

My mother's dream for me was to pursue knowledge and help people as a college professor. She loved knowledge and school, to which she had little access, and dreamed I would become a college professor. This professional choice was

her deathbed wish for me and I have been a college professor for the last thirty years. The radicalism in my heritage helped lead me to a nonconformist academic path exploring the frontiers of psychohistory.

I was influenced by rescue efforts during and after World War II. My parents sponsored a Holocaust survivor's immigration to America and they sent Care Packages of clothing and food to relatives in European displaced persons camps and Israel. I now teach about World War II as well as a separate course on the Holocaust.

My identification with them extended further; feeling as if I were a part of the working class, I taught at Temple University in the morning and drove a truck in the afternoon, moonlighted in a hosiery factory, cleaned offices in the evening, and stacked cases in warehouses to pay the rent, pediatrician, and food bills. In fact, I quit the job in the hosiery factory when I was made a supervisor because I felt the women workers were mistreated and I was uncomfortable as a "boss."

Dad was the oldest of two boys and a girl. He fathered two boys and a girl in the same birth order: boy, girl, boy. All three of his children had two boys and a girl. Like my siblings I followed my parent's prescripts and married a Jew. My father's first American girlfriend was Irish and my second wife was born an O'Connell. All of my parents' married grandchildren have wed non-Jews. Not surprisingly, my own three grandchildren have an Irish surname.

As I look out the window at the water behind my home, I smile at the thought that my father was born near a river and built a "dream house" on the shore of a lake when I was thirteen years old. It was an unusual house in that it was quite modest looking on the roadside and, safely hidden from the public eye, expansive and beautiful on the lake side. He hired European-trained craftsmen and "overbuilt" it to last hundreds of years in the best European tradition. Dad's experience in the chaos of European war and revolution, as well as a union organizer in New York City which was teeming with immigrants, led him to fear the envy of others. He saw people hurt or killed simply for having more than others. Consequently, he downplayed his success and at crucial moments in his business career backed away from opportunities that might have made him a rich man.

My mother's socialist background and identification with the hard life of her own mother led her to have trouble accepting the success that came from the fruits of her labor. For the first fifteen years of my career I followed in her footsteps and felt guilty when I bought a home or applied for tenure and a raise. In my own psychoanalysis, I learned I had to overcome guilt and fear whenever I wanted the normal things people desire and achieve. Early in my career, I also inclined to try to make myself indispensable at work as my mother had in our store. Based upon the ambivalence towards success I observed in my parents and had to overcome in myself, I learned to teach senior students how to overcome their internal obstacles to success. My joy in helping others is directly related to this character trait in my mother and father.

My parents told me *not* to learn the four European languages my father spoke. I took them literally and developed a mental block against speaking foreign languages which plagued me in college and graduate school. When they told me *not* to pay attention when they spoke about me in Yiddish, I was obedient to the letter rather than the spirit of the request. I understood their meaning while never learning more than a few words of Yiddish in my childhood and adolescence.

### **Family Secrets and Contradictions**

My parents prided themselves on their honesty and encouraged this virtue in their children. They would return a lost wallet or note a billing error in their favor, yet they kept monumental secrets from their own children and people outside the family.

My father lied to me about his country of birth, telling me he was born in Lithuania rather than Poland. He lied about his age, being fifteen when he came alone to America rather than thirteen as he maintained. Dad told me I weighed three-and-one-half pounds at birth when I was in fact over five pounds according to the hospital records. Furthermore, he hid the fact he was not a citizen until he applied for his citizenship papers during the McCarthy era.

My mother died on March 5, 1959, never having told me or even hinted at any of the following: She was born and lived with the name Pichanic for the first fourteen years of her life. She assumed an alias, lied about her age, and spent some months in jail for organizing a Communist

unemployment protest in Waterbury, Connecticut, during the Great Depression. She was a Communist Party organizer when she was jailed. (After her death my father said the newspapers called her "Red Rose" during her trial). Later she became disillusioned with Communism.

My straight-laced mother never told me she believed in "free love." She lived together with my father before they married and as a young woman had love affairs in Minnesota before meeting Dad. All this was especially surprising since she told her kids to be chaste until marriage, and the chosen partner, she said, had to be Jewish. That she was not a citizen she told me only because I overheard her talking to Dad about it. Later she needed me to go to the post office to get resident alien cards every January to comply with the new legislation of the McCarthy era.

Our close relatives had many secrets as well. My father's sister's divorces were quite hush-hush as was his younger brother's occupation as an illegal bookie. My maternal uncle and aunt were Communist Party organizers in Minnesota and California; during the McCarthy era the government attempted to deport them as subversive aliens. My father spoke of my mother's family as if they were useless and freeloading idealists (the word "idealist" always came out of my father's mouth as an insult), who were wasting their lives in pursuit of an impossible utopian society. (Yet, he wanted to see they had a good time when they visited and he would do nice things for them.) In fact, he shared more of their values than he was willing to admit to himself or the world.

Not only secrets but contradictions abounded within the family. My father was a successful capitalist who was proud of having been an organizer for the Communist-led furriers' union. My mother was a proud business woman who refused to stay home as my father wanted, but did not drive a car or venture far away from home or the store. She was a capitalist who thought like a socialist, admonishing father not to sell coats for more than materials and labor. Though Dad told Mom to stay home and mind the kids as befitted a mother in the 1930s, 40s, and 50s, he was helpless without her in their fur store since he could barely write English. He relied on her charm, skill, tact, and warmth with people to sell coats.

My mother endlessly said, "Do as I say, not as I do," without seeming embarrassed by the

contradiction in her maxim. She genuinely hated prejudice and told us to treat all people equally, at the same time harboring secret animosity towards Germans and German Jews, including her son-in-law's family. My father hated prejudice as illustrated by the following story related to me by my maternal aunt. A Negro mugger attacked my father as he entered his house. He caught the man and called for help. When the intruder said he was an escapee from a Southern chain gang to which the police were sure to return him, Dad refused to press charges. In the same spirit of opposition to prejudice, he glowered at my brother, reprimanding him if he used the term *black* (which was then considered derogatory), but he would say *shvarzah*, which means *black* in Yiddish. Dad insisted it was a negative term only in English, not in Yiddish.

Dad felt it essential to identify peoples' ethnic background, which I also enjoy doing. He passed on to me the belief that ethnicity often reveals a lot about an individual. To him you were Irish, Polish, German, Italian, Yankee, *shvarzah*, Jewish, or Gentile. Like my parents before me, I am a strong advocate of the rights of immigrants. Where others see new immigrants as potential competitors for jobs, or future welfare cheats, I incline to see them as willing workers ready to make America grow as my parents did.

My mother was in excellent health throughout her years of hard work and privation to build a life for her family. When she and Dad built her "dream house" alongside a lake and were ready to enjoy life more, she was stricken by Hodgkin's disease from which she died four years later. As she lay dying in Grace New Haven Hospital, her doctors, rabbi, friends, children, and husband were crying, but she was calm, in control, and at peace after four years' intense pain. Rose Pichanic Roast Elovitz died of a lethal injection prescribed by the doctor who was moved to tears by her courage. This final act, like so much else in her life, was a secret.

### **History, Psychoanalysis, and the Uncovering of My Family Secrets**

As I state in the introduction, I became a historian to discover my family secrets. In graduate school I learned all sorts of research methods which I was unable to apply to what I most wanted to research, because there were too many internal obstacles to my proceeding. Also, my graduate school teachers seemed to have little

respect for genealogy, family history, and biography — all of which were somehow denigrated as beneath "professional historians." Rather than deciding the truth was not knowable, I became a psychohistorian in my search to uncover the truth. First I searched out the unconscious motivation of others and then I followed the Socratic dictum, "know thyself."

Psychoanalysis enabled me to probe deeply and free myself from my own devotion to the family code of silence and from my guilt when I violated it. For example, I probed my own impulses to search the hospital records and other data and what fears kept me from taking action. Before an urban redevelopment project tore down "Michael's Fur Shop" and the apartment over it in which we had lived, I talked my sister into going back to it with me. I tore down the boards covering the door and walked up the stairs into a small apartment that I had recollected as quite large (since I had been quite small!). We exchanged reminiscences and they varied. I also had to learn how to face Dad's anger and outright obstructionism when he realized I was researching the family history. Knowing finally he could not stop me, he tried to send me in the wrong direction by saying Mother was arrested in Danbury, the scene of a famous hatters' strike, rather than Waterbury. When I no longer feared his anger, his attempts at frightening or diverting me just seemed annoying as well as slightly bemusing — almost childlike.

It became clear to me that acknowledging and searching out the past was too painful for both my parents. To my mother it was a reminder of the pain of her jailing, her feelings of being (in my father's words) "a patsy" for the Communist Party, and her embarrassment over her own radical family. To my father it was a reminder of his beloved grandfather and of his mother's and sister's failure ever to accept the reality that there was no return to the Poland destroyed by two world wars, Hitler, and Stalin. In 1981 when I brought him the copy of the Holocaust memorial book from his hometown, with its maps and many pictures, he quickly pushed it away saying I should give it to my aunt. I said, "*No, Dad*, once she has it she will never let it out of her hands. You have to look at it for several weeks before I give it to her." Several weeks later his eyes, but not his mouth, told me it had special meaning to him. Knowing more about his past brought us closer

together.

My family's secrets were gradually revealed to me as I became ready to act independently of my father's judgment and of my even more consistently critical "father within." This freed me to keep asking questions and not to be put off by Dad's obstructionism. I used the opportunities occasioned by births, *bar mitzvahs*, weddings, and funerals to talk to the oldest members of the family to learn more about my loved ones' pasts. Relatives responded positively to my curiosity because they accepted my genuine desire to reconstruct vital aspects of the lives of Michael and Rose. This was possible since I had been able to put aside most of my disappointment and anger at the lies told to me. Empathy was a central instrument I used to understand them and their decisions. My realization that I identified with so many of their values also made the process of studying them easier.

#### **Patterns and Conclusions**

Experiences, values, and traumas are passed between generations in a variety of ways. The dreams of poor immigrants, unfulfilled in their own lives, are often realized by their children and grandchildren. I will provide some examples in the areas of education, health, and ideology. The belief in learning and knowledge of my Hasidic great grandfather Jacob and my socialist grandfather Harry were transmitted to me through my parents. My mother glorified the education she wanted for me. My father was ambivalent about it since he associated education with the hated rabbis and he saw it mostly as a means to an end. By becoming a professor, therapist, and author I achieved some of their dreams. My youngest son, "the lawyer," reflected a family tradition of public service when he left commercial law with a prestigious firm to fight for the rights of the disadvantaged for a fraction of his former salary.

Health is another area affected. There is a tendency to diabetes in my father's family and cancer in my mother's. But health is not just affected by heredity. In the open marketplace of a tiny Jewish village in Ukraine my grandmother ruined her bladder since she could not leave her stall to "relieve herself" (urinate) in the woods for fear of having her goods stolen. In identifying with her, my mother would wait until the absolute last moment to run to the bathroom, thus hurting her own bladder. Like her mother before her, she died young after having a life of great toil.

In my opinion, Mother's health was also hurt by repressing and suppressing so much of her own life experience. The stress of holding in too much is not healthy. Dad could consciously try to suppress information, but a certain robust emotional openness ultimately doomed most of his attempts. However, at the end of his life he died of a broken heart stemming from the overwhelming grief he felt after his eldest son died of cancer and a grandson of AIDS at a time his vision was impaired by a disappointing cataract operation. At eighty-two years of age, he was disgusted with a world in which he had already lost his wife, two of his three children, and a grandson from a disease (AIDS) too dreadful to be even spoken about. He lost his will to live and stopped eating properly before the stroke occurred.

The political radicalism of my parents was directly related to the conditions of Jews in the Russian Empire in which they were born. Communism made some sense as an alternative to Tsarist absolutism, but not over time in the American context, especially because it became an instrument of Soviet foreign policy. My parents were keenly aware of the poverty and inequalities of the immigrant neighborhoods, factories, and workshops of America in the 1920s and during the decade of the Great Depression. Radicalism was sometimes a vehicle for Americanization. To be an effective organizer my mother had to speak without an accent, so as not to be branded and written off as simply a "foreign troublemaker," and to learn some U.S. history to be able to appeal to American ideals. Without even being citizens my parents were educated in American politics by their radical papers, public meetings, and unions. And they were not alone. For the eighteen years I lived in Connecticut's third largest city of Bridgeport, there was a socialist mayor who was the son of a Scottish-born immigrant. This was an industrial city of immigrants and their children.

My parents' success as capitalists is equally related to their Eastern European Jewish traditions. Jews, barred from agricultural work, were forced to live as craftsmen and middle men which prepared them to become capitalists when given half a chance. The traits of hard work, literacy, sobriety, and strong communal and family cooperation aided them in the struggle to get ahead in the teeming cities of urban America. Part of the appeal to immigrant Jews of the socialist critique of capitalism was that it was of the established

capitalists who had achieved what they were only just beginning to dream. My parents' experience as both socialists and capitalists is baffling to Americans who see a total opposition between these systems, but it was not at all unique. Many Jews found themselves in the same situation and, to their own satisfaction, rationalized the paradox.

Rose Pichanic Roast Elovitz and Michael David Elovitz were immigrant American success stories who raised three children to be proud, productive, and thoughtful Americans with a strong sense of social responsibility. However, their commitment to both Jewish socialist and capitalist traditions lead them to give some confusing messages to their children. Their memory is best served by lifting the burden of family secrets.

*Due to his desire to probe more deeply into his family history, the author, Director of the Psychohistory Forum, originated the Forum's Psychology of Immigration Research Project and then proposed the writing of a Forum-sponsored book on the subject, Immigrant Experiences: Personal Narrative and Psychological Analysis (Madison, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1997), edited by Paul H. Elovitz and Charlotte Kahn. This article is adapted from the author's chapter, "Family Secrets and Lies My Parents Told Me: The Impact Of Immigrants On Their Son," in that book. □*

## Immigrants and the Mother Tongue

Norman Simms

University of Waikato, New Zealand

Emigration and immigration are of great interest to me since I moved from my native Brooklyn to Canada, to New Zealand, to Israel, and, perhaps only temporarily, back to New Zealand. I have also, together with my wife (a Missouri native), lived for varying periods in France, Romania, Spain, Malaysia, and Singapore. We have both been immigrants and lived among immigrants for most of our lives. I have grown up among people who speak many languages and who, moreover, find that the multiplicity of languages enriches, enhances, and even protects them.

My experiences and the observations of a lifetime give me a perspective that rests on one issue, that of the "mother tongue." Is it true that the mother tongue is a place of refuge? However, if it is not, does the immigrant really yearn for a return to the mother tongue? What follows is only an abstract from my lengthy paper on the subject.

Mothering is not a naturally smooth or loving relationship between infant and mother. No matter how far our society has advanced during the past few thousand years, there are both structural roots deep into violent acts of cruelty and abuse which emerge as dream, action, and speech forms, and sufficient acted-out fantasies of infanticide, sexual violation, and abandonment to keep intact the group fantasies. These violent acts and violent fantasies may often change their appearance or their distribution through the areas of conscious behavior and unconscious dreams. This realignment of expression, along with the specific content of images and verbal clues, occurs in the sense that Freud postulated, "that thoughts and fantasies are symbolic representations of actions" which "precede actions and serve as substitutes for them." But the reorganization also significantly occurs as James Gilligan points out in his work, *Violence: Our Deadly Epidemic and its Causes* (New York: Grosset/Putnam, 1992):

Actions are symbolic representations of thoughts. That is, actions can precede and serve as substitutes for conscious thoughts. They can take the place of thinking in words, if the behavior is never interpreted or translated into words and ideas.... In order to understand violence we must ... learn to interpret action as symbolic language — with a "symbolic language" of its own.

Once we accept that mothering as a symbolic language does not automatically and naturally lead towards the comfort and well-being of a child, we have to re-evaluate our notion of mother tongue. We see that it may be in itself a means of abuse, a self-projection of the parent's need to humiliate and shame for cruelties suffered during her own infancy, and a field of at best ambiguous socializing. Even if the language itself is no longer consciously a symbolic system of abuses and even if many (or most) mothers today no longer consciously abuse and humiliate their children, we cannot be sure that the language and the socialized traditions of childrearing are not implicated in the violence that radiates through

modern civilization (Derek Bickerton, *Language and Human Behavior* [Seattle: University of Washington Press, forthcoming]).

Thus, with the mother tongue removed from its idealized and sentimentalized categories, we can see why primary socialization tends towards a multiplicity of languages, as each new language becomes a way of deflecting the original trauma, projecting new cries for help, and establishing alternative social bonds to those of the mother-infant struggle. The needs of social-protection and ambition often lead to families regularly based on two or three languages, and individuals learning them as a combination of punishment, self-aggrandizement, ego-protection, and cushioning against a hostile inner and outer world.

While emigration/immigration can sometimes be a descent into a new hell of anomie and tongue-tiedness, when the individuals and family lose their old identifying roles and connections to existing groups, immigration may also be a release from the outer hells, giving each member of the family opportunities to enter into new emotional and intellectual language groups. What is important to see, though, is that the category of the family, like that of the mother tongue, is not in itself naturally or normally positive.

*Norman Simms is editor of Mentalities and the Glozel Newsletter and a most prolific author. He was born in 1940 in Brooklyn, New York, and received his doctorate in English Literature in 1969 from Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri. After four years at the University of Manitoba in Canada, he lived in New Zealand for 25 years before his sojourn in Israel. □*

## A Hidden Child's Response to Goldhagen

**Flora Hogman**  
Research Associate and  
Psychologist in Private Practice

*Essay Review of Daniel Jay Goldhagen, Hitler's Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1996. 622 pages, \$30.00. (Goldhagen was also reviewed by David Beisel, Eva Fogelman, and George Kren in*

*the December issue.)*

There is a noteworthy fervor with which Daniel Jay Goldhagen takes to task, indeed, almost battles, the scholars and scholarship which preceded *Hitler's Willing Executioners*. To his eyes, his predecessors are basically "soft" on Germans in their denunciation of German anti-Semitism. Too much weight is given in explanation of the war horrors, he says, to Germany's bad economic conditions, to the impact of the totalitarian state, and to universal inner aggressive tendencies. He describes earlier scholarship as saddled with "tunnel vision" which essentially leaves the ordinary Germans off the hook.

Yet, Lucy Dawidowicz (*The War Against the Jews: 1939-1945* [New York: Bantam, 1975]), Israel Gutman, (ed., *Encyclopedia of the Holocaust*, 4 vols. [New York: Macmillan, 1990]), and Raul Hilberg, (*The Destruction of the European Jews* [New York: Harper and Row, 1961]) have all addressed the very question Mr. Goldhagen poses about the antecedents of the war. They, too, find the origins of the destruction of the Jews in centuries of anti-Semitism in Germany as well as in the rest of Europe. They all find some responsibility in the common people, even in their passive indifference. Goldhagen's thesis that ordinary Germans relished getting rid of Jews as the culmination of chronic, centuries-old anti-Semitism certainly is not news to me either. This knowledge has been part of my consciousness for a long time.

One wonders why Goldhagen needs to destroy (or at least discard) the credibility of the work of every scholar who has come before him. Is it simply in search of truth? If so, whose truth? Is it the truth of a zealous graduate student who must destroy all in order to feel he creates his own Phoenix? How does Mr. Goldhagen's status as a child of survivors impact his scholarship? Dawidowicz and Hilberg were not Holocaust survivors. Does being a member of an ostracized [victimized] group particularly lead one to scholarship about one's group? How does it impact the author's writings?

While I will not pretend to know all that drove Mr. Goldhagen to take his approach, I feel safe in asserting that through his accusatory style, he is expressing the rage of the Jewish people. As a child of Holocaust survivors, he finally faces the

brutality which some of the first generation of survivors have been trying hard to suppress while trying to rebuild their lives. Research is his medium to legitimize his rage: to that end he must be able to discard everything which he sees standing in the way of the rageful anger. This may in part help to explain his assertion that no one understood the Holocaust. This is essential to his argument and it is, of course, partially true.

Let me speculate further. It is also of interest that Mr. Goldhagen has become the center of a heated debate in Germany. He has found through his passionate, provocative book a way to battle his way back onto German turf. What better way to ignite an intellectual battle, a debate, in Germany over the Holocaust than by describing, in horrific detail, German hatred of Jews as all-encompassing? One wonders whether through his repetitive, obsessive, and accusatory style he wants to symbolically destroy the Germans of today.

The emotional descriptions, with graphic details of the brutalities of the police in the labor camps and the death marches, are enough to sicken anyone; it certainly forces one to dig up and confront war memories which many survivors have had to suppress throughout our lives — perhaps in fear of our own rage.

Only recently, after a lifetime of trying to suppress it, have I painstakingly been able to acknowledge and picture my mother's last moments when she was sent to the gas chamber because she was a Jew. It still sickens me but I must do it if I want to feel whole. However, at those moments, Germany appears as an amorphous, all-encompassing monster worthy only of total destruction, not even worthy of my having one German friend or of my going to reconciliation meetings between Germans and Jews. Thus the emotion of *j'accuse* in the book strikes a powerful chord within me.

While Dawidowicz and Hilberg relate the same events, their style is sober, factual and somewhat impersonal. In fact, Dawidowicz remarks how difficult it is to write in a dispassionate, scholarly style about this terrible tragedy. On the other hand, Goldhagen makes it his mission to write passionately. I find the difference interesting: Goldhagen's emotional tone brings home more forcefully the horror of the events than previous historians'. Is the writer's need to say *j'accuse* again and again in a passionate

tone indeed an attempt to revive everyone's passions? It has been widely acknowledged that both the survivors — as well as the Germans — went through a process of repression and denial.

Having done extensive clinical research on the Holocaust, which involved, among other things, interviewing the children and grandchildren of survivors — the second and third generations to be impacted, I have been amazed by the variety and divergence of views and reactions regarding the role of the Germans during World War II. To my astonishment, several people referred to the presence of evil in all of us as a way to mitigate, I believe, the impact of German evil. Many feel sadness, not rage, at the Germans. It is also of interest that research done in Israel has found that survivors did not harbor rage at the Germans, the reason being

that perhaps hatred, and the wish for revenge, became blocked during the Holocaust, because the expression of these feelings was dangerous then, and would have meant certain death, so that these feeling became frozen until recently (Shalom Robinson, *Echoes of the Holocaust*).

But while he is more forceful than his predecessors, does Goldhagen then end up discarding all the evidence that doesn't fuel his emotional thesis that all Germans are willing executioners? His scholarship problem could be that he has a one-dimensional view of the war, that he suffers from tunnel vision. For instance, Goldhagen states that Germans could have chosen not to victimize Jews, but how could this be generally true? Germans could have been severely ostracized for lack of obedience. But Goldhagen must see it his way to be consistent with his central point. Indeed, he dismisses the occasional disobedience a German does manifest, as a mark of squeamishness at spilled blood rather than compassion for the victim. Goldhagen sees discussion of the authoritarian personality (a German trait) as giving an excuse for misdeeds. However, authoritarianism can be a dangerous mechanism by which the sadist-perpetrator finds a structure for his evil actions. Neither does Goldhagen attempt to explain institutional sadism. In this sense, the book appears surprisingly unpsychological in its analysis.

The fact that throughout the book Goldhagen faults "other" researchers for not attacking the Germans enough is confusing. It is

almost as if Goldhagen fights against Jews (who did most of the previous research) as well as against the Germans. Should we be angry at the Germans or at the researchers? While taking to task the "others" might help revive passions, such an approach also serves to deflect the rage from focusing on what I presume is its primary target, the Germans. Why was it necessary to introduce these "others" in the first place? Is Goldhagen simply saying he is better than they, that they don't count, that only his rage counts? Such an interpretation, if correct, would further define his study as a very personalized, self-indulgent work. Polemics in the end can only diminish the impact of the book.

The most important aspect of the book concerns the description of the extreme dehumanization process used by the Germans to further the aims of the final solution, the depth of depravity and brutality to which the Germans sank: German total indifference to — and at times enjoyment of — suffering. Of course, it is not the first time or first place in history that conquerors are gleeful at their victims' suffering. But what is striking, even horrifying, to me is the thought processes of the Nazi bureaucracy which further distanced the perpetrator from acknowledgment of and/or partaking in the process of sadism, and further allowed the intensification of the sadism by further dehumanization, bureaucratization, and institutionalization. It is not that different from the Unabomber's paranoid thought processes. Dehumanization can go hand-in-hand with the development of a paranoid delusional process where real human contact recedes into another universe and disappears, forgotten and unpalpable.

I am afraid that we do find the roots of dehumanization not only in Germany but in our United States as well. It exists in all of us potentially. In Germany, Jews sent to concentration camps were referred to as "packages." Here, when conservative Republicans refer to helping the impoverished in the Third World as our "accounts" rather than as "suffering people" it is, of course, still a far cry from the indifference and brutality perpetrated on a daily basis by people supposedly civilized, such as the typical example of a German SS playing Bach beautifully just outside Auschwitz where he had finished his day of "duty." One needs to be on one's guard today as well: no individual or group is immune to such cognitive distortions. One must

remain alert to where the process can take one whenever hatred takes over — sadly this happens not only in Germany.

*Flora Hogman, PhD, a Research Associate of the Forum, was a hidden child in Vichy France during the Nazi era. Today she conducts a Holocaust survivors support group and is a psychologist in private practice in Manhattan. She is the author of articles on children during the Holocaust, including "The Experience of Catholicism for Jewish Children During World War II." □*

## Free Associations

**Paul H. Elovitz**  
Ramapo College

### **Madeleine Albright's Jewish Family: Repressed Memories or Suppression?**

This Catholic-turned-Episcopalian recently reported receiving a terrific jolt, obviously a major surprise, when she was confronted with "fairly compelling" evidence in the *Washington Post* that two of her grandparents were taken from their homes in Czechoslovakia to Nazi camps during the Holocaust. As Jews, they, and a third grandparent, were killed. Albright's nomination as Secretary of State had brought with it a number of letters from Europe indicating her family's Jewish roots. Nevertheless, throughout her life she insisted she had never considered herself other than Christian. Several Jewish residents of her Wellesley College dormitory, who became life long friends, stated they had never heard a hint that her family was anything but Catholic. One indicated that the diplomat was shocked and felt "battered" by the revelations.

When the story first broke, it appeared that her parents, Josef and Mandula Korbel, were secular Jews who converted to Catholicism to save themselves and their child from eliminationist German anti-Semitism. After all, it was the Nazi takeover of their country which prompted their fleeing to London when Marie Jana (she became "Madeleine" years later in a Swiss boarding school) was two years old in 1939. The little girl celebrated Christmas and Easter in what she reports was a family tradition. Her country changed from Czechoslovakia, to England, back to



her homeland (after the war but before the Communist takeover in 1948), to Switzerland for school, and later to the USA. She gave the impression that the Catholic religion was a consistent part of her life despite all the changes of residence.

Before proceeding further it is important to set the scene regarding the climate of fear which was present in Europe in her formative years and which affected the decisions of her parents. The Korbels were Czech nationalists, proud of their democratic state created at the end of World War I, some 300 years after the war, genocide, and ethnic cleansing which spelled the end the previous independent Czech (Bohemian) state. As a diplomat, Josef Korbel was sensitive to the incredible threats to his country from Germany and Russia. Democratic Czechoslovakia was destroyed by Soviet Russia in 1948 only three years after Nazi Germany was defeated. The Korbels again had to flee abroad where the former diplomat published *The Soviet Subversion of Czechoslovakia (1938-1948)*. He dedicated the book to the memory of his parents, but did not indicate they were killed in the Holocaust. It probably was clear to this family that Stalin, beginning with the purges of the 1930s, was, despite the Soviet laws against anti-Semitism, attacking many Jews and eventually killing them under the guise of "rootless cosmopolitanism." Albright's mother told a family friend that "to be Jewish was always to risk persecution."

As the story developed, it became clear that Marie Jana's conversion to Catholicism was in 1939 in the comparative safety of wartime London. As a two-year-old, little Marie Jana presumably did not have a conscious memory of the event, but would she have a recollection of being told about it by others? Did this first woman Secretary of State, the senior member of the cabinet, know about her family's past? Did she, as some have suggested, consciously suppress knowledge of this Jewishness to advance herself? Or, did her parents do such a good job of creating a new past that she never had reason to doubt? Or, was she such a "good little girl" that she repressed knowledge that she was not supposed to know? Let us look at these possibilities more closely.

*Suppression.* Madeleine Korbel's first memories are of air raid sirens in London. Because of the terrible things she knew happened to Jews, and without a sense of her own Jewish

origins, it certainly could have been tempting for the girl to identify with her parents' denial of their past. It was hard enough as a terribly serious young immigrant in England and then in the States — being a Jew would have been even harder. In America, Jews still faced powerful social restrictions, employment barriers in many fields, and significant entrance hurdles when applying to college. Jewishness was a definite barrier to success in many fields of endeavor — most definitely diplomacy. Even in Clinton's second-term Cabinet, which has two avowed Jews, Robert Rubin (Treasury) and Dan Glickman (Agriculture), and a Christian Secretary of Defense (William Cohen) whose father was Jewish, it is most unlikely that someone viewed as a Jew would be able to emulate Kissinger's feat of becoming a Jewish Secretary of State. The old guard would have raised too many concerns among Arab nations. Though at certain junctions of life Albright had powerful reasons to suppress her past, thus far I have seen no firm evidence that she consciously did this, though she has hardly lived up to her ego ideal of "I tell it like it is" on this particular issue.

*A perfect parental cover up.* Parents may think they have done a perfect job of creating a new past, but inevitably the past comes back to haunt them. Parents can not totally control friends, relatives, and what people say on the street. They inevitably fail to totally control the environment and usually blurt things out in front of the child themselves as part of the denial of the child's level of understanding. Setting up family rules of secrecy helps to limit the child's questions, but not curiosity. As a historian and psychohistorian who developed my research skills partly to uncover family secrets, I wonder if Madeleine's college ambition of journalism was aimed at honing the skills of getting at the facts of her family's hidden past? Whatever her initial motivation, upon marrying the heir to a newspaper, she was told it would not look right if she worked for her husband's paper or its competitors. As a good wife, she did what she was told and forgot about journalism, which is a further indication she was a "good girl."

*Repression.* I suspect that she just repressed knowledge she was not supposed to know in the same way she "absolutely did not see divorce coming after 23 years" of marriage. In this view she was so scared, being taken from country

to country in dangerous times, that she found it safest to identify completely with her parents' wishes even if it meant repressing what she heard or saw. I am reminded of a very bright, accomplished professional woman in her late forties, who struggled in treatment for nine years to escape her family's code of silence. Her goals accomplished, she left analysis. Some years later, she was jolted into considering a return to treatment when she realized that she had unconsciously "denied" what she had heard in a family context because it violated the rule of silence she had so proudly thought she had escaped for all time. Albright, much like this woman, seems to have the capacity of putting inconvenient facts "out of mind." But the past does come back to haunt one and I eagerly read the paper each morning to see if there are any new revelations.

Though I do not know the characteristic coping mechanisms (psychodynamics) of Madeleine Albright, I am impressed by her capacity for growth and her ability to adjust to difficult situations. As a woman diplomat fighting to be heard, and reacting, I presume, to anger generated by her husband's abandonment, she learned to speak loudly and forcefully in the world of men and she advises other women to do the same. I feel compassion for a refugee child from Central Europe grown to a woman who feels battered by issues affecting her very identity.

I also worry about Albright's judgment as Secretary of State partly because she is so focused on the need, above all else, to avoid another Munich. This was the kind of thinking that resulted in the Vietnam War! To prove the USA is strong, she may be too quick to commit American forces and is definitely too eager to expand NATO to the East, including the land of her birth, the Czech Republic. These are dangerous, and probably unnecessary, steps in the post Cold War era. Albright believes America must "marry force to diplomacy" to achieve our aims. I hope she emphasizes diplomacy rather than force. As a woman, and perhaps even as the grandchild of Jews, she will be tested even more than our Secretaries of State are normally tested.

### Hidden Jews

I wonder if Josef and Mandula Korbel ever had the impulse to become "hidden Jews"? Or, are Jews who go underground (sometimes for generations) to practice their religion only a phenomenon of periods such as that of the Spanish

Inquisition? I am tempted to argue that in all likelihood the ability to emigrate or easily assimilate in our age, which is normally available, precludes this response to persecution. But then I think of the millions of Christians in Communist China who suffer severely for their faith, and suspect that there are numerous "hidden Christians." The issue of hidden believers came to mind because of the publication in February of the late Raphael Patai's *Jadid al-Islam: The Jewish "New Muslims" of Meshhed* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1997, 352 pages, ISBN 0-8143-2652-8 \$39.95).

Professor Patai recounts the trauma faced by the Persian Jews of the Islamic holy city of Meshed in 1839, when 36 were murdered and the survivors were forced to convert to Islam. Though the fury of the *Allahdad*, as the event was labeled, seemingly destroyed a century-old Jewish community, part of it survived by going underground. Outwardly, its members were good Islamic adherents, but at home they were secret Jews. In arranged marriages, their daughters were engaged within the community as early as four years of age to avert proposals by genuine Muslims. The community held together until after World War II when most dispersed to larger Iranian cities, Israel, and overseas.

You may recollect that last September in these pages (Vol. 3, No. 2, page 67) we had the sad responsibility of writing an obituary of Professor Patai. Among his other books available from Wayne State University Press are *The Jewish Mind* (1996 version), *The Jews of Hungary* (1996), *The Hebrew Goddess* (1990), and *The Myth of the Jewish Race* (with Jennifer Patai, 1989). I wonder if Madeleine Albright will be tempted to read some of these volumes, at some future date, when she has the time to ponder her hidden heritage.

### Psychohistory Online

A history colleague mentioned that a great bibliographic aid, one that could save me trips to Barnes & Noble bookstores and the library, is <<http://www.amazon.com>> on the World Wide Web. "It's as good as *Books In Print* and accessible from your home computer," Tom Heed declared. I typed in "psychohistory" and it recorded 67 books ("hits" in the language of computer jargon also known as "cyberspeak"). Many of the titles are thought-provoking psychohistorical works, such as Bruce Mazlish, *The Leader, the Lead, and the Psyche* and Peter

Loewenberg, *Fantasy and Reality in History*. There are classics such as Rudolph Binion, *Hitler Among the Germans*; Norman O. Brown, *Life Against Death: The Psychoanalytic Meaning of History*; Lloyd deMause, *Foundations of Psychohistory*; Saul Friedlander, *History and Psychoanalysis*; and Peter Loewenberg, *Decoding the Past: The Psychohistorical Approach*. Helpful books such as Peter Gay, *Freud for Historians*; Henry Lawton, *The Psychohistorian's Handbook*; and William McKinley Runyan (ed.), *Psychology and Historical Interpretation* are also included. There are even old books attacking psychohistory along with new books such as Andrew Brink, *Obsession and Culture*; Daniel Dervin, *Enactments* (see review on page 118); and Avner Falk, *A Psychoanalytic History of the Jews*. Sixty-seven "hits" isn't bad, even if there are several attacks and some duplications.

Yesterday, I reached into the mail pile awaiting my return from a trip and came up with a pleasant note from a senior colleague. Yet I had to take exception to his lamenting the sad state of psychohistory in the U.S.A. While we are far from achieving our full potential, our achievements, current creativity, and scholarly books are not to be slighted. Online, on the stacks, and at numerous meetings, there is lots of good psychohistory. If the productivity of Forum members is any indication, there's an abundance of psychohistory coming into print, and much of it is first rate.

### **Paul Tsongas, Political Courage, and Presidential Health**

I was saddened by the January 18 death, from liver problems related to cancer treatment and pneumonia, of former Senator Paul E. Tsongas. As with my brother's death in 1987 (some 17 years after his lung malignancy was diagnosed), it was the effects of the 14 years of treatment rather than the cancer itself which ultimately took Tsongas' life. In response to this loss, the White House made the following statement: "Paul Tsongas was a great American. He cared deeply about his beloved state of Massachusetts and about our country and its future. In a life devoted to public service," it declared, "he set an unparalleled example of integrity, candor, and commitment."

It should be remembered that Tsongas had beaten Clinton in the vital New Hampshire Democratic primary as well as in Democratic primaries in Arizona, Maryland, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Utah, declaring the Arkansan to

be another one of the "Santa Clauses" seeking to buy the voters' favor with unrealistic, fairy-book promises. Our President, or someone in his name, obviously was able to rise above the residue of this political strife and say the right thing at the Senator's death.

An obituary reminded me of Tsongas' having said after the November, 1992 election, "I would love to be standing here today as President-elect. The fact is a lot of people who should have run for President didn't. There was a medical problem with gonads, not lymph nodes." The lack of political courage the man from Massachusetts was referring to involved more than qualified candidates' not running for President. He was troubled by the failure of those who did run to tackle the tough issues for fear of voter rejection. This son of an immigrant Greek business family confronted the economic issues paving the way for the main issue of Ross Perot's much better financed Presidential campaign.

Tsongas, who had felt the "obligations of survival," had had to abruptly terminate his campaign because of a lack of money rather than directly because of the health issue. Indirectly, the health issue was an important factor in his mind because he did not want to saddle his wife and young daughters with debt since his future earning power was in doubt.

When I met Paul Tsongas in person he seemed very much as he had on television: direct, intelligent, and with a hint of humor. When I called his home or he called mine, I felt it was like talking to a friendly next door neighbor or relative. There was a relaxed, down-to-earth quality which I found most inviting. He seemed to say what he meant and mean what he said to an unusual degree for a politician of national stature. When I spoke with his wife Nicki, who realized I was delving into issues of childhood and personality that might be used to hurt his political career, she said to me in a factual manner, "He's much too open," and then passed the telephone to him. He seemed bemused, but not inhibited, when I indicated I would be publishing in *The Journal of Psychohistory*, and hopefully, for the op-ed page of the *New York Times*. As Tsongas suspected, the *Journal* was more receptive than the *Times*.

At my 1992 IPA presentation which was based on my article, "Character, Cancer, and Economic Regeneration in the 1992 Presidential

Campaign of Senator Paul E. Tsongas," Stanley Rosenman, a New York City psychologist/psychoanalyst, raised the issue of the ethicalness of a cancer patient running for President. He argued that it was unethical to run for an office if you might not have the health to serve out your term. This was certainly on my mind, and I do not know if on that basis I would have voted for Tsongas in November. It certainly brought to the forefront the issue of the health of Presidential candidates and the response of the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute in Boston and Tsongas' doctors to questions regarding his health during the campaign. Lawrence K. Altman, MD, medical reporter for the *New York Times*, implied a conscious cover-up. This, in my opinion, was not the case, partly because the information regarding his health was already in the public domain.

I am always interested in the process of collective amnesia by which the public and media ignore documented facts about Presidential candidates (and others) and then, suddenly awaken to the facts, instantly claiming a cover-up. I do not think it is sufficient to blame this infuriating tendency on sloppy reporting. (Though I do get frustrated with reporters who, like so many of my students, don't seem to know the difference between a press release and an objective fact.)

As I gazed at some of the final pictures of Paul Tsongas, shorn of his hair and looking terrible, I was aware of a sadness. I also thought about the flash of pleasure people sometimes express at the death of a politician. There is, to use a German word, *schadenfreude* (pleasure at the displeasure of others) involved in these cases. I suspect that it is based mostly on a sense of getting the politicians back for their lies, misjudgments, and lack of political courage.

There are enormous difficulties when a President is incapacitated by illness or an assassin's attack, or is clearly dying. Russia is currently facing this psychological bad dream, though in the recent elections they preferred an incapacitated Yeltsin to his healthy opponents. The USA has lived through this nightmare on numerous occasions, for example, during the Presidencies of William Henry Harrison, William McKinley, Dwight Eisenhower, Ronald Reagan, and, most especially, Thomas Woodrow Wilson. People's fantasies about a dying President breed paranoia, of which there is already too much. □

## The Journeys of Life and Death

Marie A. Caulfield  
Caulfield Associates

Recently, I spent two weeks with my daughter and son-in-law and their newborn twins. These weeks are among the most precious in my life. I was awestruck as I fed, bathed, watched, and glorified in new life. Watching my own child, and the woman she has become, care for her children represented one of life's most exciting passages. I savored the moments, capturing a mental image of each visitor's reactions to these tiny, helpless human beings. My adult son, who will always be my baby, summed it up when he first met and held the babies, saying, "Wow," with tears quietly streaming down his face. How wonderful to capture part of life's deepest experiences!

So much of my work for 18 years as a hospital chaplain specializing in death and dying has been in helping patients and families come together at a time that for so many is extraordinarily difficult. The bedside is usually quiet as we sit and wait for the patient to begin a new journey. Yet dying patients have much to teach us if we allow ourselves just to be present to the moment and to the experience. Death, which we must all face, can be a growth experience for the living. It is with great passion that I serve the sick and dying and it was with great passion that I gave witness to the life of my grandchildren surrounded by love and gentle caring.

Regrettably, people sometimes let some of the most precious moments of life pass them by without fully embracing the possibilities. I am reminded of the pain of a mature man who at age 50 had witnessed the birth of his first child and was extraordinarily eager to be present when his parents arrived from a far distance to see their first grandchild. He had been joyous at the birth of his child and several times on the telephone he had asked his parents to time their arrival so he could be present when they first saw the new arrival, but they ignored the request and arrived several hours earlier than planned. Though he did not, or perhaps could not, clearly articulate what he had hoped the three generations would experience, he

clearly felt the sting of his wishes being disregarded. Nevertheless, the tears of joy I saw in his eyes as he watched his teary-eyed father hold his grandson for the first time suggested to a therapist friend of mine that there was much unfinished business in the family that the new father had hoped to overcome at the specially timed meeting of the generations he had tried to plan.

Perhaps because of my own personal journey into grandparenthood, the helplessness and dependence of both the newborn and the dying became even more focused for me as I most reluctantly left my grandchildren to return home. The reflections once again were tied together with my hospital experience. Several years ago, I remember the statement of an adult son after his dad had died in our hospice program. He too said, "Wow," and then added, "I am so glad I was here to be part of this process." As he was leaving the bedside he asked me, "How many people get to share this kind of time with a loved one?" I responded by saying, "As many as we can possibly have that will step into this very difficult time in the journey. Many who say 'No' don't know they have missed anything."

What a wonderful process this journey of life invites us to share and experience. Not just for ourselves but especially with those we love. "Life is a Journey" not just for the young or the old but for all of us who will take the leap to reach out to each other both in birth and in death.

*Marie A. Caulfield, MR, FCM, is a Hospital/Hospice Chaplain who recently left her position at Hospice by the Sea in Boca Raton, Florida, partly to be closer to her family in the Orlando area, but still some 1,200 miles from her grandchildren in New Jersey. John Caulfield of the Psychohistory Forum's Advisory Council is her partner on the journeys of life. □*

## Clinton's Pattern of Success and Failure

**H. John Rogers**  
Martinsville, West Virginia

Veteran politicians in Arkansas must have had a powerful sense of *déjà vu* as they watched President Clinton rise from the ashes of his

political repudiation in the midterm elections of 1994 and move flawlessly to his landslide victory on November 5. They had seen the exact same scenario played out some 14 years earlier.

In 1978, at the age of 32, Bill Clinton was elected governor of Arkansas, making him the youngest governor in the United States. Clinton was bright, attractive, and, perhaps more importantly, blessed with the ability to raise money — a greater asset than being born with it, because the donor has a strong interest in the candidate's success. However, Clinton's two years as governor were such a disaster that he was beaten by a nondescript Republican in the 1980 election.

In 1994 President Clinton would have been eviscerated at the polls if he had been required to stand for re-election. The Clinton Presidency had produced a series of mitigated failures. Democrat majorities in the U.S. Senate and the House of Representatives were wiped out. Whatever aura this Arkansan had seemed to have been transferred, temporarily as we know now, to House Speaker Newt Gingrich.

If a student flunked out of a prestigious university after his freshman year and then came back to graduate with a Phi Beta Kappa key, only to replicate this pattern at a top graduate school, we would wonder why. The pattern is striking, especially since it falls within a well-recognized psychoanalytic categorization — the *repetition compulsion*.

A compulsion is generally defined as a defensive substitute for unacceptable unconscious ideas and desires, and repetition simply means that the behavior is repeated. An example of this is a person who likes to jaywalk, getting closer and closer to the passing vehicles each time. The second or third time this person ended up in the hospital might lead a rational observer to conclude that there was something defective with the jaywalker's thought processes. The "rush" of getting as close as possible to a passing vehicle is hardly enough to offset the broken bones.

In psychoanalytic theory, a repetition compulsion is thought of as the impulse to re-enact earlier emotional experiences (both good and bad), and Freud considered it more powerful than the pleasure principle — the concept that people instinctually seek to avoid pain and discomfort and to strive for pleasure and gratification. In traditional Freudian theory, the pleasure principle

antedates the reality principle — the inescapable demands and requirements of the external world. There is regular conflict between the two, between what we want and what the world is prepared to give us. In normal maturation, the reality principle gains ascendancy, and we take (or become satisfied with) whatever pleasure the world is prepared to give us. This is not true, however, with regard to certain mental conditions, one of which is the repetition compulsion.

Twice in 14 years, Bill Clinton, by dint of his skill, ability, and intelligence, was able to claw his way to the apex of the political structure of, first, Arkansas and, later, the United States. In both instances, the question which was asked of Sammy Glick in Buddy Schulberg's *What Makes Sammy Run?* — "How does it feel to have everything, Sammy?" — could have been put to him. Yet within two years, Clinton, like the fictional Sammy Glick, went from having everything to being on the verge of having nothing. The preternatural political intelligence which melded the coalitions that lead to political victories in 1978 and 1992 was unable to read and manipulate the Arkansas legislature, the U.S. Congress, or public opinion with the same facility.

What is significant from a psychological point of view is not the ineptness in office itself that lead to Clinton's falls, but rather the fact that it occurred a second time and under similar circumstances. The ancient Greeks believed that "character is destiny." So, what precisely is it in the Clinton persona that could explain the two precipitous crashes just after he had attained his goals?

Clinton would clearly seem to have what Harvard sociologist David Reisman described in his seminal *The Lonely Crowd* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1950) as an "other directed" personality. Like his political *doppelganger* [double, mirror image] Richard Nixon, there seems to be no principle or individual that Clinton is not prepared to jettison in order to secure a tactical advantage. In addition to being "comeback kids," Nixon and Clinton were both raised in modest circumstances and ended up being "scholarship boys" at prestigious schools, a social status which is just a few steps this side of being an "affirmative action baby." However, there are very real personality differences between the two, the chief one perhaps being Clinton's expansive, undisciplined persona as contrasted with Nixon's

pinched, paranoid, and probably depressive nature. It is Falstaff versus Richard III, sanguine versus black choler.

One clue to the President's behavior might be found in the imprecise concept of the *addictive personality*. The jaywalker mentioned earlier is an example used by Bill W., the co-founder of AA, in his book *Alcoholics Anonymous*. At bottom, the popular addictions — drugs, alcohol, over-eating, gambling — are initially counterproductive and, if carried far enough, self-destructive behavior. In Freudian terms, the death instinct (*Thanatos*) is triumphing within the psyche, as surely as it has with the old pachyderm lumbering off to the elephants' graveyard.

Within Clinton's family, both his natural and adoptive fathers were heavy drinkers; his half-brother was a serious cocaine addict; and his mother, we learned from her posthumously published autobiography, took a particular delight in spending long hours at the race track. The President may have inhaled no marijuana smoke, but from published reports his eating habits and appreciation for the opposite sex would seem to border on the compulsive. Clinton's voracious appetite has been a running joke on the late night talk shows, and Betsey Wright, one of his strongest supporters, used the revealing phrase "bimbo eruptions."

President Clinton by heredity or environment was doubtless susceptible to alcoholism, but he managed to avoid it, just as he was able to avoid preceding his brother Roger down the path of drug addiction. But he may have been able to get the equivalent of the gambler's "rush" through his intense involvement in the political system. Politics is, after all, a rather dicey vocation, and, for over a decade, with primaries and general elections, Clinton averaged one election per year. Many commentators have noted that Clinton's basic interest (like Richard Nixon before him) was in the electoral pursuit for its own sake, so when he reached his ultima Thule [remote goal] he had few firm ideas as to substantive agendas, (e.g., gays in the military and universal health care were ideas whose time had not come).

If one couches the President's two reputed addictions in the phraseology of the Seven Deadly Sins, then it would seem problematic whether he has dealt with *gluttony* and *lust* on any psychological level. He appears to be in denial

about gluttony. Lust, in the best Victorian fashion, is simply not discussed. As addictions, Clinton's over-eating and womanizing would appear to be simply on hold, rather than in remission. The President could, by no stretch of the imagination, be thought of as being in recovery any more than a man on a deserted island could be deemed to be practicing celibacy.

Addictions can be sublimated, sometimes with great social success. As conventional wisdom in Appalachia puts it, "A reformed drunk either becomes a pillar of the church or settles down and makes a lot of money." At least two former alcoholics successfully devoted their free time to politics: former Texas governor Ann Richards and the late U.S. Senator Harold Hughes of Iowa. But both of these individuals went through a systematic process of recovery, i.e., dealing with whatever it was in their character that was successfully complemented by the chemical of their choice. It is an axiom in treatment circles that if the abused substance is merely removed, the person is still left with the "-ism", namely the problems, insecurities, character defects, or "whatever" that was self-medicated with the chosen substance. If these matters are not dealt with, then all of the "reasons to drink [or whatever]" continue in force. Abstinence then becomes a pure exercise of angry repression and suppression. As was suggested above, the source of all these addictive drives is some variant of the pleasure principle. People learn to defer pleasure and subordinate the desire for immediate gratification to some long range goal which promises even greater pleasure. The factory worker toiling for Friday's paycheck is but one example of how the carrot keeps humanity trudging along the road.

Clinton's 1982 and 1996 rebounds have several features in common: There was a decided shift to the right, alliances with large corporate financial contributors were forged, and there was a public eclipse of Hillary Clinton's role. In Arkansas, she abandoned the use of Hillary "Rodham" and became Hillary "Clinton." In Washington, after the failure of health care reform, Mrs. Clinton played no further official governmental roles, although her fingerprints — metaphorically and literally — were all over the administration. Finally, the same Machiavellian figure, Dick Morris, superintended both of Clinton's resurrections. It is a mark of Clinton's political ability that he can easily shift gears and

shuffle personnel.

The question now becomes, What earlier emotional experiences was Clinton re-enacting by 1980 and 1994, when he failed so completely in office? Here I lay out not the answer but the pattern: A long period of highly-disciplined and purposeful activity is followed by complete triumph and then failure. In the 1978 and 1992 elections, Clinton came close to achieving at a young age Thomas Wolfe's fantasy of being "all conquering and all beloved." What then followed was lassitude, lack of focus, and a nearly total loss of that almost magical ability to synthesize and meld the disparate elements of the polity into a working political consensus. Clinton was able to put together enormously effective political campaigns in 1978 and 1992, but nearly as quickly he became politically impotent and suffered devastating setbacks two years later. The psychological question is, Why did he twice lose his Midas touch?

*H. John Rogers is a Democrat and a graduate of Harvard Law School who practiced in West Virginia and federal courts for over 25 years. He is pursuing a new career in theology.*

*Editor's Note: Rogers raises some important questions in this article which was originally entitled "Clinton and the Repetition Compulsion." As a Clinton scholar, I have long speculated on the impact of the gambler's rush which seems so apparent to me in the President, his mother, brother, and stepfather. For some answers to questions raised by Rogers, I would advise the reader to turn to Stanley Renshon's two 1996 books and to Herbert Barry's review of them on pages 81-82 of our December, 1996, issue (Vol. 3, No. 3). See Stanley A. Renshon, High Hopes: The Clinton Presidency and the Politics of Ambition (New York: New York University Press, 1996) and The Psychological Assessment of Presidential Candidates (New York: New York University Press, 1996). □*

## Psychohistorical Enactments

David Lotto

University of Massachusetts

*Review of Daniel Dervin, Enactments: American Modes and Psychohistorical Models. Madison, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1996.*

ISBN # 0-8386-3591-1, 356 pages, \$49.50

"Although the history of madness plays through the registers of cultural discourse, the madness of history continues to elude the most determined texts." This is the opening sentence of one of the best books yet written in the field of psychohistory, one that goes far toward elucidating the nature and variety of the irrationalities which play such a prominent role in the history of civilization.

*Enactments* embodies what is best about our field. It is thoroughly multidisciplinary, as good psychohistory must be, spanning and integrating material from the primary areas of history and psychoanalysis, but also bringing enrichment from literature, the theater, political theory, anthropology, literary criticism, and feminist theory, among others. This is an erudite book: rich, broad, and deep. It is best read and re-read slowly, with time taken to digest both the text and the accompanying notes. The time and effort spent will be well rewarded.

The book starts with the "Introduction" in which Dervin attempts some organizing and systematizing, much as David Rapaport did in 1960 with respect to the structure of psychoanalytic theory (David Rapaport, *The Structure of Psychoanalytic Theory*, Psychological Issues, Monograph No. 6, [New York: International University Press, 1960]), by introducing the notion that there are six models, or points of view, which can be applied to a particular psychohistorical analysis. The models, as Dervin describes them, are not independent entities. There is a great deal of overlapping and commonality among them. As in psychoanalysis, the importance of the principle of multideterminism is recognized as necessary for a full psychohistorical account of any particular subject matter.

The models are organized around the familiar psychohistorical notions of group fantasy, sacrifice, poison containers, the leader as group delegate, delegate groups (scapegoats), and the centrality of the influence of childrearing practices on the behavior of the adults in a particular culture. However, the notion of enactment, which as Dervin says, has "applications to court, theater, and the clinic," takes on the role of the central organizing principle for the understanding of events from a psychohistorical perspective.

Following the "Introduction" there are

twelve chapters, six appendices, and an excellent glossary of key psychohistorical terms, all written by Dervin. Earlier versions of 10 of the 18 pieces have been previously published, mostly in *The Journal of Psychohistory*. The articles examine a variety of recent events in American political life from 1968 through 1992 including Watergate, the Thomas/Hill hearings, and the Palm Beach Kennedy rape trial. There is one historical-biographical piece focusing on the significance of parental abandonment on several writers and other creative individuals from the seventeenth century to the present. There are chapters on the meaning of some New Age phenomena and on feminist analysis of patriarchy.

The remaining articles focus on some aspect of psychoanalysis, ranging from an exploration of some acting out at a psychoanalytic conference, to a look at Freud and Virginia Woolf, Freud and Foucault, and an excellent analysis of an interesting exchange of letters between Freud and Jung. Finally, there is a densely-packed, one-page diagram entitled Hitler & Holocaust: Feedback System, which demonstrates the complexity and elegance of a multi-dimensional psychohistorical analysis incorporating and integrating insights from twelve different psychoanalytical and psychohistorical authors.

This is an important book in our field and a must read for psychohistorians.

*David Lotto, PhD, is a psychoanalyst and psychologist in private practice in Pittsfield, Massachusetts, with a longstanding interest in psychohistory, especially in regard to issues of war, peace, and the quality of patient care. He is also an adjunct professor at the University of Massachusetts. □*

## A Conversation With Charles B. Strozier

(Continued from page 97)

*Publishing Company, 1985), as senior editor with Michael Flynn on the companion volumes Genocide, War and Human Survival and Trauma and Self (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 1996), and has just completed work as contributor and senior editor with Michael Flynn on The Year 2000: Essays on the End (New York: New York*



University Press, 1997). He is currently working on a biography of Heinz Kohut entitled, *Heinz Kohut: Psychoanalysis at the Millennium* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, forthcoming). In addition to his written work, Professor Strozier has participated in various media projects including a nationally televised PBS (Public Broadcasting System) documentary on Abraham Lincoln for which he also contributed the script (1992). Charles Strozier ("CS") spoke with us ("PHE") on November 22, 1996, at the Center on Violence and Human Survival.

PHE: How do you define our field of psychohistory?

CS: I define psychohistory as the exploration of history from the psychological point of view. It remains history but is systematically psychological in the kinds of questions it asks. However, those questions have to get answered within a historical frame, following the criteria of historical methodology and abiding by the rigor of historical methodology. It is an interdiscipline — the point on the bridge where the two approaches meet. By defining it this way, you distinguish it sharply from psychological questioning *per se* or from historical questioning *per se*. It combines the psychological quest for the universal with the historian's appreciation for the unique and is intrinsically interesting.

PHE: What is your primary identification as a professional?

CS: What am I? Who am I? These are the eternal questions. My answers have changed as they change, as they evolve, for each person over a life cycle. I never thought of myself as anything but a historian. Even from four years of age I was interested in history and thought about things historically. In my earliest schooling I was interested in the stories of the past and biographies. We didn't do a lot of visiting of historic sites when I was a kid, but we did a lot of talking about wars. I come from an academic family: my father was a college professor who would always talk about things in the past — the stories of Europe and France. I was born in the South and he was from the South, so there were stories of the Civil War. I'm a Georgia boy — born in Athens, Georgia. Then we moved to Chicago where my father was a professor. During my adolescence, I went to high school in Tallahassee, Florida, where he was president of Florida State University. He died

when I was sixteen. Then I went away to school and was no longer in the South from that point. Nevertheless, although I'm basically northern, I have deep roots in southern history. Stroziers go back in Georgia for a couple hundred years — way back to plantation life. There is a Strozier plantation down there in Georgia. It's an astonishing past. On the side, I'm writing an autobiography. My most complete chapter is the one on my father, so I've explored some of the father issues more systematically in terms of my own experience.

PHE: I wonder if concern for the father isn't a commonality among many psychohistorians. How did you come to psychohistory?

CS: I first got interested in psychohistory when I was a senior at Harvard in European History and took Erik Erikson's course, "The Human Life Cycle." I thought, "This is really intriguing stuff." I read *Young Man Luther* and got very excited about it. Then I read Freud, to understand Erikson. In graduate school at the University of Chicago in the late 1960s, I began to approach psychohistory more systematically — reading more widely and doing a dissertation which combined the two fields. I had a generous grant to study Polish history and I did a psychoanalytic study of the 19th century Polish Revolution. I spent a year-and-a-half in Warsaw and Krakow. I had relatively more money than I have ever had in my life. This was during the Cold War: phones were tapped and there were men in dark suits talking into their wrist watches and following me whenever I went to the library. It was an extraordinary experience. The PhD *was* in history even though I had two first readers: one psychoanalyst and one historian — George Pollack and William McNeill. It was a reaching out from within the history profession to try to understand history from a psychological point of view.

In 1972 I was hired at Sangamon State in Springfield, Illinois, [now the University of Illinois at Springfield] as a *psychohistorian*, not a European or East European historian. It was the only job that was or has ever been formally named as such. Sangamon was a new school, setting up a new history department, and a student had read *Gandhi's Truth* and said, "How can you possibly create a department of history without a psychohistorian?" — not realizing how utterly revolutionary his idea was. That helped consolidate my own thinking about my relation to

the field of psychohistory: I was there in psychohistory, I developed a program in psychohistory, and then I started editing my own journal [*The Psychohistory Review*] within a year. It was a deeper exploration of what I thought it meant to be a psychohistorian, but not essentially different from where I had started.

When I first started teaching at Sangamon, I also started psychoanalytic training at the Chicago Institute for Psychoanalysis. First, I was analyzed. As a research candidate, I wasn't doing clinical work. At that point in my life I was probably too poor, too crazy, and had too many children to do clinical work. It seemed that if I wanted to teach and keep my head above water and also write books, I couldn't throw clinical work into the mix. I always thought that clinical work would appeal to me, but I thought it was dangerous because I thought I would like it too much. So I had to keep it away from my life — but that was also part of my identity as a historian. Though it was very good that I did my psychoanalytic study of Lincoln [*Lincoln's Quest for Union*] (it was an extension of my identity as a psychohistorian), I was really moving onto that bridge, into that interdisciplinary from the point of view of history.

PHE: How did your analysis affect your work as a psychohistorian?

CS: My analysis was central to my development as a psychohistorian, though I think I might broaden that a bit to say my ongoing encounter with the therapeutic is crucial to being a psychohistorian. I was not entirely pleased with it, partly because it was my didactic analysis and carried the burden of being part of my training. I also thought my analyst was a bit of a jerk, and I came to feel the couch is vastly over-rated. In my own practice I never use the couch. Why deliberately foster regression and fragmentation when the goal is healing and self-cohesion? Anyway, after analysis I have had several shorter and more fruitful experiences with therapy. I can't imagine keeping alive to the psychological in history without those continuing encounters.

One further thought, which has been quite surprising for me, is the way I have been changed by actually being a psychoanalytic psychotherapist. I would not have thought it would make that much difference in my life. But my wife says, and I think I believe her, that I am softer, less driven, more generous, and a happier person since I began

my practice five years ago. It may be good for your soul to try and heal others.

PHE: What led you, trained in Polish history, to the study of Lincoln?

CS: I think I was drawn into a study of Lincoln for reasons that were both sublime and ridiculous. When I arrived in Springfield in 1972, I was looking for a big project, especially one that would take me out of the East European rut I felt stuck in. I was in the world's most boring town in a new university literally surrounded by corn fields. Lincoln seemed the only interesting thing available. And, yes, it mattered hugely that Lincoln was in the air in Springfield and that the Illinois State Historical Library there is the richest trove of Lincolniana in the world. Once I began to really read Lincoln, however, I discovered why he is so endlessly interesting, and I was hooked. What I then focused on about Lincoln drew intensely out of my own experience. My first insights were about young Lincoln's struggles with identity when he was almost exactly my age then [about thirty]. Over the course of the next seven or eight years I moved more into his troubled marriage, which was the main theme in my life then as well. In a sense, my book became reflections on his "House Divided" speech. And I always tried to keep Mary [Todd Lincoln] in focus as I studied Lincoln. One reviewer, in a left-handed compliment, said it was the best thing ever written about Mary — and the only thing worthwhile in the book. Needless to say, I preferred the *New York Times* review, which called the book "surpassingly eloquent."

PHE: Will you tell us about your coming East?

CS: I came to New York about ten years ago, in 1986. First, working with Robert [Jay Lifton], I began to change somewhat — I was in a totally different environment. Aside from working at the Center and all the work here [at John Jay College], I got associated with the Self Psychology Institute, TRISP (Training and Research Institute in Self Psychology). They were just setting it up and I helped them. As I started teaching at the Institute, I was getting closer and closer to clinical psychology, even though I still wasn't seeing patients. At one point in the late eighties I thought, "Maybe I should do this," but as I looked into it I found there were some incredible hurdles and road blocks and such nonsense — so I just put it away.

But then about five years ago I got grandfathered in as a psychoanalyst and I suddenly could do clinical work. It was a wonderful opportunity! Doing clinical work has actually changed my whole thinking about myself.

Who am I? Now, I genuinely think of myself as much as a psychoanalyst as I do as a historian. I'm writing a biography now on Heinz Kohut and I'm seeing patients. It's a real change of identity. But, of course, it's not a change at all. It's moving a little further over the bridge: taking a few steps over the other way, without losing anything that I was before. I find that my fears were groundless; rather than being a distraction and taking me away from my creative impulses and my writing, psychoanalysis and seeing patients has deepened them and I think it has made for more interesting psychohistorical work. Although I've been reading and teaching psychoanalysis for all these years, by not seeing patients there had been something missing in my understanding of the field. So, that's where I am in my early fifties. I'm fifty-two and I see this mix of teaching and seeing patients as absolutely wonderful — it gives me a much deeper appreciation for our enterprise.

PHE: How do you respond to the fears of Bruce Mazlish, our December interviewee, that historians will go over the line and cease being historians if they're seeing patients?

CS: I think it's a real issue. If you're not committed to your scholarly work, then you'll probably be drawn away from it. If you have a kid in college you may try to pay the tuition bill by seeing an extra five or ten patients. If you've already got too many hours, then it's going to be a real distraction. But, if you are committed to scholarship and you feel it has integrity in terms of the course of your life, psychoanalysis will deepen your commitment rather than soften it. I don't think the mere fact of having psychoanalytic training is *per se* going to draw you away. I think there are also some very practical considerations. For example, Jack Fitzpatrick who worked on *The Psychohistory Review* couldn't get a job teaching history, so he started seeing patients and became a psychoanalyst. That was his only option.

In my own experience, I wanted to wait [to do clinical work]. I didn't want to start too early. I knew that I was a historian. That's what I've always been, but it could have been eroded. If you're in your twenties or early thirties and you're

training and getting into clinical work, then that can become a crucial part of your identity in ways that can compromise your commitment to historical research. So, I share some of Mazlish's concerns. Clinical work is wonderful work and very seductive — but not more seductive than teaching.

Historians, because most of them are not dealing with psychological questions and haven't been in treatment, don't think psychologically about people and emotions. They can be very smart and write about the history of emotions, or people's motivations in doing things, or motivations in great events like wars and social movements, but they don't think about *their* connection to those events. They write historical narration and they're separated from those events. We psychohistorians, however, are so damn systematic about those issues of motivation and where we stand as authors in relationship to our subjects and our own feelings about our subjects. This really bothers historians and they think it borders on bullshit. Psychologists and psychoanalysts, however, say, "Of course if you're going to read about the Civil War you are going to want to know in advance why Lincoln would act the way he did. Why would anybody be so stupid as to not want to ask that question?"

I have found that whenever I speak to shrinks or medical schools, I begin with their being receptive to what I am up to [as a psychohistorian]. They don't question the project, although they may not like what I say. (Whereas, when you talk to historians, you have to justify your existence.) You have to speak with caution. You have to know how not to push the wrong buttons. Then you bring them in and make them think that they like it [the psychohistorical material] more than they actually do. This is, and has always been, a dilemma for those of us who move in both areas.

PHE: But the world out there is very open. The average people on the street might not know exactly what psychohistory is, but they know it makes sense. And they want to talk about themselves which psychohistory gives them more opportunity to do. So, I think we've won the battle for the basic approaches inherent in psychohistory, but we've lost the war for academia.

CS: I don't think we lost the war; we never got a chance to fight it! In the sixties, the field had the prospect of being structurally grounded. But it

started just as the bottom dropped out of academic hiring between 1971 and 1972. That's exactly when *The Journal [of Psychohistory]* started (1971) and when I started *The Psychohistory Review* (1972), and when everyone was getting their first jobs — or they had them for a few years before then. The established people like Erikson and Lifton were doing nothing to institutionalize psychohistory — in terms of creating an institutional framework where you bring students in, train them, they get PhDs, and then they have jobs. Then, fifteen or twenty years later you have the next generation of people moving into the field. This is what happened in economic history, women's history, and American colonial history. Keep in mind, those men were not in history — Erikson was in Social Relations at Harvard and Robert was in Psychiatry at Yale. But, they were not trying to become major professors and create psychohistorical centers. Nobody was! We were trying to do it at the junior level which was impossible to do because of the hiring crisis.

PHE: Another problem was that a lot of what passed for psychohistory was throwing labels around very nervously and defensively like second-year medical students who are so nervous that they have all those diseases and then, in turn, see those diseases in their friends and family.

CS: That's partly generational. Erikson wasn't doing that in the fifties and sixties. The people who were doing that were younger people doing their first works. So, the lesson had to be learned all over again. The early Freudians did it, as reflected in the minutes of the meetings every Wednesday at Freud's house. Now, however, most of the seventies' younger people have grown up and gone beyond that.

My friend Larry Friedman feels that, as a field, psychohistory is dead. But I think he exaggerates the difficulty that graduate students face in getting jobs. I think the field is not dead at all; I think it's very intellectually alive. However, it's not structurally grounded in the life of academia, and it probably won't be — and that's a problem. Institutionally, it is always going to work at the margins. At the same time, biography, in the last thirty years, has been changed — transformed!

PHE: You're working on a biography of Kohut now?

CS: Yes, my main project right now is my biography of Heinz Kohut. I began it in 1983 and

worked on it for three years but then I had to abandon it because I couldn't get access to [vital manuscript] papers. But now I've come back to Kohut in a big way. He's such an interesting and wonderful figure who created a new set of original ideas — he's so complex and contradictory. And self psychology is so important to the history of psychoanalysis. It's very exciting for me to be back again writing another psychobiography, which is really what I love to do.

If you really understand Kohut's life history, you can see how his ideas are the natural extension of his self and his issues into the theoretical realm. He didn't just project his own issues and universalize his conflicts and confusions and create a theory out of them. He was able to speak from within his own confusions and contradictions and wrestle with them in a way that forced him to reinterpret and remake psychoanalytic theory. One can see Kohut in all of his theories: narcissism, idealization, mirroring the psychological meaning of drivenness, and, perhaps most importantly, his reinterpretation of sexuality — that is, sexuality as opposed to sexual drive, the instinct. All of this reconceptualization can only make sense in terms of understanding what his own life history is all about.

PHE: I'm curious about applied psychohistory — what you do here.

CS: Once I came to the Center on Violence and Human Survival, I went through a ten-year project working on the "Ultimate Threat," under the influence of Robert [Jay Lifton]. My coming to New York happened to coincide with finishing my Lincoln work, and I wasn't quite sure where I was going and what my next project would be. By coming here, I came to understand the significance of ultimate threats. I found that enormously exciting. I realized in retrospect that I didn't "get it" before. Psychologically, I didn't understand what the ultimate threat *really* means.

We got a \$400,000 grant from the MacArthur Foundation in the late eighties to do a big study on what Americans think about nuclear war. I handled that and did tons of interviewing. We interviewed [Christian] fundamentalists, black poor, civic leaders, and peace activists. The interview method was Robert's method that he had been working on ever since the thought reform book [*Thought Reform and the Psychology of Totalism*] in the late 1950s. It is psychological

interviewing — it isn't therapy when you're doing a research interview, but it's psychological.

I think it is of just such enormous significance to understand ultimate threats that we live with because we live in a time of extremes. Even when you have superficial calm, such as with Generation X and self-absorbed people doing their own thing, it's a false confidence, a false withdrawal into self. What is below the surface is agitation, turmoil, and deep anxiety because nobody can really trust a human future. The Christian fundamentalists, while they wait for Jesus to come back, become the extreme edge of that agitation. It affects everybody else in the culture; the way it connects with very widespread and diverse, protean forms of anxiety about the future and about social dislocation, mass death, AIDS, disease, suffering, and all the kinds of uncertainties that are very much a part of our cultural and social existence now. It gets connected to the year 2000 in very peculiar kinds of ways so that there's an "age of millennialism." The year 2000 focuses those concerns. You can't go to a movie or read a book without seeing something that has an apocalyptic theme. It is everywhere! In fact, Christian millennialism has stirred Jewish millennialism — if that's not an irony!

It changes everything if you can't be certain of your own future. In the wake of the end of the Cold War, there was this response for a few years where people said, "Well, we don't need to worry about the nuclear threat anymore." It wasn't just that [nuclear] proliferation had made the threat even worse if you thought about it for five minutes, but it was a response — albeit an irrational response — that revealed how panic-stricken people had been about the threat itself, that there could be this kind of totalistic retreat from the threat into the fantasy that now it was over. When we were doing this study between 1988 and 1991, we documented in our interviews the expansion of the fears from nuclear [war] to environmental [catastrophes], for example, ozone holes. That's a change in consciousness of great proportions, although it's not a conceptual change. It's like T.S. Elliot's poem: You go with a bang or a whimper. Ultimately, you go. What the fear is and what the knowledge of the possibility of going is, is that it *could* end. Not that it *will* end, but it *could* end.

If you have such a profound shift in the last

half of the century in consciousness, your sense of self changes, religion changes, culture changes, art changes, aesthetics change, values change, and all institutions change. It effects banking systems and computers. Computer makers forgot to program the turn of the millennium. Psychologically, when people forget something rather significant like that, there's more going on than just accidental forgetfulness. It could cost anywhere between 300 and 600 billion dollars worldwide to correct — and that's a conservative estimate! It is just so fundamental to who we are.

Historically we've always had millennial fears; they've been around since the beginning of culture. However, they've been assigned to deeply religious people (mystics) and artists who can extend their own individual death to encompass universal human endings, and to psychotics. Those three groups were assigned the task of thinking about collective death — until the nuclear age. Now, what the nuclear age introduces is that you can no longer leave the task of imagining ultimate issues to the margins and to these three assigned groups. Now you have to numb yourself to not think about them. Before, you could live a life having never questioned that there would be your children's children and that there would be, as Robert says, some kind of immortality of the self. [This allowed you] to lead a rich, vital life. Now, you cannot lead a rich, vital life and not, at some point — if not continuously — imagine human endings. That is such a profound transformation. We're just beginning to understand it.

We're still going nowhere with the American nuclear age. You see the incredible confusions that Paul S. Boyer [see *When Time Shall Be No More* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992)] has documented and all this madness. Think about Herman Kahn [*Thinking About the Unthinkable*] in the sixties talking about having limited nuclear war where *only* 100 million people will die and therefore it's imaginable and therefore we can have it. That kind of utter craziness and evil — I mean, it's ethically evil to think in those terms. We're just beginning to be able to think in terms that make some sense about all that.

[As I said,] one of the groups that I interviewed was the Christian fundamentalists. I started hanging out in the churches. It was so interesting I stayed with it and did a separate book based on that research [*Apocalypse: On the*

*Psychology of Fundamentalism in America*]. Although I finished that book in 1994, I then got sucked into doing a book on the year 2000 with Mike Flynn [*The Year 2000: Essays on the End*] — it's a collection of essays, three of which are mine. Mike and I just turned it in [to the publisher] the day before yesterday. So, that's the end of millennialism, ultimate issues, fundamentalism, Christianity — well, it's not totally the end because I'm sure I'll write some more, but right now I'm really focused on my Kohut biography.

PHE: How do you feel about there being two major journals in the field?

CS: We need two journals in the field. Each serves a purpose. *The Journal of Psychohistory* is much more psychologically oriented. It's approaching that bridge from the point of view of psychology and psychoanalysis, rather than from the point of view of history. It is also an important alternative to the perspective of *The Psychohistory Review*, which is to look at psychohistory from [a particular] point of view: that the answers that one has to those psychological questions have to be historical and have to follow historical methodology and have the rigor of history. The essential difference is the difference between an approach to psychohistory from within psychology and psychoanalysis as opposed to one coming from history.

PHE: Yes, I think that is a very real distinction.

CS: That is why when you go to meetings of the IPA [International Psychohistorical Association] there are a lot of people who are psychoanalysts. Whereas [at an] upcoming meeting of GUPH [the Group for the Use of Psychology in History] there will be all historians in attendance. There will be people like me who are historians and analysts — or [Robert Jay] Lifton who is going to give a talk — but there won't be any [who are only] psychoanalysts.

PHE: Which is unfortunate because a few more [besides you and Lifton] would probably be good. You disagree with Lloyd deMause's belief in laws in history, but what about patterns?

CS: I do not accept the idea that there are laws of history at all, but certainly there are patterns. It is one of the prime tasks of historians to uncover and describe those patterns. But it is foolish to attempt anything more than that.

PHE: One thing that strikes me is how, despite different approaches and disagreements, you, Lloyd deMause, Robert Jay Lifton, Peter Loewenberg, Larry Shiner, and various presidents of the IPA have all done the right thing as far as cooperating with each other at crucial junctures and not burning bridges.

*Gary M. Schmidt, the Forum's Administrative Assistant, participated in the interview and transcribed it in an act of unremunerated scholarship. He is an honors graduate of Ramapo College who will soon be pursuing his graduate education in nonproliferation studies. Professor Strozier generously spent a half-hour advising Gary on graduate schools. As with all interviews, Bob Lentz, Associate Editor, did the final editing. □*

## Response to "The Unabomber"

H. John Rogers  
Martinsville, West Virginia

One sentence leaped out at me from Elovitz and O'Donnell's excellent "The Cry of a Child: The Unabomber Suspect's Explosive Family Boundaries" [in the September, 1996, issue]. That sentence was about alleged Unabomber Ted Kaczynski's brother: "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...." The situation facing David Kaczynski is at least as old as that of Sophocles' Antigone: where does one's obligation to family end and obligation to the polity begin?

From his public statements, two factors weighed heavily on David's mind. First, he was repulsed by the possibility that the financial largesse he had given to his brother had financed, however unwittingly, Ted's criminal activities. Second, and far more germane, David feared that the Unabomber would kill again. (I have put aside two other *possibly* relevant facts from the public record: 1) David's wife, like Lady Macbeth, hectored him into taking action and 2) there was a sizable monetary reward posted which the family has not publicly renounced.)

The Kaczynski family seems to be

possessed of solid middle class values. Middle class people view the police and prosecutors as their protectors and friends, which they usually are. An example of this thinking was present in my family when my nephew was in a one-car accident after a high school football game. He was intoxicated and the police found a handgun (his father's) under the front seat. My sister, an elementary school teacher, felt that her son should give the Deputy Sheriff a full statement because the boy "needed to learn a lesson." (It was my position that he should decline to make a statement and that any "lesson" here could be best taught by his parents.)

But, what should David have done? Clearly, at the beginning he was only operating on suspicion. Why not fly out to Montana, confront his brother Ted, and say, "I suspect A, B, and C, and I have reasons 1 to 8 inclusive. What do you have to say?" If Ted denies the allegations, David could say, "I have left a tape of what I just told you with a trusted friend and if anything happens to me, or if the Unabomber strikes again, that tape will be delivered to the U.S. Attorney's Office." If Ted admits the allegations, I, personally, would follow Antigone's course and put the welfare of my brother (by blood or affinity) before the welfare of the state, as it applies to past actions. Then I would deliver the above admonition with regard to possible future offenses. But, I am the first to concede that a valid case can be made for turning the brother in. Again, where does one's obligation to family end and obligation to the polity begin?

I have the feeling that David Kaczynski will end up being a hero in everyone's eyes but his own. Regardless of the reasons behind his actions, he betrayed his brother and, like history's first surviving brother, he will bear *Lekayin ot* — "the mark of Cain."

*H. John Rogers, who remains a practicing attorney, manifests his profound concerns for ethical and theological issues by earning a Master of Divinity degree (1995) and becoming a candidate for ordination. He also studies Talmud and is translating one of the books of the Bible.*

### Paul Elovitz Responds:

It is nice to be complimented on one's "excellent" article. Rogers is most gentle in his implied criticism that Michele O'Donnell and I

missed the point in reference to the motivation of David Kaczynski and his wife, specifically to the temptation of the reward. To liken Ted Kaczynski's sister-in-law to "Lady Macbeth" seems both misguided and unfair to a beleaguered family. She (Linda Patrik) has reasons to feel distant from a brother-in-law who always treated her as an interloper, worried the family, and drained its resources.

David has been extremely devoted to a troubled, increasingly distant, and paranoid brother. He has had to relinquish his job as a social worker because of the needs of his brother's defense and the difficulty of living a normal life in the spotlight of the media. Since the Kaczynskis are a middle class family of modest means, if they should claim the reward for the Unabomber, I suspect the money will be used to defend Ted against the death penalty and to compensate for lost income.

I would second Rogers' assessment that "David Kaczynski will end up being a hero in everyone's eyes but his own." He cares deeply about his brother and was placed in a no-win

### Immigration Meeting Report

A free copy of Pauline Juckes' detailed report of the 1996 Forum meeting on the Immigrant Psychodynamics Project is available on request from the Editor. Please include a stamped, self-

situation by his realization that his "big brother" could have been bombing and killing people for 17 years. I would suggest that people focus on moral courage as a far more likely explanation of David's actions than greed. They might also monitor their own feelings and examine the variety of impulses that each of us normally has during a high profile trial. Psychohistory can provide many insights into the group psychology surrounding the Kaczynskis' 15 minutes of fame and I hope some of our colleagues will write about this aspect. I would welcome the opportunity to publish such research findings. □

### Letter to the Editor

Clinton's Paternally Partisan Presidency

Dear Editor,

University of Pittsburgh

Like a wise father, President Clinton emphasizes the common national interest rather than partisan rivalry. He has accepted Republican initiatives such as the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), decreases in federal expenditures, and a balanced federal budget. He has appointed former Republican Senator William S. Cohen as Secretary of Defense. The Democratic Party thereby becomes more inclusive and popular.

A psychobiographical source of Clinton's paternally partisan Presidency is that his birth was preceded by the death of his father. Two previous Presidents, Rutherford B. Hayes and Andrew Jackson, were also born after the deaths of their fathers. In common with Clinton, they emphasized the national interest rather than partisan rivalry. Hayes, a Republican, was elected President in 1876. In his inaugural address he said, "The President of the United States owes his election to ... a political party ... but he should strive to be always mindful of the fact that he serves his party best who serves his country best." Jackson, a Democrat from Tennessee, was elected President in 1828 with John C. Calhoun from South Carolina as his Vice President. Calhoun asserted the right of states to nullify federal laws. At a Jefferson Day dinner in 1830, President Jackson declared in a toast, "Our Union: It must be preserved." He was re-elected in 1832 with a New Yorker, Martin Van Buren, as his Vice President. The Democratic Party was strengthened in the North and Van Buren became the next President.

The tragically premature death of the father had two early and persistent effects on the personality development of the Presidents. Both effects contributed to their emphasis on the national interest rather than partisan rivalry. The first effect was a special attachment with the bereaved mother. She gave the son the same first name as her dead husband. She was a beloved maternal model for national service and conciliation. The second effect was exposure from an early age to laudatory descriptions of the dead father. The son therefore identified with an idealized man. By contrast, most children become aware of the human flaws of their father and compete with him for their mother's attention. The child's antagonistic feelings toward his father are subsequently displaced onto other male authority figures and rivals.

Herbert Barry, III

## Meeting Reports

### Loss and Achievement

*Report on the November 3, 1996, Psychohistory Forum Meeting*

Marvin Eisenstadt, author (with others) of the classic book *Parental Loss and Achievement*, led a lively discussion at the November 3 meeting of the Psychohistory Forum. Eisenstadt is kept quite busy with his work as a clinical psychologist at South Oaks Hospital along with his private practice on Long Island. Nevertheless, he has found time to read and analyze hundreds of biographies in a search for statistically verifiable relationships between childhood experience and adult achievement. His most important finding is that creative achievement in adult life is statistically associated with the loss of a parent. Loss of a parent, particularly in the first ten years of an individual's life, produces problems in reality testing, emotional relating, and the development of a successful adult social role.

The eminent people Eisenstadt studies are exceptional individuals who manage to overcome this handicap and redirect their inner rage in creative and constructive ways. The group discussed the advantages and disadvantages of comparative biography as a method which can provide rigorous tests of statistical patterns, when compared to in-depth individual studies which are more subjective but provide a different quality of insight. Paul Elovitz provided parental loss data on some contemporary politicians he is studying and, on the basis of his limited sample, thought there might be some support for Eisenstadt's correlation of later parental loss with greater conservatism.

Ted Goertzel  
Rutgers University

*Editor's Note: The November 3 meeting was the first personal encounter between*

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*Eisenstadt and Ted Goertzel. The two had previously met only through their books. Eisenstadt's book was published in 1989 and is still available in hardcover for \$47.50 plus \$4.00 shipping and handling from International Universities Press, 59 Boston Post Road, P.O. Box 1524, Madison, CT 06443-1524. Ted Goertzel co-authored the book Three Hundred Eminent Personalities with his parents in 1978. The Goertzels' latest biography, Linus Pauling: A Life in Science and Medicine, has just been released as a \$16.00 paperback by Basic Books. As it happens, Pauling's life is an excellent example of Eisenstadt's thesis, since the loss of his father at age nine was the central emotional crisis of Pauling's life.*

### Men's Fear of Women

*Report on the January 25 meeting of the Psychohistory Forum*

Rita Ransohoff, a psychoanalyst and psychologist affiliated with the New York School of Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy, made a progress report to the Forum of her research and writing of a book on men's fears of women and their consequent attempts to subordinate the female gender. She brought in a vast amount of anthropological, literary, psychohistorical, and psychological data in support of her thesis. The majority of her materials came from African, Hindi, and Islamic examples that she collected in the course of extensive research and travel. The participants mainly related these to American culture.

There was a most lively discussion among the fourteen people (eight men and six women) present, ten of whom are psychotherapists. Inevitably, the discussion worked its way around to sex: it is almost as if difficult materials on the relationship of the genders must be sexualized no matter how educated and sophisticated the participants in the dialogue — and this was as high-powered a group as you are likely to find anywhere.

Forum members may have an interest in reading Dr. Ransohoff's previous volume, *Venus After Forty: Sexual Myths, Men's Fantasies, and Truths About Middle-Aged Women* (Far Hills, NJ: New Horizon Press, 1987). She was also one of the three contributors to the book, *Berggasse 19: The Home and Office of Sigmund Freud* (New

East Germans shake their heads in disbelief about the recently revealed corruption, betrayals, and terrorization by the former Communist government. They are as hurt as if an idealized parent had been exposed as corrupt and inhumane. Many hold on to past ideals, and wonder whether it would have been possible to approach these ideals under better leadership. So, at this moment it seems likely that they will manage to embrace the future without suffocating in hate of their past, without despising, poisoning, or cutting off their roots. However, because they appear to be more hurt than enraged by their former leaders, it is not at all certain that these "emigrants" from Communism to capitalism, from East to West, will be able to cherish aspects of their past without drowning in nostalgia.

Nostalgia may be triggered by external factors such as unwelcoming social, cultural, and political conditions. Great disparities between life before and after any change, as well as the abruptness of change, may leave people yearning for what they left behind. Forced rather than voluntary change, and the irreversibility of the change, may make the acceptance of the new conditions more difficult. The changes brought about by the German unification were certainly abrupt as well as forced and irreversible, thus heightening the tendency to become nostalgic. The nostalgic reaction may occur when a new situation "becomes uncomfortable or painful," or impedes a person's progress toward a chosen goal. These conditions obtained for the East Germans, who abruptly had to exchange the "rituals and teachings of a particular culture" for "the unfamiliarity of the new situation."

It is as true for the East Germans as it was for the majority of the emigrants from Nazi Germany that, in the new situation, their reduced economic circumstances and the uselessness of previously valued professional and work skills create a major turmoil in their lives. These conditions upset their customary system of rewards, contributing further to the experience of nostalgia. Despite the promise of freedom and opportunity, for many the immediate reality is one of imprisonment, often by unemployment, nearly always by relative poverty and lowered social status. These are ample reasons to yearn for the past, to mourn the losses, and to feel the shame of tarnished ideals.

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