
Clio's Psyche

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

Volume 5, Number 1

June, 1998

Freud and Asimov: Two Very Different "Psychohistories"

Nine Articles and a Bibliography

Fantasies and Realities of Psychohistory

Paul H. Elovitz
Ramapo College

It was as if two separate worlds in a science fiction novel met each other for the first time last September. The occasion of the meeting was the

Books Shaping Psychohistorians

Comments by Binion,
Loewenberg, and Strozier

In a new feature of our publication, outstanding psychohistorians reveal the books which shaped their thinking. All three of this issue's contributors are historians, two of whom -- Loewenberg and Strozier -- have also become psychoanalysts.

Rudolph Binion, Brandeis University

I came to psychohistory in the 1960s through my efforts to make sense of Lou Andreas-Salomé's rich life fraught with pathology. No work in the field itself led me to it; toiling in

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isolation, I was unaware even that such a field already existed. The writings that were my strongest inspirations are an unlikely set.

Freud's works top the list: I read them all. Almost as eye-opening for me as Freud's searchlights into our irrational human depths were Ibsen's. And for method my master was Henri Bergson's *An Introduction to Metaphysics* (1955). When I graduated from biographic to group studies later along, I drew support from three equally disparate sources: *The Bacchae* by Euripides, with its stark model of the group unconscious in action; Durkheim's *Suicide*, with its elegant theoretical construction of shared consciousness; and, above all, that locus classicus for group psychodynamics in history, *The Genealogy of Morals* by Nietzsche.

If no works of psychohistory proper pointed my scholarly way, that is because I came to the field in its infancy while teaching intellectual and cultural history. But then, psychohistory is hardly out of its infancy even now, and I would urge its young votaries to look back to such classics as have guided my own hand.

Rudolph Binion is Leff Families Professor of Modern History at Brandeis University. See Bob Lentz, "The Courage of Rudolph Binion," Clio's Psyche, December, 1994: 7-12.

Peter Loewenberg, UCLA

If I had to choose one early book that excited me, it would be one I encountered in graduate school, *Black Ship to Hell* (1962), by the late Brigid Brophy. It is a wonderful psychoanalytically-inspired lithe, intelligent culture critique of modern social rationalizations and self-deceptions, including the language of foreign policy and the prelude to World War I. I knew that the assumptions of the diplomatic history I was learning were superficial and that she was right -- there was a lot more to going to war than naval races and telegrams between Berlin and Vienna. She was particularly strong on music, adored Mozart (about whom she wrote a book), and did clever psychodynamic things with "Don Giovanni." I immediately read all of her works I could lay my hands on, including essays in the *Times Literary Supplement*, and discovered that, among other things, she was a fervent animal rights anti-vivisectionist and author of *Hackenfeller's Ape* (1964).

For later work, I would name four articles, one each from psychoanalysis and cultural anthropology, and two from history:

- Ernest Schachtel, "On Childhood Memory Amnesia," in his book, *Metamorphosis* (1959).
- James A. Boon, "Between the Wars in Bali -- Reading the Relics," in George W. Stocking, Jr., ed., *History Of Anthropology*, vol. 4, *Malinowski, Rivers, Benedict and Others* (1986): 218-247.
- Jonathan Steinberg, "The Copenhagen Complex," *Journal of Contemporary History*, I:3 (1966): 23-46.
- Kenneth M. Stampf, "The Southern Road to Appomattox," in *The Imperiled Union* (1980): 246-269.

Though Peter Loewenberg technically retired from UCLA, he is in fact quite busy doing professional work and teaching. See Bob Lentz, "The Praxis of Peter Loewenberg," Clio's Psyche, September, 1994: 5-8.

Charles B. Strozier, CUNY Graduate School

The most important book in my psychohistorical life was Erik Erikson's *Young Man Luther* (1958). I took Erikson's course at Harvard in the fall of 1965 and it changed my life. I read *Young Man Luther* then and decided that was what my interest in history was all about. Later, I read Erikson's *Gandhi's Truth* (1969) which is a more moving, if somewhat less elegant, book. In the 1970s I taught *Gandhi's Truth* in almost every course that I taught and over a ten-year period read it at least a dozen times. It was reading *Gandhi's Truth* that led me into the theory of nonviolence and my own struggles with food and vegetarianism. I think the next book on my list would be Lifton's *Nazi Doctors* (1986). Finally, I would mention Geoffrey Ward's first volume on Franklin Delano Roosevelt, *Before the Trumpet* (1985). It is a model of a historian using psychology completely unobtrusively.

Charles B. Strozier is Co-Director of the Center on Violence and Human Survival of John Jay College and Professor of History at CUNY Graduate School. See Paul H. Elovitz, "A Conversation With Charles B. Strozier," Clio's Psyche, March, 1997: 97, 119-125.

Editor's Note: We want to thank these leading psychohistorians for contributing to this issue and Professor David Beisel for his suggestion that we list the books shaping their thought as a separate feature. The formative books of Peter Petschauer, this issue's "Distinguished Psychohistorian," are given in the interview. □

Reflecting from the Periphery: Peter Petschauer

Sally Atkins
Appalachian State University

Peter W. Petschauer was born in Berlin, Germany, in 1939. He grew up in Afers/Eores in northern Italy (South Tyrol) during World War II, attended gymnasium there and in Holland, and immigrated to the United States in 1957. He received his doctoral degree in European and Russian history from New York University in 1969. From 1968 to the present he has taught at Appalachian State University in Boone, North Carolina, where he is currently Professor of History, specializing in Russian and Children's History. He was I.G. Greer Distinguished

Professor of History, 1987 to 1989, and Chair of the University of North Carolina Faculty Assembly, 1995 to 1997.

Petschauer's publications include *The Education of Women in Eighteenth-Century Germany: Bending the Ivy* (Lewisburg, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 1989); *The Language of History: A Topical Approach to World Civilization* (Dubuque, IA: Kendall/Hunt Publishing, 1990); and *Human Space: Finding Our Place in a Threatening World* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1997). He has published over 50 articles and chapters of books and presented over 100 papers. He is currently writing, with Howard Stein and Thomas Howell, *The Next Civil War*. He is Contributing Editor, *The Journal of Psychohistory*; Board Member, the *Psychohistory Forum*; and on the Editorial Board of **Clio's Psyche**. Sally Atkins ("SA") interviewed Professor Petschauer ("PP") in August, 1997.

Clio's Psyche

Vol. 5, No. 1

June, 1998

ISSN 1080-2622

Published Quarterly by The Psychohistory Forum

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Subscription Rate:

Free to members of the Psychohistory Forum

\$25 yearly to non-members

\$40 yearly to institutions

(Both add \$4 outside USA & Canada)

Single Issue Price: \$9

We welcome articles of psychohistorical interest that are 300 - 1200 words.

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SA: Peter, how do you define psychohistory?

PP: It brings together different disciplines, principally history and psychology. It may attract a kind of historian who is more proactive than others in the field. And it may attract psychologists who would like to be more reflective than proactive.

SA: What brought you to psychohistory?

PP: Two or three different things. First, the field itself intrigues me. Then there are the personalities in the field. Third is the combination of the field and the personalities. The personalities intrigued me more than anything else. The individual I came across first was David Beisel. He had written an article about German motherhood, and I strongly disagreed with one aspect of what he had to say. Impetuous as I was in earlier years, I wrote him a letter, challenging him. Much to my surprise, he wrote me a very charming response. The other person I came across very early on in my acquaintance with psychohistory was Lloyd deMause. In his 1982 book, *Foundations of Psychohistory*, he had proposed a new way of looking at the history of childhood. I was very excited by what he had to say but here, too, were some points with which I disagreed. I wrote a response and, again, I received a wonderfully open and charming response, saying in effect that he appreciated what I said and would publish it in *The Journal of Psychohistory*.

SA: So, you just entered the dialogue.

PP: Yes, and in time with other colleagues like Paul Elovitz and other individuals in the New

York City area, and also some as far away as Howard Stein in Oklahoma and Heinrich Reiss in Germany. Through getting to know these colleagues and attending meetings of the International Psychohistorical Association (IPA) and the Psychohistory Forum I gradually came closer to these groups. One of the early high points came in 1988 when my wife Joni and I coordinated the meeting of the IPA in Washington, DC. When I joined psychohistory, the field was searching for a definition, and I suppose it remains in the process of defining and reinventing itself.

Three pillars initially made up the field of psychohistory. The first is the study of biography, or a new way of searching for a more accurate and comprehensive interpretation of individual lives, past and present. This search goes back at least as far as Sigmund Freud. Next is the history of childhood. Even before deMause, others like Philippe Ariès had begun to define this subfield, but Lloyd gave it the impetus to become an integral part of psychohistory. More recently, again under the initial leadership of deMause, group-fantasy analysis was added. Individuals like Freud and Erik Erikson, of course, exerted a tremendous influence on psychohistory because of the way they approached history and combined it with psychology, edging beyond just setting the two fields next to each other by integrating them.

Today, psychohistory bears characteristics of its relatively recent roots. It is a field of research, but it is also a field of very dynamic and creative individuals who are engaged in research and publishing in different venues. Ours is not a field of great institutes and governmental or private largesse. Rather, it is a field of a number of key individuals who have assembled organizations around themselves for the purpose of "doing" and publishing psychohistory: deMause, the IPA, and the *Journal*; Paul Elovitz, the Psychohistory Forum, and **Clio's Psyche**; and Vamik Volkan, the Center for the Study of Mind and Human Interaction, and *Mind and Human Interaction*.

While I do not see psychohistory threatened in any way, one of its weaknesses is that these individuals are growing older and the field must find ways to replace their dynamic scholarship and organizational leadership. As my generation and those a little older retire or leave the field for various reasons, the research focuses will change as well. The field will continue with biography and history of childhood, and probably with ethnic history, but other directions may be

different. We may discover that a new combination of disciplines will give us better access to the past and present than psychohistory. Interestingly and wonderfully, today we have quite a number of individuals in the field who are not necessarily trained historians or psychologists. They come from business, medicine, biology, sociology, and political science. So, while the key contributions probably are still made by historians and psychologists, a number of different fields are contributing to psychohistory.

SA: From a psychologist's perspective, it sounds as if psychohistory incorporates more of the aspects of personal history. Is that accurate history?

PP: It's accurate. It includes everything from childhood to biography to group-fantasy, figuring out how the mature individuals who emerged from a particular childhood operate or work in the society in which they find themselves. If child upbringing during a certain period in history was particularly violent, then we might expect the individuals who survived into adulthood in that society to be violent also, unless in their maturing process, in their own parenting, they realized that this violence was detestable, that is should not be continued. Psychohistorians have found individuals in the past and present who overcame their violent past and later tended in the opposite direction of what was done to them.

SA: So, we have examples of how the societal context and the personal history of people shape and alter their approach to life and work.

PP: Yes. My book on human space is my latest expression about how to look at the way we live and exert ourselves in the world. I talk not just about childhood or adulthood experiences, but endeavor to explore the different ways in which we understand and shape our environment and our bodies, and what we and others do to them. In a way, I stay in one of the traditions of psychohistory, which is to be a change agent, but in another way I push in a different direction. Even in that I am following others, including Howard Stein, one of my mentors, who long ago started discussing human beings in their space, including how we perceive space and how we use space. The political consideration about space for me is that we must as a society learn to be less romantic about such issues as freedom of speech because it can easily become one person's penetration into another person's space. We must be guided instead by human spatial needs, that is,

respect the spatial entity that another human being represents. Dealing with our fellow human beings in that way allows us to be open to their needs for clean air, clean water, and privacy.

SA: Of which of your psychohistorical works are you most proud?

PP: I'm most proud of three things. One of them was the article I wrote in response to deMause's *Foundations of Psychohistory* in which I offered some reinterpretations of how childhood history might be seen, some of the nuances that we might work on to improve it. Another piece is a short biography of my father. You might say I've barely shared it with anyone even though it was published (but a long time ago) ["Father, Son and Uncertain Solutions: Conversations and Reflections about National Socialist Germany," *Biography: An Interdisciplinary Quarterly*, VII, 3 (Summer, 1984): 189-205]. I tried to figure out this complex man, this father who was an SS officer and a diplomat, a man who also was totally disappointed with the Nazi regime after 1943 but who never joined any of the resistance groups. Not unlike most young people, I was trying to find my father and do so both in a historical context and in reference to the psychological dimensions of his experience during and after the SS regime. The last one is *Human Space*.

SA: What are you working on now?

PP: I am working principally on a book that takes a number of issues that psychohistory has explored and focuses on violence in the United States. The title of the book is tentatively *The Next Civil War*. It'll be a very short book, similar to classics like Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front* or Orwell's *1984* -- a short, precise, almost novel-like statement about how the violence, ethnic and otherwise, that permeates almost every aspect of our society will almost inevitably lead to a violent outburst. I hope to synthesize what psychohistorians and other scientists have been writing in regard to childhood, group-fantasy, ethnic behavior, and many other issues. The historian likes to look at the past, analyze it, and draw conclusions for that past, but not usually penetrate the present or the future. The psychologist likes to analyze the past and then evaluate and write to assist future behavior.

SA: What books were important to your development as a psychohistorian?

PP: I came across Erik Erikson fairly early. Everything he wrote made immense sense to

me even if I took no university course in which he was being read. I also read Freud's *Civilization and Its Discontents*. Later I read it in German; he wrote beautiful German. Of the recent psychohistorians, probably the work that had the most impact on me was Lloyd deMause's *History of Childhood*. Since then, probably the work of Stein, Elovitz, Rudolph Binion, Elizabeth Marvick, and Volkan has influenced me the most. Not only because of their writings, but also because of their personalities -- their personalities and their conversation intrigued me and directed me to a particular approach.

SA: What training should a person entering the field today pursue?

PP: The first thing that a psychohistorian must have is empathy for the individual subjects and for the society that s/he is studying. The other essential is formal, serious, rigorous study or training, whether it is in history, psychology, economics, political science, business, or law. But this serious training must include psychology.

SA: Please tell us about your teaching of psychohistory.

PP: Psychohistory is part of everything I teach. I have offered the courses History of Childhood and Human Space. I've also been invited into other instructors' courses and talked about the history of childhood and other aspects of psychohistory. Articles and books I've published, even with my Russian colleagues Anatoly Isaenko and Max Bliev, always are permeated by this perspective. Books and articles I assign in, say, 18th-Century Studies sometimes include a psychohistorical dimension.

SA: What do we as psychohistorians need to do to strengthen our work?

PP: Probably the best thing we can do for ourselves is to be constantly alert to the frailty of any field and the opportunities created by change. Many of the established fields like history or psychology are fairly formalistic, with fairly clear borders about the sorts of areas that can and cannot be investigated. They have become rigid in the way promotion and tenure procedures recreate the field generation after generation. Thus, new avenues are difficult and outreach to other disciplines is sometimes perceived as treacherous. Interestingly, too, subgroups are formed which battle with other groups in the field. Psychohistory has the advantage of not being as rigid as a field. New areas and avenues are explored regularly.

But, we, too, have certain issues with which we remain.

So, we can strengthen our field by retaining our flexibility. Another way is to refrain from becoming too much of an academic discipline. Still another is to write and write and write, to do writing that is disciplined and rigorous yet innovative and intriguing. Then it will be easier for us to attract the intrigued and excited, and the academically disenfranchised, individuals. We must also continue to train good people both in the university setting and outside of it, and to encourage the very best people with whom we come in contact to be, at the very least, open to the field.

SA: Can you name five or so individuals, in order, who have made the greatest contribution to psychohistory?

PP: Freud, Erikson, deMause, Stein, Volkan, Marvick, and Elovitz.

SA: What is the importance of childhood to psychohistory?

PP: It is very important because of the way it has helped us reinterpret and better understand behaviors in certain periods of history. In a university setting, students are interested in the history of childhood because, obviously, they have barely come out of childhood. It also intrigues them that psychohistorians say that spanking in our elementary and high schools is the last reverberation of the cruel and terrible punishments that were meted out to children throughout history. Childhood also helps us to better understand certain ethnic issues.

SA: Some Psychohistory Forum researchers have been struggling with the issue of identification with a particular parent and how that relates to achievement later in life.

PP: Psychology and psychohistory have made a great issue about parental relationships. The assumption there is that individuals grow up in nuclear families and have two parents after whom they can model themselves. This stance is not a good assumption either for my own or the present generation. I grew up, in deMause's terms, "farmed out," in a rural household of four women and a principal male servant in Afers in Northern Italy. Although later in life I interacted regularly with my parents, considering my father to have been my friend, and with my natural relatives, my role models were "strangers" rather than my parents. I did have a very solid relationship with

my father; he was a decent man. By contrast, I had a very troubled relationship with my mother. But I formed my attitudes regarding career and research interests only in small part in discussions with or reactions to my father, or mother. I formed them more from my experiences on the farm in Italy; in monasteries in Italy, Germany and Holland; and at universities in the U.S. and with the people in them. Although I am a stickler for timeliness like my father and took many of my anti-Nazi attitudes from him, I never looked back and asked if I was living up to him or continuing the perspectives that he held. Rather, I think, my growing up in a female household and choosing several significant female role models had a genuine impact on who I am and the fields I have chosen. I include among these choices my dissertation about a woman (Catherine the Great), a field like psychohistory, and directing myself towards the marginal in traditional history. I don't see any achievements particularly associated with my parents; I see any achievements more associated with the household in which I grew up in Italy during World War II. I shaped my attitudes towards success, morality, ethics, childhood, ethnicity, and human space in that household. It is a unique situation. I would have been extremely happy if my father had had a chance to be with me at some moments of my life. But, I'm equally happy that I can go back to Italy to the family who brought me up and be accepted there for what I am, accomplishments or not. One set of my principal interactions remains with the descendants of the women of the Egarter farm.

One of my first psychohistorical writings dealt with Catherine the Great. In her household, she very much reacted off her father's accomplishments and tried to attain similar accomplishments and push them further. Although she grew up in a large household in the 18th century, she thought in terms of a nuclear family in which the relationship between daughter and father and between daughter and mother were the principal relationships, and she shaped many of her patterns of behavior and her successes and failures on how her father and her mother might react. But with her, too, over time, other individuals emerged who played a role similar to her parents, almost as if they were substitutes for them. Thus the Empress Elizabeth, who reigned in the middle of the century in Russia, became like a father substitute for her. Then there were the models she chose from the past, like Ivan the Terrible, Henry IV of France, and Peter the Great. So, it is that in this nucleated setting she conversed, one might

say, throughout her life with her parents, but with other individuals having a tremendous impact on her as well.

SA: Do you think psychohistorians are more father-identified than are others?

PP: In order to be able to answer that question, we would have to know how all psychohistorians feel about their fathers, and there is additionally in this question the presumption that fathers inspire their children to succeed. It may be mothers, it may be sisters, it may be brothers, it may be another member of the household, or it may be a "stranger" role model. This is a male-centered question.

SA: It is, isn't it? And, a male-centered question in a patriarchal culture.

PP: And psychohistory prides itself not to aspire in a patriarchal direction.

SA: How do you feel about the impact of parental loss on achievement?

PP: Parental loss can be taken in at least two ways. One of them is the actual loss of a parent through death. The other one is the loss of a parent through a long-term separation. I have experienced both. By emigrating, I became separated from my parents and through their deaths I experienced the final separation. Both losses are difficult to take, but so was the separation from my household family in Afers; I was often more homesick for them than my parents. I have to say that my father's encouragement in many letters probably saved me from taking a less positive path in the U.S., but all the decisions about school emerged from discussions with role models, friends, and extended family in New York City.

I doubt also that the death of my parents had an impact on my success. My father's death 20 years ago made me realize the finality of life, but that realization or his total absence from my life has not driven me to do more or less than before that finality stared me in the face. The sort of physical separation I alluded to is probably different from the one we usually associate with parental loss. Regarding Catherine the Great, she lost her parents when she was asked to go to Russia. Her *Memoirs* show that the voice of the parents continued in her head, the superego, as if they were near her for many years. Their death seems not to have had as much impact as that initial separation. It is the separation that may in some ways have refined in her head, and in mine, the images of the parents.

SA: When were you separated from your father -- when did you go to Italy?

PP: Sally, you're asking an interesting question. Until this moment I never perceived my being in Italy as separating me from my father. I was a child. I was three or four years old. But I had images of him in my head and when I met him again at age 13 or so, it was as if we had hardly been apart from each other. We had similar hand movements. We had similar speech patterns.

SA: Did you actually see him at all during those ten years?

PP: Only in photos and through stories.

SA: But you were with your mother?

PP: Not really. I spent most of my childhood on a farm and in monasteries, away from her. All the same, my real separation from my father and mother, in a sense, occurred when I came to the United States; that is, when we were not on the same continent. I was 17.

SA: How old were you when they died?

PP: My father died in 1977 when I was in my late 30s. My mother died during the time that this interview was completed and I am now in my late 50s. The separation from my father through his death impacted two areas of my life: I became firmer in my beliefs about having to guard against the excesses of authority and I created an excellent relationship with my stepmother. My mother died much later in my life and after a long bout with senile dementia. Her death enabled me to realize some of the reasons we experienced difficulties in our relationship, and now I am trying to resolve how I will live with these realizations. I doubt that the death of either parent had a dramatic impact on my life, at least not that of my father. I accomplished the kinds of goals that he would have wanted me to accomplish before his death and it had little impact on my accomplishing them; all that had already been set a long time before. My mother had many ambivalences toward me, for example, she liked my younger brother better than me, she thought that I represented the same negative sorts of things as my father from whom she got divorced in the late 1940s, and felt that I would never amount to much. Her death simply allowed me to understand her better.

PP: In modern society, the final separation between parents and children takes place relatively late in life. That is, the death of parents tend to takes place when we are in our 30s, 40s, or 50s.

We have already set ourselves in a life pattern that is not likely changed by the death of a parent. It can bring tremendous sadness and loss, but it will not change our behavior.

SA: How do you explain the growth and psychology of fundamentalism?

PP: I suspect that this question would like to address why psychohistorians have become interested in fundamentalism. The religious past, or the combination of the religious and ethnic pasts, can be examined independently or be brought together with modern expressions from that past. We can analyze the way people have been brought up, we can discover the way they behave in groups, as adherents, as ethnics. All of us in psychohistory have a religious or ethnic affiliation which we deal with fairly constantly while we're working on our past through our analysis and writing. Psychohistory's interest in fundamentalism may thus ultimately have to do with the individuals who are engaged in psychohistory. Some of the principals in psychohistory are Jews living in the New York City area who had family members killed in the Holocaust and who have others living in Israel. So, extremism of various sorts, whether extreme nationalism, fundamentalism, or terrorism, are human expressions that ask to be discussed and understood by this group of individuals. Many others of us grew up or are living in areas that are prone to fundamentalist and/or terrorist expressions and so it is in the very nature of the field to study them. Fundamentalism is intriguing because it might help us explain our religious and ethnic backgrounds or those of our "ethnic enemies."

SA: How do you understand the psychology of terrorism?

PP: Terrorism is, like fundamentalism, an extreme form of human expression. Terrorism can take many forms. Certain groups, particularly minority or excluded ethnic groups, are attracted to it; they begin to feel that the society in which they live, especially when an ethnic group other than their own is in control, can only be changed by violent means. Terrorism can also take on the form of very specific terrorist acts, like a person, or a group of people, terrorizing a neighborhood; someone breaking into a home or an office and "desanctifying" that space; or some man raping a woman. Another issue that attracts our interest is the issue of the resurgence of terrorism. That is, once members of a society have begun to use terrorism, it is almost impossible to move beyond

it. Terrorism then becomes part of society's behavior. So, it is very difficult for some societies not to be violent because it has become "inbred," because children are brought up into it and become used to seeing violence as the best form of resolving societal problems. People who commit terrorist acts can see themselves as avenging a past misdeed, as freedom fighters, and as being in a state of war with members of an opposing group. So, psychohistorians are interested in how children are educated and trained to become violent at home and in school and then use terrorism as a means of resolving problems outside and inside these settings. There are several individuals in our group, like Volkan, who have spent the last 10 or 15 years trying to diffuse ethnic tensions in areas of the world like the Baltic, the Middle East, and Cyprus. What they have learned about ethnic groups and child violence and why violence becomes such a preferred tool helps people of different ethnic backgrounds in these areas to meet and to converse. To me, that's where psychohistory, psychology, and history can meet in order to accomplish a present day good, that is, reduce violence.

SA: How can we recruit new people to the field?

PP: The best way to recruit new people to the field is by writing good books and articles, and teaching great classes -- to invite new people into the dialogue.

Sally Atkins, PhD, is Professor of Human Development and Psychological Services at Appalachian State University in Boone, North Carolina, and a participant in the University's Hubbard Center for Faculty and Staff Development. She is a former Chair of the University of North Carolina Faculty Assembly. □

Death to the Winner: A "Kennedyesque" Enactment

Daniel Dervin
Mary Washington University

On New Year's Eve on Aspen mountain, in the late afternoon after most skiers had taken their last run, about 30 skiers -- including Michael Kennedy, son of the late Robert Kennedy, along with several of his siblings and their children -- embarked on a singular game that had become a seasonal ritual. Michael displayed a snow-filled,

plastic waterbottle and, turning on a video-cam, captured the start of ski-football. The day before, the game had ended in a tie, and, despite warnings from the ski patrol, the group gathered for a rematch, with the slogan "Death to the Loser" echoing on the slopes turned icy by the banking sun. Michael's mother Ethel, who in some reports had supplied the ball, drank cocoa on the sundeck while the others began the contest. At first Michael handled the camera but then, passing it on to his daughter Rory, went out for a pass. An expert skier and organizer of these annual events, Michael lost control of a ski while catching the ball and, turning to exclaim, "This is great!", smashed into a tree. He died instantly of massive injuries to the brain and spinal column.

Though the media accurately reported his death as accidental, they could not refrain from rehashing the traditional Kennedy risk-taking and recklessness, or from depicting Michael as a mixture of Eros and Thanatos, whose life was "just one breathtaking downhill streak" in the words of Steve Dunleavy (*New York Post*, January 3). Thus, amidst celebrating the Kennedy mystique of service, idealism, and derring-do, an eerie sense of fatedness suffused the responses. Shadows of blighted lives from generations past fell over the present tragedy. Along with the Kennedy brothers John and Robert's assassinations in the 1960s were the older brother Joe's death in World War II and the younger brother Ted's Chappaquiddick. Having granted the vaunted Kennedy vigor, exuberance, and joie de vivre, the gods returned to exact a cruel vengeance. As free will seemed bound by harsh necessity, action turned into enactment.

Like his father Robert who ran his brother Jack's campaign, Michael ran the campaign of his uncle Ted and had begun helping his brother Joe run for governor. Like the Kennedys from the patriarchal Joseph down, Michael did not let marriage interfere with his womanizing until his affair with a teenage babysitter led to divorce. He was also devoted to public service. So far Michael, who was born in 1958 and was 10 when his father was killed, performed true to type. But a darker shadow, this one cast by Camelot, may have been more fatal. It flung the happy memories, captured on film, of the legendary Kennedy brothers playing touch football on the White House lawn and of Michael's father tossing the football with him at Hyannisport.

Michael could never replicate those sunny

games, which had become profoundly linked in his memory with violent deaths by head injuries, any more than he could he outdistance the father seen as the "bravest guy who ever lived" (*Newsweek*, January 12). But he could contrive to fuse the game of innocence with the imminent danger of death. An unlikely variant of football would be played on the icy slopes of Aspen Mountain; the players would forego ski poles, ignore warnings from the ski patrol, and, of course, shun helmets. The rubrics of these rituals favored risk, excluded safety. Only under certain conditions could the lives and deaths of beloved ancestors be enacted to allow the living a transitory rush of fusion. Like other Kennedy wives, mistresses, and mothers, Ethel would be co-opted to validate the games while being confined to the sidelines where she served as a symbolic accomplice.

"There was blood all over the place," a witness observed. In the end, assassination in some terrible and mysterious way had become internalized as sacrifice -- accidental yet fateful -- and the death of the parent would be enacted as the death of the self.

Daniel Dervin, PhD, a prolific psychohistorical author, recently published Matricentric Narratives.

Editor's Note: The death in another skiing accident of Congressman Sonny Bono, shortly after that of Michael Kennedy, highlighted the danger of sports in which many prominent people are engaged. □

Pol Pot's Death and Nightmares of the Cambodian Genocide

Jerry Kroth
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To scholars who have studied the Cambodian genocide, President Clinton's bid to bring Khmer Rouge leader Pol Pot to justice is applauded, but Pol's death on April 14 is a surprise and perhaps a disappointment, an opportunity lost. For Cambodian refugees like Cindy of San Jose, California, however, the reaction is far different.

When Cindy was 10-years-old, the Cambodian Communist Khmer Rouge broke into her home and ordered her and her father, mother, brothers, and sister to grab what they could and

march. At gunpoint, they trekked for weeks, until they came to a tropical forest. Their escorts pointed to a patch of jungle and ordered them to build a house.

They lived in this makeshift camp under leaves and thickets for four years. One by one, Cindy's father and brothers were taken away and killed. Like most Cambodian refugees, she now lives under a chronic fog of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Memories pop up at random and often only years later.

Fifty percent of all Cambodian refugees in the United States lost a relative to Pol Pot's murderous regime. Between 20 and 30 percent of the entire population of the country died. The Khmer Rouge murdered between 1.5 and 2 million people, repeating Nazi atrocities right down to death camps. Just as the Nazis tried to "purify" their Aryan complexions through systematic exterminations, so did the Khmer Rouge try to create a "pure Khmer" by "cleansing" away the taint of capitalist decadence. If you were educated, or wore glasses, or had a beard, you were put to death. Of the 550 doctors in Cambodia, only 51 survived the reign of terror.

Rather than liquidating their victims in gas chambers -- far too expensive for penurious Communists -- they beat their victims to death and buried them. In virtually every village in Cambodia there is a mass grave.

I became interested in Cambodia from the perspective of a psychologist. It is not merely that Pol Pot and his wife were mad, but that the entire country was forced to live in a state of collective insanity, as if the whole country was conscripted into a Jonestown-like cult grown large enough to become a nation.

Everyone was ordered to wear black. All seven million citizens were given new names, usually monosyllabic utterances. No one was allowed to use titles like "father," "mother," "uncle," or "brother." Money was completely abolished. All libraries were padlocked. Mirrors were destroyed so that capitalist "vanity" would be erased. So much to do, so little time!

Cindy scrupulously hid the fact that she spoke French, that she was educated, or that her parents employed a maid in Phnom Penh. Her life depended on never disclosing a very long list of secrets.

Young boys were taught to kill animals to "harden" themselves. Little children were to play

around village huts and report any conversations that seemed improper. Then, in the evening, an unlucky victim would be dragged out to the killing fields based on little more than the testimony of a four-year-old.

In my graduate classes at Santa Clara University, where I introduce my students to collective psychology, Cindy occasionally visits to relate her experiences. It takes a week or two to recover from her talk. Although she is educated and articulate, and brings with her an exemplary tale of personal survival and triumph, her experiences are terrifying and inconceivable to most students.

To meet Cindy is to meet Anne Frank. Between the fourth and seventh grades, Cindy lost her father, brothers, sister, and numerous cousins, uncles, and aunts. She was always tired -- sometimes working as much as twenty-two hours in a day -- and constantly hungry. In those years, she witnessed terror, murder, and even cannibalism, and cannot recall a single day she did not fear for her life.

When I showed her a video tape of Pol Pot, her first question was, "Is that really him?" Strangely, Pol Pot, born Saloth Sar in 1928, was an elusive, mercurial figure, never seen by the people, hardly ever photographed. He was interviewed by Western journalists only once. What we know of him has been pieced and patched together over the years.

He came from a relatively wealthy Cambodian family. He never finished his education in France, returning to Cambodia to become a revolutionary in the tradition of the Chinese Red Guards. His stupidity only amplified the terror. He wanted to "step-leap" from pre-capitalism to agrarian communism, skipping all intermediate phases of Marxist evolution. Cindy's march into the jungles was just such an attempt to force the masses into the "idyllic" life of utopian socialism.

Pol Pot himself seems well qualified for a diagnosis of paranoid psychosis (delusional disorder). He took no responsibility for the genocide, acquitting himself by saying that it would not have happened if he were not as persecuted as he was. His search for his unconscious demons began in 1975, and he started executing them to the tune of about 1800 murders per day for three horrible years.

With the death of Pol Pot, a living

incarnation of Adolf Hitler and the worst serial killer of the last 50 years, we have lost a splendid opportunity to learn more about Cambodia and collective insanity. But the opportunity to learn more about ourselves has not disappeared.

At Harvard, Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn pointed out how our "news media" is more a circus of entertainment and titillation than a venue for objective information and history. While Pol Pot was practicing his demonic arts, our newscasters were fussing over Patty Hearst. She outscored Cambodia on prime time ten to one. When the 1984 Ethiopian famine was raging, Bernard Goetz, the white subway shooter, displaced news from the entire continent of Africa for months. Similarly, the Rwanda massacres of almost 800,000 people were over and done with before the media gave it much consideration.

One of the consequences of our MTV approach to news is ignorance. Most Americans think of Tiananmen Square when they think of China's human rights record, but China's role in aiding and abetting Pol Pot's genocide is one of the greatest scandals of the 20th century. The level of assistance Pol Pot received in foodstuffs, tanks, guns, and political support is unconscionable.

Ignorance does not spare our leaders either. Ieng Sary was at a cocktail party with Alexander Haig, former Nixon Chief of Staff and Reagan Secretary of State, in New York years after these terrible events. One wonders if Haig knew he was clinking glasses with Pol Pot's brother-in-law, the infamous killer who went by the nickname "Brother Number Two." Having a martini with Ieng Sary was the rough equivalent of sharing a cocktail with Adolf Eichmann.

Media capriciousness and distortion skew our sense of history immeasurably. As Marv Albert or Monica Lewinsky meander through American couch-potato consciousness -- and other prurient news icons come and go -- psychohistorians realize how pervasive is the mist of collective group fantasy and delusion surrounding us. When we take a step back and try to see through this mist to understand our ever-emerging, serpentine, news obsessions, we discover the Jungian shadow is not far off.

Kenneth Starr, for example, is probing through the President Clinton's well-defended shadow, asking questions about appointments, indiscretions, sexual behaviors, telephone sex, and curious stains found on an evening dress.

Recently, Clinton, in turn, threatened to take us all to war if Saddam Hussein didn't do exactly what Clinton himself was being asked, but refusing, to do: open up his closet to scrutiny so that a cadre of inspectors can sniff palaces, private quarters, and bedrooms until we are all mysteriously satisfied. From Clinton's bedroom to Hussein's, the shadow seems to be readying itself for exposure and unveiling. Symbolism streaks across this landscape so quickly, we can barely grasp it. In the middle of the Lewinsky revelations, the Clintons send their dog out to be neutered.

Against this potpourri of seemingly irrelevant events, we find Pol Pot is dead, a symbolic figure who has languished in the jungles of unconsciousness for 20 years. Pol Pot was dark, a complete incarnation of the human shadow: cold, violent, insane, barbaric -- one of the leading antichrists of the 20th century. His death occurred, synchronistically, on the anniversary of the sinking of the Titanic.

We have yet to understand how all of these symbols and icons interact and fit together, but there can be little doubt that unconscious symbolism is swirling all around us.

Cindy's reaction to these speculations is far different, however. Most Cambodian refugees, Cindy included, suffer from PTSD, some of it so severe that over 120 people have had such terrifying nightmares that they died of heart attacks in their sleep, a rare syndrome called "nightmare death." For many, the days following Pol Pot's death will mark the very first time in 20 years they have been able to go to bed and rest in peace, knowing, finally, that the devil is gone and can harm them no more.

It would have been good to have been able to conclude with Cindy's relief at Pol Pot's death -- *but is he really dead?* Cindy is not sure. Noting that Pol Pot's photograph from the Khmer Rouge "mock trial" shows him with white hair but that the photograph before cremation is of a body with black hair, she fears that Pol Pot's "death" may have been staged. Whatever the facts of this case, it is to be remembered that evil, like nightmares and the repressed, can never fully be put to rest.

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Hitler's Self-Hatred and Anti-Semitism

Ralph Colp, Jr.
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*Review of George Victor, Hitler: The Pathology of Evil. Herndon, VA: Brassey's, 1998. ISBN 1574881329, 263 pp., \$24.95. [Material from this book has been previously discussed by Paul Elovitz and George Victor in **Clio's Psyche**, December, 1997.]*

George Victor, a psychologist and psychotherapist for over 30 years, has written a psychobiography of Hitler that is distinguished by its broad research and original ideas. Along with studying most of the psychological, biographical, and historical publications about Hitler and forming his own opinions on the factual veracity of many controversial biographical events, Victor has used data and concepts from behaviorism, child development, experimental psychology, psychoanalysis, social psychology, and sociology. He has also read the unpublished manuscript, *Analysis of the Personality of Adolf Hitler*, by the eminent psychologist and psychiatrist, Henry Murray; and he has talked about his work with Rudolph Binion, author of the influential 1976 psychobiography, *Hitler Among the Germans*.

Drawing on this research, Victor has suggested several new psychological explanations for Hitler's beliefs and actions, most notably for the origins and development of his anti-Semitism which may be summarized as follows. When Hitler was a boy, because of being severely beaten by his father, he began to experience himself as evil and worthless. As an adult he formed the delusions that a Jew had impregnated his paternal grandmother and that, therefore, his father was part-Jewish and he himself possessed Jewish blood -- blood which he regarded as "toxic" because it was poisoned by its genetic roots (and by syphilis), "demonic", and "an evil force controlling him." This accentuated his previous negative self-image into feelings of self-loathing. Because of these feelings, after he became Chancellor of Germany he attempted to diminish Jewish blood among Germans not only by forcing Jews to emigrate and by banning marriages among Aryans and Jews but also by controlling marriages and sexual behavior between individuals with smaller fractions of Jewish ancestry and by planning to sterilize Germans (perhaps numbering over 3,000,000) who

may have had Jewish ancestors going back at least three or four generations.

In thinking about all of the above measures, I believe Hitler was projecting his negative image of himself onto Jews. "But," writes Victor,

Hitler's self-loathing was extreme and he was troubled by more than a trait of his, by more than a few traits. The evil that haunted him seemed to be at the core of his being. Projecting his traits onto Jews was hardly enough. He was driven to get rid of Jews -- to obliterate the hated images of himself. That set him apart from most anti-Semites.

One of Victor's most original contentions is that several of Hitler's World War II military decisions -- to allow the English to escape at Dunkirk in May, 1940; not to invade England in October, 1940; and to prevent the capture of Moscow in August, 1941 -- were really decisions meant to prolong the war so that Hitler could begin to carry out the extermination of the Jews. Once this extermination had begun, in the summer of 1941, Victor argues that Hitler "stuck to it at the expense of other goals." So that the way he conducted "the last two years of the war and the priority he gave the Holocaust showed that.... To him it was literally worth the sacrifice of millions of Germany's soldiers, loss of the war, and destruction of Germany in order to exterminate Jews." Throughout the war Hitler adroitly concealed his extermination motives and acts from most of the leaders that he daily worked with; General Alfred Jodl, his chief of operations staff, observed that "Nobody really knows what went on in his mind." But near the end of the war, Hitler remarked to Himmler, head of the SS, which was implementing the Holocaust, "should we lose, then we shall at the very least have hit decisively those subversives [Jews].... I am determined, out of higher responsibility, to translate this recognition of mine into action, whatever the consequences."

While the above explanations are interesting and plausible, they should have contained fuller discussions of three aspects of Hitler's psychopathology. 1) *The Pathology of Evil* mentions briefly that the contemporary psychiatric diagnosis that best applies to Hitler is that of borderline personality disorder, but then no description is given of the diagnostic criteria for this disorder, which comprises clusters of many psychiatric manifestations (a pattern of unstable

interpersonal relationships, identity disturbance, impulsivity, recurrent suicidal behavior, chronic feelings of emptiness, affective instability, inappropriate intense anger, and stress-related paranoid ideation) that strikingly fit the psychiatric manifestations shown by Hitler. 2) More could have been said about the nature and clinical course of Hitler's variform psychosomatic symptoms that were present for most of his life, involving his skin, stomach and intestines, head, and nervous system; frequently caused him severe abdominal pains, headaches, and insomnia; and exacerbated his feelings of self-loathing. At the end of his life, when he told his secretary that since his youth "misery and anguish have been my constant companions," he was referring not only to adverse events, but to the impacts on his mind and body of his psychosomatic symptoms. 3) No mention is made of Hitler's 1936 to 1945 relationship with his personal physician, Dr. Theodor Morell (although David Irving's book on Morell, *The Secret Diaries of Hitler's Doctor* (1983), is cited in *The Pathology of Evil's* bibliography). There need to be adequate explanations for how Morell secured Hitler's confidence and why his treatments -- of pills (that sometimes contained emulsions of intestinal bacteria) and of frequent intravenous injections of glucose and vitamins -- sometimes relieved Hitler's psychosomatic symptoms. A question that never seems to have been asked is what Hitler, who thought that his blood was toxic -- and who sometimes stared at it to find the toxin -- thought about receiving intravenous injections from his doctor.

Despite psychiatric limitations, *The Pathology of Evil* breaks new ground in Hitler biographies by its view of the history of its subject's pathological thoughts about Jews, especially the origins of these thoughts in delusions of having Jewish blood, and then of their influence on the making of important military decisions -- a view that will probably be opposed by the eminent Hitler biographer John Lukacs, who in his 1997 *The Hitler of History* stated that "the real sources" of Hitler's anti-Semitism "are not ascertainable" and that only the evidence of Hitler's "expressed purposes" are discernible. For this reviewer, who has been reading Hitler biographies since Konrad Heiden's 1944 *Der Fuehrer: Hitler's Rise to Power*, reading *The Pathology of Evil* has sometimes been emotionally painful but almost always grimly informative.

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private practice in Manhattan who has a long-standing affiliation with Columbia University. Currently, he works in a supervisory therapeutic capacity at St. Luke's-Roosevelt Hospital Center. Dr. Colp is a founding and active member of the *Psychohistory Forum's Communism: The Dream That Failed Research Group* and a world-renown Darwin scholar. □

Nazi Psychotherapy

Mary Lambert

Psychoanalyst and Forum Research Associate

Review of Geoffrey Cocks, Psychotherapy in the Third Reich: The Göring Institute. 2nd edition. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1997. ISBN 1560009047, xix, 461 pp., \$29.95, paperback.

Many of us believed that the night Hitler's henchmen burned the published works of Sigmund Freud what they extinguished throughout Germany was the light shed by psychoanalysis as a scientific theory of the mind and as a form of treatment for mental illness. Not so, says Geoffrey Cocks of Albion College. Psychotherapy not only survived under National Socialism, but also flourished as an integrated institutional and professional entity quite separate from medical disciplines.

Cocks has prodigiously researched his topic and gives us an overwhelming array of facts in support of his position. "The history of psychotherapy in the Third Reich," he writes, "is not an inspirational tale of advances in sophisticated theory and the alleviation of suffering but rather a morally and intellectually ambiguous accommodation to the power of Nazi Germany." In other words, Germany used, converted, and perverted scientific theories to suit its own ends. When Franz Wirz, the Nazi Party's chief Administrator for University Affairs, was asked about his position on Freud, he replied, "We all know that the Wassermann reaction was discovered by a Jew. But no one in Germany would be so foolish as to no longer use this reaction."

After this auspicious beginning, I was prepared to hear more about the well-recognized unsavory misuses of institutionalized psychotherapy by those in power. Unfortunately, this topic was not pursued and became lost in the author's attempt to present us with an unbiased

array of dry bone facts. When I read of horseback riding recommended for mental illness as one of the more benign treatments, I cannot help but wonder about the extent of deviations from psychotherapeutic principles as we understand them. Perhaps the word "psychotherapy" is a misnomer.

On the positive side, Cocks throws light on a dark era by explicating Germany's pursuit of psychology and treatment. Cocks' research into the course of psychotherapy from its interception in prewar Germany on through to the German Democratic Republic after the war is admirably detailed and documented. His presentation is as methodical and orderly as I imagine the documentation left behind by the Nazis to be.

We are told that psychotherapy owes its survival to Mathias Göring, cousin to Hermann. Mathias, born in 1879 into an upper middle class Lutheran pietist family, originally studied law, but, after traveling extensively in the East, went back to Germany to study medicine. Apparently his view of another culture whetted his interest in the intricacies of the human mind. His specialty became neuropathology and in 1928 he became a member of the General Medical Society for Psychotherapy. This international organization, founded in 1920, hoped to inform and educate the medical profession to the use of various modes of psychotherapy. Alfred Adler, Carl Jung, Frieda Fromm Reichman, and Karen Horney were among some of its most prominent members. Freud refused to join. Anxious to protect his particular practice of psychoanalysis, he founded his own society and meant to keep it pure. It is interesting to note that most of the above mentioned members were analysts who eventually left Freud's group.

By contrast, Mathias Göring considered himself a synthesizer and drew from many disciplines. When the Nazis came to power in 1933, a number of psychotherapists, in an attempt to differentiate and distance themselves from "Jewish Psychology," formed a separate group within the umbrella organization, headed by Carl Jung. The splinter group called itself, the German Medical Society of Psychotherapists. Göring was chosen as its leader and he remained in that position until the end of the war. It was a prudent choice. The Göring cousins were close friends and Mathias could count on the support of his cousin in his endeavors to expand the development of the group's research and treatment programs.

Toward this end he established the Göring

Institute to train future psychotherapists, which eventually expanded to other cities and included a clinic in each of the branches. It has been said that Göring, at the beginning of his career, treated a number of Jews. However, he declared that from 1930 to 1933 he only treated 11 Jews and was unable to help them "because of racial differences." On the question of Göring's anti-Semitism, Cocks, in an attempt to remain neutral, states, "Göring did not join the Nazi Party in order to exercise his anti-Semitism; he joined as part of a process of professional necessity and national cultural loyalty." What the author intends us to make of this statement remains puzzling; other non-Jewish therapists, for example, Horney and Jung, distanced themselves from the Party. Horney left the country and by 1936 Jung wrote, "The impressive thing about the German phenomenon is that one man who is obviously 'possessed' has infected a whole nation to such an extent that everything is set in motion and has started it rolling on its way to perdition." Soon, the entire profession rested in the hands of Mathias Göring who, in his defense, single-mindedly kept the Institute afloat at a time when other professions suffered serious setbacks. For example, few people know that Anna Freud's interrogation by the Nazis in 1938 was directly related to an attempt on Göring's part to incorporate the Vienna Psychoanalytic Institute into the Göring Institute -- without its Jewish members. A similar feat had been accomplished in 1936 when the headquarters of the Berlin Psychoanalytic Institute was taken over by the German Institute of Psychological Research and Psychotherapy which later became the Göring Institute.

Nevertheless, Göring did try to maintain an institute dedicated to the advancement of psychotherapy. He drew from various theoretical positions and tolerated a certain diversity before the war. Once the Party became involved with the Institute, an attempt was made to integrate this diversity into a theory of one unified nation. Thus, Alfred Adler's concept of an individual's responsibility to the community served to further feelings of loyalty to the Party and to value the group's welfare above the individual. Freud's concept of the unconscious was used to express the existence of a racial and national consciousness. Jung's concept of the collective unconscious and mythology was cleverly connected to German mythology of heroism proving the superiority of the Aryan race.

Before the war, Göring was allowed a certain measure of autonomy to run the institute as he saw fit. However, once the war started, the Party began to intervene, dictating policy. Every candidate was forced to read *Mein Kampf* and use it as a guide to good German mental health. Hitler became "the doctor" and the exponent of the healthy soul in its national, cultural, and racial manifestations. The elevation of the concept of the soul has a particular tradition in German romanticism and culture and, therefore, did not seem alien to the German people. Hitler, in talking about racial purity in appearance (blond, blue-eyed), drew directly from German mythology.

As the war progressed, the Party made greater use of the Institute for military purposes. Army personnel were trained in psychological warfare to be used not only to weaken the enemy's morale but also to better control their own troops. Psychologists were trained to guide army personnel in strategic campaign planning and to go to the front and deal with war neurosis.

The *Luftwaffe* doctors were particularly keen on an affiliation with the Institute because the incidence of war neurosis and fatigue-induced psychopathology was most prevalent among the fliers. By 1940, *Luftwaffe* hospitals were set up in Cologne, Brussels, and Paris where fliers were sent for observation. These units were staffed by an internist, a physician trained in psychotherapy and neurology, and a medical assistant with special training, and were loosely connected with the Göring Institute in Berlin.

Unfortunately, by 1942 the original good intentions of rehabilitation turned sour. German losses led to a lessening of morale among the troops. More and more soldiers and fliers were physically and mentally disabled. The use of psychological interventions in such medical units was phased out by the Nazis and cruder methods were employed. By 1944, anyone not willing to fight was classified as a malingerer. The Göring Institute continued to operate with a small staff until 1945 when the building in which it was housed was completely destroyed during the Berlin bombing.

Cocks concludes with a short summary of psychotherapy in postwar Germany. His research throughout is faultless to a point of overwhelming this reader. Since this book was originally a doctoral thesis it is understandable that Cocks would include as much factual information as possible. (This new edition has been revised to

make it more chronological and easier to read as well as to incorporate new research since the 1984 edition.) But I sometimes had trouble getting through the minutia in order to see the broader picture.

Despite the strengths of this volume, I miss the author's voice. In an effort to be non-judgmental, he deprives the reader of any of his emotional involvement. Such diligent research requires great passion for the topic on the part of the author. Unfortunately, he shares none of this passion or even his point of view. As a result, the book seemed filled with undigested facts which gave it an obfuscating density. I for one, am unable to read a history of the Nazi era without bringing a particular bias to the subject.

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Elovitz on Asimov

(Continued from page 1)

inauguration of the Psychohistory electronic mailing list (the Psychohistory List). (A subscriber to a mailing list can, by e-mail, send messages to, and automatically receives messages from, the other multiple members of the list, usually on a specific topic.) At first it seemed the two worlds spoke the same language, but it soon became apparent that common meanings eluded them. No where was this clearer than in the use of the word "psychohistory." To some it meant understanding individuals and groups based on feelings, historical patterns, psychological theories, and psychoanalytic concepts. To others it meant the prediction of human mass behavior based upon mathematical principles. After working for 30 years to help create, define, teach, build, research, and write the history of organized psychohistory, I participated in this encounter with keen interest.

Those who were introduced to the psychohistory of Isaac Asimov (1920-1992) by reading his science fiction thought in terms of mathematical projections of future events spanning thousands of years. Though these readers knew

this was fiction, their belief in science and hope for progress based upon this scientific knowledge led some of them to have great hopes for the field of Asimovian psychohistory. Then they discovered the existence of groups such as the International Psychohistorical Association (IPA), the Group for the Use of Psychology in History (GUPH) of the American Historical Association, the International Society for Political Psychology (ISPP), the Psychohistory Forum, and the Group for the Psychohistorical Study of Film. Though they had high expectations for what these psychohistorical associations could accomplish, they felt confident that this had come about because of the foresight of Isaac Asimov. As his online user name, one of these individuals used "hseldon" -- for Hari Seldon, Asimov's imaginary psychohistorian who predicted specific crises 500 or 20,000 years in the future. (This engineer, Stan Pope, has written a brief article for this issue featuring Asimov's foresight.)

The second group had more varied routes to the psychohistorical voyage. They were introduced to the field by reading Sigmund Freud, Erik Erikson, Robert Jay Lifton, Bruce Mazlish, Lloyd deMause, Robert Waite, *American Imago*, *The Journal of Psychohistory*, *The Psychoanalytic Review*, *The Psychohistory Review*, **Clio's Psyche**, and a variety of other sources. Or they discovered the power of the unconscious in their own analyses and sought to apply it to their historical and societal inquiry. Psychoanalysis, psychobiography, or fantasy analysis, rather than mathematics and hard science, was their focus. This group's leaders each had 20 to 40 years of work in the field, numerous publications, and the founding of psychohistorical institutions as their credentials.

War and prediction were clear areas of difference. Fear of a Persian Gulf war of 1998 prompted warnings from Lloyd deMause, David Lotto, and others in a movement whose leaders have strong anti-war inclinations. To readers of Asimov's *Foundation Series*, power inclined to be used readily for the furtherance of civilization championed by "The Psychohistorians." The threat from Saddam Hussein seemed real to some of them just as the threat from Hitler had seemed so real to Asimov at the time he was first creating his science fiction psychohistorians. In the heat of the exchange, Richard Varela accused Lloyd deMause of cowardice. By early December a member complained that there was intolerance in the List

since deMause, who was working to educate and shape the discussion group so it would share many of his views, was not acknowledging the "other strains of psychohistory, like the mathematical one."

Before proceeding further, I want to make a note about terminology. Since it is the psychological/psychoanalytical psychohistorians, rather than the Asimovian/mathematical psychohistorians, who have written numerous books on psychohistory and created many organizations and publications, unless otherwise noted or clear from the context, I am referring to them when I use the terms "psychohistory" or "psychohistorian."

I noted to the Psychohistory List that if the paradigm of Asimovian psychohistory has merit as a reality, as opposed to an appealing science fiction fantasy, than we must openly discuss it, preferably in the pages of journals as well as on a much more ephemeral online mailing list. Naturally, the corollary of this is that if Asimov's notions have no value as psychohistory then this would also be clearly established. (Moreover, if as respected a colleague as Henry Lawton could credit Isaac Asimov online and in these pages with coining the word "psychohistory" almost 20 years after I told him this was incorrect, then I thought I had to make the case in print to put an end to this common misconception.) I invited those who expressed opinions on an Asimovian psychohistory paradigm to write articles on it for a **Clio's Psyche** exchange. Richard Varela and Stan Pope, both inspired by Asimov, readily agreed to be part of the discussion. So did Henry Lawton, author of *The Psychohistorian's Handbook* (Lawton 1988), who has little patience for Asimovians. Lee Shneidman, a historian specializing in methodology and late medieval Spain was asked to comment, with special attention to the feasibility of the Asimovian psychohistory of Spain which Varela envisioned. Added perspectives came from Alan Elms, a California academic psychologist with a lifelong interest in science fiction, and James Gunn, a science fiction writer and colleague of Asimov who is a Kansas professor and the author of a prize-winning biography of Asimov.

Let me spell out a number of reasons why this research and discussion has merit. As Thomas Kuhn taught us in *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Kuhn 1970), knowledge is advanced by people working within different paradigms. Martin Luther used his enormous intelligence to

study scripture especially after lightning struck near him because he was pursuing a traditional Christian paradigm emphasizing man's sinfulness. He was not necessarily less knowledgeable, or intelligent, than Ben Franklin, who invented the lightning rod to deal with the dangers of lightning which drove Luther to read his Bible more carefully. Franklin examined electricity in the pursuit of the paradigm of modern science applied to the betterment of society. It is valuable to study the motivation of individuals.

It is also interesting, and perhaps useful, to observe the meeting of two groups who are pursuing different paradigms in the name of "psychohistory." When I observe the extent to which the new Darwinians, armed with the evidence of DNA and the mantle of "hard science," are trying to discredit the paradigms of psychoanalysis, much of traditional history, and the liberal arts and sciences, I think that understanding the processes involved in such meetings can have considerable merit for all psychohistorians, scholars, and interested laypeople.

Psychohistory needs a popularizer, indeed many popularizers, like Asimov, of the knowledge we have so laboriously developed in our separate studies. A deeper understanding of Asimov's psychobiography, erudition, love of writing, and his troubled relations with academia may help us understand the nature of the creative popularizer.

Asimov's work brings up vital issues which this research may help us to understand. Does fantasy precede or follow reality? Did Asimov's science fiction anticipate and help to inspire actual invention and innovation -- as he thought -- or did it merely reflect and popularize other people's ideas? Why do so many people, like Asimov, set up the ideal of a perfect scientific society devoid of emotion? Are their profiles, as is Asimov's, those of bright and bookish but awkward and lonely adolescents who create an imaginary world to compensate for their sense of inadequacy in this world? What is the fascination with science fiction that makes it a multibillion-dollar industry? Are fantasies about the future rooted in the history of the past? Why are even highly creative and innovative psychohistorians often prone to readily dismiss other people's views out-of-hand, just as their views were earlier dismissed as "mere fantasies."

The question of determinism versus free will runs through Asimov's *Foundation Series*. His

general statements about the historical process usually come down on the side of determinism -- it is man in large groups, rather than individuals, who influence history. In his fictional psychohistory, Asimov, like the Marxists of Soviet Russia in which he was born, believed in theory that the ordinary individual was too insignificant to make a difference. Yet, in practice, like Trotsky who, when he went to write the history of the actual Bolshevik Revolution in Russia, ended up arguing "No Lenin, No Revolution," Asimov believed that Hari Seldon, the Mule, and other individuals actually change the course of history. Psychohistorians who have been enamored of theory have had similar problems reconciling their theory with their practice.

In our June, 1997, issue, focused on space right after the Heaven's Gate Cult suicides, I made the point "that we project out into space things that we cannot do within ourselves or on this Earth" and that "space is such a fertile place for our fantasies, dreams, and endeavors that in less than one century humans have both flown close to the Earth and in outer space." Furthermore, "if people, even acrophobic men like Isaac Asimov and his fellow science fiction writer Ray Bradbury, can think of doing something [like traveling in space], other people" may actually accomplish it! (Elovitz 1997: 12) (For almost 30 years I have been giving my students examples that extend from human flight to a cure for polio to the ovens at Auschwitz. I remind them, though, that just because we can do a certain thing, it does not mean that we should do it.) As the distinction between fantasy and reality increasingly blurs in the world of television and other mass media, we need to carefully examine the relationship between these two elements of our lives and society.

Besides the discussion in the Psychohistory List and my desire to probe the above questions, the following collection of articles on the inventor of science fiction's psychohistory and its psychohistorians was also prompted by my longstanding interest in Isaac Asimov's erudition and the quantity of his literary creations. Because learning and writing are slow processes for me, I thought I might learn how to do them faster by focusing on an individual who was amazingly erudite and prolific. In my article "In Search of Isaac Asimov" my intention is to reveal something about Asimov's psychobiography to help us understand the roots of his creativity and the need to create science fiction. □

Isaac Asimov's Contribution to Psychohistory

Richard Varela
Walden University

Isaac Asimov is certainly one of the most prolific writers of the later 20th century. His work includes over 500 fiction and non-fiction books and countless articles. He is probably best known for the creation of the fictional universe surrounding the *Foundation Trilogy* (Asimov 1951-1953) and its supporting literature as well as its linkage to another major work, the *Robot Series*. The resulting fictional panorama spans a period of future human history from our near future to a far distant future many millennia hence.

The purpose of this article is not to critique or review the formidable works of Asimov but to provide insight to his philosophical contributions to the field of psychohistory. Future psychohistorians may consider his contributions to the science in a similar vein to our crediting of foundations of other sciences within the parables, musings, and lessons of the ancient Greek philosophers. The significance of Asimov's creative work in fiction is the theme of psychohistorical determinism which permeates his stories. He has done what no amount of scholarly psychohistorical research can do: he gives voice and substance to the work of the psychohistorian.

In the *Foundation Trilogy*, Asimov's initial protagonists are a small group of psychohistorians gathered around their leader, Dr. Harry [sic] Seldon. The fictional psychohistorians are always working on their calculations to predict and influence the course of historical events, and, as fans of Asimov know, while not always successful, they triumph in the end. Their objective is to shorten the span of time humanity will have to suffer in Dark Ages following the collapse of the Galactic Empire and to engineer an especially benign, progressive Second Empire. The project takes a thousand years or so.

The quintessential role model of a psychohistorian is the character of Seldon, whose contribution to psychohistory was that he "found the field little more than a set of vague axioms; he left it a profound statistical science...." (Asimov 1951-1953: 3). Asimov teases the reader of his fiction with partial yet significant hints as to the nature of the psychohistorical discipline. Below I will represent and paraphrase some of these.

Psychohistory is defined as "the branch of mathematics which deals with the reactions of human conglomerates to fixed social and economic stimuli" (Asimov 1951-1953: 14). Asimov's definition clearly supports a theory of psychohistory based in mathematical prediction of mass human behavior using variables of cause and effect, probabilities from social behavior, and economic conditions. Asimov appears to have taken his theory partly from systems theory, mathematical probability functions, quantum mechanics, and other different but interrelated theories. He is obviously referring to some of the principles -- entropy, homeostasis, and equifinality -- of systems theory, when he writes in *Prelude to Foundation* (Asimov 1988), "In many systems, the situation is such that under some conditions chaotic events take place ... the more complex a system, the more likely it is to become chaotic" (Asimov 1988: 9).

Asimov makes numerous references to the higher order of mathematical development needed by the psychohistorians. At one point, his protagonist, Harry [Hari] Seldon, explains the purpose of the mathematical tools and acknowledges the intuitive nature of the work. Asimov writes, "Every successful politician, businessman, or human being of any calling must make these estimates of the future and do it fairly well or he or she would not be successful" (Asimov 1988: 10). But, for the purposes of psychohistory, this is not enough. Asimov's character continues his statement, "With proper mathematics, anyone would be able to assess the probabilities. It wouldn't take the rare human being who is successful because of a remarkable intuitive sense" (Asimov 1988: 10). Finally, Asimov's fictional theory delves into the fabric of the universe by comparing quantum mechanics, or the movement of subatomic particles, to human society. Seldon explains,

In studying human society, we place human beings in the place of subatomic particles, but now there is the added factor of the human mind. Particles move mindlessly, human beings do not. To take into account the various attitudes and impulses of mind adds so much complexity (Asimov 1988: 11).

Turning to Asimov's methodology, his protagonists develop an application model for their concept of intervention:

The psychohistoric trend of a planet-full

of people contains a huge inertia. To be changed it must be met with something possessing a similar inertia. Either as many people must be concerned, or if the number of people be relatively small, enormous time for change must be allowed (Asimov 1951-1953: 25).

Asimovian psychohistorians also make use of detailed individual psychobiographical profiles: "...in a plan such as ours ... the actions of others are bent to our needs ... [powerful bureaucratic functionary Chen's] temperamental makeup has been subjected to greater scrutiny than that of any other single man in history" (Asimov 1951-1953: 34).

Asimov adheres to valid and reliable scientific research by including such statistically vital assumptions as,

Implicit in all these definitions is the assumption that the human conglomerate being dealt with is sufficiently large for valid statistical treatment... [and] a further necessary assumption is that the human conglomerate be itself unaware of psychohistoric analysis in order that its actions be truly random.... (Asimov 1951-1953: 14).

In Asimov's fictional universe, the basis of all valid psychohistory lies in the development of the Seldon Functions, "which exhibit properties congruent to those of such social and economic forces as..." "probability of Imperial assassination, viceregal revolt, the contemporary recurrence of periods of economic depression, the declining rate of planetary explorations...." (Asimov 1951-1953: 14, 16). In another case, "a rising bureaucracy, a receding initiative, a freezing of caste, [and] a damming of curiosity" (Asimov 1951-1953: 27) are considered as indicators of the collapsing society.

Prelude to Foundation, the last work to be written in the Foundation series, concerns the beginning of Harry [sic] Seldon's search to resolve the mind-numbing question of how to find the underlying psychohistorical truths within the myriad of societies "each with its overall characteristics and culture ... and all ... interacting in innumerable ways and combinations!" (Asimov 1958: 11). In the end, the hero, Seldon, decides upon a reductionist solution. The decision is to study the capital of the Galactic Empire because of the representation of human social organizations

and cultures present (Asimov 1988: 385). This idea is not so far-fetched when one considers that Asimov's experience with New York City and its immediate environment was probably the model for the Galactic capital.

Consider for a moment that Asimov's assumptions are valid for a model of psychohistorical assessment of past events. We, of course, have the same problem as the fictional characters in that the difficulty of quantifying all the conditions and variables appears insurmountable. However, I propose the following "axioms" as extrapolated from Asimov's fiction for the methodological intervention model:

- The inertial force of a psychohistorical trend may be redirected by a large enough segment of population to present an equally strong alternative force.
- If the alternative inertial force is not equal to the presenting inertia of the historic trend, then time increase is required in inverse proportion to the size of the alternative population to change the direction of the original trend.
- Any public exposure of the psychohistorical intervention to the research subjects becomes an additional factor for consideration in terms of the contamination of the scientific experiment.

The research methodology would be to establish the historical boundaries for the variables in terms of time and population, reducing the following variables to a numerical value:

- Degree of social stability (internal and external)
- Degree of expansion (territorial and economic)
- Equality of opportunity (social, educational, and wealth-earning)
- Facility of enterprise (individual initiative)
- Facility of technological implementation (time lag between research, invention, and production)
- Energy consumption factors (renewable/-perishable, cost-effectiveness, environmental relationship)
- Religious factors (relative power of organization, degree of personal commitment)
- Political structure (organizational factors, unity levels, population demographic representation)

For example, variables might be reduced to points on a scale for each relationship at various intervals over time, ranging from -5 to +5 in correlation to the comparative events. Consider the extreme example offered by comparing Nazi Germany with the United States in May, 1945, on

the independent variable of internal stability. One can assume Germany as being a -5 on the scale and the U.S. a +5 (see Figure 1).

Figure 1

Following the measurement of each variable, the mean for all variables at a particular time would yield the General Psychohistorical Trend (GPT), which can be plotted on a scattergram graph for trend analysis.

[Editor's Note: Author Varela then presented a long "Outline for an Experimental Test of the Model" based on Spanish history. Mostly

Internal Stability - May, 1945										
Stagnant/Disintegrating Negative Trend						Stable/Creative Positive Trend				
-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5
Nazi Germany						U.S.A.				

because of space restraints we are able to publish only the following brief summary.]

As an experimental test, take the space and time boundaries of Spain, Medieval Era from 711 CE to 1492 CE. A combined multiracial Islamic army invaded the Iberian Peninsula in 711, quickly conquering the sedentary Visigoth society. Small groups of Christians gathered in inaccessible areas in Northern Spain and established an independent kingdom. Islamic society dominated most of the peninsula and, following the initial brutality of invasion, established a powerful, stable [and highly civilized] state based upon religious tolerance, commercial enterprise, science and technology. The Christians began a process of conflict to retake the peninsula which took nearly 800 years to complete and culminated in Spanish domination of much of the known world for another 300 years. Could the course of evolution of the two societies and the ultimate triumph of the Spanish Christians have been predicted through psychohistorical analysis?

Consider for the purpose of this model that the General Psychohistorical Trend (GPT) (derived from the mean of the correlated variables measured through historical archives) of the Visigothic Christian kingdom prior to 711 CE was 0 and the Islamic society was +5. This would suggest the Christian kingdom was at a distinct disadvantage in terms of confrontation with the Islamic force and the probability is that the Christian kingdom cannot survive. At the year 711, we might measure the Christian kingdom at -5 and the Islamic society

at +5. This would indicate that the collapse of the Christians was virtually total in comparison to the Islamic onslaught. Moving forward 10 years, following the limitations on the Islamic expansion, the measurement may be Christian kingdom +1 and Islamic +1. This would suggest a relative balance with enough pressure exerted from the Christian side to ensure survival. By a measurement taken approximately 14 generations later in the year 1000, we see the effects of the Christian transgenerational injunctions and religious fervor and measure the Christian kingdoms (as represented by Castile) as +3 and place Islamic society at -3. This would indicate that the positive trend on the Christian side is correlated with a negative trend of equal proportion on the Islamic side. Finally, in 1492, the full force of Spain united under the Catholic kings is measured as +5 and the Islamic caliphate at -5, indicating a total reversal of the condition and trend 800 years before.

The GPT for the two societies would demonstrate a steady negative trend for the Islamic caliphate and a steady positive trend for the Castilian Christians. The graphic chart of the two trends should cross at some point and that date would be the forecast for the destruction of Iberian Islam and the ascendance of Christianity. The test reliability would be a function of how close to 1492, the year of the final Christian victory, the GPT predicts. [End of summary of "Outline for an Experimental Test of the Model"]

The sheer weight of the documentation, reduction, and measurement process provides some insight to Asimov's rendering of the fictional psychohistorian Dr. Harry [Hari] Seldon's despair. It would be ponderous to reduce all the variables and calculate the myriad of correlations needed to support this model, however, but the end result yields a measurable numeric value which may be used to predict something about the society being analyzed. The work for the psychohistorian may be to enlighten society as to its deterministic variables and their consequences. The work of the politicians or teachers may be to change some of those variables to change the resulting General Psychohistorical Trend.

In conclusion, it appears that Isaac Asimov's fiction is based upon very solid scientific thought. Any researcher of psychohistory knows that much of the literature is replete with the same concepts and theories offered by Asimov. The fact that Asimov offers the material in fictional form

should not be a cause for neglect, but rather a celebration of the vision and depth of the human imagination. It must be noted that not only did Isaac Asimov pioneer in the development of psychohistorical concepts but he also wrote it as a good story.

Perhaps, we should consider Asimov's science fiction stories in the same vein as parables and mythology, as a means of fostering group fantasy. Maybe life will imitate art, and some person inspired by fiction will seek to solve the psychohistorical equation, building on the tenets of the developing discipline, fiction and non-fiction, and thus raise humanity's consciousness. At the very least, Isaac Asimov deserves an honored place in the litany of psychohistorical pioneers.

Richard Varela is currently working toward a PhD in Organizational Psychology from Walden University. A retired U.S. Army officer, he has a second career as a psychotherapist/social worker with the Cumberland County (North Carolina) Mental Health Center in the Child and Youth Division, and is also a part-time domestic violence group facilitator and a contract professor with Webster University. □

Psychohistory and an Asimovian View of Iberian History

J. Lee Shneidman
Adelphi University

Psychohistory concerns individuals and groups of individuals. It is an art, not a science. It aims at understanding the psychic motivations for action and attitude. Its verity depends upon detailed examinations of specific individuals and some shared experiences or cultural myths, with the caveat that those with a shared experience do not necessarily have a shared reaction. Change is activated by individuals who actively object to a shared experience. The position that psychohistory is "the branch of mathematics which deals with the reactions of human conglomerates to fixed social and economic stimuli" is based on the false assumption that "fixed social and economic stimuli" can be discovered and that individual and group perception of the stimuli are identical. Let us take an example.

In 1347/8 the Black Plague struck Europe. Death as well as political, economic, and social

confusion ensued. But reactions were different: some sought scapegoats; some blamed themselves and became flagellants; some became mystics; some worshiped at Black Masses; and some said, "Let's enjoy what little time we have and live it up." How would one predict how an individual or a group would react? Certainly not from any past experience.

To claim that one may predict with certainty action of a group is not only to admit to a misunderstanding of history, but also of mathematics. Since mathematics is based on certain accepted axioms -- "The sum of the parts equals the whole" -- to accept other axioms -- "The sum of the parts is greater than the whole" -- would lead to other conclusions. "Parallel lines never meet" and "Parallel lines meet in infinity" are both true, but I would never use the latter in a geometry class. There is a mathematical axiom which should be remembered: "The reliability of any mathematical solution is as valid as its least reliable component."

To comprehend the complexities of Iberian motivation -- as distinct from individual actions -- would require an understanding of the trail left by the various civilizations -- Celtic, Punic, Greek, Roman, Vandalian, Suevian, Visigothic, Alanic, Nomadic Arabic, Urbanized Arabic, Berber, Riffian, Slavic, Frankish, and Hebrew plus, perhaps, Gypsy. While, with exception of Basque, all Iberian languages have a Romance base and the verbs tend to be Latinates, one-third of the nouns are of Semitic origin. The government structure of Christian Iberia tended to be Germanic while the legal structure was, after 1200, increasingly Roman. While Granada was under Islamic control for almost eight hundred years, the northern fringe was never under Islamic control. Attitudes and values in Frankish-influenced Catalunya were markedly different from those in Galicia (where the Celtic bagpipe is still played).

One can write a psychohistory of some leaders, for example, Jaime I. But one would have problems with Ferdinand whose actions as Prince Consort or Prince Regent of Castile, as King of the Crowns of Aragon, as King of Sardinia, and as King of Sicily were different -- Jews fleeing the Inquisition in Castile found safety in his Italian territories.

One may agree with Asimov that human behavior is not random, but that does not accept the proposition that is quantifiable. Hegel and Marx were more accurate when they posited that

yesterday's antithesis would become today's synthesis, but even that does not guarantee a knowledge of what aspects of the old thesis would combine with what aspects of the antithesis to form a new synthesis.

Asimov, of course, has so many caveats as to render implementation of his system futile. It reminds me of the old alchemist formula for the transmutation of metal which required so many distillation steps that error was always predictable. (But at least we did get the word "alcohol" from the Arabic word *al-kuhul* from this endeavor at alchemy.)

The model Varela presents for an Asimovian understanding of Iberia 711 CE to 1492 CE makes assumptions that do not exist in reality. There was neither a Christian nor an Islamic group; there were groups. Gallacia, Navarra (the Basque Country), and the Spanish March (Catalunya) had (and still have) three different identities. The urbanized Arabs of the Umayyad Dynasty were distinct from the Bedouin Arabs, and both were different from the North African peoples. As for the supposed unity of the Christians, I would suggest a reading of the "Song of Bernardo del Carpio" to cure this illusion. Anyone, like Varela, viewing Islamic Spain as non-expansionist just has no idea of what was developing in this time period.

I am indeed pleased that there are some signs in the final paragraph of the presentation that the author realizes the futility of his suggestions.

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Asimov's Mathematical Psychohistory Is Pure Fantasy

Henry Lawton
The Journal of Psychohistory

Richard Varela's contribution is disappointing because he seems to have little or no idea of what psychohistory is about. I have done psychohistorical work for 25 years and can assert without hesitation that his claim that "any researcher of psychohistory knows that much of the literature is replete with the same concepts and theories offered by Dr. Asimov" is just not true.

Though Asimov did indeed invent the term "psychohistory," his ideas in no way reflect what our field is about or reflect our current state of awareness and knowledge. What Asimov presents might more properly be called "mathematical history," but it is not the psychohistory we work with today and never has been. We are not practitioners of a "branch of mathematics which deals with the reactions of human conglomerates to fixed social and economic stimuli." Humans do much more than react. "Social and economic stimuli" does not begin to describe the complexity of what large groups are about. And when, in the reality of human affairs, is anything ever "fixed"? Our field is not a "profound statistical science." Nor do we attempt "mathematical prediction." Can humans really be understood mathematically? I think not.

We use psychoanalytic theory because it recognizes the importance of understanding individual and shared emotion when we attempt to understand the motivation of human beings in the theater of their history. One reason our field can be so anxiety-provoking is because when dealing with real human beings there is little certainty of anything. Mathematics, on the other hand, offers a sense/fantasy of certainty that a focus on emotion and fantasy content -- more the reality of our humanity than any attempt at statistical quantification -- cannot. Varela's belief that mathematical prediction is even possible may stem from a fantasy of certainty provided by mathematics. Such a fantasy might be an understandable defense in response to the anxiety often inherent in psychohistorical work. From what Varela has written, he does not seem to acknowledge, or even be aware of, the reality of feeling in individuals, groups, or history. What is history after all, if not ourselves? Men as individuals or in groups are not abstract entities that can be understood in any meaningful way by mathematical thinking. Considering "mind" -- more properly emotion and fantasy -- does add greatly to the complexity of what we seek to do. But human beings think *and* feel. We love, desire,

make love, make war, steal, help others, dream, progress, regress, cheat, are consistent and inconsistent, achieve tremendous greatness and evil (sometimes in the same person), do actions that can be truly wondrous as well as shameful, and all the rest that space does permit me to enumerate. Where is the sense of wonder in Asimov's so called theories? There can be no psychohistory without admitting to facing the reality of emotion in man. To some this may seem a hopeless effort, but it is not. Psychohistory is one of the great scholarly challenges of our time.

The whole notion of science itself offers a fantasy that certainty and mathematical prediction are possible. In Western society, science seems to be a benchmark criterion for defining whether fields of study are legitimate. Some scientific thinkers are beginning to call this into question, but they remain in the minority so far. There are psychohistorians who long to use prediction as a way to scientifically test our insights, but this still remains a largely intuitive process with a limited level of certainty. To a limited degree, prediction may be possible in psychohistory, but because man, in all his complexity and wonder, remains our field of study, prediction will always be more intuitive than scientific. Varela and those enamored of his fantasy are certainly entitled to their opinion. As for me, I think we have more than enough to do right now to simply improve our levels of psychohistorical understanding. Getting overly involved in disputes about such issues as prediction, may be defenses to detour us from our truer task of understanding human historical motivation, anxiety-provoking though it is.

Asimov does not deserve an "honored place" among psychohistorical pioneers. He is not, and never was, a psychohistorian. To make such a claim is insulting to our real pioneers: Freud, Abraham, Erikson, Bion, deMause, Binion, Loewenberg, La Barre, Stein, and many others. Varela is an intelligent man but I find his lack of awareness disappointing and insulting. Perhaps it is because he is relatively new to our field. I hope he will want to learn more about what we really do and work with us to better understand, rather than remaining enmeshed in some abstract fantasy world.

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Founder of the Group for the Psychohistorical Study of Film; and the author of The Psychohistorian's Handbook (1988) and many other studies. □

Asimov's Scientific Predictions

Stan Pope
Detroit, Michigan

Since my grade school days I have been intrigued by some of the concepts in Isaac Asimov's fiction, such as robotics and psychohistory. Asimov was actually more of a scientist than a science fiction writer. As a result, many of his ideas have proven to be realistic and have actually come to exist. These include "automated" showers, hand held calculators and the miniaturization of electronics in general, solar-powered satellites, the ability to choose the sex of babies with certainty, cyber cafes (where one can rent online computer time for communicating by e-mail and browsing the Internet, with light refreshments usually available), and the term "robotics."

Over the years, I developed a curiosity regarding the real potential of explaining short- and long-term actions of large groups of individuals while considering the question of just what was Isaac Asimov's concept of a science of psychohistory. At one point, Asimov wrote that the only difference between explaining or predicting the actions of atoms and the actions of humans is that there are billions more atoms involved in a given event than there are humans in a given event. Therefore, the statistical uncertainty introduced as a result of extraneous variables is greater when dealing with humans than when dealing with atoms. This sounds suspiciously like scientism which, I assume, most psychologists and sociologists dismiss.

I am not a psychologist by trade. In fact, I am educated in electrical engineering and am an entrepreneur. My perspective and my contribution to any discussion of psychohistory is as a layman. Probably everyone who has read Asimov's books has wondered if his methods have been or could ever be used in real life to predict the future. But I believe that among Asimov fans there is virtually no understanding of what his psychohistory was really meant to be. They confuse Asimovian

psychohistory itself with the Seldon plan, the 1000 years of prediction, which was a specific and detailed application of that psychohistory. Although a purpose and function of Asimov's psychohistory was prediction, its essence was to give a precise explanation of *past* and *current* human activity. Only then was Asimov's psychohistory able to predict future actions -- and then only generally and over long periods of time. There is even less understanding that he was able to apply psychohistory to a controlled and manipulated future only with the use of the purely fictional mentallics -- unless you believe in psychics.

I believe that Asimov's variation of psychohistory is completely unrealistic and impossible in the current period of human history. The need for extremely large numbers of humans to be involved is the most obvious problem with attempting to apply Asimovian psychohistory to real life. There is currently no model available on which to test psychohistorical theories or even to chart trends. Other ideological and pragmatic obstacles include the lack of superior understanding of group motivations; the significant technological advancement we are experiencing which produces a still-developing and, therefore, unstable society; and the absence of a mature truly global community -- not just the presence of the beginnings of a global economy.

I am also convinced that any attempt to link Asimovian psychohistory and real psychohistory for prediction is futile. But my earlier examination of the potential of Isaac Asimov's psychohistory led to my continuing interest in explanation of group psychology, which is at least a part of the scope of the psychohistory that professional psychohistorians have developed. Because I developed an interest in psychohistory from the background of a scientist's frame of mind, and was introduced to a fictional version of psychohistory that used strictly scientific methodologies, I have had to sort through the multi-definition nature and the varied ideologies behind current psychohistorical study to gain even a partial understanding of what it is all about. I suspected and then was informed on the e-mail Psychohistory List, first indirectly by Henry Lawton, then directly by Paul Elovitz, that psychohistory is not necessarily a science, but can also be described as a subjective art that utilizes intuition as well as science. My view at this point, influenced by Asimov, is that the multidisciplinary

nature of psychohistory could use a little more of the discipline of science.

Stan Pope was educated in electrical engineering at the University of Michigan. He is an entrepreneur and small business owner (Tanco, Inc.) as well as National Service Manager for the Island Sun and Health Systems and a technical advisor for the Island Sun Times. Pope, who is 34 years old, is married and has a two-year-old daughter. His e-mail address is <hseldon@gowebway.com>. □

Isaac Asimov and Psychohistory

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My friendship with Isaac Asimov was episodic. We met at science-fiction conventions and corresponded from time to time, though that tapered off as his answers came back so quickly I began to feel that I was taking time from his work. We had met first at the World Science Fiction Convention in Philadelphia in 1953, where I remember him (and his first wife Gertrude) as part of a group that went out to dinner at a local restaurant, and I was impressed by his wit and cordiality as well as by his reputation. He had been publishing science fiction since 1939 and had been a star since 1941 when "Nightfall" was published as a cover story in *Astounding Science Fiction*. His place in the science fiction firmament had been confirmed by his robot stories and by his *Foundation Trilogy*, which had become one of the central building blocks of science fiction. Perhaps our longest companionship was when Isaac and I joined several others for a car trip from New York to the Cleveland World Science Fiction Convention of 1955, where Isaac was guest of honor. We seemed to spend a good deal of time together at the Convention. "Why do we spend our lives among strangers, who don't know what we do or care, so that we can spend three or four days a year among the people we love?" he told me then. Whenever we met after that at occasional conventions or in New York when I was visiting editors or attending science fiction functions, Isaac would hug me and tell me how I didn't look any older, and I would respond that my novel *The Immortals* (Gunn 1962) had been autobiographical.

The only time I was in his home was in

1971 just after he had separated from his first wife and had taken an apartment in New York. He had agreed to do a film about science fiction literary history, *The History of Science Fiction Since 1938*, that I was producing as part of a series about science fiction, and we filmed it in his study (interrupted by a telephone conversation with his son, who was disturbed about the impending divorce). About eight years later I interviewed him for my study of his science fiction, *Issac Asimov: The Foundations of Science Fiction* (Gunn 1982) (the interview can be found in the revised edition, published by Scarecrow Press in 1996) (Gunn 1996), and he told me I should work on my own fiction rather than writing about him.

What kind of person was Isaac Asimov? When I met him he was gregarious, witty, charming, a marvelous impromptu public speaker, and someone who was pleased with his own success. He became even more successful after he began including autobiographical notes in his collections of stories and the anthologies he edited (beginning with *The Hugo Winners* in 1962) (Asimov 1962), and his life story became entwined with his life's work just as his life's work became entwined with the evolution of science fiction itself. If his attitude of "cheerful self-appreciation" offended some, it endeared him and his work to most of his fans. And his pleasure at his success (measured, in part, at the way he counted his books and celebrated their totals -- the final number was in the 470s) was ameliorated by his frank admission of his own flaws and his genuine surprise at how it all had come about. In the interview, his curious mixture of pride and confession was evidenced by his unwillingness to accept praise or advantage without recognizing other people's contributions. He always admitted, for instance, that, although he would like to claim the credit, John Campbell had invented "the three laws of robotics" (although Campbell maintained that they were implicit in Asimov's stories). [In 1937, John Wood Campbell, Jr., editor of *Astounding Stories*, encouraged writers to produce science fiction of literary merit and fostered what has since been called the golden age of science fiction. Campbell changed the magazine's name to *Astounding Science Fiction* in 1938 and to *Analog* in 1960.]

I also asked Isaac about his insistence on being designated as a science fiction writer when he was more famous as a science popularizer and man-about-letters. He considered loyalty a major

virtue, he said, and compared it with his Jewish origins. After saying that he wasn't a good Jew, observed no Jewish rituals, and considered the Judaic "only god" doctrine pernicious ("It's not just that we have our God and you have your God - - it's that we have the only God and you have something less"), he continued, "I try to make up for it by making sure that everybody knows I'm a Jew, so while I'm deprived of the benefits of being part of a group, you know, I make sure that I don't lose any of the disadvantages...."

The first volume of Isaac's autobiography, *In Memory Yet Green* (Asimov 1979), gives many examples of the way in which he felt that his later life was shaped by his early experience growing up under the care of a strict mother and an absent father (busy with the Brooklyn candy store downstairs). He taught himself to read before he went to school, and his father understood then that his son was unusual. That didn't prevent his father from pointing out his faults: yelling up at his son for sleeping late when he should be helping out in the store, calling him a "sluggard." Many of Isaac's later eccentricities such as rising early, working long hours, eating rapidly, reading newspapers so that they looked undisturbed, Isaac traced to his early upbringing. But that, after all, is what an autobiography is -- an attempt to explain and make sense of, to rationalize, a life: what brought me to this time and place and position?

In the end Isaac thought that he had earned his eccentricities; they were part of what made him Isaac Asimov, and Isaac Asimov was a good thing to be. As I ended the biographical chapter of my *Isaac Asimov: The Foundations of Science Fiction*,

You can see for yourself in my autobiography that I had a great deal of difficulty adjusting to the world when I was young. To a large extent the world was an enemy world.... Science fiction in its very nature is intended to appeal a) to people who value reason and b) to people who form a small minority in a world that doesn't value reason.... I am trying to lead a life of reason in an emotional world (Gunn 1982).

Asimov, no doubt, still was trying to please his stern father with industry and productivity. Asimov would have been the first to admit it. He also would have said that it didn't matter how the past had shaped him. He was satisfied to be what he was: a claustrophile, an acrophobe, a compulsive writer. When he was a teenager, people complained about his eccentricities: his

walking home from the library with three books, reading one and holding one under each arm; his love of cemeteries; and his constant whistling. Their complaints didn't bother him (though he did, when asked, stop whistling in the cemetery). "I had gathered the notion somewhere that my eccentricities belonged to me and to nobody else and that I had every right to keep them." He added, "And I lived long enough to see these eccentricities and others that I have not mentioned come to be described as 'colorful' facets of my personality." He ended up rationalizing everything that had happened to him; he was a rational man who knew that the past cannot be changed, it can only be understood. And, as a rational man, Asimov knew that the present must be accepted.

That life of reason found its expression in his fiction as well as his non-fiction. Moreover, the things that he became were rewarded by the world. He had his many triumphs. He was guest of honor and toastmaster at World Science Fiction Conventions. He won Hugos and Nebulas, the top awards in science fiction; was named a Grand Master by his fellow science fiction writers; and, perhaps best of all, was told by John Campbell, "You are one of the greatest science fiction writers in the world." Scientists applauded his science books. Professor George G. Simpson of Harvard called him "one of our natural wonders and national resources." As a rational man, he knew that what he was was an excellent thing to be. So the world said, and so he agreed.

I might add that none of his neuroses -- his "eccentricities" -- interfered with the life he desired. To be sure, he might have enjoyed traveling (he turned down several of my invitations to lecture at the University of Kansas because he didn't fly and train travel took too much time), but traveling would have interfered with what he liked most of all, writing. His neuroses may have influenced his fiction, as Alan Elms suggested in the June, 1997, *Clio's Psyche* (Elms 1997), but not the space travel that he wrote about. There is little about space or the experience of space travel in his writing, just as there is little description, little sense of place in them -- his stories are mainly dramas of ideas acted out on a bare stage. But in *The Caves of Steel* (Asimov 1954) and *The Naked Sun* (Asimov 1956), his so-called Robot Novels, he describes a humanity that has developed a species-wide agoraphobia because of its enclosed environment, and one man (Lije Bailey) who fights his phobia and conquers it.

They are, to my mind, Asimov's finest novels, and they illustrate what I consider the central, Darwinian concept of science fiction -- that humanity is adaptable, but because it can recognize its adaptations it can choose to behave otherwise.

The June, 1997, issue of *Clio's Psyche* (Elovitz 1997) also mentions Isaac's propositioning the valedictorian of the Ramapo College commencement. The academic vice president of Paul Elovitz's college attributed that act and Isaac's "literary profusion" to his habit of not censoring his own thoughts or words. As a rational man and a witty man, Isaac sometimes came out with words he regretted (mostly when someone "topped" him with a wittier remark, which he enjoyed recounting on himself), but his "gallantry toward the ladies," as he called it, was a strategy he adopted to cope with his early uneasiness with women. As he told about it in his autobiography, *In Memory Yet Green*, Isaac was 21 when he had his first experience with intimacy, though it stopped short of intercourse, but he arrived home at 5 a.m. to his family's alarm and his mother's anger, which would, he feared, end up with her calling the police and having him thrown in jail:

If, however, I remained backward in sex, I rapidly learned, during that summer of experimentation, how to "kid around" with girls -- that is, to make playful sexual allusions. Once I overcame my fright at saying anything of the sort (in particular, my fear that the young woman would call the police and do my mother's job for her), I found it a fascinating game, made up of word play and riposte, which I was naturally adept at, and which I have never outgrown (Asimov 1979: 309).

It was easier for Isaac to be "gallant" to all the women he met rather than to wonder how he should behave or how they would respond. Every woman he met, young and old, got the same treatment, and he was so notorious among female editors that some of them might have felt offended if he had overlooked them in his "all-embracing gallantry."

Finally, to psychohistory. Isaac has recounted many times how he conceived the idea of predicting the future through a science of mass behavior, how on August 1, 1941, he was on the subway going to meet editor John Campbell but didn't have a story idea, how he opened his book of Gilbert and Sullivan plays and came up with the idea for a story about the fall of a galactic empire

and the return of feudalism. The story "Foundation" was published in the May, 1942, issue of *Astounding Science Fiction* and was the beginning of the series that later was published (and better known) as the *Foundation Trilogy*. Asimov's interest in the series was rooted in his interest in history. In *Opus 100*, he confessed that he had almost majored in history instead of chemistry, and when later in his career he turned to writing non-fiction, many of his favorite books were histories. It was his love of history -- he had twice read through his major source, Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* -- that inspired his desire to write a future history:

In the 1940s, you see, I wrote a series of stories about the fall of the Galactic Empire, the thousand-year Dark Age that followed, and the rise of the Second Galactic Empire. What I had in mind was the fall of the Roman Empire, of course, and I was very free in making analogies, although the imitation was never slavish.

The stories involved the deliberate establishment of two Foundations of scientists toward the end of the days of the First Empire. It seems that the science of "psychohistory" (an invented term of my own, which deals with the study of quantitative sociology so that the sweeping changes of history can be foreseen in advance and foretold) had been perfected. The Foundations were therefore located in such places and in such fashion as would serve to reduce (according to the predictions of psychohistory) the length and disastrousness of the Dark Age interregnum.... (Asimov 1969: 239-240).

In his interview, Isaac recounted, as he had a number of times earlier, that Campbell had tried to rationalize psychohistory through symbolic logic (and some commentators had likened it to a kind of "debased Marxism"), but Isaac "made it mathematical"; his analogy was to the kinetic theory of gases, where individual molecules are unpredictable but the average action is completely predictable. "[S]o that what we needed were two things, a lot of people, which the Galactic Empire supplied, and secondly, people not knowing what the conclusions were as to the future so that they could continue to act randomly."

Somewhere in his voluminous writings Isaac referred to his discovery that "psychohistory" was a term that had been applied to a branch of

psychology or history. I don't think he was aware (nor was I) that the word had existed before he "invented it." In Isaac's later work, *Prelude to Foundation* (Asimov 1988), Hari Seldon says that "psychohistory" should have been called "psychsociology," but the second term was "too ugly a word" and "he may have known, instinctively, that a knowledge of history was necessary." But, of course, these were later refinements added as Isaac thought through the complications and criticisms that "psychohistory" had engendered. Just as his robot stories continued to refine the concept of robotics and their relationships to humanity and to individual humans, so Isaac's later Foundation novels kept building on and modifying his original ideas about psychohistory and the Foundations.

Some of the criticisms of Isaac's fiction are based on the mistaken concept that his Foundation stories form a true trilogy and should be judged as if they were planned that way from the beginning, but it is my contention, and Isaac agreed, that they were put together like Tinkertoy pieces, one tacked on to the end of the other. Like the robot stories, they were exercises in ingenuity, one generation's problem growing out of the previous generation's solution, and the fact that they seem planned is a tribute to Isaac's ingenuity, to his rational approach to fiction, and to his overarching vision of psychohistory and the Foundations set up to implement it, as well as to his knowledge of history and historical precedent, in particular, the example of the fall of the Roman Empire.

If Isaac had a distrust of psychologists, it evidenced itself ambiguously in the Foundation stories. The Second Foundation (they are excluded from the First Foundation) is made up of psychologists -- they are the custodians of Hari Seldon's psychohistory -- and they act in the second half of the *Foundation Trilogy* to set Seldon's Plan back on the correct path after the Mule's mutated and unpredictable psychic abilities get it off track. Still, I felt an uneasiness about their behavior and the fact that the future of the Second Galactic Empire seemed to lie in their hands rather than those of the self-made political leaders of the First Foundation. As the psychologists had demonstrated in the final novella of the *Foundation Trilogy*, their powers to shape human behavior and even human beliefs were too overwhelming to trust to anyone. But in the best-selling novels that Isaac wrote after 1982 (and after the publication of the first edition of my *Isaac*

Asimov: *The Foundations of Science Fiction*) Isaac found a third way that integrated his Foundation stories and his Robot novels into a single future history.

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Psychohistory and Enlightenment

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When I first read Isaac Asimov's *Foundation Trilogy* as a teenager, I was mightily impressed. Many years later I was glad to see him pick up the Foundation saga's threads again. I eagerly followed his mature reflections on the early and late life of his greatest character, Hari Seldon. But I'm not ready to adopt either Asimov or Seldon as the patron saint of psychohistory.

Asimov did not originate either the word "psychohistory" or the concepts it now usually describes. The Oxford English Dictionary cites a 1934 usage of the word, and I suspect there were earlier ones. Freud and others were already enthusiastically practicing psychohistory before Asimov's first Foundation story saw print in 1942. *Moses and Monotheism* (1939), for example, is clearly psychohistory as we now know it, though it was so speculative that Freud initially called it a

"historical novel."

"Psychohistory as we now know it" is an important phrase when we discuss what Asimov called psychohistory. It mainly involves the application of psychological concepts and theories (especially but not exclusively psychodynamic theories) to historical movements and historical figures. What Asimov labeled as psychohistory was a fictional combination of approaches now called historiometrics and futuristics. My departmental neighbor Dean Simonton is the most active and influential scholar of historiometrics. In such books as *Psychology, Science, and History* (Simonton 1990), he applies complex statistical analyses to just the sorts of "mass human behavior" and "variables of cause and effect, probabilities from social behavior, and economic conditions" that Richard Varela identifies as the essence of Asimovian psychohistory. Simonton draws conclusions primarily about the past, but he does sometimes move into a predictive mode, as in *Why Presidents Succeed* (Simonton 1987). What he never does -- but the fictional Hari Seldon does persistently -- is to manipulate individuals and social movements to make his predictions come true.

(Incidentally, Dean Simonton tells me that he has never read the *Foundation Trilogy*, and thus received no inspiration from it. Well after he had established his own historiometric approach, someone gave him a photocopy of several relevant pages from the *Trilogy*; he recognized certain similarities but didn't read further. Simonton collects his masses of historical and biographical data from a wide variety of sources, at times including Asimov's nonfiction reference works on such topics as Shakespeare and the Bible.)

Asimov paid little attention to the psychological and psychoanalytic literature, and indeed appears to have carefully avoided the latter, though his second wife was an analyst. He derived his theoretical concepts concerning psychohistory mainly from an early reading of such historians as Gibbon and Toynbee, with minor later infusions of ideas from such contemporary approaches as systems theory and chaos theory. (Gunn 1982, Hassler 1991.) One of Asimov's main psychohistorical concepts, however, does overlap in interesting ways with ideas both from psychoanalysis and from social-psychological research. That concept involves the necessity (according to Hari Seldon) of keeping secret the psychohistorians' analyses and predictions. If such

knowledge became public, according to Seldon, "freedom of action would be expanded and the number of additional variables introduced would become greater than our psychology could handle" (Asimov 1951-1953: 74).

A quarter-century ago, a social psychologist named Kenneth Gergen described (without reference to Asimov) a phenomenon that he called "enlightenment effects." (Gergen 1973). According to Gergen, the spread of psychological knowledge inexorably alters the minds of us all -- alters them so radically, indeed, that a lasting science of human behavior is impossible. Gergen contended that people avoid behaving in ways that psychologists explicitly or implicitly condemn; they look for different ways to behave when they see their behavior patterns neatly categorized; they even act directly contrary to ways predicted by psychological theories, to assert their freedom or individuality.

The term "enlightenment effects" was new with Gergen, but the general idea was not. As early as 1911 Sigmund Freud was warning other analysts, "The more the patient has learnt of the practice of dream-interpretation, the more obscure do his later dreams as a rule become" (Freud 1911: 95). Freud recommended that therapists cope with the problem by guarding against "displaying very special interest in the interpretation of dreams" (Freud 1911: 92-93).

Asimov's psychohistorians instead try to disguise their operations and keep their findings secret. I suspect Kenneth Gergen would feel that such attempts to forestall enlightenment effects are ethically indefensible, even though the psychohistorians may be working toward good ends. Rather than advocating a dishonest and hard-to-maintain secrecy to protect their science, Gergen proposed that social psychologists give up their scientific pretensions and resign themselves to practicing a sort of contemporary social history. If enlightenment effects are so powerful and inescapable that the fabric constituting the social sciences falls to tatters almost as it is being woven, why waste time trying to develop predictive hypotheses and integrative theories?

I doubt that social-scientific research delivers nearly as many enlightenment effects as Gergen assumes. People display an amazing capacity to ignore hard-won knowledge and to fasten instead upon astrology, advertising slogans, pseudo-psychiatric quackery, and a host of other alternatives. But if we can have any genuinely

enlightening impact upon the general public, we should go for it. A great deal of direct feedback has led me to believe, for instance, that Stanley Milgram's research on obedience to authority has made contemporary college students and graduates more hesitant about accepting authoritative commands unhesitatingly -- and that's mostly a good thing.

Asimov's psychohistorians were at times pretty dubious characters, though they claimed to be working to save galactic civilization from a new Dark Age. One thing they didn't do, as far as I can recall, was to use enlightenment effects in positive ways. With their ingenuity and technology, they could have publicized their findings in ways that would have truly enlightened the Galactic Empire and made its citizens more resistant to the grand and petty tyrants who sometimes gained a throne. As psychohistorians of a rather different stripe, we can aim our work at least partly in a similar direction.

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In Search of Isaac Asimov

Paul H. Elovitz
The Makers of Psychohistory
Research Project

Throughout my life I have encountered Isaac Asimov's writings in book stores, casual conversations, libraries, and book reviews. To me, he was a popularizer of science who also wrote science fiction. I was, and am, awed by the breadth of his knowledge. He was writing guides to biology, chemistry, physics, and Shakespeare,

subjects which I had studied in college, as well as to astronomy, the Bible, computers, and an incredible number of things which were -- and in some cases still are -- a total mystery to me.

As I prepared to offer my first avowedly psychohistory course in 1972, a bright student made reference to the *Foundation Trilogy* (Asimov 1951-1953) and could not believe that I was about to teach psychohistory without having read these books by the man who, he assured me, had invented the field and term. A quick perusal of the *Trilogy* reassured me that Asimovian and Elovitzian psychohistory were based upon and working within two different paradigms. At the time I was much more interested in reading every article on psychohistory and psychoanalytically-informed biography I could find, rather than a science fiction fantasy which glorified psychohistorians.

It was a most pleasant surprise that Ramapo College chose to pay a considerable sum of money to Isaac Asimov to speak at commencement in 1976. I remember his making a point about the incredible creativity of children before they were subjected to formal schooling. I had already arrived at this viewpoint through my parenting, practice of child therapy, and teaching the history of childhood. The vividness with which he made this point struck me. I recollect his words as: "Until they go to school children drive you so crazy with questions that are so brilliantly fundamental that you want to hit them with a two-by-four because you can not answer them." The disparity between the appreciation of the unfettered intelligence of children and violent metaphor by a man who seemed so warm and humane, made the audience laugh. The experience prompted me to want to have more contact with this brilliant polymath. Our correspondence never led to an interview for the *Psychohistory* because he did not like to be interviewed by people with psychological credentials.

Curiosity led me to want to know more about the man and last year in these pages (June, 1997) I published a preliminary article noting that Isaac Asimov "amazed, inspired, frustrated, and puzzled me" (Elovitz 1997: 12). Although I have long shared Harvard paleontologist Professor George Gaylord Simpson's sentiment that "Isaac Asimov is one of our national wonders and natural resources" (S. Asimov 1995), as a psychoanalyst, biographer, and historian I know that it is easy to be blinded by awe, and I worked hard to get past

this sentiment.

My methodology in undertaking this research project was to first listen to many audiotapes of Asimov's science fiction -- about 20 hours in all. Next, I read, and partly re-read, all of the autobiographical materials I could find along with the book of his letters that his younger brother posthumously edited (S. Asimov 1995). Then I read the relevant materials in six biographies including both editions of *Isaac Asimov: The Foundations of Science Fiction* by James Gunn (Gunn 1982, Gunn 1996). I also spoke with James Gunn and Janet Jeppson -- Asimov's widow -- and others who had contact with the prolific writer.

Listening to the *Foundation Series* on audiotape was an enjoyable task. As someone who has devoted his professional life to developing psychohistory, I found it delightful to listen to fantasies of psychohistorians saving the world on numerous occasions. It reminded me of some of my adolescent fantasies, though it was infinitely more creative. Hari Seldon and his psychohistorians, in the face of incredible odds, would almost single-handedly triumph over the forces of tyranny, ignorance, and decay. Seldon even showed great physical courage and talent in protecting himself against thugs who would try to intimidate or disrupt psychohistory. He had a historian wife, who turned out to be a robot, totally devoted to protecting him -- she died saving his life. Some of the concepts I came across in listening were *robotics*, *probes* and *scans*, and *mentallics* (people who could control the emotions of others). It was enjoyable, though eventually it became tedious because Asimov was no great stylist and even he became bored with the series which he felt he outgrew (S. Asimov 1995: 79). Yet, after waiting 30 years, he expanded the original *Foundation Trilogy* into the *Foundation Series* in 1982 and it immediately made the best-seller list. Many of his readers are so emotionally attached to the *Trilogy* that they, like Richard Varela, continue to refer to all of his writings on psychohistorians by that early title.

Reading Asimov's three autobiographies totaling 2160 pages -- *In Memory Yet Green* (Asimov 1979), *In Joy Still Felt* (Asimov 1980), and *I. Asimov: A Memoir* (Asimov 1994) -- was a daunting task. Just keeping track of this prolific polymath's books was a major endeavor because there are over 500 by his count and more than 470 by that of James Gunn. Asimov overwhelms the reader with details of his life, friendships, and

writings. In the course of my research I found a complex man, one who was quite admirable and likeable in most, though certainly not all, respects. I also became aware of many contradictions between Asimov's self-image and the way his devoted readers viewed him.

For all of Asimov's reputation as an egotistical self-promoter he wrote much that was unflattering about himself. He described himself as "boisterous," "loud-mouthed and eccentric," "self-absorbed," "particularly self-centered," "a terrible hypochondriac," incapable of working for anyone else, "inadequate for scientific research," "the world's biggest klutz" with fax and other machines, "a loner and a semi-recluse," a school boy who "enjoyed baiting the teachers," easily manipulated by flattery or a pretty girl, and "a mere dreamer." Though he recognized that his "ability to sop up" enormous bodies of information and his "faculty of instant recall" were central to his success as a writer, he also acknowledged "vast areas in which I am pathetically ignorant." He declared "I know nothing about economics, psychology, sociology, music, art, contemporary literature, and so on and so on" (Olander and Greenberg 1977: 203).

There is a stream of consciousness quality to these writings, and sometimes a confessional tone, yet there is also a holding back in significant respects. Asimov liked to see himself as mentally well-adjusted and healthy, and usually he did not like to think, talk, or write about his own motivations, at least until he had them neatly, though not very deeply, explained. He presented it as a great revelation when a professor lecturing on science fiction said that the author does not necessarily understand the meaning of his own stories. After becoming friends with the professor who subsequently arranged for a German translation of one of Isaac's works, Asimov wrote a story about Shakespeare who comes back to life as a student and flunks a Shakespeare course.

Isaac Asimov clearly identified with Hari Seldon, his genius scientist who predicts the future course of mankind 20,000 years into the future. But this is not something that the author liked to acknowledge. His feelings of not wanting to know the roots of his creativity or about his identifications with the characters he made up were embodied in the title of his poem, "I Just Make Them Up, See." After his death in 1992, his widow, in the course of completing his third autobiography, wrote: "...in killing Hari Seldon [in

Forward the Foundation, Asimov, 1993] he was also killing himself, yet he transcended the anguish." In facing death he said, "like Hari Seldon, I can look at my work all around me and I'm comforted. I know that I studied about, imagined, and written down many possible futures -- it's as if I've been there" (Asimov 1994: 552). In his last science fiction work, published posthumously, he had Seldon die the way he would have preferred to have died, at an advanced age (81), at his desk, writing.

Despite his self-image as a mentally well-adjusted person, Asimov suffered from acrophobia and agoraphobia which he described as mild. He usually preferred enclosed spaces and it is no accident that he created a totally enclosed planet in his science fiction so that his heroes would never have to go out into the open spaces which frightened him. He saw his acrophobia as "a blessing" because it kept him at his typewriter or word processor rather than on a plane (S. Asimov 1995: 166). Though his "travel phobia" helped keep him writing, he also loved to give after dinner speeches, the range of locations of which was limited by the need to drive rather than fly. In the 1970s his brother reports that he traveled "on occasion by ship, train or car. It was because his extreme love for Janet was greater than his extreme aversion to travel" (S. Asimov 1995: 166). In my 1997 article (Elovitz 1997) I presented the science fiction writer's lifelong fascination with space travel as a compensation for his acrophobia as he did in fantasy that which he feared to do in reality. I noted that it was not very unusual and cited the fear of flying of Ray Bradbury, another well-known science fiction writer. In this article I will now turn to his family origins, childhood, and psychology.

★ ★ ★

In Petrovichi, Russia, on January 2, 1920, Isaac Asimov was born as the eldest of three children to Judah (Jack) Asimov and Anna Rachel Berman Asimov. The family had been well off before the ravages of World War I and the Russian Civil War. A gentle boy Judah had taught to read had become a "big shot" Communist Commissar who was "influenced" by his early mentor (Asimov 1979: 27). Adapting to the economy of the new regime, for five years Judah organized and successfully ran a food cooperative. According to their famous son, the family harbored no ill will towards the Communist experiment.

Sponsored by Rachel's brother, the

Asimovs legally left Soviet Russia, moving to Brooklyn in 1923. They were newcomers with a very limited knowledge of English. Judah's efforts at being a salesman were not productive since he was "too argumentative and did not know how to ingratiate himself" (Asimov 1979: 64). He and his family made their livelihood as the owners of a series of candy stores.

As was the case with so many other immigrants involved in "nickel and dime capitalism," the Asimov family were slaves to the store. They did not eat together because someone had to be in the candy store. Isaac felt that the store made him, in certain respects, "an orphan" (Asimov 1979: 67). He later longed for the wonderful days that ended with the purchase of the first candy store in his sixth year, wonderful days when his "Poppa" could relax with him on Sundays and tell stories. It should be remembered that Isaac would become an outstanding storyteller (Asimov 1979: 68).

Judah may not have eaten with his children, but he was a powerful presence in Isaac's life. His eldest son was his favorite child (rather than Isaac's younger sister or much younger brother), "remarkable," and the smartest kid in school, and he set very high standards for him. He also reasoned with the boy, explaining things patiently rather than hitting him as did his wife. His mother also expected much of her eldest son. For example, she went to school to ask the teacher why he earned only a B+, rather than an A, in "deportment" -- a term she did not understand. Upon her return home she hit him, never a rare event, until he was black and blue all over, but he never did stop talking at the wrong times in class.

The store was the hub of the family's activities and Isaac worked there from an early age, just as I remember working in my immigrant parents' store. The boy was fascinated by the pulp fiction magazines which his father told him to stay away from, but these warnings only increased his interest. At the age of nine he found his lifelong love when he read his first science fiction magazine. He seems to have been able to convince "Poppa," who did not know many things about his adopted country, that the "science" in science fiction made it worthwhile. As a consequence, Asimov became a lifelong advocate for reading of all sorts. He championed science fiction and popular science even in academia where they are looked down upon.

The realities of the boy's life were home

(with a younger sister he did not like), the store, and school. There was no question of joining an after school club or going to the playground. Years later, Asimov wrote, "I was small, I was weak" and "essentially an outsider" (Asimov 1994: 29-30). Unlike his parents, the other children did not appreciate his quick intelligence. Isaac described himself as an "acne-ridden" teenager with "an easily provoked grin," and "a foolish expression." With girls he felt totally inadequate. Part of his problem was that he was being skipped from grade to grade, enabling him to graduate at age 15 as did his sister, so that he was the youngest in the class. As he advanced up the educational ladder Isaac discovered that he was no longer the best student in the class. The problems being tackled by the Math Team at Boys High were totally beyond him since he had no feel for mathematics. This was the period when he decided he would write science fiction. In his *Foundation Series* he is the one who understands the mathematical formulation of history that others can not fathom -- the two Foundations are Isaac's own highly selective, secret, math team. Perhaps "team" is the wrong word, since Asimov was never a team player.

In his science fiction, Isaac Asimov, the undersized child, created a brilliant, almost all-knowing psychohistorian. The man who could write, "there is nothing physically heroic about me," and present autobiographical evidence to back up his point, created the totally heroic Hari Seldon. Asimov's psychohistorians were the outgrowth of his adolescent fantasies. Judah Asimov had "always schooled himself never to show emotion" and the son, who identified strongly with his father, created heroes who were above *mere emotion* (Asimov 1979: 20). In his *Foundation* stories, the psychohistorians, and especially the handful of robots, were best able to live up to his ideal of reason.

When he was 19 years old Isaac "realized that robots were essentially loveable" and he never seems to have changed his mind (S. Asimov 1995: 83). While others might see machines as Frankensteinian monsters, Asimov felt that robots helped human beings. Several of the most important characters helping his hero Hari Seldon turn out to be robots in a time when robots were supposed to be outlawed. There were few robots in the *Foundation Series* because his editor and mentor, John Wood Campbell, was a racist who insisted that white people of Northwest European

descent had to emerge as the heroes over all others. Asimov, who started publishing "Foundation" in 1942 as the first of a series of stories for *Astounding Science Fiction* when he feared Hitler would spread his racism throughout the world, dealt with his mentor Campbell's racism by avoiding it. He simply wrote about other worlds, without any Aryan or WASP types, and excluded robots so they would not have to be demeaned. Later he would write a separate robot series. Despite his own sense of intellectual superiority, Asimov was always a strong advocate of democratic ideals and was a lifelong liberal. When he describes his membership in MENSA later in life, he seems embarrassed by involvement with such an elitist group.

Why does Asimov like robots when so many others have focused on their fears of them? The answer appears to be the utter rationality of robots, which he greatly admires, and their potential to free humans from drudge work. It must be remembered that Isaac's beloved father regularly worked 18 hours a day and usually 365 days a year in the candy store. Isaac himself could not be involved in any after school extracurricular activities, such as the newspaper, because when he was not in school he had to be working in the store. Though the boy's body was focused on the work of the store, his mind was drawn to the pulp fiction he was selling amidst the newspapers and candies. Robots could have freed him to do what he wanted to do. Ironically, he turned the work ethic he learned in the candy store to his writing and became a kind of "writing machine" who could only be stopped by death (S. Asimov 1995: 328).

Asimov discovered a world of science fiction and worked to find his place in it even while graduating college at the early age of 19 and starting graduate school. He would have loved to have studied history, but feared he would not make enough money and would have to take a job far from home, so he studied biochemistry although he had little aptitude for laboratory work. Though his doctoral degree was interrupted by working at the Naval Air Station in Philadelphia and being drafted at the end of World War II, he eventually finished it and became a professor of biochemistry at Boston University. If we believe Asimov himself, he was not a good scientist and he struggled constantly with administrators at Boston University who wanted him to spend his time in the laboratory doing biochemistry. He reports becoming "disillusioned with science," "inadequate

for scientific research," and "an utter failure at research" (Asimov 1994: 132, 163). Indeed, his ambition to become an enormously prolific author seems to have emerged during these struggles. It is no wonder he preferred to spend his time lecturing, popularizing his field, and writing science fiction -- these were all areas in which he excelled and he bragged about his non-scientific productivity.

(In my search to understand Asimov the man, I was struck by how we shared certain values and experiences, how we were in the same place but at different times. We both are the sons of immigrant, secular Jews who greatly valued education. We both worked, and before that were baby sat, in family businesses above which we literally lived. We both hated our period as draftees in the army, stationed at Fort Meade and Fort Lee before being shipped overseas. We each spent a miserable period working at the Naval Air Station outside of Philadelphia -- Asimov doing science and I cleaning the offices at night after teaching at Temple University during the day. We each taught at and disliked large urban universities. I had best stop here lest I give the reader too much Elovitz and not enough Asimov.)

The science fiction world which Asimov creates is an overwhelmingly male world, at least until the stories he writes in the period toward the end of his life. Sexuality in Asimov's writings and life interested me because of the absence of women in his early science fiction, the absence of sex in all his science fiction, his awkwardness as a young man with the opposite sex, his virginity prior to his first marriage, his subsequent reputation as "a public Casanova," and his sometimes boorish behavior with the opposite sex. His "public Casanova" reputation was supported by the numerous reports of his attempting to seduce women at every opportunity. In his autobiographical writings he describes himself as constantly flirting with women as mostly a posture. Though he insisted he "was no angel of fidelity," he reports feeling guilty about his infidelity during his failing first marriage. He wrote that this guilt and commitment to his literary productivity kept his Don Juan impulses in check (Asimov 1994: 338).

At a book signing at a science fiction convention, Asimov, who was racked with physical pain from kidney stones, asked a buyer her name and occupation without ever looking up at her. When she answered "Janet Jeppson" and "psychiatrist," he "automatically" said, "Good, let

get on the couch together." His future wife furiously walked away from him thinking that he might "be a good writer, but he's a pill" (Asimov 1994: 257). He recounts years after they were married grabbing and kissing a family friend as he heard Janet opening the door. He reports, almost with a chuckle, that his wife ignored this behavior. Elsewhere, he describes publicly missing the waist and ending with his hand on the breast of the woman introducing him for a public speech. His need to sexualize relations with women runs throughout all of his autobiographical writings.

Isaac Asimov had warm and friendly relations with many women who were not put off by his endless flirtatiousness. Though he married young, it was not a happy union. He felt Gertrude had not married him for love and with her he felt rather inadequate as a lover and in other respects. She smoked and he detested living with a smoker. Michael White, an English biographer (White 1994), is probably right in saying that he "married his mother." It should be noted that his mother was his less favorite parent. The "love of his life" was the psychiatrist Janet Jeppson with whom he made a new life in New York City after moving from Boston. They even wrote science fiction books together. His widow continues to treasure his memory.

Isaac Asimov's personal aversion to being interviewed by psychologists and psychiatrists did not keep him from using psychological terminology in his fiction. As I listened to the audiotapes of the later volumes, I was surprised to hear, though most infrequently, clearly psychological terms such as "sexual repression," and "psychopathology." The biggest surprise was that the psychohistorians of the mysterious Second Foundation were psychologists. And what psychologists! These hidden agents of Hari Seldon's secret plan could read minds and secretly control the course of human history. Yet in the end of the story they, and civilization, were saved from a mind-altering dictator, the Mule, by a single girl who was trained as an historian rather than as a psychologist. It should be noted that not only was Asimov's second wife a psychoanalyst and psychiatrist, but that his beloved daughter was a psychology major in college. By the time of his last autobiographical work, he acknowledged that he, like "every writer, I am convinced, makes use of his own neurosis to the fullest possible extent in his writings" (Asimov 1994: 131).

I will now turn to some issues involving

Asimov's claims to originality. Throughout his career, and somewhat ambivalently towards the end of his life, Asimov believed that he invented the term "psychohistory"; many of his readers and his widow share this belief. Fortuitously, Stan Pope sent me a selection from an article Asimov wrote titled "Psychohistory," first published in July, 1988 (I. Asimov 1995: 185-189). In it, Asimov wrote that "Psychohistory is one of three words [with positronics and robotics] (that I know of) that I get early-use credit for in the *Oxford English Dictionary*." He adds, "I first used it in my story, "Foundation," which appeared in the May, 1942, issue of *Astounding Science Fiction*. Asimov was *not the first to use the term*, however. "Psychohistory" was used at least as early as when Isaac was only two years old. Leon Pierce Clark used it in the title of a psychoanalytic journal article in 1922 (Clark 1922: 367-401).

In the "Psychohistory" article Asimov continues,

...eventually, I thought that MY psychohistory would fade out of human consciousness because the term came to be used by psychiatrists for the study of the psychiatric background of INDIVIDUALS (such as Woodrow Wilson, Sigmund Freud, or Adolf Hitler) who had some pronounced effect on history (I. Asimov 1995).

Like some contemporary psychohistorians, Asimov had a strong emotional reaction to others using his term. He wrote, "naturally, since I felt a proprietary interest in the term psychohistory as a predictive study of large faceless masses of human beings, I resented the new use of the word." Asimov reports growing "more philosophical" about this usage on the grounds that it "might well be that there could be no analogy drawn between molecules and human beings and that there could be no way of predicting human behavior." If human history is "essentially 'chaotic'" then there "could be no psychohistory." But then he takes heart as he declares that scientists are "increasingly interested in MY psychohistory, even though they may not be aware that that's what the study is called and may never have read any of my Foundation novels, and thus may not know of my involvement." He then writes, "Who cares? The concept is more important than I am." At this time he was contemplating his own mortality and impact on society: it was reassuring for him to think that ideas he invented or contributed to would live on and perhaps be developed by others.

The idea of creating mathematical models of human society was also not originated by Asimov. For example, in 1919 Lewis F. Richardson published *The Mathematical Psychology of War* (Richardson 1919) which ended up being more important in promoting a statistical rather than a psychological understanding of war. Like Lloyd deMause, one of the best-known psychohistorical scholars of war, Quaker scholar Richardson was also a campaigner against organized violence. In Asimov's science fiction, war was often avoided by his heroes, but not in the name of the principle of peace. This may have reflected the greater proclivity for the acceptance of violence of the very young Asimov, in comparison to the longing for a universal peaceful togetherness, the "gaia," of the more mature writer.

There have been a number of attempts to apply mathematics to history. Most fall under the categories of cliometrics, futuristics, and historiometrics. I came across one such explicitly Asimovian approach in "An Introduction to Psychohistory" which was a two-part, April and May, 1988, article in *Analog Science Fiction / Science Fact Magazine* by a Michael F. Flynn (Flynn 1988a and Flynn 1988b). Listed in the table of contents as the only nonfiction, "Science Fact" article, it is devoted to proving the Asimovian mathematical approach to psychohistory using a hodgepodge of materials from areas as diverse as anthropology, demography, economic cycles, homicide rates, and slave revolts. There are numerous charts and lots of discussion of mathematical modeling. Although optimistic about this science of mathematical psychohistory, Flynn concedes that "a detailed timetable of the future, à la Hari Seldon, may not be possible." In the article, psychoanalytically-based psychohistory is consigned to only a footnote denunciation on the grounds that "psychoanalysis is a religion, not a science"; its premises must be "accepted on faith"; and it is a closed system not open to the dictates of science. The reality of psychoanalytically-based group psychohistory is ignored, which is quite typical among those inspired by Asimov's group psychohistory (Flynn 1988a: 61). (The *Analog* author is not to be confused with Michael T. Flynn who is a distinguished young psychohistorian and psychologist at John Jay College's City University of New York (CUNY) Center on Violence and Human Survival.)

On the Psychohistory List last November, Richard Varela enthusiastically established himself as the most outspoken proponent for an Asimovian psychohistory based on statistics. When I asked him to develop his concrete examples, which were from medieval Spain and ancient Rome, he had difficulty doing so but eventually wrote the article published above. In it he makes numerous statements which reflect considerable confusion of Asimov's science fiction fantasy psychohistory, and his hope for a mathematically-based psychohistory, with the reality of the psychoanalytically/-psychologically-based psychohistory that has been painstakingly developed in the 20th century by a large group of academics, psychotherapists, and independent scholars. Established psychohistorians are correct in thinking that those introduced to psychohistory as a result of reading Asimov should pay their dues by doing serious research and writing if they want to be taken seriously. This means that they should know the actual psychohistory that exists. What is most striking to me is the degree to which Varela fails to integrate his belief in Asimovian psychohistory with his knowledge and experiences as a practicing psychotherapist, social worker, youth counsellor, domestic violence group facilitator, and psychology graduate student. Shneidman makes it clear that from the standpoint of mathematics, methodology, and Spanish history, Varela has yet to do his homework and that he has set himself a methodologically impossible task. The graduate student should also face the fact that the proper test of a mathematical predictive model is that it should predict the future, not the past. At the moment he does not know enough about what Asimov actually wrote about psychohistory. Nor has he even gotten the name of Asimov's psychohistorian straight -- it is Hari, not Harry, Seldon. I am hopeful that the experience of seeing his own ideas in print alongside other people's reactions to them will help in this process. In our correspondence he referred to me as a mentor, and as a mentor, I would recommend he master the existing psychohistory and then consider if it makes sense to work to validate a mathematical model of psychohistory.

Stan Pope proved to be a most cooperative colleague in the venture of putting together this issue. Besides writing "Asimov's Scientific Predictions" in this issue, he hunted in various libraries and bookstores in the Detroit area for a variety of books and articles. He loves research and his citations, Internet leads, e-mails, faxes, and

re-typing have been greatly appreciated. This is not to say that I readily agree with most of what he has to say. Pope is overly generous in crediting Asimov. He erroneously jumps to the conclusion that Asimov, the prolific popularizer of science, was a "great scientist." Despite its limits, Pope's article is a clear-cut statement by an ardent but sensible Asimovian of the role of Asimov in his own life. It seems to me to be no accident that he comes from a technical or scientific background, as do many readers of Asimov. Although he is a rationalist and believer in science, and insists that psychohistory is a science, Pope sees an Asimovian psychohistory as a most distant possibility. To my way of thinking, at such a distance it takes on the character of hope more than science.

The mathematical model of Asimovian psychohistory has nothing to do with the type of psychohistory I practice. Like most psychohistorians, I primarily work with psychobiography rather than group psychohistory precisely because I have a better grasp of my subject. Yet I know that after years of working with primary sources and empathizing with my subjects, my knowledge is still inexact. I recognize this partly because I have worked two and three times a week for years with patients and still not had an exact knowledge of their psychodynamics. They get better, but just why is not clear with anything like mathematical precision. This experience leaves me hesitant to make generalizations about thousands and millions of people who are so variable in their motives and psychodynamics. To me a mathematical model of society borders on wishful thinking or fantasy. Lee Shneidman, a specialist on methodology, takes this position more eloquently in his article.

Yet, group psychohistory does exist and some important progress has been made. The group psychohistory that I am most comfortable with is usually coupled with individual psychobiography, for example, Rudolph Binion's *Hitler Among the Germans* (Binion 1976). It represents years of research by someone thoroughly knowledgeable in the field. In short, it follows more from experience than from theory which makes it the opposite of Asimovian psychohistory. □

Conclusion

Paul H. Elovitz

The Psychohistory Forum

Asimov's science fiction psychohistory, which he first published in 1942 and added to for the remaining 50 years of his life, is a wonderful fantasy of individuals standing up to the forces of history and changing its course for the better. His fictional mathematical psychohistory is so much easier than the real-life psychohistory scholars and psychotherapists have been struggling to write throughout our century. Isaac Asimov neither coined the term *psychohistory*, which was in use at least as early as 1922, nor invented the notion of a mathematical study of society. He did do an enormous amount to popularize these concepts and science generally. His readers appear to be thoughtful people who often come from a scientific or technical background and who feel a debt of gratitude to Asimov for opening their eyes to many new ideas in the worlds of fantasy and reality.

On the Psychohistory List, the Asimovians have tended to fade away. In the face of the reality of psychohistory, those drawn to the fantasy psychohistory of Asimov have either dropped out or have been coming to see the merit of the actual psychohistory we have labored to build in the last four decades. Stan Pope, father of a two-year-old, relates to some of the childrearing ideas online. An "electronical engineering student" in Argentina, who originally wanted the List members to pay due respect to Asimov for inventing psychohistory, upon learning a little about the actual psychohistory from Henry Lawton, declared that "I think that what you do has many more possibilities because you work with more of a basis of understanding of human actions than any mathematician." The Asimovians have come to accept that we are serious about the statement at the top of every e-mail on the Psychohistory List: "Historical motivation utilizing psychoanalytic principles," put there by Michael Hirohama, the originator of the List, who had read Asimov's *Foundation Trilogy* as a teenager.

The inevitable triumph of the psychologically-based psychohistorians should not cause professional psychohistorians to ignore the presence and hopes of those who came from a different vantagepoint. It is my conviction that each person invents and discovers her or his own psychohistory, hopefully building upon others' discoveries and false starts.

The animus by most working psychohistorians to the very idea of an Asimovian

psychohistory has a variety of roots. Professional psychohistorians have been locked in a tough, only partially successful, struggle to convince the general public and the academic community that what we do is real, rather than personal fantasy, "shrinking history," and "mere psychobabble." For all but a handful there have been far fewer professional rewards than would have been forthcoming had we pursued a less controversial area of inquiry. This leaves most intolerant of and embarrassed by the very idea of a fantasy psychohistory, not to mention its commercial success. Most wonder why anyone would take a pure fantasy of psychohistory seriously. They know that it is by researching individual and group emotions and cognition rather than mathematics that we can understand and better control the human condition. Nevertheless, the notion of a mathematical psychohistory, which even Asimov gave up on in his later Foundation novels, continues to be held by many readers of Asimov, and for this reason it deserves to be examined.

It is my conclusion that Asimovian psychohistory is pure fantasy and that in all likelihood it will remain as such. But what a powerful fantasy it is! It has inspired vast numbers to think about the future, to learn the word psychohistory, and some to even learn substantive psychohistory based upon a long 20th-century tradition. Asimov's psychohistory is useful if it leads people to what we do. In encountering individuals who have come to a concept of psychohistory through Asimov's much-read books, I think we should greet them with the same civility and reasonableness we hope to encounter in our academic colleagues. After all, most of them have been told that ours is nothing but an impossible fantasy. We have proven that wrong, but all too few know this fact. Readers of Asimov also need to accept the realities of what this prolific author did, and did not, do.

Finally, it would be a great help to our field if more of us were inspired to both learn an enormous amount, as did the polymath Isaac Asimov, and disseminate it, as he did, throughout our society for the betterment of humankind. Psychohistory needs more prolific authors, natural teachers, and popularizers of the knowledge that we have so laboriously developed in our separate studies. In short, we need people like Isaac Asimov.

Paul H. Elovitz, PhD, Editor of this publication and Director of the Psychohistory

Forum, is a founding member and past president (1988-90) of the International Psychohistorical Association, a former editor of Psychohistory and a contributing editor to The Journal of Psychohistory. He is also director of the Forum's Makers of Psychohistory Research Project. Professor Elovitz's numerous publications include the edited Historical and Psychological Inquiry (1990) and Immigrant Experiences (co-edited with Charlotte Kahn in 1997). Among the subjects of his publications are creativity, Presidential personality, psychobiography, psychohistorical methodology, and teaching. Dr. Elovitz taught at Temple, Rutgers, and Fairleigh Dickinson universities before becoming a founding faculty member at Ramapo College of New Jersey where he is a recipient of the Alumni Award for Leadership and Teaching. □

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The Psychogeography of Parking Spaces

James Thomas Fitzgerald
Ramapo College

The word "psychogeography" fascinated me when I first heard it in Professor Elovitz's class, War, Peace, and Conflict Resolution. It rolls off my tongue. It springs to mind when I think of conflicts in the Balkans, Northern Ireland, and the former Soviet Union. A feeling of ethnic territorial possession is extremely powerful to the people embroiled in these psychogeographic tugs of war.

A profound awareness of the power of the feeling of territorial possession was brought home to me personally years ago in the mundane world of parking. I was parking my auto in another person's designated space in an underground parking lot in New York City. She arrived as I was locking my door. She felt that I had infringed on her territory and was outraged that I should *dare* to park in her space. Her unreasonable, explosive anger took the form of five minutes of the most extreme expletives which literally left me speechless. Then, I moved my car, wishing her "a nice day."

Others have also parked in my reserved parking space. But in those situations my anger seemed quite reasonable to me and the offending party's rage appeared totally unreasonable. In one incident, I sought out the owner of the car in my space who, after an ugly exchange of words, moved his car and apologized in a guilty manner. After defending my turf, I felt quite powerful. I imagine this is how others feel in the midst of the conflicts I study.

At the Visitor's Parking Circle of Ramapo College, there are only 20 spaces, including some spots for high-ranking administrators. I am sometimes tempted to have an exciting day by parking in someone else's space and watching the eruption of a sense of psychogeographic territoriality. But then I wonder if, as a rational person, I might not be tempting fate.

James Thomas Fitzgerald is a retiree who audits courses at Ramapo College of New Jersey. □

Meeting Report

The Future of Psychohistory and Psychoanalysis

Hanna Turken and Paul Elovitz
Psychohistory Forum Research Associates

The November 15, 1997, meeting of the Psychohistory Forum addressed the future of psychoanalysis and psychohistory at the millennium. The presenters were Nellie Thompson (New York Psychoanalytic Institute), Conalee Shneidman (private practice) and Lee Shneidman (Adelphi University), David Lotto (private practice and the University of Massachusetts), and Paul H. Elovitz.

Dr. Elovitz started with a number of examples of the impact of psychoanalysis and psychohistory on our society. He noted that precisely at a time when psychoanalytic and psychohistorical concepts have permeated our society there has been a frontal attack on psychoanalysis and to a lesser extent on psychohistory. The attack takes many forms including Freud-bashing, rejection of nurture in favor of nature (for example, the idea that behavior is programmed by your DNA), attempts at undercutting the economic basis of psychoanalysis, and the presentation of psychological concepts without emotion. David Lotto's materials were presented in absentia due to a snowstorm and were published in the March issue of this journal [as "The Attack on Psychotherapy as a Contemporary Purity Crusade"].

A number of questions were asked, including: Can psychoanalysis survive the onslaught of managed care and bad publicity? Can psychohistory be effectively independent of psychoanalysis? Or, if psychohistory is *dependent*, how will the attack on psychoanalysis effect the

future of psychohistory?

Nellie Thompson contended that psychohistory cannot be independent of psychoanalysis. She felt that psychohistorians must experience first-hand what psychoanalytic treatment is about. She has found her clinical training at the New York Psychoanalytic Institute extremely helpful in her work as a psychohistorian.

Paul Elovitz, like Thompson, a professional historian and a psychoanalyst, prefers dual training including psychoanalysis, but noted the major contributions of people without training in both or even either field. Even while advocating this openness to psychohistorians from all backgrounds, he stressed the impact of psychoanalysis on psychotherapeutic practice by psychologists, psychiatrists, social workers, counselors, and people in other disciplines.

J. Lee Shneidman, a historian who had partial training as a psychoanalyst but had no interest in seeing patients, noted that sometimes the mention of the name Freud has resulted in his work not being accepted for publication. Despite these prejudices among some editors and peer reviewers, he has published numerous articles and several books enriched by clinical insight. Through collaborative work with his wife, Conalee, he has been able to probe the psychological makeup of such important people in history as 13th-century Jaime of Aragon. His main focus was why Jaime hired Jews, Arabs, and Sicilians as high officials rather than the Christian nobility as was customary? Traditional historians have contended that Jews were hired because they were rich, but Shneidman demonstrated this was not the case. Conalee Shneidman asked the question: What drove Jaime to do this? As husband and wife pieced the ruler's childhood together, they stressed its chaotic, insecure quality. His childhood failure to control his destiny led him to distrust the nobles who had wrecked chaos in his early life, and turn to Jews, Muslims, and others who were totally dependent upon him. The policy helped to create the middle class.

Conalee Shneidman also presented on the future of psychoanalysis without third party (insurance) payers. Her thriving practice has not been hurt by managed care programs with their negative impact on psychoanalysis. She suggested that there are untargeted populations that are able to pay an out of pocket fee. She draws from a pool of individuals who are thinking about retirement and the emotional and economic problems entailed

in this process. She also works with individuals who are already retired and looking forward to emotional stability without the presence of work.

The participants left the meeting feeling cautiously optimistic about the prospects of two vital fields which have thrived in the last few decades, despite the recent and intense attacks on psychoanalysis.

Hanna Turken, PhD, is a psychologist and psychoanalyst in private practice in Forest Hills and Manhattan. Paul Elovitz is founder of the Forum and a professor at Ramapo College. □

Bulletin Board

Our **SATURDAY WORK-IN-PROGRESS WORKSHOPS** schedule includes **Eva Fogelman** (CUNY Graduate Center and private practice) on the "**The Rescuer Self in the Holocaust**" **September 19, 1998**, and **Charles Strozier** (Center on Violence and Human Survival, CUNY Graduate Center, and private practice) on "**Putting the Psychoanalyst on the Couch: A Biography of Heinz Kohut**" on **January 30, 1999**. **CONFERENCES:** The **Association for the Psychoanalysis of Culture and Society** (APCS) Conference is November 6-8, 1998, at Emory University in Atlanta Georgia. The **International Psychohistorical Association** (IPA) 21st annual convention is June 3-5, 1998, at Fordham Law School in New York City. The **International Society for Political Psychology** (ISPP) is meeting July 12-15, 1998, in Montreal. The **Laconian-Link** is a newly forming Laconian group planning a 1999 conference. **Peter Loewenberg** presented "Psychoanalysis: Between Therapy and Hermeneutics?" to the Yale "Whose Freud?" conference in April and "John Muir and the Erotization of Nature" to the American Psychoanalytic Association meetings in Toronto in May. This summer, **Rudolph Binion** will begin a year-and-one-half away from Brandeis in Australia, France, Ireland, and Scotland. In July he will be in Sydney to give the opening address at the Eleventh George Rudé Seminar in French History. **Albert Schmidt** in April presented "Monuments as Symbols of Czech National Identity" at the Yale conference on "History and Memory" and on anti-Semitism and democracy at the University of Nebraska conference on "The Legacy of the Holocaust: Its Meaning in the Today's World." **CORRECTIONS:** **David Beisel** had actually won the National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development Teaching

Excellence Award, announced in the March "Bulletin Board," and his trip to Austin in May was simply a celebration of the award, rather than the completion of the competition. **AUSTEN RIGGS CENTER DIRECTORSHIP OPENING:** The position of Director of the Center's Erikson Institute of Education and Research is open to an interdisciplinary/psychoanalytic scholar/administrator. For information write the Center in Stockbridge, MA. **CERTIFICATION IN PSYCHOANALYSIS:** Congratulations to **Nellie Thompson** upon her recent certification. **OUR THANKS:** To our members and friends for the support which makes **Clio's Psyche** possible. To Patrons Ralph Colp, Dominic and Mena Potts, and Jerome Wolf; Sustaining Members Alberto Fergusson, William Joseph, Peter Petschauer, and Jacques Szaluta; Supporting Members Florian Galler and Hanna Turken; and Contributing Members Charlotte Goodman, Ann Kuehner, David Lotto, Doris Pfeffer, Franchois Rochet, and George Victor. Our thanks for thought-provoking materials to Sally Atkins, Rudolph Binion, Ralph Colp, Jr., Dan Dervin, Alan Elms, James Gunn, Jim Fitzgerald, Jerry Kroth, Mary Lambert, Henry Lawton, Peter Loewenberg, Peter Petschauer, Stan Pope, J. Lee Shneidman, Charles Strozier, Hanna Turken, and Richard Varela. Thanks also to David Beisel and Margo Shea for editing suggestions; Michele O'Donnell for scanning and typing; Michael Scordo and Jeanne Richardson for proof reading; and Stan Pope for notifying Asimov readers about the issue. □

Next Psychohistory Forum Meeting
Saturday, September 19, 1998
Eva Fogelman
"The Rescuer Self in the Holocaust"

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Letters to the Editor

The History of Psychohistory

Clio's Psyche's interviews of outstanding psychohistorians have grown into a full-fledged study of the pioneers and history of our field. Psychohistory as an organized field is less than 25 years old, so most of the innovators are available to tell their stories and give their insights. Last March, the Forum formally launched the Makers of the Psychohistorical Paradigm Research Project to systematically gather material to write the history of psychohistory. We welcome memoirs,

Some Forthcoming Features

Interview with **Lynn Hunt**, author of *The Family Romance of the French Revolution*

Awards and Honors

CORST Essay Prize • Professor Janice M. Coco, Art History, University of California-Davis, winner of the First Annual American Psychoanalytic Association Committee on Research and Special Training (CORST) \$1,000 essay prize, will present her paper, "Exploring the Frontier from the Inside Out in John Sloan's Nude Studies," at a free public lecture at 12 noon, Saturday, December 20, Jade Room, Waldorf-Astoria Hotel, New York City.

Sidney Halpern Award for the Best Psychohistorical Idea • The Psychohistory Forum is granting an award of \$200 to Michael Hirohama of San Francisco for starting and maintaining the Psychohistory electronic mailing list (see page 98).

Psychohistory Forum Student Award • David Barry of Fair Lawn, New Jersey, has been awarded a year's Student Membership in the Forum, including a subscription to **Clio's Psyche**, for his contribution of a fine paper as part of the Makers of the Psychohistorical Paradigm Research Project

Psychohistory Forum Presentations

THE MAKERS OF PSYCHOHISTORY RESEARCH PROJECT

<p>Free Subscription</p> <p>Independent Variable of Internal Stability – May, 1945</p> <p>Stagnant/Disintegrating Negative Trend</p> <p>Stable/Creative Positive Trend</p>											
		-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	+4
<p>Nazi Germany</p> <p>the person donating or arranging it will receive a year's subscription to Clio's Psyche free. Help us spread the good word about Clio.</p>		USA									