
Clio's Psyche

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

Volume 6, Number 1

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Beisel, Dervin, and Knapp On The Columbine Massacre

Columbine: The Search for Causes

David R. Beisel
SUNY-Rockland

Littleton, Colorado; Hitler's Birthday, 1999. The images are etched in our memories, at least for now.

Personally sickened by the mass-murder-

(Continued on page 14)

Humor in the Holocaust? 7 Authors On Why Life Was Not Beautiful In the Holocaust

Laughter and the Holocaust

Sander L. Gilman
Luce Professor, University of Chicago

During the past few decades there has been much speculation about the impossibility, or the appropriate way, of imagining or representing the Shoah. Humor has rarely figured in this discussion. Even the appropriation of forms such

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as the *commix* (the illustrated novel) by artist/authors such as Art Spiegelman in his *Maus: A Survivor's Tale* (1986) has self-consciously stripped these forms of any comic, humorous, or witty content or intent.

Indeed, Spiegelman's text works against the popular American assumption that "serious" themes can not be dealt with in the form of the illustrated text. In Israel such appropriations even in the form of the *commix* seem not to have been imaginable. In Japan, on the other hand, one of the most powerful series of Osamu Tezuka's *manga* [*commix*], *Also Tell Adolph (Adolph ni Tsugu)* (1983), seems to be able to represent the Shoah. It chronicles the Shoah as seen from the point-of-view of the Japanese and received the Kodansha Manga Award in 1986. Neither Spiegelman's nor Tezuka's *commix* is comic.

If the *commix* even has avoided the comic in representing the Shoah, let us pause for a moment and ask our implied title question again: Can the Shoah be funny? Can horror be understood through laughter? Who laughs? (*Quid rides?* was the ancients' question.) The audience, the victim, the perpetrators? Is laughter the intention of the creator of a work of art or the response of an audience? Is laughter intentional or, as in the case of the high school students at Castlemont High School in Oakland in April of 1994 who laughed at a screening of *Schindler's List* at a school assembly, situational. (Anything and everything that is done at a school assembly is understood as the butt of laughter.)

But, then, even more basic is the question: What is the Shoah? Is the Shoah a specific moment in time, a specific set of horrors, or is it a metaphor for all genocides, past, present, and future? It was the attempt to murder Europe's Jews, an attempt which murdered millions of Jews along with the murder of millions of others. But any understanding of the Shoah must acknowledge that its meaning and function has changed over the 50 years since it occurred. Over half a century the murder of the Jews moved from being one aspect of the crimes of the Nazis to being its central, defining aspect. Over the past decade or so, it has evolved from a specific, historical moment to the metaphor for horror itself. Can the Shoah be funny? This is a question which must be framed in both its historical and its ethical dimension.

Central to any discussion of humor in the Shoah seems to be an understanding of what concept of humor is evoked. Virtually all of the

theoretical views of the comic are ways of speaking about narratives -- the stories that are told which encapsulate humor. If you depart from Thomas Hobbes' notion that humor is in complex ways wedded to notions of power or the illusion of power, then humor is a weapon aimed at those perceived as weaker or stronger than one's self. Yet, if Sigmund Freud's image of humor (*Witz*) is employed, then the tendentious laughter which results is a sign of an attack on the object of the joke, an attack shared with the listener, reader, or viewer. Is humor a gratification of the forbidden or unspeakable desires which Hobbes' notion of humor places in the public sphere? Henri Bergson sees in humor the desire to humiliate and to "correct" those who are perceived as different in a public manner. Yet, it is clear that all of these narratives of humor mark the comic through the physiological response of laughter.

Sander L. Gilman, PhD, is the Henry R. Luce Distinguished Service Professor of the Liberal Arts in Human Biology and Chair of the Department of Germanic Studies at the University of Chicago. He is a cultural and literary historian and the author or editor of over 50 books, the most recent in English being The Yale Companion to Jewish Writing and Thought in German Culture, 1096-1996 (with Jack Zipes, 1997). For 25 years he was a member of the humanities and medical faculties at Cornell University and has been a visiting professor at numerous universities in the United States, Canada, Germany, and South Africa. □

Laughing Away the Pain? Benigni's Inappropriate Fable, *Life Is Beautiful*

Paul H. Elovitz

Ramapo College and the Psychohistory Forum

Laughing about anything to do with the Holocaust does not come easily to me. Though laughter is often present in my classes, for the first ten years I taught my most popular class, "Hitler, The Holocaust, and Genocide," I don't recollect ever even telling a joke specific to the Holocaust. For the last ten years I have inclined to tell only the following joke.

An Auschwitz inmate declares to his bunkmates, "I predict that Hitler will die on a Jewish holiday!" Their response was an

emphatic, "How can you know when he will die? There are lots of Jewish holidays, but he could die on any day." Triumphant, the prognosticating inmate declares, "Any day Hitler dies will be a Jewish Holiday!"

My recollection is that the journalist Steve Lipman either told me this joke or I read it in his book, *Laughter in Hell: The Use of Humor During the Holocaust* (1991).

I had trouble laughing while viewing *Life Is Beautiful*. For those readers who have not seen the movie, I will spell out the story line. The first half of the film is a romantic love story of Guido, a frenetic Italian waiter who quite incidentally happens to be Jewish, falling in love with an aristocratic woman -- played by Benigni's wife. As

befits any fairy tale, the clumsy, hyperactive waiter wins the hand of the woman he calls "Princess" who wants to escape an unwanted marriage to a villainous man. The couple rides off on a horse, leaving shambles behind them -- a Benigni specialty -- to "live happily ever after." The second half of the film sees the happy family over five years later with their utterly charming, adored little boy. Enter the Nazis.

As Jews, father and son are taken to a concentration camp where the work seems to be carrying anvils back and forth. Unwilling to separate from her family, Princess insists on being taken on the train with them and is taken to the same camp as an inmate. Miraculously, unlike most real young children who are killed upon entry into the camps, the boy is successfully hidden by his father who tells the child that they are playing a game with three rules: the boy must hide while his father is away, he must not cry for his mother, and he must not ask for more food. Points are granted for good behavior, and the child's reward will be a toy tank. Through the father's ingenious, self-sacrificing, and heroic efforts, the child survives even the roundup of all remaining Jewish children in the camp. Right before liberation, after finding a new hiding place for his son, the father is killed - - off camera. The Nazis flee and an American tank begins the liberation of the camp. The child comes out of hiding, sees the tank, which stops in front of him, and jubilantly declares, "We won" -- in reference to the contest, rather than the war. The American tank driver scoops him up and takes him for a ride. Almost immediately, mother and child are reunited to "live happily ever after" despite the aftermath of war. Such is the story line of the fairy tale.

Though I love to laugh and thoroughly enjoy many comic films, the slapstick humor of *Life Is Beautiful* moved me to grimace more than laugh. It reminded me of the humor of Jerry Lewis which I generally find to be adolescent and tedious. Though this slapstick was much more predominant in the first half of this movie fable, when set in the context of the camp, it was inappropriate and offensive to me. Consequently, my working title of this editor's introduction to our special issue on "Humor in the Holocaust?," was "Why It Pained Me So Much to Watch Benigni's Fairy Tale Set in Hell." It pained me to see the Holocaust being trivialized and the Nazis portrayed as easily manipulated so that the hero can use, without consequences, the camp public address system to

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send a message to his wife in the women's section of the camp. Moments like that felt like the American sitcom "Hogan's Heroes" in which the Nazis appear as buffoons easily tricked, without real life consequences, by the American prisoners of war.

Why could I not simply enjoy *Life Is Beautiful* as a fluffy Italian fable? Is it because of all the survivors I have known, many of who have told their stories in my classes? Was it because of the anxious tone in my immigrant parents' voices as they worried at what had happened to our relatives under Nazi domination in Poland and Ukraine, and later wrapped CARE packages for the few who survived? Was it the total lack of humor of the camp survivor whose immigration to America from a displaced persons camp in Germany was sponsored by my parents? (For a year they gave him my sweeper job in the family workshop -- only they paid him.) Was it that I don't like humor at funerals and the Holocaust was like a funeral in which nearly a third of the Jews of the world were cremated?

The analogy of humor at a funeral has particular appeal to me. In my early 20s, I was horrified at the jokes that a relative by marriage told as we rode with a group to the cemetery to my Jewish grandmother's funeral -- his laughter seemed cruel even if the jokes were normally inoffensive. Yet, I noted that in mourning Irish-American friends at wakes -- in which there are sometimes more smiles and laughs than tears -- the humor expressed often had a strong appeal to me. But it did take a long period of getting used to humor being in anyway associated with death and mourning. I have come to realize that not only is there a place for laughter in the face of death, but that it can help with the processes of remembering and healing. The question is always, In what context and what type of humor? Joking and laughing before me as a grieving grandson in the funeral procession for my grandmother was inappropriate, even if she had been ill, old, and ready for death. Likewise, slapstick humor of the Roberto Benigni variety in front of the grieving family at their loved one's funeral is out of place, but this is how much of the so-called comedy of *Life Is Beautiful* appears to me. How dare Benigni get people to laugh amidst the memory of the slaughter of my people? Our slaughter is no laughing matter.

For better and worse, the Holocaust is no longer the sole property of the Jewish people. Not

only is it the subject of brilliant, mass market films created by Jewish film makers like Steven Spielberg in *Schindler's List*, but it is also the metaphor for the problems of survival amidst genocide and all the horrors of the modern world. To modern minds, Hitler and the Nazis represent the epitome of evil (note that the Columbine High School massacre in Littleton was staged on Hitler's birthday even though one of the two shooters had a Jewish mother) and the Holocaust represents the epitome of survival under extreme situations.

Of course, the Holocaust was never really the sole property of the Jewish people since it is a historical phenomenon open to all to use as part of the bloody fabric of history. Dramas and action adventure films use the Nazis, Nazi persecution of Jews, and sometimes even the camps as a backdrop. The award-winning acceptance of *Life Is Beautiful* in Israel, Italy, and the United States illustrates that, however ambivalent survivors, their children, Holocaust scholars, and I may be about this transformation, the Shoah is now fair game for comedic film makers. While it may seem to me that Benigni's opus is too much like the comedy of the Three Stooges in front of the grieving family and the open coffin, that is not how most people felt.

The Holocaust is a hot commodity in Hollywood, especially in anticipation of the Oscar Awards where films on the Shoah do quite well. Benigni's film was successful in North America even with subtitles -- which is no mean feat. Those few of my students who say it, liked the film and found it uplifting as did most people I queried. The heavy criticism of it on the Holocaust Listserv, where I requested papers on the subject, was not typical.

The success of *Life Is Beautiful* evoked psychohistorical as well as personal reactions. Why is humor amidst the horror of the Holocaust now acceptable in society? Are we tired of crying for the innocent dead of World War II in our age of ethnic cleansing in Bosnia, Rwanda, and Kosovo? Is there a generational reason: Do younger viewers have very different psychic reactions than those who are more connected to the experience of World War II? Is laughing part of a healing process? After all, the Western World continues to process the dual shocks of 1945 wrought by the loss of a sense of human goodness and scientific benevolence wrought by the beginning of the nuclear age and the revelations of the Nazi atrocities. These are some of the questions I ask

and will continue to ask. To help me and the reader understand some of these issues, I sent out a call for papers suggesting a variety of possible themes, not all of which were psychological.

Sander J. Gilman, formerly of Cornell and now of the University of Chicago, also helped my understanding in a talk he gave to the Ramapo College History Club in early May. The Henry R. Luce Distinguished Service Professor of the Liberal Arts in Human Biology, probed the role of humor in the Holocaust by comparing East German Ernest Becker's *Jacob the Liar* (1974) and Benigni's *Life Is Beautiful*. He seemed to prefer the East German film and is looking forward to the remake of it next year with Robin Williams in the starring role.

Regarding *Life Is Beautiful*, Gilman pointed out to what extent the film is very much an Italian myth of the Jews being fully integrated into their society and a very Italian Catholic story of the mother and child as the Virgin Mary and the Christ child surviving while Joseph (Guido) sacrifices himself for the good of the family and society. The Holocaust is merely like a stage backdrop. Among many other important points, Gilman raised the issues of anxiety, of humor as a psychic compensation -- a coping mechanism -- and of the sense of absurdity which led some survivors to recount that upon arrival in the camps all they could do was laugh. He also wondered if humor defused the Shoah.

Some of my colleagues and I thought Sander Gilman's presentation had flashes of brilliance. The History Club students, who included many from my Holocaust classes, did not like it because it went right over their heads -- there were just too many new ideas and too much new material to absorb in 45 minutes. There may be another element at work with the students as well. Instruction about the Holocaust is now required in public education in New Jersey, which is a mixed blessing. My students now bring more prior knowledge to the class, but to many the Shoah no longer seems out of the ordinary. Could the same thing be happening in society? Is that the reason the public is more open to the exploration of other approaches, including comedy?

Appropriate humor has its place in the depiction of the Holocaust, just as Steve Lipman and others have shown that it had its place among survivors and even in the camps. In *The Great Dictator*, Charlie Chaplin used humor as a weapon to mock Hitler; though, as Gilman pointed out, had

the great comedian realized just how terrible the treatment of Jews was, he might not have made the film. Laughter can be a powerful weapon used for good or bad. The people in Auschwitz were so terrorized, starved, and beaten down that the scope for humor was certainly much less than in normal society. Yet even there, as Lipman notes, Viktor Frankl -- the Austrian psychiatrist -- advised prisoners to think of a humorous anecdote every day. It is good advice for our lives as well.

Paul H. Elovitz, PhD, is a modern European historian at Ramapo College of New Jersey who has taught the Holocaust for over 20 years. Prior to becoming a founding faculty member at Ramapo, he taught at Temple, Rutgers, and Fairleigh Dickinson universities. In addition, he trained for ten years as a psychoanalyst which helped him appreciate the value of humor. □

***Life Is Beautiful:* Benigni's "Olocaustaccio Nazionale"**

**Mark Bernheim
Miami University of Ohio**

The date is April 14, 1999, and I am at a Hofstra University conference on "The Most Ancient of Minorities: History and Culture of the Jews of Italy." My task is to lead a panel discussion of Roberto Benigni's *Life Is Beautiful* soon after the film has won its requisite number of Oscars as engineered by the massive Miramax/Weinstein Brothers public relations campaign. The audience is composed of bespectacled academics ready to talk to each other about "metanarrative" and "cinematic strategies" mixed with a larger number of retired folk who apparently attend these symposia promoted by the Hofstra outreach office for cultural programming.

The evening before, a brilliant and haunting documentary, *Memoria*, has been shown in less than optimal screening conditions by the researchers themselves from the Jewish Documentation Center in Milan. They are the same names who appear at the end of *Life Is Beautiful* as gratefully acknowledged by Benigni for having aided the research efforts that went into the historical background, such as it is, of his film. Afterwards in informal conversation I am extremely interested to note their reticence to say much about the extravagant success of *Life Is*

Beautiful; most telling is the translated remark, "He came to us for the authority of the Holocaust but not the authenticity." Clearly doubts and second thoughts inhabit the minds of these serious and overworked scholars who receive no support whatsoever from the Italian government and wonder what they have helped create. The complex tale of the Holocaust in Italy will consume our attentions in many ways over the next days as part of the exploration of Italian Jewish history and culture, but nothing is more topical or visible (Benigni's Oscar gymnastics are just a few days old) than the impact of what is already the biggest box office hit ever in Italian film history. I sense a "What have we wrought?" attitude that stays in my mind and suggests I had better be a careful moderator.

At the actual panel the next day, the room is hot, crowded, and buzzing. Miramax would not authorize a showing (even after the Oscars have been captured!) from the video version which sits mutely on the table. A scattered few in the full house may not even have seen the film yet, and I wonder how they will react to our obviously open talk about the "victorious" denouement -- will they rush to see it after, or now shun it? Nevertheless, we push on with our mixed scholarly/Elderhostel chatter. When I sense a discomfort, perhaps there was dozing, with talk of tropes and postmodernists among the retirees, I decide to get to what I think is the bone.

A week before the symposium, the college newspaper on my typical undergraduate campus ran a "review" of *Life Is Beautiful*. This in itself was noteworthy. Miami University is strongly undergraduate oriented, located in a small town with one movie house that studiously avoids foreign or serious films of any kind. Jewish or Holocaust Studies are glaringly underdeveloped (a course I had proposed this term in American Jewish writers drew no enrollees at all), and the newspaper's reviews are normally of the music to be heard in frat houses or the student union mixed with films of the *You've Got Mail* variety. But when the film soared everywhere, it was brought to town and even critiqued by an undergraduate staff writer.

For who he is, for what the paper represents, and for the climate of the time and setting, I wanted the Hofstra audience to hear the gist of the review. Unnamed, as the author will remain, he first assured his (few) readers that he, like them, surely avoids all films that are downbeat

or portray human suffering. Likewise, he eschews "girly" romantic stuff that his sweetheart likes but which makes him squirm. In his little boy persona, he then assures possible viewers of *Life Is Beautiful* that this is a really special romantic story that is not mushy but original and unique. He loved the pranks and pratfalls and enchanted atmosphere of Guido and Dora's romance. It's a romantic comedy to remember, and he never even thought of walking out (after the first few minutes!).

But let's get to the hard part: this is also definitely NOT a "Holocaust Movie" so don't worry about graininess or suffering in black and white. The second part does have history in it, but do note: "In a minor plot complication, the main character is Jewish" and since Italy was on the side of Nazi Germany in the war, if history is not your major, that's a problem.

Even beyond my expectations, the Hofstra audience gasped and groaned in their seats. From that point on, the panel discussion went more where I think it should have. Film scholars have plenty of time to debate the mechanics and aesthetics; what I wanted to have aired right after Oscar time was the heart of the matter. Are we now ready for "comedies of the Holocaust"? What does it mean when, of all things, an Italian comic/clown decides that the story of the historical event is now common property to the extent that it is everyone's story to be told as he understands it from his own experience? I myself tried deliberately to provoke the audience by suggesting that "holocaust fatigue" is really the issue now, especially after the previous public relations spectacle of *Schindler's List*. Mass audiences will not sit any longer, in the new millennium, through literally colorless recreations that depress and anger them. Benigni, with his grounding in Christian allegory and myth typified in the stories of his devotion to Dante and personal recitations of *The Inferno*, has done no more or less than he could be expected to do. His mythic recasting of history into a myth of family survival (but only part of the family, note, since the Jewish members are non-survivors) is precisely where most people are going to wish the Holocaust to go, if they wish to hear of it at all.

I took the opportunity to do two things at this point: I asked if a "myth of the Holocaust" such as some of the panel scholars were proposing as its merit also had potential to shade off into THE "myth OF the Holocaust"? Few seemed to

feel this real fear of mine needed elaborating on. Provocation aside, I would urge that Benigni's audacity needs to be examined as both a positive and negative. Reviewer after reviewer takes him to task in print for the utter unreality of a child and parent surviving in such a basically unsullied state that makes you think of summer camp in the Catskills -- days of deportation in a train, then barracks life in which even hunger and filth seem mostly absent, the wife and mother merely exchanging her brightly visible red suit for a carefully tied head scarf but otherwise appearing as healthy and blooming as before, and the child succeeding in hiding in plain sight with little difficulty while his father has time to puzzle over riddles and play Offenbach through a camp public address system. All these criticisms miss the point that Benigni is knowingly not describing anything that ever happened. A fable of how an Italian family might (mostly) survive the onslaught of the hated and unimaginative German occupiers, of how Italian wit and verve and polish (*furbo* is the operative term -- fast on your feet and with your mind) -- this is the possibility Benigni offers. And who can refuse?

Indeed, those who were there. I noted for the audience that some Italian survivors of my acquaintance have been less than enthusiastic about *Life Is Beautiful*. One friend, a leading Florentine publisher of Jewish titles and an active member of the community, expressed his dismay in a long letter in *Il Tirreno*, the Livorno newspaper, in December, 1997. Daniel Vogelmann's father survived Auschwitz but the senior Vogelmann's first wife and daughter did not. Over the next decades, his son reports, he too opined that life could be beautiful, but with much more mystery and pain in his voice. The jokes, the games, the sense of a guiding angel watching out and manipulating events to protect the sanctified family relationship, all this in Benigni irritates and offends those few who still know the truth was almost invariably otherwise. Perhaps hardest is the sense that Benigni is just so well-intentioned and damned popular. Daniel Vogelmann notes that even to himself, "Speaking badly of Benigni is akin to doing it to Garibaldi," and the national admiration for the man is such that he wonders at his own carping. But, looking ahead, as educators and writers must, his fear is such that he feels impelled to ask, "Thousands of young people here in Italy, knowing nothing about the Holocaust, but surely attracted by this "Robertaccio nazionale" [ever-present phenomenon of a Robert]

are going to see this film. What will they learn, what will be their impressions?"

Over the next days, the subject of *Life Is Beautiful* recurred often. One particularly sharp Canadian scholar told about the imminent appearance in the U.S. of the Romanian film, *Train de Vie*, and the controversy over its apparent inspiration to Benigni for *Life Is Beautiful*. Radu Mihaileanu, the director, has already disclaimed any legal action, perhaps hoping only to benefit from the popular acclaim for Benigni. But many are eager to view *Train de Vie*, a different type of Holocaust "comedy" in which *shtetl* Jews playact their own rail deportation against Nazi power.

We ended with questions, not answers. Perhaps those who feel a grudging admiration for *Life Is Beautiful* and would resist the kind of typical John Simon personal attack ("the inverted-eggplant headed, chinless wonder Benigni with his passive-aggressive charmlessness and fish-eyed simpletonism" in a recent *National Review*) will eventually find the materials with which to deal more rationally with the film. The Holocaust cannot, increasingly over time, "belong" to anyone, as those most concerned with it will no longer be able to speak directly. Benigni is thus perhaps as likely a spokesman as any of us dare to be.

I admit that Benigni's Oscar words to the effect that "I dedicate the movie and salute those who died so that we could say 'life is beautiful'" were really hard to bear. But the Holocaust itself is the hardest to bear of all, and from that we should by now have learned various ironic lessons. This film is only one of them.

Mark Bernheim, PhD, teaches Children's Literature and Journalism at Miami University in Ohio. He is the author of Father of the Orphans, a young reader's biography of Janusz Korczak, the subject of Polish director Andrzej Wajda's 1990 film, Korczak, which also has a "questionably revisionist ending." He has taught previously at Rutgers, SUNY Stony Brook, and abroad as a Fulbright professor in France, Austria, and Italy.

***Life Is Beautiful* and Holocaust Comedy: A New Film Genre?**

**Roy Merrens
York University, Toronto**

During the half-century or so that has passed since the Second World War, fewer than half-a-dozen feature films treated the events of the Holocaust with humor. Now, within the space of just one year, at least three Holocaust comedies have appeared. Although we can't be certain that such films will continue to proliferate, it is possible that we are witnessing the emergence of Holocaust Comedy as a new movie genre. We will have to wait and see what happens. In any event, I would argue that *Life Is Beautiful* should not be considered as an isolated phenomenon. Indeed, consideration of at least a couple of the other recent films, as well as a much older one that never got released, enable us better to understand the remarkable box office success of *Life Is Beautiful*.

Of the current new comic treatments, *Train de Vie* is the one that has most often been compared with *Life Is Beautiful*. Made by Radu Mihaileanu, a Romania-born, France-based director, the film has not yet been released in North America. It was shown at the Sundance Festival, however, and at one special screening in Los Angeles. What little I know of this movie comes from a few Canadian and Italian print media; *Variety*; the Web site set up for the film; and a few on-line reports originating in a couple of the European countries where it has been screened in commercial cinemas. Although each film made its festival debut in 1998, work on *Train de Vie* had begun in 1993, and its director gave Benigni a copy of the script in 1996, when he offered him the key role of the town clown. While Benigni declined the offer, it might have been the inspiration behind his own film, for he began working on *Life Is Beautiful* shortly afterwards.

Train de Vie has a number of important things in common with *Life Is Beautiful*: both have a comic Jewish figure in the central role, both employ concentration camp settings, and both have similar narrative framing devices. However, there are also important differences between the two comedies, as is evident from the plot and details about *Train de Vie* that can be found on the film's official Web site. In a recent interview, Mihaileanu has explained his intentions in making his movie: "Not to banalize, not to rewrite but to keep the discussion going. I wanted to depict the tragedy of the Holocaust using the language of comedy, to use comedy to strengthen the tragedy."

The critical success of *Train de Vie* in some European countries, together with the box office success of *Life Is Beautiful*, may well

convince North American distributors to overcome their habitual reluctance, for box office reasons, to release here any film that comes bearing the burden of sub-titles. Or, it might not appear until the forthcoming dubbed version of *Life Is Beautiful* has been completed, with the film then distributed to the large additional market represented by airlines and video rental stores.

Another contribution to the new genre can be identified in reports from the Berlin Film Festival, held in February of this year. At least one of the films presented there treats the Nazi era and the background of Auschwitz with humor. The film is by the Spanish director, Fernando Trueba, and is entitled *The Girl of Our Dreams*. It has, according to one reviewer, "many elements of a bedroom farce." The Director himself has insisted that "I don't think it is daring to do this now...."

Trueba's judgement about the effect of the passing of time seems well-founded. About thirty years ago, Jerry Lewis made a film called *The Day the Clown Wept*. This too was a comedy set in a concentration camp, the clown being used by the S.S. to lead children into the gas chambers. Apparently, the final sequence showed laughing children following the clown, who is juggling bits of bread as he leads them into the gas chamber where they all die, the final shot being a puff of smoke from a tall chimney. Not much else is known about the film, because it was never distributed. The reasons for its non-release are not clear, but it is probably safe to speculate that the release of such a film today would not be problematic.

Before concluding, there is one important point I should acknowledge quite explicitly: I have not commented directly upon *Life Is Beautiful* because I have not seen it (nor do I wish to see it). I have been reading about the movie and tracking its reception, here and abroad, ever since its debut at Cannes. This fairly diligent monitoring has been prompted not only by my interest in the subject matter of the movie because I am Jewish, but also because of my special fascination with Italian movies: I'm an active member of the Italian Film Society of Canada. My conclusion from reading reviews, interviews, synopses, and whatever else I could find about the movie is a fairly simple one: it seems to be a successfully hyped piece of feel-good entertainment, a Holocaust success story. Not Holocaust kitsch perhaps, more like Holocaust Lite. But off-putting for me is Benigni's insistent representation of the movie as a fable. This seems

to me to be a masquerade. A fable employs radical simplifications in order to enhance a particular truth or truths. But the core of the Holocaust was the murdering of millions in an effort to exterminate an entire people. I have yet to hear anyone identify any truth about the Holocaust that this movie illuminates.

A friend recently reminded me that in one of Woody Allen's movies the character played by Alan Alda observes that "Comedy equals tragedy plus time." Perhaps. But for me, never enough time could pass to accept this movie as a comic fable. If truth be the issue, then I need to report that I grew up as a Jew in England in the 1930s and 1940s, very much aware of and thankful for my great good luck. Had I been located just a couple of dozen miles to the east, across a narrow body of water, I too would have been in German-occupied territory. Or, if Germany had occupied England, I don't doubt that the anti-Semitism of many English neighbors would have facilitated the extermination efforts of the occupying forces, and that I would not have been either resilient or independent enough to have contrived a means of hiding and surviving. I would have been one of Jerry Lewis' "laughing children."

Roy Merrens, PhD, is a historical geographer whose research and writings have focused on past events as represented in films and texts. After growing up in England, and spending a couple of years with the British Army of Occupation in Germany, he completed his graduate degrees in the U.S, and taught there for a number of years before settling in Canada. Professor Merrens has been the recipient of a Fulbright Award and a Guggenheim Fellowship.

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The Evil of Banality

Steven Horowitz
Coe College

Hannah Arendt philosophized about the "banality of evil" when she reported on the trial of Nazi bureaucrat Adolf Eichmann, a man whose skill at scheduling train deployments helped send hundreds of thousands of Hungarian Jews to their death. While much less lethal, there is also the "the evil of banality." This occurs when an artist creates an extraordinarily hackneyed work that minimizes and distorts a really important and profound human topic; and it can be extremely

offensive. Such is the case with Roberto Benigni's much celebrated film, *Life Is Beautiful*.

I take the Holocaust seriously. As a college professor, I have taught classes, written papers, and given academic presentations on Shoah-related topics. I am also the son of parents who were the sole members of their families of origin to survive the destruction of European Jewry. My mother, a Hungarian Jew, was deported to Auschwitz with her six brothers, both parents, and a grandfather. My father, a Polish Jew, was sent to Dachau. My parents were on the same train of Jewish prisoners, headed deeper into Germany, that the American army liberated just weeks before the end of the war in Europe. They both died of cancer in New Jersey before they reached the age of 60. I find *Life Is Beautiful* a boring, stupid, and ugly film.

Somehow the movie won the Grand Jury Prize at the Cannes Film Festival and won two major Academy Awards including Best Actor and Best Foreign Film for writer, director, and star, Benigni. The movie alleges to be a heart-warming, Chaplinesque tale that takes place in a concentration camp during the Holocaust. The Italian film's central conceit concerns a clownish Jewish waiter (Benigni) who convinces his five-year-old son that the concentration camp they have been deported to is part of an elaborate game. Benigni manages to turn the German *stalags* into not-so-bad places for his concept to exist. In other words, he turns Auschwitz into a factory where the laborers have to work hard, but there is no horror. The movie continually trivializes the misery of the victims of European fascism. This is inexcusable.

In Benigni's world there are no screaming inmates, loud terrorizing brutes, or even just tumultuous noise, but enough silence for a recording of an opera to be heard drifting from an open door in the officers' hall to a faraway women's barracks for his character's wife to hear. He depicts no starving prisoners, but a father who has enough food to share with his son. He offers no barbarous regimentation and strict regulations, but a place where a Jewish internee can transmit a message from the public address system without fear of punishment. Making a concentration camp a benign setting is morally reprehensible.

The Holocaust has been used as a simple metaphor for evil in a number of abhorrent ways. Anti-abortionists frequently compare the terminations of pregnancies with the destruction of a people. Just recently a local Christian leader

came to the Iowa City synagogue on the Jewish Sabbath and talked about "Jesus on the cattle cars" and thus equated the suffering of Jesus with the extermination of millions of Jews. This type of generalization depreciates the magnitude of what actually happened. The devil, so to speak, is in the details.

Life Is Beautiful bills itself as a fable so as to eliminate the need for realism. Miramax (the motion picture's American distributor) chief Harvey Weinstein suggested to Benigni that he add a voice-over at the beginning and the end of the movie expressing this fact, after Benigni had already completed the film. The film's tacked-on explanations are as unsatisfactory and phony as Bobby's season-long dream in the old television series, *Dallas*.

Benigni has made his reasons for making this movie clear: he felt it would be a challenge. "I felt an urge to play a comic character in an extreme situation, and what could be more extreme than this?" Benigni said in an interview published in London's *Sunday Telegraph*. He made the movie to feed his own ego. Not only does he give himself all the "good" lines in the script that he wrote, he gives himself almost all of the dialogue and hams it up whenever possible. And Benigni's vapid over-emoting isn't the only thing that's not kosher about this movie. Because he doesn't show the horrors, Benigni also manages to make the film boring. The movie is dull as well as odious.

The enormous tragedy and inexplicable evil of the Holocaust inherently provides a difficult backdrop for a life-affirming film. However, if you want to see a deep and moving, dark Italian comedy about the Holocaust, rent Lina Wertmuller's classic, *Seven Beauties*, from your local video store. Wertmuller's more than 20-year-old movie addresses the horrors of Fascism and the Nazi concentration camps with an acerbic intelligence and comic passion. She reveals insights into the humor of the human condition, even amongst the depravity of the Auschwitz. Benigni's much lauded new film, *Life Is Beautiful*, tries to find a simple answer in the face of such wicked misfortune. The horrible truth was that for the many victims of the Holocaust, life was ugly and too short.

I have published my views on *Life Is Beautiful* in *Icon*, the alternative news weekly serving the Iowa City/Cedar Rapids area, which I serve as Arts and Entertainment Editor. Usually my movie reviews provoke little response. This

one touched some buttons. I received five letters of complaint (one even addressed to "Horowitz") that basically said I should lighten up. They said *Life Is Beautiful* has made the Holocaust more accessible; the film offered a message of hope without all the gory details. *That* is the problem. The Shoah should not be sanitized. This trivializes what actually happened, and in a perverted way provides a false history. The movie does not add to one's knowledge of the event on a material or spiritual level, but functions to deny the reality. I also received three letters of support. These eight letters generated more immediate written responses than anything I have penned before in my more than three years as Arts and Entertainment Editor.

Steven Horowitz, PhD, is an assistant professor of rhetoric at Coe College in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, where he teaches all the journalism classes, plus a number of writing seminars including one in Modern European Culture. He reports that teaching Holocaust topics in that class has proven a difficult task because so many undergraduates have no more than a fleeting intellectual connection to the subjects. Horowitz has written and presented extensively on the Shoah and was Fulbright Professor of American Studies at Attila Jozsef University in Szeged, Hungary, during 1989-90 when Communism fell across Eastern Europe. □

Life Is Beautiful for Only Some Children of Holocaust Survivors

Ralph Seliger
Israel Horizons

As a child of Holocaust survivors involved intermittently in "second generation" activities over the last two decades, I've been struck by how few generalizations about us are valid. We have surprisingly few commonalities in attitude and life experience. Included in what we do share is a sense of growing up as "different" from others, a less secure identity as Americans, and a deep identification as Jews.

Although I would like to say that we're all passionately interested in politics and social justice, that we are all fervently concerned and knowledgeable about Israel, that we are all tremendously accomplished or, conversely, are mostly underachievers -- I cannot. The differences

among us almost drown out our similarities. Considering that our backgrounds are so diverse, how can it be otherwise?

The points I make here are most recently substantiated by my experience as a member of a discussion group, usually comprised of eight or nine children of survivors at any given time. It met for about six months during 1998 before disbanding. References to actual individuals have been modified sufficiently to protect their privacy.

For one thing, our parents experienced the Holocaust in such a variety of ways: from surviving concentration camps, to hiding, to escaping to Russia, China, or the West. Some children of survivors are survivors themselves, as are three of our group. These are the oldest, with the rest of us being post-war baby boomers. Even among the boomers, some are in their thirties while others are in their forties or fifties.

None of us are married, but three are divorced with children. Our non-married status should not be regarded as typical of children of survivors, since our little circle is self-selected, and it makes sense that singles would be freer to get involved with a support group than those who are married. But it appears reasonable to assume that our group's collectively poor record with marriage is associated with our upbringings in homes haunted by history.

Nevertheless, it would be a mistake to regard us as a collection of pitiful, hopelessly neurotic individuals. Most of us are doing well economically and at least a couple of us are quite creative and interesting. On the surface at least, all of us seem fairly normal.

We met every three weeks for about half a year. We had decided upon seeing *Life Is Beautiful* as a group activity, but due to scheduling problems, saw it individually. Our discussion occupied the penultimate meeting, with only five of our usual number in attendance. Three of us were greatly impressed by Benigni's work, while two objected to it. (At our next and final meeting, I discovered that another, absent the previous time, also liked it.)

As the three of us who admired the film made our points in a mild debate with one who disapproved, I noticed that the other sat stonily silent. When I asked what was wrong, he blew his emotional reserve and spewed forth an uncomprehending outrage as to how any of us could tolerate such an atrocious work. To him,

Benigni had constructed a disrespectful farce which bore no relation to the barbarities encountered by our people at real concentration camps.

None of us on the other side of the argument had thought of this movie as particularly true to history. Clearly, the concentration camp it depicted, although by no means a pleasant place (these were not *Hogan's Heroes* Nazis), had scenes which are not believable. Although we have learned recently that someone apparently survived in a way remarkably similar to the child portrayed, we know that some scenes were pure fantasy, e.g., the child moves freely around the camp to talk to his father in the midst of his torturous labors carrying anvils, and the father commandeers the loudspeaker to communicate with his wife -- yet nothing happens to them in either case.

Where Benigni succeeds is in constructing, during the Chaplinesque first half, a totally engaging character with a charming little family which gets swept up in the Nazi horror. They are totally humanized to the audience before they become victims. And then he lets go of the comedy just enough to make us understand that they are confronting an unfathomable evil. The Benigni character drops his clownish demeanor but twice: once when he discovers that his old German doctor friend with a passion for riddles is truly a Nazi without any desire to save him, and then in seeing the mountain of corpses. This is presented alongside of the off-camera murder of his character, the ever devoted father, in the end. For me, and others, these scenes help elevate and transform the movie into something moving and profound.

But two of our number did not see it this way. The more emotional of the two has had a very difficult adjustment to being a child of survivors. He was brought up in Germany, unaware of his Jewish identity until a decade ago. In my view, he requires more time to mellow into his relatively new sense of himself.

The other appears to be an emotionally constricted individual, who speaks haltingly and never evinces anger or annoyance, while maintaining a remarkably neat and orderly home. Perhaps, not surprisingly, he works as an accountant. That such a person -- who even found Art Spiegelman's *Maus* offensive -- would regard an unconventional treatment like Benigni's improper or inappropriate, should not come as a shock.

Still, I am comforted by realizing that I am part of a general class of people called "children of Holocaust survivors" and have benefitted from the insights gained regarding ourselves and our parents. I have drawn strength as much from our differences as our commonalities.

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Benigni's Beast

Ruth Liberman
New York University

Sometimes I have the impression that the Holocaust has become like a wild animal on the loose. Some chase it to see it safely locked away in history -- or, better yet, dead and forgotten -- so it can escape no more. Others seek the beast to study and understand. Entrepreneurs stalk it in the name of profit. With these in mind, I think of filmmaker and actor Roberto Benigni's claim that the Holocaust belongs to everybody ("Interview: Roberto Benigni and Adrian Wootton," *The Guardian*, Saturday, November 7, 1998). Yet, if he really thinks it belongs to him, why does he go to the Jewish community to get approval? I am not sure exactly what he means, though my intuition tells me, rather, that everyone belongs to history. After watching *Life Is Beautiful*, my sense is that Benigni suggests that if something belongs to me, I am free to use it as I please.

Laughter and humor are additional tools to feel empowered in the face of danger, even if one ends up getting shot. This applies to a movie audience, too, only that they cannot get shot, so laughter may indeed triumph. However, I can think of no humorous film dealing with the Shoah where humor is *in actuality* empowering to a degree that it overpowers the enemy, except for *Life Is Beautiful*. Here, the audience leaves the cinema feeling elated and appeased, as can be gleaned from various reviews alleging that the film is "a rare treat: a lighthearted comedy that tackles a very serious subject," "a very enjoyable movie," "exciting, wonderful," and "a remarkably uplifting, rejuvenating experience." That must mean that history had to undergo some major cosmetics, unless, of course, if what we are seeing has nothing

to do with history but is actually a fable.

If the movie is a fable, then questions of whether a child would have survived under these circumstances in a concentration camp, or whether a prisoner could have accessed and manipulated the sound system in the camp, are as inappropriate as pointing out that a Jew could have never married a gentile in Italy in the early 1940s. What is historically plausible and what is not is relevant only in a situation that resembles history. Since the film is declared to be a fable, we must accept everything as what it is presented as being. Just as in a fairy tale we accept animals speaking or people flying, here too, we should accept the rules laid out by the movie.

Except that the circumstances portrayed do resemble a real-life situation: Europe in the late 1930s and early 1940s; war; Jews as victims; Germans as bad guys; trains; bunk beds; chimneys with smoke; striped uniforms; heavy labor; mysterious showers; a heap of corpses; and soap made from humans.

Indeed, the cues read almost like a foolproof list of Holocaust attributes. Perhaps Benigni needed the Holocaust to lend pathos and significance to his movie. Yet, in order for the story he so much wanted to tell to be at all convincing, he also needed the Holocaust to be not quite the Holocaust. For instance, the father in the film protects the son, as Benigni's wife and actress Nicoletta Braschi explains, so that the son "doesn't have the shock, the trauma that otherwise he would have forever" (Sharon Waxman, "Embracing 'Life' in Death Camps: Filmmaker Roberto Benigni, Putting Comedy to the Test," *Washington Post*, November 1, 1998: G01). I read "otherwise" also as "in a death camp."

Benigni explains that he fell in love with the idea of placing the story in a camp: "I didn't set out to make a movie about the Holocaust. I was looking for a new movie and ... comedy comes out of extreme situations ... the ultimate extreme situation is the extermination camp" (Carrie Rickey, "Italian Film Dares to Mix Humor and Holocaust," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, October 28, 1998: D01). Evidently, it was not a concern for history or memory that compelled him to place his fable in a setting reminiscent of the Shoah, nor was it any particular aspect of the Shoah he was motivated to explore. He was interested in achieving comedy and in reaching "some sort of poetry, or beauty" (Waxman: G01). Unfortunately, in order to tell an uplifting, life-affirming tale

against a historical backdrop that has hitherto offered little or no redemption, historical accuracy had to be sacrificed.

Other films that use some form of humor and deal with the victims -- in ghettos, camps, or during deportation -- seem to have been prompted mostly by genuine concerns the filmmaker had regarding the Shoah itself. For instance, in *Jacob the Liar* (*Jakob der Luegner*) by Frank Beyer, the humor stems from the story itself, and the story, which takes place in an unnamed Polish ghetto, appears to grow out of the very situation of the ghetto. Written by Jurek Becker in 1969, the plot revolves around the protagonist Jacob's overhearing a news broadcast indicating that the Russians are 300 miles away. In the face of disbelief among the other people in the ghetto, he begins his web of lies claiming that he has a radio hidden in his room. Suicides in the ghetto cease, courage and hope flourish, as he reports daily about the latest news. When he finally confesses his lie to a friend, the latter hangs himself. In the last scenes we see the faces of the people in the ghetto on a train. Inadvertently, Jacob had lied to overcome the lack of hope in the ghetto. The ensuing situation of his lying bears certain comical elements, as do other incidents that bespeak a degree of pride and distance as yet operative among the people in the ghetto. Although we are transported, along with the characters in the film, into sweet and short-lived hopefulness, we are not spared the exacting truth of history.

This holds true also, although by vastly different means, for Lina Wertmüller's *Seven Beauties* (*Pasqualino settebelleze*). (The film was vehemently attacked by Bruno Bettelheim in his 1976 essay, "Surviving," but was respectfully analyzed by Terrence DesPres in his *Harper's* essay, "Black Comedies," of the same year.) In the film, the politically indifferent dandy Pasqualino is plunged into the nightmarish, comically absurd, and morally testing hell of a concentration camp. The distortion that humor, by its very nature, inflicts on its subject is here so crass that its nature can at once be discerned as that of parody. For instance, in order to show Pasqualino's problematic opportunism, Wertmüller creates a grossly overstated, cigar-smoking, and grotesquely repugnant female commandant with whom Pasqualino tries to flirt in the hope to save himself. The entire scenario of the camp appears so stylized and dreamlike as to leave little doubt that what we see is an artistic expression. Neither the humor nor

the plot stands apart from the subject.

While it is true that Benigni sometimes creates humor out of real situations -- like when Guido pretends to translate a guard's instructions or when he mocks Nazi ideology by presenting himself as a perfect example of racial purity -- I see him stumbling through his experiment with great awkwardness. *Life Is Beautiful* eliminates what is difficult to deal with, what may leave us in shock rather than tears. Thus, we do not know what ever happened to Guido's uncle and we find the disappearance of all the children hardly deplorable.

Unfortunately, the film's naive ignorance and sentimental universalism find their culmination in the enormous success the movie has had. Is it preposterous to expect that an author's outlook transpires into his or her work, such as that expressed by Benigni in his Oscar acceptance speech, "I would like to dedicate this prize to those [who] ... gave their life in order [that] we can say 'life is beautiful'"? Given Benigni's frivolity and borderline innocence, what are we to make of the audience's overall enthusiastic response? Perhaps Sander Gilman is right in suggesting that, in the "post-Schindler's List world," you no longer have to be powerless, but you can affect the future.

Although it may seem early in history, this film has lead me to imagine one child saying to another, "Let's play Holocaust." The difference from conventional games, such as "Cowboys-and-Indians," is that you can pick the role of the Jew and still win. Using the Holocaust as a metaphor for extremeness and the concentration camp as a contrast for beauty, *Life Is Beautiful* insists at all levels on displacing knowledge with innocence.

Almost unwittingly, rather playfully, one can bumble into the Holocaust: "Sometimes with my screen writer I improvise a monologue like an ancient Roman or like a Russian woman, or, I don't know, a Spanish dog, something by accident. And then suddenly, we were writing another kind of movie, very light and funny. And then I was improvising -- suddenly, out of the blue -- a monologue of a man in a concentration camp" (*The Guardian*). I find it fascinating how disconnected reality is for Benigni from his comedic vision. The success of the film may indicate a true desire for accepting history. It seems to be saying: if we must live with the Holocaust in our backyard, let's make it at least a little jolly. Let us tame the beast.

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University where she is researching her PhD dissertation on humor in representations of the Shoah. Her essay, "Of Testimony, Piles, and the Poetics of Final Letters," will appear in *Contemporary Portrayals of Auschwitz and Genocide: Philosophical Challenges* (forthcoming, 2000). Ms. Liberman is also an alumna of the Whitney Museum Independent Study Program and a visual and performance artist with shows at various venues including the Drawing Center (New York City), the Jewish Museum (Frankfurt, Germany), and the Museo Alejandro Otero (Caracas, Venezuela). She may be reached by e-mail at <ruth.liberman@nyu.edu>. □

Columbine: The Search for Causes

(Continued from page 1)

suicide-mission of two high school youths, we are also scholars who, like much of the rest the nation, want to channel our energies into answering the question, "Why?" In my case, the quest for cause was not a separate scholarly exercise, but became intertwined with my teaching, especially in my psychohistory classes. Like many of us, I want to help students analyze, explain, and try to make sense of contemporary as well as past events. If any course lends itself to causes, it is psychohistory (and although some faculty in traditional history courses refuse to deviate from the history curriculum, how can one discuss Hitler, but not Columbine?). In any case, with feelings stoked by viewing hours of electronic images, most students came ready to talk.

As I drove to classes on the day after the Littleton shootings, my thoughts revolved around how best to use the previous day's events to help highlight psychodynamic processes and principles while testing psychohistorical theories and interpretations. By the time I arrived on campus, my goals were threefold: to explore the causes of the perpetrators' behavior; to identify the nation's reactions, including what media "experts" were saying and not saying; and to learn how class members approached and analyzed the event.

Usually, classes move discussion all over the place. Just as one student begins to talk on the level of description, another jumps in with a judgement, while someone else offers ways to "fix" what is deemed to be "wrong." There is much venting, but little consistent analysis;

students can leave class confused. To help everyone stay on track, I sometimes simplify discourse by reducing it to five categories, writing each on the board: first the descriptive level (the "facts" we agree upon); second, the causal level (what produced the behavior); third, the level of consequence (what follows from the event); fourth, the level of judgement (what is "right" or "wrong," "good" or "bad" about these things); and fifth, the prescriptive level (what can be done, or not done, to make things better). If discussion drifts from description, cause, or consequence, one can note this shift to more emotion-laden judgements and prescriptions, and students can better analyze what is happening as different themes are stated and intertwined.

I found my first class that morning (Western Civilization II, honors) raring to go. Their observations included almost all the themes being played out in the media. Near the end of the hour, it suddenly occurred to me, however, that almost 80 per cent of our time had been spent discussing prevention: gun control; metal detectors; how an unspecified "education" or "early education" could make a difference; how "sensitivity training" could help people better understand and empathize with "outsiders." I took this preoccupation with security issues to mean that class members, on some level, were frightened, and were trying to get their anxieties under control.

I expected similar responses from my psychohistory classes (three introductory, one advanced). I was wrong. Without prompting, they all looked directly at causes. One class patiently described the facts for a few students who were unclear about details. All explored several possible causes, including:

- the notion that the perpetrators were "nuts," so alien that it was as if they came from another planet; the incident was so fundamentally bizarre, some said, to be unknowable;
- the idea the perpetrators were "born evil" suffered from "a chemical imbalance in the brain," or had inherited a "bad gene" (there clearly could be no environmental, family, or childhood influence);
- the question, "Where were the parents?" (this meant only recent supervision of them as adolescents);
- the impact of an unspecified "media" or non-specific "media-violence;"
- the impact of a specific medium -- violent video

games, television and movie images, nihilistic rock music, unsupervised wandering on the Internet;

- the sinister influence of the Gothic sub-culture;
- feelings of being "outsiders;"
- seeking vengeance for being bullied and scapegoated; and
- the accessibility of guns (one can point out here that the gun symbolically "empowers" those who are feeling disempowered).

Psychologists, psychotherapists, sociologists, and psychohistorians can recognize the defensive nature of some of these observations, but the discussions were rich by any standards even if many of the themes echoed discussions in the media. In addition, many students were particularly focussed on the fact that the event was planned (as if it is easier to understand such things when people "snap"). A few students noted that "this time the media didn't blame drugs." But no one mentioned any possible "copy cat" connection between the murders and the recently begun U.S./NATO war against Serbia. No one asked about the scientific scholarship on violent children and on children who kill. No one asked about the childhoods of the perpetrators. All of these one might naturally expect from psychohistory students well into the third month of the semester.

The students' avoidance offered an opportunity to suggest that the media not only provides information, but also performs a defensive function. It is as if the media is an analysand, presenting all kinds of detailed data while hiding impulses, fantasies, and wishes through denials, rationalizations, displacements, projections, and the avoidance of facts (or topics) that might hint at the truth. To illustrate how *The New York Times* was covering the story and to show how it sought to convince us that the causes of such behavior are essentially unknowable, I read passages from the *Times* over the next three weeks.

Two days after the shooting, the *Times* reported a friend of one of the alleged murderers as saying, "He was a normal kid ... I don't know what happened, he turned into a nut case" (April 23, National: A21). A colleague of one of their mothers said, "As far as I can tell, this family was utterly normal ... They did everything right" (Ibid.). Two days later, the *Times* quoted the mother of one of their friends as saying that they "were just like any other young men, interested in bamboo sword fights, *Star Wars*, and computer

games." The same page added that "...reporters have drawn attention to the Gothic culture, video games like *Doom*, violent movies, and the popularity of figures like Marilyn Manson. But none of these is by itself evidence that something is wrong...;" For good measure, it quoted the director of Yale's Child Studies Center that the parents could not be blamed (April 25, National: 30). The *Sunday Times* ran an article on "The Motives" in which Erica Goode wrote, "Exactly what propels young perpetrators like those in Littleton, [Colo., and] Jonesboro, Ark., and other communities remains a mystery."

In a box labeled "Other Shootings Involving Students" (*Times*, April 21, National: A17), six recent incidents were mentioned, each ending with a statement relating to "causes." One perpetrator said, "I had no other choice." Another acted because "a classmate ... was dating his ex-girlfriend." For another, "The motive is unclear." For yet another, "The police did not suggest a motive." For another, "When asked why he did it he said he did not know." For another it was peer-pressure: "the teenagers were in a cult-like group."

Whoever tried to make sense of these events -- which the *Times* itself had linked together -- would, of course, be hard pressed to find a common thread. Four days later, the *Times* was more direct. An article connecting Columbine to six earlier acts of mass murder (April 25, Week in Review: 18) made the point that "long before violent video games, the Internet and nihilistic industrial rock music, America's young were committing occasional acts of destruction and violence." Fair enough. And the lesson? "If the following example fails to show a pattern, it may be because there is none." One week later the Week in Review (May 2: 1) stated, "Clearly, no single factor will ever explain any of the incidents."

Specialists had earlier reassured us that events like this weren't permanently traumatic. Said a *Times* op-ed piece (April 23: A25), "Most people, in fact, are quite resilient and don't need registered experts to deal with anguish." This last Sunday's *Times* Week in Review (May 9: 1 & 4) headlined, "Science Looks at Littleton, and Shrugs." It declared, "...if there is anything left to be said about the recent tragedy" it is that since "such events are so rare ... there may be no larger lessons to draw." What was not done (said the Center on Disease Control), "What we were not able to do ... was a psychological profile of the

offenders, to look at the commonalities." The last word seemed to be that of the Director of the National Consortium on Violence Research at Carnegie Mellon University who blamed guns, which "transform what is widespread teenage behavior into disasters." Perhaps more insightful than any of the experts was the student graffiti which appeared on the bulletin board outside the door of our Social Sciences Department: "Blaming violence on guns is like blaming obesity on the fork."

This, of course, corroborates the scientific findings of psychology that the sources of violent behavior lie not in guns but in the personalities of the perpetrators, personalities formed in large part by early experiences. Like the analysts, the media (in this case, the *Times*) sometimes dropped hints to the effect even as they defensively focussed on other "factors" or claimed causes were essentially unknowable. An article (April 27, National: A21) on the earlier Jonesboro shooting revealed something in passing about child abuse: "...there was also the sexual abuse of both sons by a neighborhood teenager ... an episode that neither child disclosed at the time," about which the mother only learned when her ex-husband "revealed it to Barbara Walters on television." It is, of course, not my contention that one episode of sexual abuse produces violent behavior. I am pointing out that childhood and the role of abuse are only mentioned as causes in passing, if at all, when many, many sources point to child abuse as a factor in violent behavior.

Indeed, the *New York Times Book Review*, two days before the Littleton shootings, carried a review of Gitta Sereny's new book, *Cries Unheard*. Headlined "Bad Seed?", it told of the 1968 murder of two English boys, ages 3 and 4, by Mary Bell, a girl of 11, whose remorseless demeanor infuriated some and prompted the British press to speak of her as "a freak of nature" and as "evil born." Sereny, however, discovered something other than biology at work: "We learn that on four separate occasions, her mother, Betty, a prostitute, used her daughter as a sexual prop in some of her sadomasochistic encounters.... (In later years when Bell served time in prison, Betty would sell stories about her daughter, as well as photographs, to the tabloids; at one point she told her daughter that she was 'the devil's spawn')" (April 18: 9). We learn more details from the review in *The New York Review of Books* (May 20: 4): When Mary was four or five, Betty "allowed her clients to

sodomize Mary and introduce instruments into her body. She restrained her while clients ejaculated into her mouth. She allowed clients to whip her, to hood or gag her, and Mary was choked so that she briefly lost consciousness."

Why were facts like these never considered by the media? Where were the studies by Alice Miller, where is Flora Rhea Schreiber's *The Shoemaker*? Where was psychoanalyst Muriel Gardner, "the real Julia," who spent a lifetime studying violent children? Since we heard nothing, anywhere, about this body of work, no one had a chance to explore this possible cause in the national discussion which followed Littleton.

Of course, careful research needs to be undertaken for any specific cases before any conclusions can be drawn. In history we work from sources to conclusions, not the other way around. Yet, once again the media had unconsciously suppressed important data by "overlooking" it, thus carrying out a central group-fantasy function by keeping the possible connection between violence and childhood experiences from group-consciousness. On the other hand, at least one 130 psychohistory students were exposed to these ideas and to some of the ways in which powerful mediums, like *The New York Times*, help keep us in the dark.

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Questions About the Suburban Massacre in Littleton

Dan Dervin
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In the aftermath of the Columbine shooting in Littleton, Colorado, we are in a situation where the more we learn the more questions we have -- a condition that may well continue indefinitely. At present there are too many perspectives and dynamics to choose from: the individual feelings of rejection (narcissistic injuries) and the reactive grandiosity in assuming power roles (identification with the aggressor) as well as the cultural and the political which provide means and models for enacting violent revenge.

I want to restrict these few observations to

questions of parenting: not only about what seems to have gone wrong, but how difficult it is to know. Not long ago, with my then about-to-marry daughter Hilary, now the mother of a girl, I monitored the messages in *Child*, a mass-market magazine for parents with young children. In many ways, its viewpoints were enlightened: non-normative, but responsive to reasonable expectations, and generally accepting of children as interesting, different human beings.

But one vignette raised some alarms. "You're opposed in principle to violent toys," goes a question-answer feature, but "your 3-year-old wants a toy gun." You should say, "Guns hurt people. You don't want to hurt people. Let's talk about ways you can help people." On the one hand, the child receives a clear message from the parent and may feel reassured that he/she participates in the parent's non-violent aura. The child may also infer that if he/she wants to retain the parent's love, he/she should identify with the parent's picture of the world -- keep the bad stuff outside. However, this could arouse a less adaptive defense of identification-with-the-aggressor, or just as easily inhibit the child's subsequent needs for self-protection. In fact, the parent's seizing the high ground in opposing violence in principle may shield unaddressed anxieties over aggression, self-injury, sexuality, etc.

There is in fact a breakdown in empathic attunement because the parent is scripting the child like a blank sheet in the Lockean mode, an opportunity to explore the meaning of toys in parents' and children's life is missed, and a crucial distinction between fantasy and reality is blurred. The so-called gun is after all only a toy to a three-year-old (and should also be to an adult); toys are transitional objects that serve genuine developmental needs. It may be the boy is attempting to dis-identify with the mother by externalizing his dawning awareness of the genital to have it recognized and validated, in which case mother's disapproval may return him to an earlier symbiotic bind of total dependency; this may in turn alleviate the mother's own anxieties over separation and loss. Eliminating the so-called gun from the field of play then reassures her and motivates her to double her energies toward this illusory safety. If the toy-gun is appropriately perceived as a transitional object, however, it will eventually succumb to the fate of all childhood's dolls and toys -- gradual phasing-out and

abandonment. When the mother interferes by imposing her own fears in terms of unquestionable principles, the child may experience the narcissistic mortification of helpless defeat at the hands of a beloved but more powerful adversary, and may grow up associating guns or genitals with power and danger, setting the stage for acting out on the one hand and sexual/gender conflicts on the other.

A neighbor of the family of Dylan Klebold (one of the two presumed Littleton killers) recalls saying to the Klebold mother, Sue, that "in your house you have all these boy toys, while I have only girl toys." "Boy toys, but no toy guns," Sue Klebold answered. A neighbor of the Eric Harris family (the other presumed killer) recalls the Harris family as great neighbors. "They're always raking their leaves, shoveling their sidewalks, lending a hand in a pinch. And they have terrific boys -- pleasant, clean-cut, respectful toward their parents." Her own kids were "such troublemakers, drinking beer, smoking cigarettes, throwing parties when their parents weren't around." The Harris parents dutifully attend PTA meetings, Little League, etc. When a neighbor, however, met with them to call their attention to death threats sent by Eric to their son, Mrs. Harris broke down in tears ("In Littleton, Neighbors Ponder What Went Wrong," *Washington Post*, May 2).

Where does what appears to be "good-enough parenting" turn out to be something else, which I'm tentatively calling "As-if parenting"? The clinical term emanates from Helene Deutsch's attempts to depict personalities akin to our borderline/narcissistic syndromes today. Among other features, the as-if personality has not consolidated stable identifications, and consequently relies on society's ready-made stereotypes of adult behavior, revealed as partly external and resulting in shallow interpersonal ties. Are we seeing today new versions of the older bourgeois forms of respectability and propriety now defined in wealth and status substituting for genuine ideals and relationships, and thereby subverting parenting?

Children may collude with such as-if parenting by outward compliance. This false-self seems to have been the one perceived by the probation officer, the judge, neighbors, and school officials in their dealings with the two Littleton boys.

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Presidency. □

Columbine and the NRA

By Old Scratch

The saddest story I ever heard tell
 Came from an old fool found sweating in
 Hell.
 Put there for repeating ideas thought true:
 "Guns don't kill people; it's Trenchcoats that
 do!"
 "'Trenchcoats'? Surely you have to be kid
 ding!
 "Was it the lining, thread, or the ribbing?"
 "None of these," whispered his soul in tor-
 ment.
 "The counsel they gave me was fraudulent."
 So, I, Beezlebug, paused then to listen,
 In darkness visible, eye a-glisten,
 To NRA tales of tyranny smelled,
 And in mine evil eyes, tears of laughter
 welled.
 "'Trenchcoats did it,' said they with manner
 firm.
 "And I believed them: odd lesson to learn."
 "Why did you fall for their self-serving
 speech,
 "Their short-sighted fears, their macho-like
 preach?"
 Quoth I with malevolent grin, dev'lish
 Laughter, happy as Sin. "Propaganda
 "Is easy; it's like consuming cold cheer;
 "'Cause ice water here goes faster than beer."
 "I know, I know -- now!" said he miserable.
 "But up there the Constitution visible
 "Says all have the right to bear arms! `To
 fight
 "Any foe that breaks down the door our right
 "Is inviolate,' they told me that oft,
 "'Government's dangerous, we can't get
 soft!
 "And I believed them; I fell for their line
 "And drank it all down like sweet-tasting
 wine."
 So I, the famous Inn-Keeper of Hell,
 Reacted once more to this tale I've heard
 Tell, repeated just like any hard sell.
 "Thinkest thou here this idea's alone?
 "There's many a good wit who's repeated

these gratis
 "Like Charlton Heston out of *Quo Vadis*;
 "An idea's only good as reality's
 "Fit; else here it's merely devilish sh-t.
 "So, tell me, what place and time were you
 born?
 "Do hunters find food through woodlands
 and corn?
 "Do neighbors still walk three days then to
 call?
 "Are cities large, if 200 folk sprawl?"
 The tormented soul shook a head-shakin'
 "Oh no, for the times, they've been a-
 changin'."
 "Wise thought," harshed I, "but it's too little
 too
 "Late. The Columbine kids needed wisdom
 "Straight, from a balanced, mature perspec-
 tive.

Political Personality and

"What they got from their folk elective
 "Was devilishly good political talk
 "Fueling their Machiavellian squawk."

But soon they'll ALL gather, e'en NRA's best
 And then His Wisdom puts them all to the
 test.

As Milton said, we all have a free choice
 So they may pick where they stay ... and re-
 joice.

In Hell's sight we have rifles galore
 Pistols are worn by five-year-olds and more.
 In Heav'n there's only one rule held dear:
 "Abandon all guns, ye who enter here!"

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 Department of English at Northern Illinois
 University, who writes about psychology and
 literature. □*

Political Psychologist and Presidential Scholar: Betty Glad

Paul H. Elovitz
 Ramapo College and the Psychohistory Forum
 and
 Bob Lentz
 Clio's Psyche

Betty Glad is the Olin D. Johnston Professor of Political Science at the University of South Carolina. Born into the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints in Utah, she was educated at the University of Utah where she graduated magna cum laude before going to the University of Chicago to take her doctoral degree. She started her teaching career at Mount Holyoke College and taught at numerous other institutions including New York University and Purdue, and mainly at the University of Illinois-Urbana from 1964 until 1989 when she went to South Carolina. She is a prolific author and editor whom this interviewer [Elovitz] first met when both were researching the childhood and personality of Jimmy Carter in 1976.

Among her books are Jimmy Carter: In Search of the Great White House (1980), Key Pittman: The Tragedy of a Senate Insider (1986), The Psychological Dimensions of War (1990), and Charles Evans Hughes and the Illusions of Innocence: A Study in American Diplomacy (1966) which was nominated for a Pulitzer Prize. Another book, The Russian Transformation: Political, Sociological and Psychological Aspects for which Glad is a co-editor and a contributor will be published by St Martin's Press this July. Her numerous articles are published in Presidential Studies Quarterly, Political Psychology, and a variety of other journals.

Professor Glad, a member of Phi Beta Kappa, is a recipient of the Harold Lasswell Award for "Distinguished Scientific Contributions to Political Science" of the International Society for Political Science (ISPP). She has served as president of the ISPP (1993-94) and of the Presidency Research Group of the American Political Science Association (APSA). She has also been vice president of APSA, a visiting scholar at the Brookings Institution, and the recipient of awards and honors too numerous to mention. Paul Elovitz interviewed our featured scholar over the Internet in April and May, and Bob Lentz asked supplemental questions.

Clio's Psyche [CP]: Please tell us about your family background.

Betty Glad [BG]: I was born in Salt Lake City, Utah. My father was a tailor; my mother, a musician. We were of the lower middle class. I am two years older than my brother. Our family was Mormon, or Latter-Day Saint, going back to Danish grandparents on the paternal side of the

family and to paternal Norwegian great grandparents on the maternal line.

CP: Regarding family influences in your experience and life, are high achievers more identified with their fathers?

BG: Not for me. I was more identified with my mother -- a talented musician who had little opportunity to develop and find success with her particular skills.

CP: Following up on an issue raised by Freud, what is the impact of parental loss on your level of achievement and those of subjects you have studied?

BG: My parents both died when they were quite old -- my father at 74 and my mother at 85. The death of my mother affected me more than the death of my father. I had been closer to her, felt more guilt towards her, and I was an "orphan" after her death.

CP: What are your feelings and thoughts about the Mormon, or Latter-Day Saint, religion?

BG: I admire the Mormon religion in many ways, but I have distanced myself from the Church. I first began to have doubts about the Church over the women's issue. I did not believe, even at age 12, that "a woman should obey her husband as he is the head of the household just as Jesus Christ is of the Church." I looked at my many aunts and uncles and saw no moral edge in the masculine corner. Actually, it was quite the opposite in my extended family.

CP: What is your psychological/psychotherapeutic experience and training?

BG: I first developed my interest in psychology at the time of my marriage to a young academic psychology professor at the University of Chicago. (Because Chicago did not fund female graduate students at the time, I worked full time as a stewardess with United Airlines for three years.) The marriage, in my fourth year at Chicago, changed my life. I read my husband's library and learned a lot about academic psychology from him. Then, at the time I was going through a divorce, I saw a Rogerian counselor at the University. Later, I spent approximately three years in psychoanalytical therapy. Both therapies provided me with insights into myself that were very emancipating. Through this process I discovered that I had an unconscious, that it was richer than my everyday life had been, and that answers to some of my basic dilemmas came through

symbolic insight dreams. Most important, I learned that I was governed too much by "oughts" and not enough by an appreciation of what I really "wanted" from life.

CP: You mention "insights" and "emancipating." Please elaborate.

BG: My therapy changed my orientation to the world in some major ways. First, I began asking myself what I really wanted from life, rather than what I "ought" to want. Next I realized that I had less rational control over some of my major decisions than I had thought earlier in my career. Then I realized that reason and emotions should be integrated in my life. Lewis Mumford's "The Revolt of the Demons" in *The New Yorker* in 1964 was an important eye opener for me along these lines. I also was able to relax and see myself as a woman in process rather than a finished product. That was very emancipating. Most importantly for my academic career, I think that my "peripheral" vision as to what people are doing and what they want was considerably heightened.

CP: Who was important to your development as a student of psychosocial phenomena? Which books? Did Erik Erikson have an impact on you?

BG: Eric Erikson had no real impact on me. Karen Horney's *Neurosis and Human Growth* was the book that converted me to psychology. Heinz Kohut's *The Analysis of the Self* was another important book in my development. Kohut's lecture at an Organization of American Historians (OAH) meeting in Chicago some time ago sparked my interest in narcissistic wounds and how they create rivalries between major figures in history. Moreover, I much admired the perspective he aired there -- that we should forget disciplinary rivalries and realize that we are all involved in the common enterprise of understanding human beings and how they interact with each other. I would add to the list of books Freud's *The Interpretation of Dreams*. I particularly like his discussions of wit and puns in dreams. My own experience, however, has convinced me that dreams are not only wish-fulfilling, but problem-solving, the source of creative resolutions to personal and human dilemmas. Jung, in short, has resonance with my own history.

CP: Please list the five people who you think have made the greatest contribution to psychohistory in order of their contribution.

BG: In an order somewhat arbitrary, I

would list Harold Lasswell, Alex and Juliette George, Arnold Rogow, Robert Waite, and Robert Tucker.

CP: What special training was most helpful in your doing political psychological work?

BG: I learned by the long and hard process of writing in-depth biographies. The works of Karen Horney, Heinz Kohut, and Otto Kernberg have been particularly helpful in my psychological interpretations, as well as my own experiences in therapy.

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

BG: Graduate courses in psychology and history or political science. My graduate students today, who mainly use aspects of academic psychology, have taken courses in the University of South Carolina psychology department and have taken summer courses at the ISPP Summer Institute at Ohio State University. They have all found the Institute experience most useful to them.

CP: Please tell us more about it.

BG: Approximately 55 graduate students and junior faculty members from a variety of disciplines meet daily for lectures, workshops, discussions, and various social activities. Each year a group of nationally renowned scholars from diverse fields lecture as guest specialists. This summer Pamela Johnston Conover, M. Kent Jennings, Jack Levy, Paul Sniderman, and other distinguished persons will attend. The result is that the young scholars come to know the big names in the field, to find that there are others in their own age group that are crossing the disciplinary lines. This reinforces them in their interdisciplinary interests, by assuring them they are not as isolated as their experience in some home institutions may suggest, and by making friendships with young colleagues who share their interests and with whom they may collaborate on some projects. For information on this program, I urge your readers to write Thomas E Nelson, Department of Political Science, Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio 43210.

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

BG: My biographies of Charles Evans Hughes, Jimmy Carter, and Key Pittman. Each one is different, and I cannot choose any one as the *most* pleasing to me.

CP: Are all of your works psychologically

informed?

BG: Most of my works are psychologically informed. The most explicit usage of a wide variety of psychological theories, however, is manifest in the chapters I contributed to the volumes I edited in *The Psychological Dimensions of War* and *The Russian Transformation* (coming out this summer). My views on Gorbachev and Yeltsin, for example, are explained in detail in the latter work. The biographical studies I have done of Hughes, Carter, and Pittman, on the other hand, use the original papers of these men to delineate the wide variety of childhood and socialization forces that contributed to their behavior in political office. My proofs reside in the ability of certain psychological theories to tie together otherwise disparate material in a framework that accords with the broader field of the social sciences. Charles Darwin called this kind of proof, which he employed for his evolution theory, "consilience."

CP: What is the importance of childhood to political psychology and psychohistory?

BG: Childhood is very important. But we often do not know enough about it to make judgements that are persuasive to people outside the particular school of thought we have embraced.

CP: How do you read Jimmy Carter as President and ex-President?

BG: My biography of Jimmy Carter was primarily an in-depth look at how he matured and how he operated politically, with the psychological analysis coming in the final chapters. I see him as a person with benign motives, but as a bit grandiose and self-referent in his approach to politics. These qualities created a distance between him and many of the Democratic pros in Washington who wanted to work with him. As President, moreover, he had a struggle between his desire to be "tough as nails" and his Wilsonian visionary side. As an ex-President he is much more successful, because he can act primarily on the Wilsonian side of his personality. Yet he still finds it difficult to be a team player, and he made sure that CNN got the first scoops on his saving Bill Clinton from possible disasters in North Korea and Haiti.

CP: Why a biography of Key Pittman?

BG: My study of Key Pittman (1872-1940), Senator from Nevada, was intended to be a relatively short vignette in a larger volume, *The Chairmen of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee from 1924-1964: Personality and Role*

Performance. The Pittman chapters expanded into a book when I saw the kinds of materials available in his papers. A brilliant man, who spoke of the balance of power in the mid-thirties and saw the need to check Japan in Asia, he was also an alcoholic who wrote long and revealing letters to an often absent wife explaining how he felt about things. For some reason she destroyed neither his letters to her, nor other revealing information including an unopened folder going back to 1910, stating that it should only be opened in case of his death. In these materials, Pittman explicitly records feeling states that exemplify Kohut's theories of the horizontal and vertical splits in narcissistic personalities. The book's subtitle, *The Tragedy of a Senate Insider*, is an indication of the compassion I felt for a brilliant and sensitive man, whose uncontrolled drinking in his last few years as Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee led others to not listen to him as they should have.

CP: What are you working on now?

BG: I have just finished an edited volume, *The Russian Transformation*, to be published by St. Martin's Press this summer. The co-editor is Eric Shiraev, a young social-psychologist of Russian origin. My contributions to this volume were the introduction to the volume, plus three co-authored chapters (two on Gorbachev) and one sole-authored chapter on Yeltsin. I am also working on a book on how Jimmy Carter made his foreign policy decisions. I look at the level of his involvement in the issue, the time at which he got involved, and his relationship to others on the decision-making team. To discuss these relationships, I use a framework developed earlier in my study on Nixon. I distinguish between aides who perform instrumental services for their leader, those who provide affective support (bolstering, compensating, and acting as a proxy), and those who provide mixed supports. My hypothesis on the relationship issue is that for matters in which the President is deeply involved, aides who retain their influence are likely to provide affective as well as instrumental support.

CP: What is your evaluation of Gorbachev? Of Yeltsin? What do you foresee for Russia?

BG: Only a man like Gorbachev -- an idealist who believed deeply in the ideals of Communism -- would have been able to go through the Communist system without being corrupted and yet maintain the commitment to it

once in power. Yeltsin, on the other hand, is impulsive, self destructive, and a power seeker who can change his hat to do what is politically opportune to place or maintain himself in power. Because he told Western capitalists what they wanted to hear, we mistakenly thought of him as a true reformer. His recent firing of Primakov is a disaster and will probably worsen the already desperate situation in Russia. I see two major possibilities at the present time: a continuation of a near anarchic situation or a strong man coming to the fore. But, as Andre Melville, the Russian political scientist, states in the last chapter in *The Russian Transformation*, the future is open. There is no way we can predict the particular path that Russia will take in the years ahead.

CP: As a U.S. Presidential scholar, which President do you feel is the most interesting to explore psychologically?

BG: Winston Churchill once said that if he were to choose one virtue, it would be courage -- because it is the precondition for every other virtue. I suspect that all the Presidents we call great -- FDR, Lincoln, Jefferson, Washington -- had courage. To delineate the sources and development of the strengths these men displayed in their adult lives is of great interest to me. But, alas, my in-depth studies of recent U.S. Presidents -- Richard Nixon, Jimmy Carter, Ronald Reagan, and George Bush -- have led me to highlight their vulnerabilities. Karen Horney once noted that we can hardly use psychological concepts without seeming to denigrate our subjects. I think there is much truth to her statement. But each of these men, from my perspective, had vulnerabilities that seriously weakened their Presidencies.

In a desire to be more positive, I have recently turned to foreign leaders who are noted for their creativity and their integrity. To me, Nelson Mandela breaks the mold. Somehow, during his 29 years in prison, he developed the political sagacity and the human qualities that were to enable him to lead a peaceful revolution. Gorbachev, too, is a marvel. I began my study of his political career with the deep puzzle of how a man could come through the Communist system and maintain the authenticity that we saw in his early efforts at *perestroika*, *glasnost*, and the new thinking in foreign policy.

In studying these two men, I also came to realize that their relationships to other political leaders were crucial to the outcomes of their efforts. Mandela was aided in the transition

process in South Africa by the statesmanship of F. Willem de Klerk. Both men worked together to hold back the extremes in the political sectors they represented. Gorbachev was not so lucky. Moving slowly, he was able to keep the more orthodox Communists with whom he shared power from moving against him in the early phases of his reforms. But with a reckless Boris Yeltsin to his left, he lost his base in any reform movement and had to deal, almost alone, with the leaders of the old order as they became increasingly concerned over the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the Communist system to which they had been dedicated.

CP: What do you think psychologically of President Clinton's character?

BG: I hesitate to analyze Bill Clinton without having more information on his early life and socialization process. Clearly he is a person of uneven development, as I have argued in the 1998 fall issue of *Presidential Studies Quarterly*. A close look at his public record shows that he has some compassion for the underdog, that he waves and weaves no more than most politicians, that he can take risks (as in Haiti and Kosovo), and that internationalism is one of his important values. Clearly, he was flirting with danger in his affair with Monica Lewinsky and did not deal honestly with the issue when it first surfaced.

But I want to avoid generalizations that suggest the man is flawed in every major respect. It is particularly important, if psychohistory is to have any credibility, that we avoid the easy and negative generalizations made by psychologists such as Jerome Levin in his simply awful book, *The Clinton Syndrome* (1998). This author takes almost as a given the things that Clinton's female accusers have said about him, without looking into their possible motives for distorting the truth. Maybe he should have read Gennifer Flower's *Passion and Betrayal* (1995) and looked at some of the published materials on the possible motives of Kathleen Willey (as a reporter has done in a recent issue of the *Nation*). Levin also makes attributions about Clinton's feelings for his mother and stepfather, without any sourcing.

CP: What is your assessment of the status of psychohistorical research and writing in political psychology journals?

BG: Psychoanalytically oriented psychology is not popular in mainline political science journals. *Political Psychology* is the main

journal in which such "soft" approaches might be published. Occasionally, *Presidential Studies Quarterly* will also publish a piece using psychoanalytic psychology. Partly the problem is due to the prevailing notions of "science" in the political science field. The assumptions are that hypotheses must be simple and the proofs quantifiable. Psychoanalytic psychology is questioned in particular because it was developed, to a great extent, outside the university setting and is based on "special experience" which other people do not share. To restore the scientific footing for such psychology we should do more work testing our assumptions. How can we prove the existence of the unconscious in a scientific setting? Are the symbols most persons employ in their dreams universal? What do we do with the fact that different languages often assign different genders to the same objects?

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

BG: Focus more on ego strength and defenses, less on early traumas that might have caused these developments. When the work is speculative, make it clear that one is only guessing. Say more about the kinds of proofs one employs.

CP: How do you see political psychology and psychohistory developing in the next decade?

BG: I hope we can be a bit less speculative in our psychological interpretations. The search for the origins of specific personality traits is bound to be much more "iffy" than the presentation of an adult personality structure which is manifest in the political activities of the individual being studied.

CP: How can psychologically oriented scholars have more impact in academia and on society in general?

BG: For the community as a whole, I only regret that progressive forces did not do some time ago what the Christian right has done. Maybe we can still produce radio shows and Internet news that is responsible. We should develop more liberal think tanks that employ psychological ideas and more summer institutes of the sort now ongoing at Ohio State University.

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

BG: The world is a difficult place to navigate and fundamentalism provides us with clear answers to some of life's questions. The

problem is that these clear answers also strait-jacket the person in their grip and impede the kind of growth that comes from being open to experience and trusting one's own judgements.

But at a broader level, social controls may be exercised in many different ways. I would like to refer you to Donald McIntosh's brilliant piece in the *American Political Science Review* several years ago in which he talked about the kinds of social controls. Social control, he argues, is the greatest when the members of a community all agree on basic values. Somewhat less so, but nevertheless significant, when they all agree on which authorities are legitimate; they then listen to those authorities. There is less control from the center, however, when the authorities have to rely on rewards or punishments. The least control is exercised, paradoxically, when one must use violence to bring about conformity within the community. For that means that power is limited to those matters over which the authorities are paying attention and spending resources -- against the resistance of the objects of their attempts at control. With this conceptual framework, we can see that a variety of social controls may be exercised over all of us, not just those caught up in fundamentalist movements.

CP: What are your thoughts about probable reactions to the coming of the third millennium?

BG: I think the theme is very much overworked. What I am concerned about, however, are the products of this century. The hydrogen bomb, as Stanley Kubrick's film *Dr. Strangelove* suggested, sent us into a crazy period where we thought it might even be rational to use it. Have any of you noticed in the very last scene in that film that the Russian ambassador pulled the pin on his watch? My supposition here is that Kubrick may have been telling us that there was no automatic doomsday machine, as the Russians were claiming. Rather, that the Russian ambassador, after hearing the Americans blithely talk about going underground for 100 years, may have decided the situation was hopeless and set off the explosion himself.

In another sphere of operation, the Internet today provides us with information that is often polarizing and factually inaccurate. Moreover, I am concerned about the kind of "education" that goes on in the privatizing of the early education movement. In the past, newspapers with editorial board control over the accuracy of comments and

public schools have provided us with relatively accurate information upon which we can base our actions as well as certain common public-regarding values. The atomization that we now see in our polity concerns me to a great extent.

CP: What do you think of the current state of American national political leadership?

BG: We seem to have little inspired leadership at the national level today. There are few strong, moderate leaders in the Republican party, and the Democratic leadership has been careless in its fundraising activities. I suspect that this dearth of inspired leadership is probably due to the ways our campaigns are run today, and the voracious appetite of the media for scandal. Maybe only very driven people will go through the long primary season, the constant solicitation of funds, and the invasion of what they might have thought in the past were their private lives.

CP: How can we recruit new people to the psychosocial field?

BG: Do what you are doing. Make psychohistory journals available to young people. Create sub-groups specializing in political psychology in the major disciplines. Form young scholars committees to put on social events that help the new entrees to the profession to feel wanted and at home.

CP: I am saddened that many psychohistorians, along with many political psychologists, do not know about each other's activities and organizations despite some overlapping membership. Even more sadly, they sometimes simply denigrate each other's groups. Information about various organizations needs to be more widely disseminated. With this in mind, please tell us about your organizational experience with the ISPP.

BG: I was a founding member of the ISPP and have been active in that organization ever since. It was a great experience to meet people like Richard Christie, Gabriel Almond, M. Brewster Smith, and other great and older political psychologists. Since then, I have met persons with whom I can collaborate such as Eric Shiraev, as mentioned earlier. I am also working on a book chapter on political leadership with Helen Shestopol of Moscow State University, another person I met through the ISPP. I have a great time at our meetings, visiting historic sites and meeting locals in places such as Jerusalem and Krakow. As president of that organization, one of my initiatives

included the Young Professionals Committee -- an idea that has been picked up this last year by the International Studies Association. I quite admire the way the ISPP has been able to bring a large number of scholars from a variety of disciplines into its organization. It meets around the world on a regular basis and has had an effective leadership with competition for the top positions. All this bodes well for its future.

CP: Our Editor, founder of the Psychohistory Forum and a founding member and past president of the International Psychohistorical Association (IPA), is especially impressed with the organizational success of the ISPP. He briefly attended that first meeting of the ISPP which was held about a week after the first IPA convention. Looking back, what were some of the reasons for the ISPP's success.

BG: I'll never forget the letter I received in the early 1970s from Jeanne Knutson, a recent PhD in political science and psychology, who is the founder of the ISPP. We had no national societies dealing with political psychology, but here was this young woman asking me to join several hundred distinguished "Founders" in her proposed new International Society for Political Psychology. The first meeting we attended was piggybacked on an American Political Science Association (APSA) meeting in New York City. There were only a few of us in attendance, but several were names of people I had read with some awe but had never met. So there was this opportunity to get to know top people in the field, personally.

It also was clear that we were traveling first class from the very beginning. As a result, we looked professional and successful from day one. The ISPP meeting signs were professionally done and our meetings took place in a fine hotel. We talked over seven-dollars-per-glass drinks in the hotel bar and were happy to do so. The second meeting I attended was in Mannheim, West Germany. Jeanne put all of us on the executive committee in a luxury hotel but the tab was a little

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The Psychology of
Online Communication**

high for some of us, so we quickly shifted to less expensive accommodations. Jeanne's energy and taste -- even her grandiosity -- were what got the ISPP enterprise off the ground. Later, in a meeting at Ann Arbor, we had to bear down and establish a budget we could live with for the long haul! Phil Converse presided expertly over that transition. So we had entrepreneurial leadership when we needed it and a more sober, management type of leadership when it came to consolidating what we had done. We were lucky.

CP: Thanks for sharing your thoughts and experiences with us. It has been good to have you as a colleague through the years and it is nice to have you join in the activities of the Psychohistory Forum and our publication.

Paul H. Elovitz, PhD, is Editor of this publication and directs, together with Herbert Barry of the University of Pittsburgh, the Psychohistory Forum's Research Group on Presidents and Presidential Candidates.

Bob Lentz is Associate Editor of this publication. □

A Conversation on Alternative Approaches to Political Personality With Observations on Gore, Botha, de Klerk, and Mandela

Aubrey Immelman
Saint John's University
and

Paul H. Elovitz
Ramapo College and the Psychohistory Forum

Paul H. Elovitz (PHE): In this era of the perpetual Presidential campaign, as the November, 2000, election leads us to intensify our investigations of candidates and probable candidates, there are many questions regarding how to go about this task. When we presented together at the Psychohistory Forum's March 6 session on impeachment, I noted the very different approach to political psychology which we each take. Would you spell out your methodology?

Aubrey Immelman (AI): I call my approach "psychodiagnostic meta-analysis," to distinguish it from classic psychobiographical and content-analytic approaches to the indirect assessment of political personality. Using the framework of personality theorist Theodore Millon, I compiled an inventory of diagnostic

criteria and developed a scoring system for assessing personality patterns and their maladaptive variants. I call the assessment instrument the Millon Inventory of Diagnostic Criteria (MIDC). The system enables one to abstract personality data directly from clinical analysis of diagnostically relevant content in biographical material, journalistic accounts, and other sources of information in the public domain with respect to political leaders or historical figures.

PHE: Would you elaborate on and provide specifics about the diagnostic procedure?

AI: Psychodiagnostic meta-analysis can be conceptualized as a three-part process. In the initial data collection phase, bibliographic source materials are reviewed and analyzed to extract diagnostically relevant psychobiographical content. Next comes scoring and interpretation. The unifying framework provided by the inventory is harnessed to classify the diagnostically relevant information extracted in the data-collection phase. The diagnostic procedure concludes with an inference process, during which theoretically grounded descriptions, explanations, inferences, and predictions are extrapolated from Millon's theory of personality, based on the personality profile yielded by the study.

PHE: My empathetically based psychobiographical approach is quite different. I focus on how personality is developed in childhood and tested in facing the traumas of life. I literally try to place myself in the shoes of my subjects and retrace their steps (sometimes literally), thoughts, and emotions at crucial moments in their lives. To do this well, I have to face my own feelings about politicians whom I tend not to trust, partly because I pay over 40% of my salary for various taxes which they have greater control over than anyone else.

In 1976 I started to develop my method in researching Jimmy Carter. It was a direct result of working to apply psychoanalytic insights to my work as a historian and student of politics. First, I started by reading Carter's own account of his life in his political autobiography, *Why Not the Best?* (1975). Then, in my psychoanalysis, I probed my own feelings towards Carter and Southerners. The South's apartheid system which I had demonstrated against as part of the Civil Rights movement had left me with a distrust of Southerners and a stereotyped view of them which I had to overcome to be an effective psychohistorian. Next, I went to

Plains, Georgia, and was given valuable information by Carter's mother, Lillian; his sister, Gloria; and a variety of people who were important in his early development. My goal was to probe his childhood to find the roots of his adult personality and "character." I focused on emotion in Carter's self-presentation and the disparity between what he said and did. To the extent I had a model, it was Bruce Mazlish, *In Search of Nixon* (1972), but I interjected my personality much more directly than did Mazlish. A major reason for this was that I felt I could speak more authoritatively about my own reactions than about Carter, at an early, uncertain stage of my inquiry.

As I developed my technique, I increasingly came to use countertransference feelings in much the way I was taught to use them as a guide to figuring out what was going on with clients. Empathy has always been a primary tool of exploration and I devote an enormous amount of time and energy to empathizing with my subject. Reporting some of my own feelings also served to humanize the process of analysis. Aubrey, what are some of your thoughts regarding my very brief description of this approach?

AI: To be perfectly frank, as a non-analytically trained clinician, it would be anathema for me to use my emotional response to the subject as grounds for inference. Clearly, my training and experience has biased me in the direction of empirical observation and objective assessment techniques. Two questions come to mind. First, what is the theoretical justification for employing countertransference as an assessment tool; and second, what are the implications for replication, a basic tenet of scientific inquiry?

PHE: In psychoanalysis and many of the psychotherapies, we use the induced countertransference as a vital source of information -- indeed, many books have been published on the subject. In psychoanalysis you spend an enormous amount of time, and money, discovering your own feelings and reactions to different people and situations. In analytic training you have many supervisions, called control analysis, with much of the time being devoted to your understanding your own reactions to patients and how to use them in treatment. You learn to note what feelings are induced in you by particular patients -- you learn to use your own reaction as a barometer of what is going on with a patient. This may not be exact knowledge, but it is invaluable knowledge. It is a most helpful tool of understanding to enable the

therapist to get beyond the manifest content, in which the patient is often stuck, to the underlying feelings and desires which may be at variance with the conscious intention of the conversation.

In turning to the psychobiography of Presidential candidates, I simply use my finely tuned sensitivity to the nuances of expression and feeling. The layman calls this information intuition or hunches, but it is far more. When people are together, information is transmitted even if there is little or no conversation. We affect each others' moods. Think about it, some people induce feelings of sadness, others gladness, others anger, or joy. The psychohistorian needs to attune her/himself to these and their variations.

I am more interested in insight than I am in replication in the name of a scientific ideal based on limited knowledge and an enormous number of variables. I see political psychology, political science, psychobiography, psychohistory, and psychoanalysis as art more than as science. We learn different things by pursuing paradigms of art and paradigms of science. Different analysts, even with the same type of psychoanalytic training, will still be different and, therefore, will not come to exactly the same conclusions. Stanley Renshon, for example, comes to similar, but not the same, conclusions I do about Bill Clinton in his fine book, *High Hopes: The Clinton Presidency and the Politics of Ambition* (1996).

AI: We certainly are following different paradigms.

PHE: What advantages and disadvantages do you see in your approach, and what advantages and disadvantages in mine?

AI: In my opinion, the principal advantage of my method is its quantitative aspect, which permits direct comparisons among political leaders. For example, I can directly evaluate individual differences among Presidential candidates or Presidents and relate these differences to variations in leadership style and executive performance. The method thus has predictive utility, an important consideration in the study of personality as it impinges on political behavior. Of course, existing content-analytic and trait-based procedures (e.g., Q-methodology) afford similar benefits. However, these approaches have significant limitations -- limitations that are averted by my method. Most problematically, they often lack a solid foundation in personality theory. A strong theoretical grounding enables

investigators to generate explanations and predictions independent of the observations used to construct the personality profile, thereby revealing information that may be hidden from ordinary observation. Content analysis is handicapped by the additional problem that the relationship between the source materials and the subject's personality may at best be tenuous. Modern Presidential speeches represent highly artificial constructions of pre-poll utterances, images, and sound bites comprising multiple input by a team of advisers and speech writers, in addition to the unique contribution of the speech writer, whose personality characteristics are ostensibly enmeshed with its content.

PHE: I have often noted that I prefer discussing theory in the context of real people. I wonder if a case study approach may be illustrative of our varying methods? Can you give me an example of how you apply your approach to a contemporary American Presidential contender -- say, John McCain or Al Gore?

AI: Al Gore is preferable, as I have systematically studied him.

I start the process by finding published biographies and autobiographies, psychological-minded profiles by journalists and political analysts, and transcripts of interviews. I do not use speeches, because I have no way of knowing who wrote them. I read these materials and conduct what essentially is a qualitative content analysis, as described earlier. Once I have identified my subject's primary personality patterns, Al Gore in this case, I am able to consult the literature for guidance on the implications of the subject's personality configuration in the major attribute domains encompassing Millon's theory: expressive behavior, interpersonal conduct, cognitive style, self-image, object representations, regulatory mechanism, morphologic organization, and mood/temperament.

Al Gore's primary personality patterns -- and I mean consolidated character patterns, not narrowly circumscribed personality traits or factors -- for instance, were identified as conscientiousness and introversion. Thus, his characteristic expressive behavior is disciplined and impassive; his interpersonal conduct is respectful and unengaged; his cognitive style is constricted and socially impoverished; his self-image is conscientious and complacent; his object representations are concealed and meager; his regulatory mechanisms are reaction formation and

intellectualization; his morphologic organization is compartmentalized and undifferentiated; and his mood/temperament is solemn and unexcitable. These observations provide a basis for inferring Gore's leadership skills and deficits and predicting his likely role performance as Chief Executive of the United States.

For example, major personality strengths for Al Gore are diligence and low susceptibility to ethical misconduct. Major personality-based limitations pertaining to Presidential performance for him are deficits in the important political skills of interpersonal, charisma, spontaneity, as well as a self-defeating potential for tenaciously pursuing a pet policy or dogmatically advancing some central principle in defiance of legislative or public disapproval. Such single-minded, dogged determination incurs the risk of alienating some constituencies and diverting inordinate energy, attention, and resources from other important endeavors, tasks, and duties. Ultimately, the preponderance of conscientious features in Gore's profile portends that he is unlikely to be a highly imaginative, visionary President or a transformational leader.

Based on these findings, I can also predict with a fair degree of confidence that Al Gore will fail in his bid to be elected President of the United States in 2000. Factor-analytic studies have shown that the extraversion-introversion dimension is the most salient personality attribute with reference to impression formation. Furthermore, extraversion is a major component of personal charm, warmth, charisma, and interpersonal. Working with data collected by Rubenzer, Faschingbauer, and Ones (presented in 1996 at the annual convention of the American Psychological Association), I am able to draw the following conclusions. 1) Starting with Franklin D. Roosevelt, every U.S. President (relative to other U.S. Presidents) has been extraverted, with the exception of Richard M. Nixon, Gerald Ford (a non-elected President), and Jimmy Carter (an anomaly in the wake of the Watergate scandal). 2) Although Rubenzer and his associates do not provide empirical data for Barry Goldwater, Hubert H. Humphrey, George McGovern, and Walter Mondale, it can be speculated with a high degree of certainty that at least since John F. Kennedy, the more extraverted candidate has won the Presidential contest every time, with the exception of Richard M. Nixon. In all likelihood, Nixon is the only President to have bucked this trend, assuming that Humphrey and

McGovern (almost certainly) were more outgoing.

PHE: You make a number of interesting points. I do feel that I am at a disadvantage in using Al Gore because I last systematically researched him during his 1992 unsuccessful Presidential bid, when I never considered him to be a strong contender worthy of my intense scrutiny. Yet, I am happy to respond to some of your points and tell you some of my responses to the former Senator from Tennessee as a casual psychohistorical observer. Without the benefit of Millon's theory, which is new to me, through the years I have observed Albert Gore to be conscientious, constricted, disciplined, often solemn, unexcitable, and even wooden in manner -- though in situations he can be quite comic in his humor about this rigid quality. He is clearly lacking in charisma and, in public settings, in spontaneity. In viewing his public appearances, sometimes I wonder if he has a reaction formation. I just don't know if "introversion," "impassive," and "concealed and meager object representations" are a proper description and in the future I would like to see your evidence for these assessments. Perhaps, you will write on Gore for **Clio's Psyche**?

AI: That is a nice possibility. I should, perhaps, note that the qualities you mention are theoretically based inferences derived from the candidate's directly observable behaviors.

PHE: Clearly, Gore does not fit the mold of the outgoing politician that we have usually been electing in our age of televised elections. I agree that he is less susceptible to ethical misconduct than most politicians, though as front runner among the Democrats he will be tested intensely in this regard, partly as a spillover from the assault on Clinton's ethics and Presidency. As a Vice President running for the Presidency while in office, he also faces the prospects of an intense denigration, called the "Van Buren jinx," which only George Bush has overcome in the last 150 years. Turning back to your points, I simply don't know what you mean by "interpersonality." Regarding his "self-defeating potential," all human beings have it, so I would like to see your evidence. Because I have long thought that he is "unlikely to be a highly imaginative, visionary President or a transformational leader," I certainly do not disagree with this point. Your prediction that Gore will not be elected in the year 2000 assumes that the variables are controlled -- but politics is not like a scientific experiment. Gore may not be the strongest candidate, but so far his

main competitor for the Democratic nomination is Bill Bradley, a talented and serious candidate whose weaknesses are that he makes the Vice President look telegenic and that he has little money and no strong political base. Nor do we know how strong the Republican candidate will be and if one of the parties may be hurt badly by a third party candidate. Personally, I usually avoid Presidential election predictions, except in casual conversations. It seems to me that you do not need a theory to arrive at most of your conclusions and that you are generalizing beyond the evidence. Though your approach comes across as based on science, I also note that you are "inferring Gore's leadership skills." I respect your inferences, but I do not see them as more reliable than judgments based upon experience or my own methodology. Though I am sure you have lots of reactions to my statements, why don't we continue this methodological discussion in the future when we have more time, using as a case study an emerging candidate that neither one of us knows much about at the present time. Interested?

AI: Most certainly. Just a brief clarification before we move on: My use of the term "interpersonality" is with reference to Dean Keith Simonton's interpersonal dimension of Presidential personality, which corresponds to the Five-Factor Model's Agreeableness factor and was derived from Simonton's study of the biographical use of the Gough Adjective Check List (*Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, vol. 51, 1986: 149-160).

PHE: Good. Right now I would like to know how you came to use your method? Did you study with Millon? Is it at all related to your personal history?

AI: I did not have the opportunity to study with Millon. As a clinical psychology intern in the early 1980s, I was trained in his framework for personality assessment by a supervising psychiatrist, a rather unbending but diagnostically astute mentor unreceptive to alternative approaches. When I started devising a methodology for indirect political personality assessment, in 1987, I contacted Millon, who was very gracious in providing me with the diagnostic criteria that provide the basis for his structured psychological assessment instruments.

Concerning my personal history, politically speaking I came of age in apartheid-era South Africa, whose defining moments for me were the Soweto uprising in 1976 and the national state of

emergency in the second half of the 1980s when President P. W. Botha unleashed the full force of state-sponsored oppression in a last stand against the so-called "total onslaught" by internal and external opposition to the National Party's apartheid policies. At the time, I was working as a clinical psychologist in the national health system. I must admit to moments of cynicism and disillusionment. To me, delivering mental health services in a maladaptive society was at times reminiscent of the proverbial Nero-fiddling-while-Rome-burned. The final straw for me was when I was asked to treat a freed political prisoner, released from Robben Island where Nelson Mandela was incarcerated at the time, for paranoid schizophrenia.

My entry into political psychology had been a natural progression. As a first-year student in 1974, I became involved with the opposition Progressive Party, which at the time had just one member in parliament -- Helen Suzman. A decade later, I had become the chair of the youth branch of the party in my city, after majoring in psychology and political science and then serving two years in the military as a conscript, which allowed me a glimpse into the inner workings of the nation-state's security apparatus. By this time my party had, as I recall, 26 members in the 140-member South African parliament.

By the mid-1980s I saw the writing on the wall for apartheid and knew there was significant internal opposition to the government's apartheid policies, even from within the ruling National Party. However, I saw the siege mentality of its leadership as the major obstacle to change. It is at this point that my interest turned to personality in politics. I wanted to know what it was about President Botha's personality that accounted for his resistance to change and his single-minded, aggressive pursuit of a failed policy, and whether it was possible to study these personality dynamics at a distance. I think it's fair to say that I had more than a casual interest in political personality.

PHE: What was it in Botha's personality that made him so rigidly devoted to a failed policy?

AI: Based on an assessment that I conducted in 1987, P. W. Botha was primarily an aggressive personality with quite distinctive suspicious (though not quite paranoid) features and secondary compulsive characteristics in conjunction with a strong self-orientation and a lack of sensitivity to others. Of course, we should not forget that he was politically socialized as a

true believer in a conservative, nationalist ideology.

PHE: Why was de Klerk more flexible?

AI: De Klerk is an enigma because his initiatives militated against the laws of politics, which are governed by the maintenance, enforcement, and extension of power. De Klerk in what many critics viewed as a total capitulation -- a self-defeating political act of the highest order -- played the role of dismantler of white supremacy. Between 1993 and 1995 I conducted three separate investigations, using slightly different methodologies, of F. W. de Klerk and Nelson Mandela. Interestingly, these studies all indicated that de Klerk and Mandela had fairly similar personality profiles. The primary personality trait for both leaders was conscientiousness. The two men also shared a strong sense of self-confidence as a secondary feature in their personality profiles. The major personality difference between the two was that de Klerk had stronger cooperative features whereas Mandela was more forceful.

PHE: What light do the personality profiles of South Africa's three most recent presidents shed on the impact of their personal characteristics on the destiny of their country?

AI: De Klerk was instrumental in initiating the negotiation process. As I said earlier, de Klerk is quite conscientious. According to Millon, individuals with this quality "are notably respectful of tradition and authority, and act in a responsible, proper, and conscientious way. They do their best to uphold conventional rules and standards, following given regulations closely" (Millon *Index of Psychological Styles*, Psychological Corporation, 1994). This description is consistent with de Klerk's history as a middle-of-the-road Afrikaner nationalist. It fails, however, to account for his change of direction upon assuming the presidency in 1989. After all, his predecessor, P. W. Botha, also demonstrated substantial conscientiousness. It is necessary, therefore, to examine the critical differences between the personalities of de Klerk and Botha.

The primary difference between these two leaders is Botha's self-orientation versus de Klerk's other-orientation. Botha's aggressive, suspicious qualities are essentially absent in de Klerk, who, unlike Botha, has strong cooperative features and a sensitivity to others. Although this analysis does not explain *why* de Klerk initiated political change in South Africa, it does serve to show why Botha

could *not*; in short, Botha was constrained by aggressive and suspicious personality features, as well as a disdain for the needs of others and a lack of sensitivity to the social environment. The critical ingredient for successful reform in South Africa was its leaders' capacity to cooperate rather than compete with political rivals. De Klerk, with his cooperative nature, possessed exactly this quality. Millon describes this personality pattern as:

Disinclined to upset others, they [cooperative personalities] are willing to adapt their preferences to be compatible with those of others. Trusting others to be kind and thoughtful, they are also willing to reconcile differences and to achieve peaceable solutions, as well as to be considerate and to concede when necessary. Cordiality and compromise characterize their interpersonal relationships.

It appears to be the combination of de Klerk's cooperative characteristics with his deep-rooted, conscientious conventionalism (which allowed him to retain the trust of his constituency) that served as the key to South Africa's transformation. But de Klerk's personal disposition would have been of little consequence had it not been for compatible qualities on the part of Mandela, in whose cooperation ultimately lay the solution. Mandela, like de Klerk, emerged from my assessment as a predominantly conscientious personality with a conventional orientation and traditional values. Characterizing Mandela as conventional is a contradiction in terms only from the perspective of the "system" politics of the old order; from the perspective of "struggle" politics Mandela personified the liberation establishment and its cause. Moreover, Mandela never represented the radical wing of the struggle, and has a long track record as an advocate of moderation and restraint, as reflected in his famous statement from the dock on April 20, 1964, during the Rivonia trial in which he was sentenced to life imprisonment: "I have fought against white domination, and I have fought against black domination. I have cherished the ideal of a democratic and free society in which all persons live together in harmony and with equal opportunities. It is an ideal which I hope to live for, and to achieve. But if needs be, it is an ideal for which I am prepared to die." This conciliatory quality favored Mandela for his role in South Africa's transition. Ultimately, the transition from

white domination to majority rule moved much faster than expected. At least in part, the rapid unfolding of events in South Africa can be accounted for by Mandela's confident assertiveness. Millon (1994) describes this personality pattern as "Competitive, ambitious, and self-assured, they naturally assume positions of leadership, act in a decisive and unwavering manner, and expect others to recognize their special qualities and cater to them. Beyond being self-confident, those with an Asserting profile often are ... persuasive, having sufficient charm to win others over to their own causes and purposes." In summary, it appears that change in South Africa was driven by situational factors but given substance by the personal qualities of its leaders.

In psychological terms, Botha's aggressiveness, dogmatism, and arrogance were replaced by de Klerk's cooperativeness, pragmatism, flexibility, and sensitivity, complemented by compatible characteristics on the part of Mandela, with whom de Klerk chose to negotiate the future of South Africa. Had there been any substance to the prevailing white right-wing view that blacks constituted a threat in South Africa, that the liberation struggle formed part of a Communist-inspired "total onslaught" against civilized values, F. W. de Klerk would have been, from an Afrikaner-nationalist perspective, the worst possible leader for South Africa. As it happens, however, the needs of the average black South African are no different from those of the average white; among these, quite literally, are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. In retrospect, therefore, it is fortunate that the script for South Africa's transition to non-racial democracy could be co-written by a black moderate of unassailable stature and a rather conventional white conservative able to retain the trust of a significant proportion of the fearful white constituency, who had the insight to recognize the need for change, a conciliatory personal style, and the confident persistence to stay the course.

PHE: I find the discussion of Botha, de Klerk, and Mandela to be most interesting, but I also wonder how my conclusions would differ using the same primary sources. Thanks for an interesting exchange which I look forward to continuing.

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The Effects of Impeaching and Acquitting Johnson and Clinton

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The impeachments and acquittals of Andrew Johnson in 1868 and Bill Clinton in 1999 were different in several respects. First, and foremost, Johnson was more vulnerable than Clinton. He was elected Vice President in 1864 as a Southern Democrat who had supported the Union during the Civil War and became President in 1865 when the Republican President Lincoln was assassinated. In 1868 the Republicans, who saw Johnson as a pro-Southern betrayer of their ideals, had more than a two-thirds majority in the Senate and Johnson was acquitted by a single vote. The reason for impeachment was his official Presidential actions. One hundred and thirty-one years later in 1999, Clinton was serving his second elected term as President and the Republicans had a slim majority in Congress. The reason for impeachment was Clinton's private behavior.

The two impeachments and acquittals had important similarities. They were partisan actions by a Republican majority in Congress, attempting to punish and remove a Democratic President. Moral outrage and hatred of the President were expressed by the Congressional leaders of the impeachments. The legal basis was weak for both impeachments. The principal charge against Andrew Johnson was his defiance of the Tenure of Office Act, requiring the consent of Congress for him to replace a Cabinet minister. His opinion that the law was unconstitutional eventually was supported by a U. S. Supreme Court decision in 1926. The charges against Clinton were perjury and obstruction of justice. The purpose of these alleged crimes was to conceal private behavior that did not involve his Presidential duties.

The United States Constitution permits a majority of the House of Representatives to impeach and a two-thirds majority of the Senate to convict the President for "high crimes and

misdemeanors." A high crime and misdemeanor can be defined broadly. Congress therefore could remove a President because he advocates the policies of the opposing political party or because of objectionable personal behavior. The acquittal of Andrew Johnson established a precedent that the President should not be removed because of political disagreement. The acquittal of Clinton appears to have established a precedent that the President should not be removed because of personal sexual behavior.

The leaders of both impeachments expressed enormous hostility toward the President. Their irrationally fierce condemnation of the President's behavior is consistent with the information and discussion in Milburn and Conrad, *The Politics of Denial* (1996). The authors suggest that denial and displacement of childhood rage against punishment are important sources of punitive political policies.

Bowen in *Andrew Johnson and the Negro* (1989) and Trefousse in *Andrew Johnson: A Biography* (1989) have emphasized the racist effect of Andrew Johnson's effort to restore full citizenship to the Southern white leaders of secession. Johnson followed a policy of allowing the former slave owners to subjugate the Negroes and prevent most of them from voting. Despite the outrage of many Republicans at this policy and the policy of reconstruction, the Democrats forced the policies through for many decades. It is debatable whether harsher punishment of the leaders of secession and federal enforcement of Negro rights would have been better policies at that time. Andrew Johnson sincerely believed that the former slaves were not yet ready for full citizenship and that it was necessary to restore local control to the white leaders.

Grossly exaggerated moral outrage was also expressed by the leaders of the impeachment of Clinton. The purpose of his alleged perjury and obstruction of justice was to conceal private behavior that was publicized because of indiscreet behavior by Clinton and indiscreet talking by "that woman," Monica Lewinsky. His erotic activity with her was consensual and did not include sexual intercourse. She was a sexually experienced adult.

The principal reaction to the impeachment and acquittal of Andrew Johnson was a stronger and more unified Democratic Party. Prior to the Civil War, the Democrats were dominant in the South and a competitive minority in the North. The Southern states were disenfranchised

following the Civil War, resulting in a huge Republican majority in Congress in 1868. The threat to the Democratic President solidified an alliance between the Southern white Democrats and the Northern urban poor Democrats to cooperate in resisting the power of the predominantly Republican business and financial leaders. After Johnson's impeachment and acquittal, the alliance persisted for a longer time -- the Democrats continued to be dominant in the South until well after World War II.

Another reaction to the impeachment and acquittal of Andrew Johnson was a split in the Republican Party. Votes for acquittal by several Republican Senators prevented the Democratic President from being convicted and removed from office. After 1868, the Republican Party split into two factions, called the Stalwarts and Half-Breeds. A dissident group of reformist Republicans, called the Mugwumps, subsequently supported the Democratic reformer Cleveland. He was thereby elected President in 1884 and again in 1892.

In common with the reaction to the impeachment and acquittal of Andrew Johnson, a strengthened and unified Democratic Party is likely to be the principal reaction to the impeachment and acquittal of Clinton. This Democratic President has initiated some traditional Republican policies, such as "reinventing government", eliminating the federal budget deficit, and welfare reform. These Presidential programs are being accepted by most Democrats who represent liberal ideology and the interests of organized labor. The only prominent Democratic opponent of Gore in the election of

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2000 appears to be Bill Bradley, who agrees with Gore on most issues. A split in the Republican Party is another probable consequence of the impeachment and acquittal of Clinton. The impeachment was led by a group of moralistic Christian Republicans. Many Republican legislators were reluctant supporters of their action. The impeachment and acquittal of Clinton has widened the rift between these two Republican factions. A sign of the split in the Republican Party might be the competition for the Presidential nomination in 2000 by numerous Republicans with diverse ideological positions. The Democrats therefore have a great advantage in the election of 2000.

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The Mad American Contributor to the Oxford English Dictionary: Dr. William C. Minor

H. John Rogers
Psychohistory Forum Research Associate

Review of Simon Winchester, The Professor and the Madman: A Tale of Murder, Insanity and the Making of the Oxford English Dictionary. New York: Harper Collins, 1998. ISBN 0060175966, 242 pp., \$22.00.

The *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED), some 70 years in the making, is arguably the greatest single accomplishment in the English language and, thus, because of English's enormous vocabulary and vast literature, within the entire world of letters. This is not just because of the nearly half million words and definitions, but because of the lexicographers' self-imposed task of tracing the usage of each word back over the preceding centuries, creating a mini-anthology of the great masters of English literature. There are some 1.8 million of these quotations contained in the text. The total length of type for the whole OED -- all hand set -- is 178 miles!

At the beginning of the project, there was a call for volunteer readers to make their way through the books of a particular period of history and make word lists from what they had read. Readers were allowed to select from three basic choices: a) from 1250 to 1526, the year of the New English Testament; b) from then to 1674, the year of Milton's death; or c) from 1674 to the "present." Later, some of the volunteers would look

superspecifically for certain words that then interested the dictionary team.

Such a vast project with the most meager of resources could only be essayed by mad dogs and Englishmen. They planned to finance the project by interim sales of completed sections. It was akin to digging the Suez Canal with pick and shovel with the great bulk of the work being done by volunteer labor. Winchester says, "It was this kind of woefully naive underestimate -- of work, of time, of money -- that at first so hindered the dictionary's advance. No one had a clue what they were up against: They were marching blindfolded through molasses."

In the end the volunteers had submitted over 6 million slips of paper containing the "target word," the reference, and the full sentence that illustrated the use of the "target word." Thus, the *OED* might be said to be the collaborative work of a people, or at least of its intelligentsia. And a handful of "Yanks," including one U.S. Army Assistant Surgeon (Retired), Brevet Capt. William Chester Minor.

In the "Historical Introduction" to the *OED* there is a listing of something less than 200 names, persons who are denominated as the "principal readers." A handful of the names are followed by "the number of quotations sent in," e.g., Thomas Austin, 165,000, and William Douglas of London, 136,000 target words with one or more literary exemplars. (The readers on average submitted five sentences per word.) Midway through the list is the unadorned name of "Dr. W.C. Minor." Dr. Minor was a Yale-educated surgeon who had served as an officer in the American Civil War and who was presently receiving a disability pension from the U.S. government. Dr. Minor was, of course, a bibliophile, with an enormous private library, but he was also an accomplished flutist and painter (whose specialty was watercolor).

William Chester Minor was also possessed of voracious sexual appetites and his nightly visits to the "red light" district while stationed in New York were the cause of his later transfer to a remote military base. Similarly, when he moved to England, he located in Lambeth Marsh, a town just outside the legal jurisdiction of London and, the author says, "a site of revelry and abandon -- a place where public houses, brothels, and lewd theatres abounded, and where a man could find entertainment of all sorts ... for no more than a handful of pennies."

It was in Lambeth late one night that Dr. Minor in a hallucinatory rage pursued a total stranger down the street, firing at him three or four times before killing him. In 1872, a jury, without any formal deliberation, acquitted Dr. Minor by reason of insanity, and the judge ordered him detained "in safe custody ... until Her Majesty's Pleasure be known" in the Asylum for the Criminally Insane at Broadmore. In 1910, he was transferred to what is now St. Elizabeth's Hospital in Washington, DC. In 1919, a nephew had Dr. Minor transferred to a private hospital for the elderly insane in Hartford, where he died a year later at the age of 85 years, nine months.

Dr. Minor suffered from a clear-cut case of what today would be called paranoid schizophrenia. Although there were periods of quiescence, the condition persisted in florid detail until old age had sapped his physical and mental strength. After some 20 years at Broadmore, still beset by lustful thoughts, he "performed a deft penectomy upon himself with a sure cut from a pocket knife," after which he threw the offending member into the fire and then lay down to make sure there was no hemorrhaging. Dr. Minor used a small penknife that he was permitted to have to open bundles of books and slice quarto pages." There was almost no blood, but since he feared going into shock, he asked to be placed in the infirmary. Winchester, in a rare instance of "cuteness," borrows from Julius Caesar and entitles this chapter "The Unkindest Cut."

Throughout his life Dr. Minor was a voracious reader and, during his confinement, he regularly ordered books from dealers in both the United States and London. The murder committed by Dr. Minor left a widow and several small children behind. The U. S. Embassy solicited contributions for the family and a relative of Dr. Minor was an early donor. Subsequently, Dr. Minor himself made donations from his military pension. The widow expressed a desire to meet Dr. Minor and became a regular visitor, transporting books from London stores. In what is a clear flight of fancy, Winchester speculates that Dr. Minor's act of self-mutilation might have been the product of revulsion at his lust (fulfilled or unfulfilled) for the widow.

Despite -- or, some might argue, because of -- his mental condition, Dr. Minor for over 20 years was one of the leading contributors to the *OED*, both in the quantity and the quality of his selections. James Murray, the "Professor" of the

book's title and the *OED*'s primary editor, would write, "So enormous have been Dr. Minor's contributions during the past 17 or 18 years, that we could easily illustrate the last four centuries from his quotations alone." Murray visited Dr. Minor on numerous occasions and a strong friendship developed over the years.

Minor had few competitors among the other "readers." Surprisingly, another major contributor, Dr. Fitzedward Hall, was also a deranged (although not confined) American residing in England. He had been a Sanskrit professor at King's College in London and librarian of the India Office before he became a recluse in a small village in Suffolk. He corresponded daily with the *OED* editors for over 20 years, but never met with Murray. At the great "slap-up" dinner held in 1897, Dr. Hall declined an invitation. The only other major figure not in attendance was, for different reasons, Dr. Minor.

(Probably the closest parallel to Dr. Minor in the twentieth century is Robert Stroud, the famed "Birdman of Alcatraz." Confined to federal prison in Kansas, he committed a murder which functionally guaranteed that he would never be released. Stroud's temperament was such that he had to be kept in virtual isolation. He fed the birds that came to his window and over the years became a recognized expert on a certain variety of sparrow. His life, as it were, was the subject of a book and a film.)

John Kenneth Galbraith wrote in *The Affluent Society* that one of the things that troubled him about capitalism is that it took what were abominable human traits, e.g., greed, avarice, deception, competitiveness, and ruthlessness, and elevated them to the level of great virtues. Did something of the opposite happen with Dr. Minor? Did his mental condition -- "monomania" was the first diagnosis -- make his great work possible, or hinder it? Under the Galbraith thesis, a person who might be shunned in polite society ends up being a captain of industry and then, of course, is lionized by people who heretofore wouldn't have had him as a dinner guest. Similarly, a paranoid, suspicious person might be welcomed inside the confines of the CIA. Of course, in both of these examples, I am referring to traits and not clinical disorders. And it is most important that the trait or disorder mesh with the task.

Rather than pursuing his library for "interesting words" as most of the readers did, Dr. Minor concentrated on the fascicle, the revenue-

producing installment, currently being worked on. (Dr. Minor was one of the few readers who ranged over the whole body of literature when he was working on an assignment.) This desire to be on the social "cutting edge" is not generally thought to be a characteristic of paranoid schizophrenia. These people are generally focused on internally generated priorities. In point of fact, the traits that would seem to be of use to a "reader" are quite the opposite of those usually associated with Dr. Minor's basic disorder. The desirable traits would be what we regularly associate with an obsessive-compulsive personality, the sort of mental structure that would enable a person to passionately sort through tons of hay in the hope of that slender sliver of stainless steel. An ordinary person, through one compulsion or another, might search for an illustrative quotation, but this person would be like a Marxian "wage slave," toiling away with an eye on the clock, looking forward only to the coffee break or quitting time. In short, with most workers the reward for such toil is normally an extrinsic one.

A schizophrenic, wrapped up in self, might easily have ignored the call to systematize (rather than advance) learning, but a man who was already thoroughly immersed in wide reading could well have looked on this as an opportunity to "kill two birds with a single stone." When he saw the call for volunteers, he must have thought, as did thousands of other book lovers, "Why, that's right up my alley!" Since Dr. Minor was already reading a large number of books each week, making the occasional notation would not impose any hardship upon him.

More importantly, for a person possessed of obsessive-compulsive traits, this may have provided Dr. Minor with a social -- as opposed to a purely personal -- rationale for the reading that he was going to do anyway. Dr. Minor's other major pursuit during his confinement, onanism, -- he was a compulsive masturbator -- was a solitary one as well, so he doubtless rejoiced at the prospect of being able to share at least a portion of his pleasure with others who would appreciate his findings. Alfred North Whitehead said, "Shared experience is the greatest of all human joys." Certainly, the pleasure of reading a great book -- or finding an interesting word -- is compounded when one encounters someone else who also appreciates the book or thrills at the interesting word. Thus, Dr. Minor's reading was no longer merely for his own enjoyment but for Dr. Murray, the staff at the *OED*, and, ultimately, the English-speaking world.

If one concludes that an obsessive-compulsive trait was the quality that enabled Dr. Minor (and doubtless the rest of the "readers" as well) to engage in this long-term, tedious labor and to do so with minimal positive reinforcements, then it is quite clear that the derangement which lead to his confinement with its attendant hallucinations and paranoia would have hindered his lexicographical work.

Of course, the leisure time Dr. Minor had because of his confinement made possible the great quantity of his submissions. However, the way he liked to work -- searching for usages of a given word, as opposed to trolling for interesting words - generally meant that he was going through an enormous number of books just to produce the same number of usages. The number of pages that one would have to skim through to find, say, uses of the word "protagonist" (a word that gives the editors trouble, because of the implication from the Greek that an event could only have one), makes the enormity of Dr. Minor's specific labors apparent. He had to scan possibly hundreds of pages to find an appropriate usage of a word. Repeat this process tens of thousands of time and one has ~~an inkling of the labor that was entailed~~ in Dr. Minor's work product. The sustained focus and energy that this work would have required beggars the imagination. To perform this type of work over decades while delusional and paranoid (various people and entities were seeking to kill him) is akin to a chronic asthmatic winning a medal in the Olympic marathon. He is clearly a brother of those who forego earthly pleasure for the hope of heaven. Dr. Minor's name may or not appear in the Lamb's Book of Life, but it does appear in the *OED*, which is no mean accomplishment. (His parents were missionaries in the South Sea islands and, after a long period as an atheist, he appears to have become a deist in his latter years.)

Thus it would seem clear that, but for his basic handicaps, Dr. Minor could conceivably have been able to have provided a vast number of the quotations in the *OED* by himself. Thus, except for the great vistas of unstructured time that his confinement provided him, Dr. Minor's work could only have been hindered by schizophrenia, just as a real paranoiac would have been a detriment to the operations of the CIA.

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Mothers and Their Legacies: Their Psychohistorian Daughters

Hanna Turken

Psychohistory Forum Research Associate

The aim of this project is to determine if there is a significant relationship between my mother's psychological life experience, her influence in my psychological development, and my choice of looking at human functioning as the product of psychological and historical components.

There are sides to my mother's personality that I, to this day and after years of analysis, have not been able to integrate. What analysis helped me to do was accept the incongruities in her makeup and let go of my need to make it all fit into a harmonious whole. Her name, Rozi (Roszshee), which is Hungarian for Rose and the name my father always called her, went very well with two of my childhood perceptions of her: as a lighthearted, happy person with a bubbly waterfall laughter; and as a light, creamy, puffy Viennese pastry, which she love to bake. She was the epitome of the middle class genteel woman. To me, and I think to others, she was a beautiful woman. She had delicate features, jet black hair and porcelain skin. And she was elegant.

She was born in 1908 in Kalasa, Transylvania, a town that was originally part of Romania but later became part of Hungary. She was the youngest of 11 children, born to an upper middle class family. The story goes that my grandmother, orphaned at an early age, was brought up in a baron's home. My grandfather was the son of upper middle class landowners who lived off their cattle and produce. He aspired to be a politician or a rabbi but accomplished neither. There are two significant events in my mother's early memories: one was her almost being kidnapped by a Gypsy woman; the other was moving to Budapest. The former left her with a fear of strangers; the latter expanded her life and helped bring out a sense of determinism. I have lived with these two opposite messages, fear and

determinism, all of my life, and I think they are the essence of my need to clarify and make sense of all psychological experience. Another influential component in my psychological development has been my mother's vagueness about her family history. Why did my grandfather give up the land? Why did he move the family to Budapest? Was there a personal reason? A political reason relating to World War I? Or was it anti-Semitism?

My mother talks of her life until the death of her mother when she was 15 as having been spoiled by her parents and by her siblings. She acquired a sort of little princess syndrome. The death of her mother, I believe, woke her up to some of the realities of life; but it also fixated her to an adolescent mode of integrating experiences which she never quite managed to give up. Four years after her mother's death, her father died. By then my mother had begun to establish herself as a legal secretary-researcher. She had toyed with the idea of studying law, but when her father died she went to Prague to stay with her older sister and remained there for a year. During her stay she met my father, who was a mechanical engineering student at the University of Prague. My parents' courtship continued in Budapest where my father's family also lived. My mother was quite taken with my father, a strikingly handsome blond, blue-eyed, intellectual man, 12 years older than she. Having been a prisoner of war in Russia when he fought with the Hungarian army, he had come to university late. He loved to tell the story of how he escaped from the Russian camp dressed as a Russian peasant. He had been assigned to kitchen duty, which gave him more freedom of movement in the camp, and a greater opportunity to learn the language. According to my mother she was warned by my paternal grandmother that she should think carefully about dating my father, that his war experience and the increasing anti-Semitism at the University of Prague had turned him into a moody, angry man. My grandmother thought my mother to be too sweet and too vulnerable to tolerate my father's moods. I guess they did not foresee my mother's inherent resolve.

After graduation from the University of Prague, my father's closest friend, a classmate, had left to work in Mexico. It was he who found my father a job with the petroleum industry in Monterrey, Mexico, which my father accepted because of the anti-Semitism he encountered in Prague. He was so intent on leaving Europe that my mother was not at this point included in his

plans. He was going to leave Europe without her. But she didn't let him, strong willed as she was. She bought her own ticket for the same trip and sailed with him. The story is that they got married on the boat. They arrived in Monterrey on March 31, 1931. My brother was born the following January.

My mother did not take well to the Mexican climate or the food and she was often sick. She knew nothing about cooking or housekeeping. My oldest sister was born several years later. I was born five years after my sister, under dire circumstances for my mother. The nationalization of the petroleum industry had taken place. All foreign businesses were confiscated and had to dismiss all foreign-born employees. My father was out of work for a few years. Our family was barely staying afloat. To make matters worse my mother had contracted trichinosis while pregnant with me. She could not digest any foods and was extremely weak. The doctors did not think we would survive. But we both did. She recuperated and I was strong. She told the story from time to time of how much she had suffered during her pregnancy and how her hair turned gray. Throughout my childhood and early adolescence I carried the psychological burden of having damaged my mother. This in fact became a very strong component in my need to help others work through the internalized psychic distortions of their childhood perceptions. A month after my birth, we moved to Mexico City and the situation improved. My father found work and my mother came in contact with a large Hungarian community, where she met her best friend until the end of their lives. This woman ran a bridge club as a business, which provided my mother with a social life in which she thrived. Often hosting dinner parties at our home, my mother earned a reputation as an excellent cook and baker. Three more children were born after me, two girls and a boy.

Growing up, my experience was quite different from my siblings. Five years difference between my older sister and myself, and four years difference between myself and the next, made me feel at times like an only child. Of all the children I was the only one to have my father's full attention. Because my mother was recovering from her illness he took it upon himself to be mother and father to me, at least for the first three years of my life. He loved to tell the story of how he would warm up my bath water in the sun until it was just the right temperature. Indeed a very

strong special bond existed between the two of us. We lived then in a house opposite Chapultepec Park. I remember the walks in the Park he and I took alone. He would point out things such as bird nests and ant mounds. When I was older he took me on trips with his mountain climbing club.

Just prior to my entering elementary school we moved to a less populated area of Mexico City not too far from the cement manufacturing plant where my father worked. He was in charge of production. The house we lived in was designed and built by my father. I was not happy there. My father was always busy and we lived behind locked gates. I wanted Chapultepec Park back and the freedom it provided. I wanted to escape my mother's over-protectiveness. She also seemed sad. It was not until much later that I learned that it was the developments in Europe that were causing her so much distress. Two of her sisters and their families had been sent to concentration camps and had been killed. A musician cousin of mine, during a concert tour in Russia, disappeared without a trace. My mother began to have chronic headaches. Often she would ask me to rub her neck and shoulders. She claimed that I was the only one who was able to relieve her pain. I guess it was the healer in me beginning to emerge. Towards the end of elementary school I went through a tomboy period. My thoughts were of becoming a doctor or a scientist, maybe another Madam Curie. My mother was also changing. While my father worked she ran a business manufacturing welding rod that my father had started in an area behind the house. I think they were both worried about economic stability. She was actually quite good at the business. With total fascination I would watch her cut the wire and dip it into the welding mixture. She also took to raising her own geese which she hand fed.

In my last year of the baccalaureate in biology I was advised by my psychology teacher to consider a career in psychology instead, for which he thought I was better suited. My friends apparently thought the same. They nicknamed me "Doctora Corazon," which was the title of an advice column in a major Mexico City newspaper. But I was unreceptive. My identification with my father and the interest he developed in me for the natural sciences was stronger. During this period my mother seemed to me immature, nonintellectual, and unable to meet my developmental needs. She wanted me to be more feminine, to find a rich boyfriend and security. Yet

she was very proud of my scholastic accomplishments. Again the incongruities. During my first year at the University of Mexico my parents and my three younger siblings went to live in Israel. This was my father's idea. He requested and got a job managing the cement production at a manufacturing plant outside of Tel Aviv. I came to New York to live with my older sister, who had married a New Yorker, and enrolled in Brooklyn College. My mother found it very difficult to adjust to a new culture, nor did she like living there without her older children. A year-and-a-half later my parents came to the United States. Six months later my father died.

During my last year at Brooklyn College I changed my major to psychology. It seemed a very natural thing to do. A combination of psychology and the natural sciences matched my needs. I actually graduated with a BS in psychology and not a BA. I believe that the components that went into making this decision were maturational, the product of further integrating who my parents were. The microbiology lab just seemed too arid all by itself. In many ways it was representational of my father's tendencies to isolate himself. My need to investigate and get to the meaning of things comes from my father; my need to interact and make contact with others derives from my mother. It was through my social work and psychoanalytic experience that I was able to complete the integration of my intellectual father and my feeling mother. One can say that my mother provided me with the fertile emotional inner ground and my father provided the world of facts and ideas. My mother was home base; my father, the world outside.

I bring to my clinical work the integration of the developmental experience with my parents, my social environment, and the historical events of my own time. As I practice it, psychoanalysis is an inter-subjective experience. That which resonates within myself is my patients' projected subjectivity. His or her subjectivity, like mine, is composed of the developmental experience with his or her own parents, the social environment, and the historical events that impacted on them. It is this understanding that shades the interpretative work, which in turn is therapeutic. Each individual has his or her very specific brand of psychohistorical experience and it is this understanding between us that reshapes their subjective and objective reality within the

therapeutic setting.

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**In Memoriam:
Dr. Judith Kestenberg
A Child of
Non-Survivors of the
Nazi Holocaust**

**Eva Fogelman
CUNY Graduate School**

On January 16, 1999, Judith Silberpfennig Kestenberg, age 88, died after a prolonged illness. Dr. Kestenberg, a boundlessly energetic psychoanalyst, endowed the field of psychohistory with a rich legacy. She was devoted to the well-being of children, adults who were traumatized as youngsters, and the children of persecuted parents - the group known as the "second generation."

Childhood encounters and a later traumatic family history were significant factors in molding Dr. Kestenberg's professional drive and interests. In the aftermath of World War I, Judith Kestenberg's mother convinced Judith's father to establish a separate orphanage for the very young among the children in their city of Tarnov, Poland. A young, latency-age Judith accompanied her mother on frequent visits to the orphanage, and Judith was forever changed by these outings.

After studying neurology and psychiatry in Vienna in the 1930s, Judith Kestenberg immigrated to the United States in 1937 to continue her training at Bellevue, and to study child analysis at the New York Psychoanalytic Institute. When Poland was invaded by Germany in 1939, Dr. Kestenberg began sending food packages to her parents. In this she was joined by husband Milton, whose family was also trapped in occupied Poland. The Kestenbergs appealed to the State Department, to no avail, to allow their parents to find refuge in America. Milton's father and sister survived;

Judith's parents did not. The details of Judith's parents' ordeal would not be discovered until the mid-1980s when her own denial broke down, and she confronted her identity as that of a child of non-survivors. Her father was murdered in a mass killing prior to deportation and her mother was killed in Auschwitz.

Dr. Kestenberg was not only a theoretician and a clinician, but also an applied social scientist. Kestenberg's early pioneering work focused on psychosexual stages and on the uniqueness of female sexual development. Among her contributions is the discovery of an inner genital stage. In the early 1970s, Dr. Kestenberg established Child Development Research, a parent-child center in Roslyn, Long Island, which served as a preventative mental health facility, and which was a laboratory for constructing the Kestenberg Movement Profile, a systematic method to measure parent-child interaction and to assess personality structure of infants through body language, which could be used to detect emotional problems. The parent-child center has been replicated in many places, and the Kestenberg Movement Profile is widely used.

In a different vein, in the late 1960s several members of the American Psychoanalytic Association started a study group on the psychological effects of the Nazi Holocaust on the children of survivors. Kestenberg became the secretary of the group and was instrumental in lobbying the American Psychoanalytic Association to include it as a formal study group of the Association. In addition, Dr. Kestenberg, along with Martin Bergmann and Milton Jucovy, organized a study group that met monthly to discuss psychoanalytic cases of children of Holocaust survivors. These monthly discussions resulted in the landmark book, *Generations of the Holocaust* (1992). Kestenberg coined the term "transposition" to explain how children of Holocaust survivors live in a time tunnel -- in their own way they experience pain and suffering and in their own way relive their parents' trauma. Most significantly, the group emphasized the importance of knowing the details of the family's social trauma and of the collective history in order to make interpretations that are appropriate. Given what is known today, it is difficult to conceive that such a concept was revolutionary for its time.

In 1981, Judith Kestenberg embarked on a quest to interview as many child survivors of the Nazi Holocaust as was possible. With a shoestring

budget and with a cadre of volunteers, she managed to interview 1,500 adults on four continents. Dr. Kestenberg and her late husband did not travel anywhere without arranging for a few interviews each day. In Eastern Europe, some of the interviewees acknowledged for the first time that they were Jewish. The Kestenbergs organized meetings, and more formal group sessions, for the child survivors, and led a long-term therapy group in New York. These meetings eventually developed into local, national, and international organizations that continue to meet regularly. Dr. Kestenberg helped child survivors of the Holocaust find an identity that was previously denied to them. Children had been told, "What do you remember?" and they would add, "Since you cannot remember, how can you be affected?" Dr. Kestenberg understood differently. She developed a kinesthetic way for child survivors to recount their past and encouraged her interviewees to express themselves artistically. She organized art exhibits, poetry readings, and lecture series. Dr. Kestenberg lectured, trained professionals, and was a prolific writer. Among her edited books are the German version of *Generations of the Holocaust* (with Martin Bergmann and Milton Jucovy), *Children During the Nazi Reign: Psychological Perspective on the Interview Process* (with Eva Fogelman, 1994), *The Last Witness: The Child Survivor of the Holocaust* (with Ira Brenner, 1996), and *Children Surviving Persecution: An International Study of Trauma and Healing* (with Charlotte Kahn, 1998). She wrote two Holocaust books for children in German and her early seminal work was published in *Sexuality, Body Movement and the Rhythms of Development* (1995).

Judith Kestenberg will forever be my inspiration that it is never too late, and one is never too old to embark on a new adventure or learn something new. In her eighties she learned how to lead psychotherapy groups, and how to sing. She improved her Hebrew, she went to synagogue, and she wrote children's books. A dancer at heart, Judith Kestenberg was really a choreographer. Bringing together people, teaching them new steps, and giving them direction and guidance were what she was best at. And, always, she emphasized the need to "Practice, practice, practice."

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Holocaust and Related Traumas Program of the Training Institute for Mental Health; a Research Associate of the Child Development Research Program; and a Psychohistory Forum Research Associate. Dr. Fogelman's publications include Conscience and Courage: Rescuers of Jews During the Holocaust (1994).

[Editor's Note: As a beginning psychoanalytic candidate in 1973, I audited lectures in Judith Kestenberg's National Psychological Association for Psychoanalysis (NPAP) course on the treatment of children and came away in awe of this dynamic little woman. Years later I helped her organize panels on the children of the Holocaust at the International Psychohistorical Association and still later was delighted when she became a member of the Psychohistory Forum. My only regret is that Judith Kestenberg's decline in health made it impossible for her to be interviewed as a featured scholar in these pages. It is fitting that Eva Fogelman, who will be carrying on much of her work, wrote her obituary for our publication. As Director of the Forum, I would like to thank Eva Fogelman, Flora Hogman, Charlotte Kahn, and Janet Kestenberg for speaking at our April 24 Memorial to Judith Kestenberg prior to Dr. Hogman's presentation on a related subject.] □

In Memoriam: **William J. Gilmore (1945-1999)**

Paul H. Elovitz
Ramapo College of New Jersey

William J. Gilmore-Lehne died suddenly of a massive coronary on March 19, 1999. Gilmore was a founding faculty member and associate professor of history at Stockton College of New Jersey. In addition to many other contributions to knowledge, he was also one of the unheralded founders of the organized field of psychohistory who introduced psychobiography into his University of Virginia dissertation on Orestes Brownson.

In the field of psychohistory, Gilmore was best known for hosting the first national conference of psychohistorians at Stockton in 1976 and for publishing *Psychohistorical Inquiry: A Comprehensive Research Bibliography* (1984). This book contains more than 4,000 items and is described by Henry Lawton in *The Psychohistorian's Handbook* (1988) as "a gold

mine for all sorts of [early] psychohistorical material" with "thoughtful and fair" annotations. In addition, from 1972-1975, he co-edited the *Group for the Use of Psychology in History Newsletter (GUPH Newsletter)*, with responsibility for the critical bibliography section. When this publication in 1976 became *The Psychohistory Review*, he assumed similar responsibilities and served as a member of its Editorial Board from 1985 until his death. This enthusiastic man was a dedicated bibliophile, who shared bibliographic and other knowledge in a variety of articles, mostly in the *GUPH Newsletter* and *The Psychohistory Review*.

My first recollection of Bill Gilmore is at the Stockton psychohistorical conference in 1976 when he was organizing an exciting meeting involving colleagues from many disciplines and intellectual approaches to our field. He was a bright, lively pioneer psychohistorian with strong opinions. For several years in the late 1970s, I also knew him as an ambivalent attendee of the Institute for Psychohistory Saturday Workshop seminars that I co-chaired. His ambivalence stemmed from contradictory desires: On the one hand, he liked meeting regularly with others in pursuit of the paradigm of combining psychology with history and, on the other hand, he considered the direction the Institute was taking to be unhistorical.

Gilmore was a dedicated teacher with a strong interest in media sources and many areas of research. Since 1995, he was on the Editorial Advisory Board of *Studies in Print Culture and the History of the Book* of the University of Massachusetts Press. Though the greater part of his contributions is in areas other the psychohistory, his contributions to the early development of our field are noteworthy and much appreciated. Professor Gilmore was the recipient of numerous grants and fellowships including a Fulbright Fellowship in Thailand and two National Endowment of the Arts Fellowships.

Among the unpublished documents that Gilmore's untimely death left behind is a manuscript on the psychohistory of the "Manson Family," extracts from which **Clio's Psyche** will consider publishing. We want to express our condolences to his widow, Lisa Lehne-Gilmore and their three children. Lisa kindly provided us with added information for this notice and the name of one of her late husband's Web sites, *Clio's Digital Forge*. □

***In Memoriam:* Robert Chaikin**

Paul H. Elovitz

On April 19, Robert Chaikin of Atlanta, Georgia, was killed instantly at the age of 52 in an auto accident. An occasional member of the Psychohistory Forum, Chaikin was an active member of the IPA and of the Group for the Psychohistorical Understanding of Film. His publications included an article on the film *King Kong* in the *Psychoanalytic Review*. His most recent project was on professional wrestling to understand it as a theater of ritual group fantasy.

Chaikin, who worked as a social worker, was a Harvard undergraduate when he was diagnosed with schizophrenia. Despite his struggle with his illness, Robert finished his bachelor's degree at Hunter and then his MSW. His psychological struggle meant that he sometimes was unable to fulfill his professional obligations as a scheduled presenter at the IPA. In part due to Henry Lawton's generous phone therapy with him, Chaikin was able to attend psychohistorical conferences in Amsterdam and Paris in 1997 and 1998, and was planning to go to Europe again this year.

Robert was single and there are no immediate survivors. I am indebted to Anne Deble, leader of his schizophrenia support group, for providing information for this notice. □

Bulletin Board

The next **SATURDAY WORK-IN-PROGRESS WORKSHOPS** seminar is scheduled for September 18. **ANNOUNCEMENTS:** **Clio's Psyche** is pleased to announce the creation of the position of Internet Co-ordinator and the appointment of **Stan Pope** to fill it. **CONFERENCES AND SCHOLARLY**

Call for Nominations

for the

Best of Clio's Psyche

By July 1, please list your favorite articles, interviews, and Special Issues (no more than three in each category) and send the information to the Editor (see page 3) for the August publication.

ACTIVITIES: Andrew Rolle of the Huntington Library gave a May 20 lecture, "Revisiting Freud's Rat Man Case" at the Southern California Psychoanalytic Institute. Charles Meyers and Norman Simms are producing an anthology of essays on the Marranos/Crypto-Jews in Europe and the New World colonies during the 15th through 17th centuries and are welcoming submissions until December 1, 1999. For information, e-mail <nsimms@waikato.ac.nz>. The Center for Millennial Studies at Boston University in conjunction with the American Studies Department at Brandeis University will accept abstracts of papers until July 1 for a conference, New World Orders: Millennialism in the Western Hemisphere, on November 7-9, 1999. Contact Beth Forrest of the **Center for Millennial Studies** at Boston University at (617) 358-0226 or <cms@mille.org>.

Professional Opportunities: The **Center for the Study of Mind and Human Interaction**, University of Virginia School of Medicine, is looking for a new Director who should have either a MD or a PhD in Clinical Psychology. Check their Web site at <<http://hsc.virginia.edu/csmhi/>> for details. The **Austin Riggs Erikson Institute Center** Directorship is available to an interdisciplinary /psychoanalytic scholar/administrator. Contact the Center in Stockbridge, MA.

NEW MEMBER: Welcome to **Maria Miliora**. **HONORS:** On May 6, **Paul Elovitz** was one of a few Ramapo College faculty members selected by the student members to be inducted into the Omicron Delta Kappa National Leadership Honor Society. **OUR THANKS:** To our members and friends for the support which makes **Clio's Psyche** possible. To Benefactors Herbert Barry and Ralph Colp; Patrons H. John Rogers and Jacques Szaluta; Supporting Members Anonymous, Mary Lambert, Peter Loewenberg, and Hanna Turken; and Contributing Members David Beisel, Ted Goertzel, Aubrey Immelman, Maria Miliora, and Rita Ransohoff. Our thanks for thought-provoking materials to Herbert Barry, Mark Bernheim, David Beisel, Dan Dervin, Eva Fogelman, Sander Gilman, Betty Glad, Steve Horowitz, Aubrey Immelman, John Knapp, Ruth Liberman, Roy Merrens, H. John Rogers, Ralph Seliger, and Hanna Turken. Thanks for proofreading to Anna Lentz and Brian McQuade.

□

Next Psychohistory Forum Meeting
Saturday, January 30, 1999
Charles Strozier
"Putting the Psychoanalyst on the Couch: A
Biography of Heinz Kohut"

Call for Papers
Special Theme Issues
1999 and 2000

- The Relationship of Academia, Psychohistory, and Psychoanalysis (March, 1999)
- The Psychology of Legalizing Life [What is this???
- Psychogeography
- Meeting the Millenium

Forthcoming in the March Issue
Special Theme:
**The Relationship of Academia,
Psychohistory, and
Psychoanalysis**

Additional papers are still being accepted. Contact the Editor -- see page 71.

Also:

- Interview with Arthur Mitzman, author of *The Iron Cage: An Historical Interpretation of Max Weber*
- Ralph Colp, Jr.'s Review of Vadim Z. Rogovin, *1937: Stalin's Year of Terror*

Call for Nominations
Halpern Award
for the
Best Psychohistorical Idea
in a
Book, Article, or Computer Site

This Award may be granted at the level of Distinguished Scholar, Graduate, or Undergraduate.

To Join the Psychohistory List
send e-mail with any subject and message to
<psychohistory-subscribe-request
@home.ease.lsoft.com>

Letters to the Editor

The History of Psychohistory

Clio's Psyche's interviews of outstanding psychohistorians (see "An American in Amsterdam: Arthur Mitzman," page 146) 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, letters, and manuscripts as well as volunteers to help with the interviewing. People interested in participating should write, call, or e-mail Paul H. Elovitz (see page 119).

Awards and Honors

Professor Janice M. Coco, Art History, University of California-Davis, American Psychoanalytic Association Committee on Research and Special Prize, will present her paper, "Exploring the Frontier from the Inside Out," at a free public lecture at 12 noon, Saturday, December 20, Jade Room, New York City.

Award for the Best Psychohistorical Idea • The Psychohistory Forum is pleased to award Michael Hirohama of San Francisco for starting and maintaining the Forum's mailing list (see page 98).

Student Award • David Barry of Fair Lawn, New Jersey, has been awarded membership in the Forum, including a subscription to **Clio's Psyche**, for his part of the Makers of the Psychohistorical Paradigm Research Project.

Forthcoming in the March Issue

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Also:

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Next Psychohistory Forum Meeting

Psychohistory Forum Presentations

September 27

George Victor on Hitler's Masochism

November 15

Michael Flynn, "Apocalyptic Hope — Apocalyptic Thinking"

Call for Papers

THE MAKERS OF PSYCHOHISTORY RESEARCH PROJECT

To write the history of psychohistory, the Forum is interviewing the founders of our field to create a record of their challenges and accomplishments. It welcomes participants who will help identify, interview, and publish accounts of the founding of psychohistory.

Call for Nominations

THE MAKERS OF PSYCHOHISTORY RESEARCH PROJECT

Independent Variable of 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						USA				

year's subscription to Clio's Psyche free. Help us spread the good word about Clio.

The Psychohistory Forum is pleased to announce

The Young Psychohistorian 1998/99 Membership Awards

John Fanton recently received his medical degree and is doing his five year residency in Providence, Rhode Island. Currently, he is at the Children's Hospital, Women and Infants Hospital, and the Butler Psychiatric Hospital. His goal is to become a child maltreatment expert working in the area of Preventive Psychiatry. At the IPA in 1997 he won the Lorenz Award for his paper on improving parenting in Colorado.

Albert Schmidt is a doctoral candidate in modern European history at Brandeis University who plans to defend his dissertation in April when his advisor, Rudolph Binion, will return from Europe for the occasion. Rather than do a biography of SS General Reinhard Heydrich as originally intended, he is writing on the German protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia under Heydrich's dominance. In the last four years this talented young scholar has been awarded nine fellowships, grants, or scholarships.

Dreamwork Resources

The **Historical Dreamwork Method** is available to help the biographer better understand the dreams of the subject and other aspects of psychobiography. **Clio's Psyche** welcomes papers on historical dreamwork for publication and for presentation at Psychohistory Forum meetings. Contact Paul H. Elovitz (see page 43).

☆☆☆

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Also:

- Interview with Arthur Mitzman, author of *The Iron Cage: An Historical Interpretation of Max Weber*

- Having previously chickened out of the

Letters to the Editor

military, he demoralized it by integrating

homosexuals into it. He disarmed the

Call for Nominations Halpern Award for the Best Psychohistorical Idea in a Book, Article, or Computer Site

This Award may be granted at the level of Distinguished Scholar, Graduate, or Undergraduate.

American People with the Brady Bill.

Call for Papers Special Theme Issues 1999 and 2000

- The Relationship of Academia, Psychohistory, and Psychoanalysis (March, 1999)
- Our Litigious Society
- PsychoGeography
- Meeting the Millennium
- Manias and Depressions in Economics and Society

Contact the Editor at

Next Psychohistory Forum Meeting

Saturday, January 30, 1999

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"Putting the Psychoanalyst on the Couch: A Biography of Heinz Kohut"

Letters to the Editor on
Clinton-Lewinsky-Starr

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**Additional Articles
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The Psychology of
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Forthcoming in the June Issue

- Interview with a Distinguished Featured Psychohistorian
- "The Insane Author of the *Oxford*

**Call for Papers
Special Theme Issues
1999 and 2000**

- Our Litigious Society
 - PsychoGeography
 - Meeting the Millennium
 - Manias and Depressions in Economics and Society
 - The Psychology of America as the World's Policeman
 - Truth and Reconciliation in South Africa
- 600-1500 words**

Contact

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