Clio’s Psyche
Understanding the “Why” of Culture, Current Events, History, and Society

The Psychology of Terror and Terrorism
Special Issue

Psychohistorical Interviews:
Fisher and Elovitz

Putin’s Fulfillment of Russian History

Mad Men as Nostalgia

Psychohistorical Poetry

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The Psychology of Terror and Terrorism Special Issue

Death Anxiety, Murder-Suicide, and the Impact of the News

Paul H. Elovitz—Ramapo College of New Jersey

There is an enormous amount of death anxiety in the contemporary world, despite an extraordinary extension of human life in terms of numbers and length. Despite the ravages of the wars in the first half of the 20th century, according to the United Nations the world population has grown from an estimated 1.7 billion people in 1900 to over 7.2 billion people today (http://www.un.org/esa/population/publications/sixbillion/sixbilpart1.pdf). The National Research Council reported that, in the United States, life expectancy has risen from 47.9 years for men and 50.7 years for women in 1900 to 75.1 years for men and 80.2 years for women today (http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK62373/). This trend was mirrored in many other industrialized nations in the 20th and 21st centuries.

The paradox of increasing anxiety about death and an unprecedented period of life extension can be explained by a number of factors, but for the purposes of this essay I will focus on two of them. One way of dealing with the anxiety regarding the inevitability of death is to commit suicide, thus gaining a measure of control over death by choosing the time and place. Secondly, the development of modern communications brings the bad news of the world to our ears, eyes, and fingertips as never before. When death was so much more prevalent in the daily lives of people through loss in childbirth and high rates of infant mortality in a child’s first vulnerable years, death came as a more normal, though regrettable, part of life. Similarly, the death of older people was taken as a given.

Today we have this massive extension of life but incredibly higher expectations in terms of standards of living and length of longevity. We also have the realization that there’s far more suicide that occurs in society than we ever wanted to acknowledge. According to suicide.org, the U.S.’s suicide rate has grown 60% in the past 45 years, to the current rate of 16 suicides per 100,000 people. Since statistics are such a modern phenomenon, it is very diffi-
cult to come up with reliable statistics regarding historical comparisons in terms of suicide. When taking an English historical demography course in graduate school, I was struck by how many suicides of older people were recorded in the parish registers. The explanation offered by the professor was that older people (by their standards, not ours) felt useless and did not want to be a burden or dependent on their children.

So how do we explain the phenomenon of suicidal murder in our modern world? Where does death anxiety fit into this picture? After discussing the function of the news, I will delve into these issues. NEWS, an acronym for north, east, west, and south represents our listening for the dangers of our world. When our ancestors began their day by looking out from the relative safety of their perch in trees or mountainous caves, they wanted to know what dangers would face them from all directions. They could gauge the relative safety of stepping down into their world. The news is geared to the dangers that exist. Of course, if it is only danger, danger, danger in all directions, then the viewer and listener of the news becomes desensitized and, in a sense, immunized against paying attention. This is why amidst all the negativity in news there will be a heartwarming story of a cute baby, animal or something else that’s warm and fuzzy. These generalizations are focused on the general impact of the media, not the specialized media programs for people who are geared to a particular business, industry, or sport. Of late, the focus on news bringing danger is diluted by the newer phenomenon of “entertainment news,” which breaks up the suffering and dangers of the world with gossip, sports, and a focus on celebrities.

Whereas in earlier times people had to deal with the bad news impacting their family and village, today it is the bad news of the entire universe which is brought to them by the marvel of modern electronics. (It is not quite the entire universe, since people in the news business know that if there is little connection to the suffering groups, for example those who have suffered and died in the Congo over the last 30 years, then showing the bodies of dead Congolese will have far more limited viewers than will the pictures of suffering people who are easier to relate to for the viewers.) The news adds a level of fantasy and disconnect between the reality of death and what we see on TV. Adolescences and young men appear to be especially prone to confuse violent fantasies with reality.

When on March 24, 2015 Andreas Lubitz, a German co-
pilot, flew 149 other people to their deaths in the Pyrenees, anyone who has flown in a plane or plans or hopes to can relate to this sense of vulnerability. Yet why did this young German feel the need to take others with him in his suicide? In our celebrity culture, did he feel the need to be remembered? Was he in a manic phrase of the depression for which he had been treated? Did losing his commercial pilot’s license appear to be a type of death to him? There are some hints as to his motivation that have been revealed, but I doubt that we will ever have a definitive answer. The phenomenon of the “lonely suicide” is one that has puzzled me for a long time. Clearly, some people kill themselves when life becomes unbearable, but why do a few of them feel the need to have companions in their death? When these companions are unwittingly joining a suicidal murderer in death, it is especially troublesome.

Murder-suicides are most associated in my consciousness and that of most people I know with domestic acts of violence and Islamic fundamentalists in the Middle East. Both forms of terrorism clearly seem to be encouraged by the bad news of such atrocities being committed elsewhere. Those involved in terrorist suicides in the Middle East and Afghanistan are likely to be drawn or forced into it because of the ravages of war and the impact of extremist religion. Immigrants and the children of immigrants from Islamic countries are sometimes torn between their new country and their old culture, and in the search for adventure can be drawn to terrorist groups like ISIS (ISIL). Those in the West performing individual acts of terrorism are more inclined to be based on what the French sociologist Emile Durkheim (1858-1917) called anomie, a lack of clear moral standards leading some individuals, especially young men, to kill themselves.

Many domestic acts of murder-suicide may be disguised since the suicide is by the police. Since the suicide is by the police trained to shoot to kill, police are only too accommodating when the group I call cowardly suicides commit acts of mayhem so that they will either feel there is no way of avoiding death at their own hands or by the bullets of the police. The gun lobby and conservatives are quick to denounce President Obama or any political opponents who dare to speak for gun control on the grounds that they are “politicizing” the tragedies of the victims, their families, and communities. The high rate of gun violence is definitely political, since public safety is the first responsibility of our President and our political leaders in general. Murder-suicides are likely to be domestic
with death by friends and family, typically on the weekend, but these usually make the local news instead of national, as pointed out by one of my students. This is precisely because we do not like to think about the danger posed by our friends, family, and ourselves—in America, suicide is a much greater danger than homicide.

The search for adventure for many young people in the West, not all Muslim, leads them to volunteer to fight for ISIS, which offers such simplistic solutions to the problems of our world. ISIS represents the safe “other” and can be feared and hated without having to change American policies on gun ownership. ISIS is an apocalyptic religion offering its adherents a chance for a cleansing rebirth in the face of a complex world in which tradition and gender roles are being questioned by the images of modern society, which increasingly shows women as equals to men and even leaders with their own emotional and sexual desires and needs. This is very unsettling to people whose societies have been destabilized by new possibilities following George W. Bush’s invasion of Iraq.

Fantasies about death abound and can inspire leaders who create death cults. Hitler, orphaned by the death of his father at age 13 and mother when he was 18, was born into a family where his father’s first two wives and his mother’s first three children had all died prior to him, as did his younger brother, Edmund, when he was 11. He focused on “glorious deaths” of Wagnerian operas and turned Nazi Germany and much of Europe into a death culture that devoured Jews, Poles, Ukrainians, Russians, and ultimately, Germans by the millions. Although before his final suicide he was reported to have tried to kill himself after the Beer Hall Putsch, it took the destruction of his fantasy of symbolically bringing his mother back to life in the “Motherland” for him to finally pull the trigger (see Rudolf Binion, Hitler Among the Germans, 1976).

Death anxiety leads some people, especially a comparatively few young men, to embrace suicide and even murder-suicide, and it is exacerbated by the rapid dissemination of bad news in our global society. Although in the end death is a solitary affair, there are some among us who seek to involve others in their own demise.

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Why the Suicide Bomber?

Joyce M. Rosenberg—Private Psychoanalytic Practice

Psychoanalysts, sociologists, journalists, and others have struggled for decades to answer the question “why” after suicide bombings. The answers have filled papers and books, many written after the September 11, 2001 attacks in which 19 men went to their deaths along with the thousands of people they killed. Virtually everyone who studies suicide bombers acknowledges that multiple factors motivate people to destroy themselves in the same act that murders dozens, even thousands, of people. These factors can be found in a suicide bomber’s childhood and in their interactions with the society they grew up in.

The development of a suicide bomber starts at birth, according to Arabist and counterterrorism expert Nancy Hartevelt Kobrin. She cites the denigration of women and violence against them in some Arab Muslim families, treatment that coexists with a prohibition against children separating from their mothers. A child who identifies with and never adequately separates from a depressed, devalued mother will go into the world filled with anger, self-loathing, and a poor sense of self (The Banality of Suicide Terrorism, 2010, 1-22). Kobrin also cites the prevalence of violence against and sexual abuse of boys in the Arab Muslim world—at the hands of their fathers and other men—that only increases their rage (20).

Clearly, not all children who grow up in these families become suicide bombers. Perhaps the best way to understand the mind of a suicide bomber is through that of a troubled adolescent. I use the concept of an adolescent broadly; analysts often see people who are well past the chronological phase of adolescence but who are fixated at that emotional stage of development. While most suicide bombers are under the age of 30, even those in their 40s can approach the world in the way an angry, confused teenager does; more to the point, the way an adolescent with a poor sense of self does. Suicide bombers act out their fury and try to compensate for the deficiencies they feel in themselves in the most concrete of ways.

What is the fantasy behind blowing oneself up and becoming a weapon of mass destruction? I can only imagine bombers believe they will become massive, enormous, and therefore impossi-
ble to ignore at the moment of detonation. They literally will make a huge impact. However, there are also the unconscious fantasies to consider: They become bigger, better abusers than the fathers they rage at. Their need for grandiosity takes over.

Dimitris Anastasopoulos wasn’t talking about suicide bombers when he wrote that depressed adolescents can be drawn to groups that help compensate for a young person’s narcissistic deficiencies. However, his observations apply to these troubled souls: “The search for identity has become harder for the adolescent. They may, therefore, sometimes resort to extremist groups that will give them a grandiose identity and self-worth…” (“The Narcissism of Depression or the Depression of Narcissism and Adolescence,” *Journal of Child Psychotherapy*, Vol. 33, 2007, 345-362).

It’s easy to see how depressed young people can be persuaded to join groups that make them feel welcome, important, and then make bombers feel special because they have been chosen for what is portrayed as a great honor. The groups must seem like better, more attuned families to these young people, even as they’re asked to sacrifice themselves.

Vamik Volkan, who has extensively studied oppressed cultures and countries that have a shared or large-group identity under charismatic and malignant leaders, writes:

> I believe that, despite their apparent privilege, they too were subject to psychological traumas that cracked their personal identities, and that historical conditions led them as well to choose to fill those cracks with large-group identity (extremist fundamentalist Muslim, specifically al Qaeda) and to submit to an absolute leader (bin Laden).

Thus he sees the September 11 hijackers as akin to suicide bombers (*Blind Trust: Large Groups and Their Leaders in Times of Crisis and Terror*, 2004, 162—parenthesis in original text).

Questions and answers about why young people leave seemingly comfortable homes to join the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) can also help us understand what motivates suicide bombers. The *New York Times* published articles this year about young Muslims in Britain—including three teenage girls—who left their families and schoolmates to travel to Syria and join ISIS. Although not written from a psychoanalytic perspective, the articles show adolescents struggling to find a self. The author points out
that it can be even more difficult to fit in “for Muslim girls than for boys.” They are “Buffeted by a growing hostility toward Islam and deep spending cuts that have affected women and young people in working-class communities like their own, they have come to resent the Western freedoms and opportunities their parents sought out.” Like so many other teenagers, these young women act out, but their rebellion takes a different form. “They were smart, popular girls from a world in which teenage rebellion is expressed through a radical religiosity that questions everything around them.” Their “counterculture is conservative. Islam is punk rock. The head scarf is liberating” (Katrin Bennhold, “Jihad and Girl Power: How ISIS Lured 3 London Girls,” at nytimes.com, August 17, 2015).

While suicide bombers and ISIS recruits come from families across the economic spectrum, it’s also true that poverty and lack of opportunity—more contributors to a poor sense of self—are motivating factors as well.

Shiraz Maher, a former Islamic militant who now studies the reasons why young Islamic people leave Britain to join ISIS, understands the appeal and grandiosity an extremist group holds for someone who feels alienated and insignificant. Maher told the Times, “If he goes to Syria and becomes involved with the Islamic State, he goes from being the manager of a second-rate clothing store to someone giving headaches to the president of the United States” (Mary Anne Weaver, “Why Do They Go?” in The New York Times Magazine, April 19, 2015, 42-47, 58-60).

ISIS clearly fits into the category of extremist groups that Anastasopolous described as giving troubled adolescents a grandiose identity. They also give some young people, including suicide bombers, what feels like a better life.

A video of Moner Mohammad Abusalha, an American who detonated an explosive-filled truck in Syria as part of the Jabhat al-Nusra group in 2014, shows an angry 22-year-old man who grew up in a well-off Florida suburb but felt deprived amid the wealth around him. Abusalha had left his family more than a year before the bombing. He said in the video that he searched dumpsters for food in the United States, and that having a cup of tea with fellow militants was “better, better than anything I’ve ever experienced in my life” (Mona El-Naggar and Quynhanh Do, “Video Released of U.S. Bomber in Syria,” at nytimes.com, July 31, 2014).
Still, even with such answers, we wonder why a young person would be so willing to die. H. Shmuel Erlich, in “Reflections on the Terrorist Mind,” senses the joy that envelops the young bomber. He writes that “It is not a psychotic regression that enables the youth to throw his life away. It is the immense power and blissful peace that comes from merging oneself with the larger cause—this is paradise...It is the point at which one’s self becomes part of something greater—venerated and supported by one’s ego-ideal as well as one’s family and community” (Sverre Varvin, Vamik D. Volkan, eds., Violence or Dialogue? Psychoanalytic Insights on Terror and Terrorism, 2003, 151).

We don’t know how many suicide bombers change their minds in the days, moments, or seconds before they carry out an attack—and whether they are persuaded or forced to proceed by the terror groups they have joined. A disturbing video that purports to show a young bomber possibly having second thoughts was recently posted on YouTube and several British media websites. According to the translation in the video, he is afraid he won’t succeed. As the young man sobs, he is urged to continue by older militants who seem to acknowledge that he is scared. He does continue, but does not look convinced. As the video ends, we see a huge explosion in the distance.

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Contemporary Ritual Suicide and Mass Murder: Speculations on the Nature of Terrorism

Norman Simms—Waikato University

Open a newspaper on any ordinary day in the 21st century and what do you find? A pilot flies his fully-laden commercial airliner into the sheer rock face of a mountain. A driver plows her
school bus directly into a power pole. A teenage girl detonates her belt of explosives while standing in a marketplace, and a few moments later, as the emergency services arrive, a friend explodes herself in the same way. Then a young man enters a church, sits in a Bible studies class for an hour, pulls out a revolver and shoots nine of the participants. A reporter later says, “He meant to commit suicide by this action.”

The media are filled with other incidents, new variations on the themes of mass murder, multiple suicides, actively sought martyrdom in the cause of ideologies and fanatical cults. A beach resort in Tunisia. A mosque in Yemen. An art exhibit in Texas. A gas station in France. A museum in Belgium. The parliament building in Canada. Sometimes it seems there are people waiting for any excuse to kill themselves and others, just as there are relatively neutral individuals who are ready to be seduced, brainwashed, or lured into the madness of death by cult.

Every time one of these events take place, the experts offer their set-piece explanation. One, a lone wolf, some disaffected youth, like so many others unable to accept his own failures in life, blames another traditional scapegoated group, and kills them in order to purge himself of inner demons. Two, a cycle of violence perpetrated by a gun-worshipping public, who are desensitized by violent video games, movies and various online games; the cycle manifests itself inevitably when susceptible individuals seek excitement. Three, drugs and alcohol are to blame. Four, ignorance, bigotry and centuries of racism periodically boil over. Five, uncensored social media sites online brainwash the vulnerable, the lonely, and the weak-willed. Six, poor parenting skills combine with underfunded schools and overworked social workers. Seven, sexual abuse in infants exacerbated by continued neglect. Eight, the breakdown of Judeo-Christian morality and Western Civilization no longer believing in itself due to political correctness and postmodernist ideologies. Nine, too much sugar in our food. Ten, the work of the devil.

In the old days, the family doctor faced with the sick mind would have recommended blood-letting, aspirin, or a run around the park. Or, a little later, the health professional proffered a full frontal lobotomy, six sessions of electro-shock each week, or a steady diet of Prozac. And rather recently the treatment consisted of love, tolerance, understanding, and more welfare payments.
Today, well, everything is more complicated because our values are so variable. There seem to be so many complications and variables in the question to be addressed in this special issue of Clio’s Psyche that it is difficult for me to know what the goal of the discussion is. Even before a psychohistorian can get down to the description of birthing details, mother-infant bonding, or early discipline in the home—that is, the things that are needed to understand before one can get close to the individual case histories and that certainly precede any attempt at social generalization--we need to know what we are investigating. At what point does an individual act of suicide (one hesitates to say a simple suicide, for none are without complications and extenuating circumstances) become socially ritualized and gain historical or religious meaning? When, too, does it become inappropriate to call the criminal murderer who kills himself as well as others a suicide bomber? In other words, at what point does a series of murders cease being a list of random criminal homicides prompted by greed, revenge, or gang rivalry and turn into a political or faith-based statement?

If we can determine how the slaying of one or more human beings functions in society, then we can look at the specifics of the personalities involved to see if these characteristics have anything psychological in common and in their ontological development over an extended period of time—within a single lifetime or several generations. Finally, no less significant, and perhaps most significant of all, do the same terms, concepts, and paradigms of behaviour cross ethnic and geographical distances, so that there is a human dimension rather than a national or cultural specificity? Can we really and honestly say, when we watch the news broadcast of a bus exploding, a young girl strapped with explosives standing in the middle of a crowded marketplace and self-detontating, or two young men leaving pressure-cooker bombs at a sporting event, “There, but by the grace of God, go I”? Is it more than a denial or a rationalization to say, instead, “They are a different kind of people than I am”?

Eventually we have to ask: Is there an ethical or scientific distinction between a paid murderer, a despondent suicide, and an idealistic martyr? Certainly, there seems no connection between a modern serial killer stalking the streets and in a fit of rage or a cold-blooded determination to avenge some deep unbearable injury done to him in childhood and a classical heroic warrior in the cause of something higher than oneself ready to accept an almost inevitable
death? Homer and then Virgil knew there were times in the midst of combat—whether it involved armies confronting one another or a single combat between world-historical leaders—when a cloud of blind rage would come over the combatants, the so-called battle fury (*furor poeticus*, divine madness), and they would kill indiscriminately all those around them, foe and friend, with no attempt to survive the moment of madness. Achilles, when avenging the death of Patrocles, his lover-companion, wished to do more than slay those responsible; he wanted to kill all the Trojans on the battlefield, and even all the other Greeks so there would be no one left alive in the world.

Other heroes, however, like Odysseus (Ulysses) used patience, cunning and disguise; they kept their cool, waited until the time was ripe, then struck when it would be most effective. They calculated, so as to gain the best results of their efforts and keep the violence from spreading in a mad, mimetic surge in the way that panic could happen. These cautious heroes knew what they did was dangerous and that they more likely than not would die, but self-destruction was not the point. They were not *kamikaze* pilots turning themselves into weapons of mass-destruction for the honor of the emperor. There were epic warriors from Troy like Hector, who sought to keep out of harm’s way if possible, for they longed to return to their wives and children, but when duty and honor required, and the circumstances offered no other way, they stepped forward, did their mighty best, and accepted what consequences there were. Still another type of hero-martyr appears in the Book of Judges: Samson, a big, blundering, disobedient fool, finally entrapped by Delilah and caught without his strength-giving hair, realizes only in the last moments of his life what his destiny requires. Drawing into himself, pretending still to be as weak as he is blind, he lets himself be taken into the Temple of Dagon, waits until the jeering and mocking Philistines have all entered the building and filled it to bursting for the celebration of his defeat. Then, with a mighty exertion of force, he brings the gigantic walls, the enormous roof and all the great weight of the structure down on top of himself as well as his people’s enemy, obliterating their power over Israel for a generation.

How does one conceive of multiple killings in a continuous series leading to genocide? One of the horrible instances was that which occurred on the Killing Fields of Cambodia, when victims were made to lie in a long row, then one by one, an individual was
made to stand up, given a sledge-hammer, and told to crush the head of the next person along the line, before lying down again to wait his turn. If they were in some sort of conscious and rational state, perhaps they thought that the harder the blow the less suffering that would be inflicted; but hopefully by that time they were all but numbed, unconscious of anything other than the merest senescence. Or the line of Coptic Christians kneeling in front of ISIS fanatics waiting to be beheaded, staring blankly, waiting without apparent emotion for the cut; they may have been in a trance waiting to pass into paradise. But what about their mute and zombie-like murderers? They too cannot be classified as responsible criminals—or can they? Is there some kind of insane collusion here between victim and victimizer, so that if the person to be beheaded does not resist or cry out, the killer is justified in his action? Who made the video and who decided to show it on international television? The world will certainly have descended into the worst hell of immorality if this collusion were true.

It was said that during the Holocaust there were not six million Jews killed, but one person and then another and then another—each victim an individual with his or her own history and private identity. At the same time, in the so-called banality of evil, murder was committed by an individual killer, whether directly or at several removes, including those who profited by the genocide in terms of cheap apartments suddenly made available, jobs opened up, luxury goods put on sale, ordinary items that had been in short supply by the war transported from one occupied territory or another collaborating state into the heart of the Third Reich. If such people—the so-called “Good Germans” who “did not know” or who “were powerless to stop the madness”—then became vulnerable to fire bombings, artillery attacks, famine, and disease, then they colluded in their own deaths and were not innocent victims or collateral damage.

The young people who strap on their suicide belts filled with explosives, nails, and screws to scatter into whatever crowd some minder has designated on their behalf, can they be compared with young patriots volunteering to serve flag, country, and God? Whereas in the last century, during two world wars and innumerable local conflicts, soldiers or guerrillas supposedly went off on a great adventure or heeded the community’s call when king or other leader called to make the world safe for democracy, or to inaugurate the new world order, or to remove the scourge of this or that
ideological evil; when actually most wanted to get away from home, domestic responsibilities, unhappy and boring lives, or to show off for their mates, girlfriends, or parents who would otherwise view them as useless cowards. As they sailed off into the sunset, they probably did not conceive of dying or being wounded. Later, to be sure, once the fighting started, each one killed the enemy to protect himself and the fellow down the line, or in some noble deed threw himself down on a hand grenade to cushion the blow for his mate. A few heroes then accepted great risks, even the likelihood of being killed in action for the success of an immediate mission, not of the Grand Strategy. Most of the troops slogged through and hoped to survive.

The true suicide-murderer kills him/herself on purpose, and anyone else by inadvertency, usually because he or she cannot perceive, imagine, or feel anything for any person outside of his or her own life. This is a form of euthanasia, instances where someone finds him- or herself so ill, incapacitated, and unable to conceive of continuing to be a horrible burden to those all around, that only death can provide relief. Unable, however, to perform the act in solitude, he or she sets up a situation where other people have to be involved but they are not understood to be other than instruments in the suicide; this is assisted suicide. When for a suicide the only meaning in the self-killing or the inadvertent slaying of others has become release from the pain, humiliations, or a sense of guilt for past decisions of one sort or another, then a moral blindness, an egotistical cloud of unknowing, descends over consciousness. For instance, someone suicidal drives a car into traffic and hits one or more other cars, but this was not the intention, and never entered the mind of the perpetrator. This is more than an acute embarrassment (shame) or a case of clinical depression or melancholia: it can be a rational, moral choice, though illegal.

On the other hand, the traditional martyr (not the fanatical mass suicide murderer) seeks to serve a higher cause, usually by accepting death passively, as a proof of faith, nationalistic patriotism or even social compassion; he or she does this because the physical and historical self (as distinct from the eternal soul) means nothing in itself and can reach spiritual fulfilment through enduring great pain and allowing it to be destroyed.

The kamikaze (who flies his plane into a battleship or aircraft carrier), the shahid (who straps on an explosive belt and walks into a crowded marketplace or movie theater), and others who turn
themselves into weapons of mass destruction are not the same as the traditional heroic soldier who takes great risks in combat and often accepts the high probability of his own death for the successful outcome of some strategic action, usually for the sake of protecting the homeland and saving many lives. The distinctions between those who accept death for a higher cause—usually the life of another—and those who seek only to destroy the other while killing him- or herself, are so manifest as to hardly need discussion.

While cultural historians may debate the meaning at different times of concepts such as honor (one’s own good name), glory (the reputation and integrity of the group), cowardice (fearfulness and weakness of spirit), and nihilism (destruction and death as ends in themselves), the psychohistorian tries to find out what motors in the personal history of an individual and the dynamics of a group lead towards these delusions, trance-like states, and self-blinded rages. From this perspective, which can be adopted for cynical reasons—to deny the possibility of any ideals or selfless acts whatsoever—the conscious and ideological rationalizations are part of mere epiphenomenon, not an essential component of the personality or national identity.

Often, too, the objective-thinking scientist may decide beforehand that the martyrs and saintly-murderers are pawns in the hands of cynical political ideologues. Children too young to know better, women threatened otherwise with social ostracism (or “honor killing”), disturbed adolescents and insane adults beyond rational thought—these can be convinced of the need to perform mass killings with themselves as the weapon of choice, of the great rewards to be won in the next life by these usually perceived crimes, and of the ecstatic state of being for all that will be created. Sometimes peer pressure or drugs induce states of susceptibility to such vile deeds. Or perhaps more simply, as in the case of a pilot who flies his plane into the side of a mountain at top speed, with 150 passengers and crew aboard, there is no consideration of others at all. A great cloud of egotistical unknowing envelops the ego, or, when people die together—no one is innocent in the darkness of humiliation and pain to be assuaged—the collective group confirms legitimacy and joy to the act. Still, on the one side, there is a notion of what is right and what is wrong, and what is right may require doing a lesser evil; and on the other, a notion that right and wrong no longer exist but such values may be brought into existence through a cleansing explosion of fury and rage, creating a new
However, it is not just a matter of providing a moral rationalization to an enormous crime (or series of crimes) but of finding out why some people have the personality to accept such a performance where most of us would back away out of fear or disgust. In some instances, the perpetrator must be forced into a kind of ecstatic or soporific trance easing away all qualms, mesmerized by persuasive promises of a higher good and future rewards for the self or family, bribed by beautiful images of afterlife ecstasies surpassing all imaginings, and convinced that present unbearable pains and humiliations will cease. Though there are probably susceptibilities locked into genetic inheritances, generated by sustained acts of abuse and perhaps to later brain injuries, neural diseases, or sustained brainwashing, it does not explain why some societies provide supporting cultural contexts or ideologies to embrace the cult of martyrdom and painful punishment of transgressors.

Is there any one or any unique combination of factors that create a personality susceptible to the committing of mass killings, including suicide as a component part and not just as collateral damage? Neglect, abandonment, abuse, intrusive discipline, or spoiling the child with smothering love—are these necessary historical stages in the formation of self-destructive or murderous personalities? Can they be matched with or exacerbated by other extragenetic and external factors, such as congenital diseases, debilitating injuries, interrupted education, forced movement and changes of school, lack of insecurity, deprivation, bigoted bullying, religious and political brainwashing, or a hundred other external rationalizations? If none of these are the sole facilitating factor and no pre-ordained combination of factors mark an individual or small cluster of individuals as most likely to fulfil the role of terrorist-suicide-killer, then are we dealing with completely random events which just happen to involve persons who might never commit a crime of such enormity or use their own private illness to destroy other people’s lives along with themselves?

These are not just modern questions, but the terms and interpretations probably are. The late 1890s and early 1900s were plagued by anarchist assassinations and terrorist acts that caused mayhem and fear, but the active agents, while they often knew there was a high probability of losing their own lives, did not consider that their primary goal. In earlier ages, a few individuals went berserk, on a rampage of maiming and killing, and in this rage
probably did not have any specific end in mind other than relieving the powerful inner urge to violence. The end of sieges usually burst into destruction of buildings and monuments, rape of all or most women and killing on a large scale—to retaliate or avenge perceived injuries in the past, to celebrate as it were survival in an orgy of savagery, to reap rewards in lieu of other compensation for fighting—but this did not turn on self-destruction. The aristocratic leaders directing the war usually did not participate themselves in this orgy of destruction and brought it to an end after a day or two. Any longer, and the underlings might get the wrong idea and become too uppity about what they deserved. Today, of course, there would be nothing and nobody left to enjoy the spoils of war.

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Quest for Rebirth: Psychohistorical Perspectives on the Islamic State’s Sacrificial War

Victor Meladze—Independent Scholar

The idea of a group engaging in ritual violence and war where innocent people are killed, raped, beheaded, and crucified for the fulfillment of a moral imperative strikes a counterintuitive note in observers who view humans as rational beings. One example of this phenomenon is the American media’s lack of clarity and depth in its assessment of the motives behind the carnage engendered by the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (or ISIS) in the Middle East.

In October 2014, the New York Times editorial board articulated its shared bewilderment at the ISIS fighters’ brutality. According to the board’s commentary, “The mind rebels at the reports of cruelty by the Islamic State...Comparisons are meaningless at this level of evil, as are attempts to explain the horror by delving into the psychology or rationale of the perpetrators” (“The Funda-
mental Horror of ISIS,” October 2, 2014). The editorial board also referenced columnist Roger Cohen’s *New York Times* article, “Here There Is No Why: For ISIS, Slaughter Is an End in Itself,” in which he wrote, “there is no why to the barbarism of ISIS.”

However, scholars who have studied psychological dimensions of religious extremism cite numerous key theories as illuminating the roots of the Islamic State group’s violence and its vision of a new Middle East. Psychohistorical perspectives on war and social violence are among the key theories we must consider in understanding the current strain of extremism. Viewed through the lenses of psychohistorical models, the ISIS project to carve out land where literal interpretations of the Qur’an infuse all spheres of a fundamentalist monoculture is symptomatic of collective regression to early attachment needs—that is, to restore the idealized parent-child unity via purifying rebirth.

Although we must avoid reductive arguments, ignoring birth and childhood traumas communicated through the Islamic State’s horrific violence will hinder nuanced views of this unfolding event. American media inadvertently promulgate an understanding that the Islamic State group’s formation was caused not only by complex historical currents, sectarian conflicts, and a multiplicity of individual and adult group grievances, but also by deeper emotional dynamics. For example, Thomas Friedman, in a September 2014 op-ed for the *New York Times*, used a birth and pregnancy metaphor in characterizing the rise of the Islamic State in the Middle East: “This is a civilization in distress, and unless it faces the pathologies that have given birth to an ISIS monster [in] its belly – any victory we achieve from the air or ground will be temporary” (“ISIS Crisis,” September 24, 2014). The unconscious reference to the Middle East theater of conflict as being a birth mother of ISIS is clearly communicated. What is more, Friedman metaphorically likened the extremist group itself to both a monstrous neonate and a pregnant woman.

Friedman is not alone in framing the formation of the Islamic State in birth metaphors. CIA analyst Graham Fuller also expressed figuratively the causal factors that gave rise to ISIS: “The United States did not plan the formation of ISIS, but its destructive interventions in the Middle East and the war in Iraq were the basic causes of the birth of ISIS” (Noam Chomsky, *The Long Shameful History of American Terrorism*, InTheseTimes.com, November 2014).
Significance of Birth and Maternal Imagery

Metaphors relating to pregnancy, birth, and infancy are used frequently by political figures, journalists, social activists, and others during crises or discoveries that are perceived to be threats to human survival (Lloyd deMause, *Foundations of Psychohistory*, 1982). Former U.S. Vice President Al Gore, as one example, drew an analogy between planet earth and a sick baby when raising awareness of climate change. Speaking on *Good Morning America* on June 13, 2006, he said, “The earth has a fever and just like when your child has a fever, maybe that’s a warning of something seriously wrong.”

The arrival of the atomic bomb also was heralded by American elites through parental and birth imagery. For example, prior to the test explosion of the first atomic bomb in Los Alamos, physicist Ernest Lawrence cabled a message to a colleague in which he referred to the team of scientists that built the atomic bomb as “parents.” After the atomic bomb named “Little Boy” was dropped on Hiroshima, U.S. Lieutenant General Leslie Groves cabled President Harry Truman with the news: “The baby was born” (deMause, *The Emotional Life of Nations*, 2002).

From psychohistorian Lloyd deMause’s perspective, birth traumas that are projected in popular culture (e.g. crucifixion imagery, political cartoons that depict womb-like settings and fetal/placental motifs such as flags, chains, and tunnels) are indications of a nation’s regressions to early death equivalent experiences. War and social violence, according to deMause, are not caused by adult groups’ humiliations and needs for revenge in isolation from preexisting psychic injuries suffered in utero and in childhood. The American wars in Iraq and interventionist policies in the Middle East, from this viewpoint, are not the single causal events thatgendered the formation of the Islamic State group.

According to psychohistorical theories, all violent mass movements and collective mobilizations for war have an underlying emotional dynamic or matrix that corresponds to separational individuation anxieties and fears of childhood. For example, it is the internalized fear of the engulfing mother of childhood that is at the base of later adult groups’ perceptions of enemies and macro level crises as posing existential threats. Thomas Friedman’s likening of ISIS to a monstrous baby and a pregnant woman is only one example of this phenomenon. To paraphrase deMause, the delegated enemy is projectively experienced as the bad-mother and bad-self.
The unconscious need of all violent groups is to kill the bad-self and bad-mother gestalt in the enemy and thereby restore the sense of merger of good-self and good-mother.

**Rebirth Themes in the Islamic State Group’s Violence and War**

The Islamic State group’s unconscious need for an apocalyptic rebirth that restores a sense of unity with omnipotent caretakers is manifested in three interrelated characteristics. These characteristics can be organized as follows:

- belief in a punitive God,
- need for total conversion of preexisting geopolitical boundaries and multi-cultural milieu into an Islamic monoculture, and
- suicidal behavioral patterns.

Freud is the most prominent figure of classic psychoanalytic thought who theorized that God is a projection of the father image. According to Freud, belief in God has a number of psychic survival functions for human organisms. Among these functions are alleviation of death anxieties and facilitation of group cohesion through emotional attachment to a shared idealized parental figure (Freud, *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*, 1921).

Otto Rank, one of Freud’s associates, broke with the Freudian orthodoxy by presenting evidence from ancient myths and pre-monotheistic cults that depict supreme deities with maternal characteristics (Rank, *The Trauma of Birth*, 1920). Rank advanced the argument that birth traumas and the mother are the original sources of death equivalent anxieties. Hence, Rank theorized that fears relating to the birth mother were displaced onto the Father-God, a product of later historical group belief systems.

From a psychohistorical perspective, symbolizations of God are unconsciously experienced by human beings as attachment objects (Daniel Hill’s chapter in *The Fundamentalist Mindset*, 2010). God representations serve the function of affect regulation (i.e. defense against abandonment, guilt, separation, and individuation anxieties mobilized during periods of rapid change). Although psychohistorians differ in their views of the neurobiological and childhood roots of belief in God, they agree that belief in a punitive God is an integral component of violent groups.

In keeping with Rank’s discovery of maternal imagery in pre-Abrahamic religions, it also should be noted that belief in a male gendered God has a particular function—that is, to neutralize
maternal engulfment anxieties. For example, the belief in a vengeful and murderous form of Father-God or Allah, for violent fundamentalist groups such as ISIS, can be traced to irregular attachments to primary caretakers of childhood (Hill, *The Fundamentalist Mindset*, 2010). In theory, the Islamic State extremists’ need to submit to the will of Allah is an unconscious striving to merge with the father, thus defending the self from annihilation by the engulfing mother. Neutralization of anxieties and death wishes for the castrating father are also assuaged through the submission to an internalized representation of a supreme male deity.

The significance of Iraq and Syria as a place to establish a “caliphate,” a religious order, is also an unconscious communication of the Islamic State group’s need to merge with a good parent. In this case, it is the need to merge with the “good mother.” According to psychohistorical theory, the physical environment and the “in group” milieu is experienced as a maternal body. In fact, deMause theorizes that group members experience its vital attachments such as national boundaries and the group itself as a womb surrounding (deMause, *Foundations*, 1982). From this perspective, the Islamic State group’s need to establish a caliphate that embodies Allah’s authority on earth (Springer, Regens, and Edger, *Islamic Radicalism and Global Jihad*, 2009) is a reflection of an unconscious need to enter the prenatal mother, or womb.

The suicidal behavior of ISIS is another indication of its unconscious need to regain primal unity with idealized love objects. For example, news media around the world are replete with reports of suicides or “suicide bombings,” committed by individuals with ideological ties with the Islamic State. At a group level, the current war ISIS extremists are waging can also be considered as a collective suicide. For example, the Islamic State is waging war against an impressive array of enemies encompassing the Western World (i.e. U.S., Britain, France, and their allies) and the Muslim nations (i.e. Syria, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, and their allies). Put in other words, ISIS is waging a war that cannot be won by any rational calculations; it also is a war where massive casualties of group members are unavoidable.

From a psychohistorical viewpoint, individuals’ and groups’ need for martyrdom or death in war stems from an unconscious striving for immortality through the merger with loving parental powers. The Islamic State extremists’ quest to “die for a higher cause,” be it in the name of Islam or Allah, overlays the need to
mask annihilation anxieties imprinted in childhood and regain maternal love (deMause, *Emotional Life*, 2002).

**Conclusion**

The formation of ISIS and its sacrificial war have complex causal roots. Most scholars would agree that the current battles waged by Islamic State extremists in Iraq and Syria are driven by a multiplicity of preexisting and emerging conflicts. Few would argue that American military debacles in Iraq, Afghanistan, and interventionist policy in the world are not among the causal factors of the formation of Islamic fundamentalist groups.

However, imperialistic overextension of American power is not the only catalyzing dynamic that has given rise to the Islamic State group. A substantial body of psychohistorical research shows that social violence and war are not caused by adult group victimizations, a sense of entitlement, and rage against the “secular Western World.” Rather, massive emotional regression of all involved warring nations to traumatic memories of birth and childhood is among the multiplicity of causal factors that are synergistically at play in the rise of these extremists.

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**Understanding Radical Youth Terrorism**

**Peter Barglow**—Univ. of California Medical School

There are similarities among most terrorists that cut across geographic lines. These include youth or prolonged adolescence, poverty, immigrant or first-generation status, issues within the family, and a lack of self-esteem that sends people in search of the culture of an extremist group that grounds and validates them.

Psychohistorical studies, with their focus on psychological motivation, have great value for understanding our contemporary world and people who turn to terrorism in particular. This approach helps us comprehend major historical events by examining the motivation and behavior of influential leaders and their groups. I will use this perspective to understand the origins of recent terrorism, relying up-
on a broad spectrum of research ranging from traditional historical and empirical studies to psychoanalysis’ formulation of aggressive instincts.

My study of religiously motivated terror was inspired by the realization that small towns and regions generate large numbers of violent jihadists (Andrew Higgins, “A Norway Town and Its Pipeline to Jihad in Syria,” *New York Times*, April 4, 2015). Regrettably, the *New York Times* piece failed to focus on the immigrant status of the terrorists. This article can only be a “pilot study” of terrorist groups because of my own limitations. As a psychiatrist, I have treated males who were violent protesters against injustice and murderers of strangers, but I haven’t treated terrorists. So I rely upon second-hand journalistic reports, often with the original in a language that I can’t comprehend. Even cursory inspection shows that while there are similarities between Islamic terrorist incidents in a number of countries, there are many important differences also.

My first focus is on eight young terrorists in Norway who present a dramatic and frightening danger to civilization. My scrutiny of likely origins of these young men’s murderous behavior is intended as a kind of small group case study. I will then apply my description as a sort of template of radical religious group terrorism to compare this event with terror attacks in other countries. (I invite members of the Psychohistory Forum and other readers to add more meat to the bones of my preliminary conclusions.) The process of radicalization and permanent adoption of religious fundamentalism may show cross-cultural similarities between individuals, but cursory examination of youth terrorism in other countries may also highlight many differences.

Eight young men who resided in a small neighborhood in Fredrikstad, Norway (population 76,000) became jihadists and several died in Syria (Andrew Higgins, “Norway Town”). What caused the radical religious anti-social behavior in the members of this group? It emerged from pervasive emotional disruption and low economic status of the immigrant youth. I propose that their adoption of a lifestyle fueled by violent hatred represents an emotional solution to an aberrant identity development of adolescence.
Below I chart the ethnic backgrounds and recent status of members of this tight brotherhood of terrorists, all associated with a local radical Islamic group, *The Prophet's Ummah* (*umma* is the Islamic nations, the community).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Torlief Hammer</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Disappeared in Syria</td>
<td>Filipino Mother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abdullah Chaib</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Died in Syria with ISIS (Admired soccer player)</td>
<td>Algerian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abu Edelbije</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Died in Kobani, Syria while with ISIS</td>
<td>Chechen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yousef Assidiq</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Became devoted to re-educating radicals</td>
<td>Norwegian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unnamed Male</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Mentally ill and in hospital</td>
<td>Norwegian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samiulla Khan</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Wounded in Syria Detained in Oslo</td>
<td>Pakistani</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown Male</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Hiding in an unknown place</td>
<td>Kurdish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egzon Avdyli</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Died in Syria while fighting with ISIS</td>
<td>Albanian</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Only two of these eight men had familial roots in Norway. Their average socio-economic status was clearly lower than that of young males in indigenous peer families. One of the two Norwegian members appears to have been mentally ill enough to need hospitalization. The other man born in Norway, Yousef Assidiq, soon turned strongly against jihad. All subjects had persistent histories of social turmoil since late adolescence, substance abuse (primarily marijuana), scholastic failure, delinquency, minor criminality, brushes with the law, and familial turmoil. Seriously deficient parenting has been associated with adolescent “grandiose and vulnerable narcissism” (Kristen L. Mechanic and Christopher T. Barry, *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, 2015, 1514). This personality constellation is associated with trends toward exploiting others, unrealistic personal fantasies of admiration and power, and an unfounded sense of importance coexisting with abject low self-esteem.

Research in the United States and other Western nations demonstrates that the teens and early 20s are ages associated with the highest probability for “emergence of risk-taking activity with a potential for antisocial, norm breaking, and criminal behavior particularly for boys” (Jeffrey J.
Arnett, *Journal of the American Psychologist*, 1999, 321). Poor schools, absence of positive parental models, and a dearth of employment possibilities lead to gang and cult participation. Immigrant youth are often ostracized by the mainstream peer culture and suffer self-esteem deficits that block conventional paths of moral development. Radical ideology and participation in ostracized or stigmatized religious cults constitute pathways to a new solid but aberrant post-adolescent identity.

The members of the Norway group shared exaggerations of normal emotional traits of adolescence: episodes of grandiosity and a sense of invulnerability, poor anticipation of danger, impulsivity, rebellion, drug-seeking, poor sense of time, and massive self-esteem fluctuations. Normal boys often become preoccupied with defects of an immature physique with attempted compensation through strenuous physical or athletic activity. This masks a fear of effeminate traits and produces avoidance of females. Identification with successful older adolescents may neutralize feelings of inadequacy. The Norwegian group’s members shared a strong admiration for Abdullah Chaib, a locally famous soccer star.

What are the emotional pathways that males with these sorts of mental problems can pursue? Erik Erikson established a psychosocial grouping of normal and abnormal individuals according to age periods. This selection process was used to create personal identity types characterized by alternative personal psychic attributes such as “trust versus mistrust,” or “ego integrity versus despair.” Adolescents and young adults have the alternative of “Identity versus Role Confusion” during the fifth part of Erikson’s eight-stage lifespan sequence of normative developmental tasks. The binary outcomes of this process are summarized by Erikson in *Identity, Youth and Crisis* (1968, 146): “From all possible imaginable relations the adolescent must make a series of ever-narrowing selections of personal, occupational, sexual and ideological commitments.” Identity “diffusion” is the consequence of such choices remaining unresolved.

The children of recent immigrants face special problems in forming an ethnic identity. Indeed, it’s particularly difficult, and often impossible, for minority group adoles-
cents to attain a satisfactory ethnic identity. Sometimes they may use available possibilities for integrating their ethnicity into their larger sense of self, such as: One, they can assimilate by adopting the majority culture’s norms; two, they may reject the majority culture while selecting peers only from their parental native country; and three, they may become bicultural (Jean S. Phinney, *Journal of Early Adolescence*, 1989). Failure to navigate any of these pathways, and the constant trauma of harsh poverty, family turmoil, and peer rejection may produce personality fragmentation and serious identity and role diffusion.

Adoption of a radical violent ideology can be a stable and durable mental solution to such a profound age-related crisis. This outcome can explain the violent behaviors of the Norwegian converts to the *Prophet’s Ummah*. Their psychodynamics apply to other countries in which recent terrorist attacks have taken place (except in Israel). Why the choice of jihad and radical Islam? The vast majority of Muslims in the world have no inclination to politicize their religion. Jihad also has peaceful implications of a personal struggle for self-control and improvement. Radical Islamic movements usually reflect the violent history of political and military encounters with the West. Examples are India and Sudan in the 19th century, and Egypt and Palestine in the 20th century (Shmuel Bar, *Hoover Policy Review*, June 6, 2004).

However, such global historical circumstances are irrelevant when the psychologically focused microscope studies the formation of a terrorist identity within the youth groups I described. I offer a simple visual image as a paradigm: A drowning man will seize any available means to rise to the surface, and for a while he can swim using any mental or physical strength he has. Radical Islamic identity offers self-esteem and meaning to vulnerable “choking” post-adolescence. The route offers sustained protection through its ready-made participation in organized fringe groups led by admirable charismatic popular leaders. It promises the rewards of a rich afterlife.

I limit my observations to terrorist incidents taking place within the time frame of the past eight years (2008-2015). However, I try to avoid “cherry picking” that ex-
cludes subjects and time periods that do not support my main assertions. So I will include a few observations about male terrorists from earlier years. The Casablanca bombing attacks of Morocco in 2003 and 2007 clearly fit the profile of terrorist youths who are first generation immigrants from impoverished communities. I hope that the tidal wave of refugees dominating contemporary news headlines will not generate many more such horrors during future decades. Now I will turn my attention to terrorists in five countries.

England

Three terrorists from England—Reyaad Khan (21), Junaid Hussain (21), and Rahul Amin (26) from Birmingham, Cardiff, and Aberdeen who were killed in a British military drone strike on August 21, 2015 in Syria—have many similarities with the Norwegian men described above. However, they were much more educated and had computer skills consistent with good employment opportunities. The three had immigrant parents, with Khan of South Asian descent, but born in Britain. All were sophisticated social media users, through which they bonded with one another and received considerable public recognition. The young men were known for childish bragging and unrealistic religious idealism. Amin, the oldest, had a strong belief in an afterlife during which Allah would personally reward him. While not suicidal, he often grandiosely expressed the belief that he did not fear death.

Over a dozen United Kingdom students, most offspring of British Sudanese parents that studied medicine in Khartoum in the Sudan, joined ISIS in Syria during June 2015. Many of their fathers were successful doctors in England who sought to reconnect their children to their African and Islamic roots before they entered a medical career of their own. While their educational level is higher than the Norwegians’, their mid-twenties age span is almost identical. Political analyst Salah Aldoma noted in Daily Monitor (September, 24, 2015) that Sudan currently is beset by warfare, economic deterioration, a charged political atmosphere, and high unemployment. Mohammed Emwazi, nicknamed “Jihadi John,” has been identified as the likely executioner shown beheading captives in videos produced by ISIS. Now in his mid-twenties, Emwazi was born in Kuwait of Iraqi
parents, but at age six he moved to west London.

Emwazi may also have been influenced by two unique childhood events. (Lloyd de Mause considered childhood abuse as central to the psychohistorical enterprise in *Journal of Psychohistory, 25, 3, 1997.*) Emwazi was no ordinary child in that he had much more difficulty mastering the English language than other children. At age 12 he had a painful accident that resulted in a prolonged school absence after serious brain damage was diagnosed. Such incidents cannot be entirely overlooked in explanations of deviant adult behaviors.

English society and culture may also have contributed to the development of these terrorists. The right wing demagogue Anthony Gleese writes that the English educational system “fails to protect us from the violent horrors of Islamism” (Colin Murray-Parkes, ed., *Islamic Terrorism and British Universities, 2014, 150*). Such remarks provoke divisiveness and threaten civil liberties. However, they also force us to confront all the biases and cherished values that terrorism inevitably awakens. Some critics consider the September 8, 2015 killing of young terrorists from England by RAF drones illegal and amoral. Others applaud the assassinations.

**Denmark**

Denmark has a large Muslim immigrant community from Palestine, Turkey, Somalia, Bosnia, Morocco, and Tunisia. The vast majority of them have integrated peacefully. However, a small fraction of young second generation immigrants have adopted militant Salafism. Out of a few hundred of these, 14 men have been killed in Syria and Iran. Anti-Semitism has been an element in some Danish terrorist attacks, as expressed in the killing of a guard at Copenhagen’s main synagogue. On February 14, 2015 Omar El-Hussein (22) died in a shoot-out with police after killing filmmaker Finn Norgaard at a panel discussion. The panel included Lars Vilks, a Swedish artist who had published derogatory cartoons of the Prophet Muhammed in 2007. That assailant did not have a devout religious life.

The gangster, Abderrozak Benarabe (38), ignorant of Muslim values, has publicized this religious affiliation to
gain sympathy. Once a common criminal, he fought in Syria against the regime of Bashar al Assad, but was arrested later in Copenhagen. His transformation from gangster to foreign warrior was reported to be precipitated by a brother’s fatal illness. If true, this connection again demonstrates the power of personal life events to affect decisions through which rage can be expressed. Other (always older) members of Danish criminal gangs have joined military organizations like ISIS or armies opposing both democratic and totalitarian regimes. Such criminal terrorists are quite unlike the Norwegian group of young men described above.

**U.S.A.**

In the U.S., immigrant communities with a significant percentage of terrorists do not exist, and religiously inspired incidents are rare. The surviving Tsarnaev brother, Dzho-khar (20), sentenced to death for the 2013 Boston Marathon explosions, was an emigrant with his 26-year-old brother from the predominately Muslim Russian Republic of Chechnya, where there is a violent struggle for independence. They and their friend Dias Kadyrbayev (20) were in the same age range as the Norwegians and were members of a tiny Cambridge Islamic community. The older brother, Tamerlan, was a talented boxer who had trouble identifying with America. Their radicalism seems to have developed independently of both peers and religious affiliation.

Relative social isolation seems to characterize the background also of Youssuf Abdulazeez (24), a naturalized citizen from Kuwait and son of Palestinians from Jordan. Earlier this year, he killed four Marines and a bystander in Chattanooga, Tennessee. Adam Lankford (*Scientific American*, July 27, 2015) considered him to be a suicidal, “traumatized and mentally ill” person, typical of Islamic mass shooters, but offers no evidence for the presence of mental illness in the murderer.

**France**

Economic marginalization like that in Fredrikstad seems also to have been a radicalizing factor in the 2014 anti-Semitic attacks in France. The Kouachi brothers who became the “Charlie Hebdo” attackers and their colleague, Armend Coulabaly, were reared in brutal emotional and economic environments. The brothers were in an orphanage for
six years beginning at ages 10 and 12 after their mother committed suicide. Coulabaly lived in a housing project characterized by extreme poverty, crime, gangs, unemployment, and violence so severe that doctors and mailmen often refused to work there. However, in France there are other factors fostering violent terrorist behavior, including centuries of virulent anti-Semitism. There is also the legacy of French colonization that produced destructive hatred between settlers and native populations. A large Muslim disadvantaged population that immigrated to France resides in suburban ghettos that felt like ethnic, social, and territorial apartheid to many.

**Israel**

Israel has not been spared the curse of Jewish terrorism. Its sources and motivations, while unrelated to Islamic ideology, offer a fascinating comparison with the radical violence in other countries described above. In August 2015 Israel’s security agency, the *Shin Bet* 3, detained four youths possibly associated with Jewish settler terrorism. Three of them are sons of American immigrants to Israel and one is a child of Australian Jews. The best known of these is Meir Ettinger (24), the grandson of Meir Kahane, a radical American Rabbi whose life was devoted to the creation of ultranationalist and antidemocratic political parties in Israel. Ettinger’s violence in the name of religion seems to have its origins in the radical values of his parents and grandparents. Relevant to the actions of contemporary Israeli terrorists is the influence of the Palestinian Jewish terrorist organizations *Irgun* and *Stern*, underground groups that may have hastened the creation of the state of Israel (Assaf Sharon, “The Jewish Terrorists,” *New York Review of Books*, September 24, 2015).

**Conclusion**

The generalizations I made about the Norwegian *Prophet’s Ummah* group use psychohistorical dynamics associated with cultural alienation and poverty. They seem to account for the conversion of children of immigrants to an extremist militant life in some but not all of the countries described. The highly educated English converts to radical Islam were most like the Norwegian group. French colonial history seems crucial for the generation of radicals in
France. Criminal gangs in Denmark yielded many men that joined Syrian jihadist terrorist fighters. The tiny sample of American terrorists seems to possess idiosyncratic qualities. Individual emotional trauma during early life may have had an influence on several French and British murderers. Contemporary Israeli terrorists behave as if they inherited nationalistic violent tactics from the Jewish insurgency movement in Palestine during the 1940s.

Erikson’s contribution to aberrant adolescent psychology is a valuable tool to understand radical religious violence. Psychiatric diagnosis was relevant only to rare isolated individuals. Age category, immigration background, low socioeconomic status, and radical religious affiliation were major contributors to becoming a terrorist. It must be remembered that this phenomenon does not encompass the majority of male descendants of immigrant parents with similar socio-economic-religious variables who have been good citizens, and even tried to counter-act violence and terrorism. Yet I have proposed reasons for the brutal fact that jihad and radical Islam have offered irresistible appeal to young men in many western countries. The best “treatment option,” if one exists, is to improve the quality of young male lives, rather than to pursue totalitarian suppression or to sponsor counter-terrorist activity and active warfare.

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Reflections on Terrorists

Herbert Barry III—University of Pittsburg

Someone who kills multiple innocent people is generally labeled as a terrorist. This irrational, destructive behavior is based on a regression to an infantile stage of oral dependency—a promi-
nent condition of most terrorists. Most terrorists project their feelings onto an external agent, usually their supreme deity. Regression and projection are two components of Sigmund Freud’s theories that can result in terroristic actions.

Freud identified five stages of normal development from birth to puberty: oral, anal, phallic, latency, and genital. An adult may regress to an earlier stage in which either deprivation or satisfaction was excessive. The most infantile regression is to the oral stage, which begins at birth and lasts for approximately one year. Dependence on the mother or substitute caretaker is the principal condition during this first stage. Oral satisfaction is necessary for survival and is emphasized by most commentators, including Freud. Partial or temporary regression by adults to the oral stage may be indicated by addiction to cigarettes, cigars (including Freud himself), alcoholic beverages, other psychoactive drugs, and obesity due to excessive eating.

In my opinion, the occurrence and effects of oral deprivation have generally been underestimated, even by Freud. Sometimes the mother or other caretaker is absent or is unable to relieve the infant’s thirst, hunger, pain, or other distress. Destructive behavior, against oneself and other people, is intensified by the limited scope of the infant’s experiences. The weakness of the little infant causes the adverse emotions to be underestimated by the mother and by other adults.

John Dollard and Neal E. Miller, in Personality and Psychotherapy (1950, 130), describe infantile emotions quite vividly: “Infancy, indeed, may be viewed as a period of transitory psychosis. Savage drives within the infant impel them to action. These drives are unmodified by hope or the concept of time.” An adult who regresses to the infantile oral stage is no longer weak or small, and has access to lethal weapons. Killing innocent people expresses infantile rage, which coexists with oral dependency. Destructive behavior against oneself, in addition to other people, is indicated by frequent occurrences of suicide soon after killing others.

Adults who have regressed to the stage of infantile rage often wish to deny their destructive emotions. The defense mechanism of projection, described by Freud, enables adults to attribute their infantile rage to an external source. The person’s supreme deity is a frequent recipient of the projected anger and hatred. Many terrorists believe that as they slaughter others they are obey-
ing God’s command. Schizophrenia is a psychotic illness that often includes projection of the person’s repressed emotions onto voices that are perceived as originating from an external source, not from the disordered mind of oneself. Fortunately, the voices rarely command the person to commit murder or any other violent act. Projection enables terrorists to believe that they are obediently performing the destructive wish of their god instead of obeying a voice that is believed to originate from an exterior source.

For adults who have regressed to the stage of infantile rage, their supreme deity is an available source of their projected destructive wishes. Jesus mostly advocated love and forgiveness, but the Christian Gospels recorded his threats and violent acts, such as throwing the money changers out of the Temple. Many Christians have fought and killed heretics and also adherents of rival versions of Christianity, as a way to express their infantile rage as it is projected onto their god. Mohammed, the founder of the religion of Islam, was a warrior and ruler of a tribe in the Arabian Peninsula. Two factions of Muslims, Sunni and Shiite, have waged war against each other beginning soon after the death of Mohammed. Many Muslims leaders have felt obliged to forcibly convert or kill infidels.

Rage is probably intensified by some Islamic customs. The mother is required to obey her husband but not her infant. She is likely to give birth to another child while her prior child is still an infant. Her husband’s superior social status, and the existence of his other wives, cause the infant’s mother to feel angry. She expresses her anger by punitive behavior toward her infant, especially if the child shares her husband’s gender.

The Book of Genesis in the Hebrew Bible contains the statement that God created man, male and female, “in his own image” (Chapter1, Verse 27). A more valid statement may be that God was made in man’s image. The supreme deity thereby shares human nature and is a suitable source for projection of destructive motives that are repressed from conscious awareness.

Effective methods to minimize terrorism are desirable and feasible. One method is better nurturance of infants, especially males, who are most at risk of becoming terrorists. Their regression to infantile rage can be counteracted by more supportive and less punitive actions by the mother or other caretaker. Another method is more effective psychological education of children and
young adults. Schools and printed literature should teach anger management and compromise. Everybody should be taught to refrain from projecting their rage onto external sources.

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The Deeper Threat

Tom Gibbs—Independent Scholar

worse than death the threat of death weaves into the intricate fabric that under all flesh

bone and blood binds us all as one a part of eternity threat the greater enemy corrupts

the fragile warp and weft fear unravels peace of mind flame of terror ignites little

fires of doubt in every simple daily task holds us inside death imagined a thousand fold life

diminishes empties by these rote rehearsals that kill more than flesh and bone and blood and deeper

Tea Bags

Tom Gibbs—Independent Scholar

When I walk into the Middle Eastern Grocery store to buy a box of Ahmad tea bags It’s difficult to keep myself from thinking These young men may sometimes tinker in Backrooms with getting to Heaven posthaste And I am somehow responsible for their deaths
And the deaths of their possible victims
Should they need just the cost of a box of tea
To finish their vests. Are such notions only
The typical wonderings of an *infidel* or are they
Lines of thought like some dark poetry born
Of media-speak and images that explode from

Indisputable facts that too often play out in
Brutal death color on saturation news broadcasts?
I feel certain it is no base racism though I acknowledge
It is certainly implied. Not from my heart but
From the subtle conditioning of dark poetry that as
I am *infidel* to them they are *jihad* to me.

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**Terror in Warfare**

*Lawrence Tritle*—Loyola Marymount University

In the year 100 the Roman historian Tacitus wrote “they
make a desert and call it peace” (*Agricola*, 30). His description
of the Roman way of war, at once accurate and rhetorical, could as
easily refer to the destruction visited on the American South in
1864/65 by Union General William Tecumseh Sherman. Sherman
characterized his Georgia campaign as “the hard hand of war,”
which he believed civilians as well as enemy armed forces should
see and feel (*Memoirs*, 2: 227, 1875).

War is indeed hard, but does it constitute “terrorism”? The
definition of terrorism and its companion violence are tricky, but a
brief look at provisions of the Geneva Conventions is revealing.
Protocol II “declares that neither the civilian population as such,
nor individual civilians may be the objects of attacks; moreover,
acts of terrorism against them are prohibited. Civilians benefit
from this protection as long as they do not take a direct part in hos-
tilities.” Sherman implicitly recognized his campaign as terrorism
and so did General Curtis Le May. In 1945, Le May admitted to
his staff that if the U.S. were to lose the war with Japan, they would
surely be condemned as war criminals for the fire-bombing of Ja-
pan, methods used to similar effect on the cities of Germany. Com-
manders in the ancient world saw the consequences of their campaigns in equally stark terms. Aurelian, a soldier and emperor of Rome’s 3rd century empire, described his Syrian campaign with brutal clarity: “We have not spared the women, we have slain the children, we have butchered the old men” (Michael H. Dodgeon and Samuel N.C. Lieu, eds., The Roman Eastern Frontier and the Persian Wars (AD 226-363): A Documentary History, 1991, 102).

In the ancient world, the Assyrians would surely win first prize for the use of terror to supplement a highly specialized and otherwise proficient and deadly military establishment. Numerous Assyrian stelae depict dismembered and impaled bodies of enemies and gruesome torture scenes; Shalmaneser III (British Museum) shows the king participating in these acts, which suggests a ritual dimension and that the king’s role in these comprised part of his royal duties.

Such acts differ only in detail from the conduct of war in the Greek and Roman worlds. Alexander’s campaigns in Afghanistan and India regularly featured atrocities where entire towns were put to the sword; the near extermination of the Malli in 325 BC is just one such example (see further the historian Arrian, books 4-6). Alexander’s destruction of Thebes in 335 BC, a Greek city, should remind us that such practices were not reserved for “barbarians.” The destruction Caesar visited upon Gallic and German tribes in Gaul also featured mass killings and enslavements; Caesar barely acknowledges the death toll among women and children that occurred with the annihilation of the Germanic Usipi in 55 BC (Caesar, Gallic War, 4: 13-15). Such destruction of peoples and their cultures is typical of the Roman way of war.

The Jewish historian Josephus records the Roman assault on Judaea in 1st century AD; towns like Galilee and Jotapata were crushed, some (like Jotapata) never reoccupied, while the siege of Jerusalem was conducted with such ferocity that some mothers, driven mad by the terror of war, ate their children (book 6). Like the Assyrians before them, the Romans occasionally depicted the hard hand of war in art; Trajan’s Column commemorating that soldier emperor’s conquest of Dacia (modern day Romania) shows scenes of heads presented to the emperor (Spiral 4) as well as the usual scenes of conquest, firing villages (Spiral 8), and finally the defeated Dacians fleeing their lands before incoming Roman colonists (Spiral 23). It is not without interest that the Dacians also decorated their city walls with the heads of defeated enemies, in this
case Romans felled in an earlier war (also Spirals 4, 8) and tortured prisoners of war (Spiral 7), practices bound to encourage payback from the other side (all references in Rossi, *Trajan’s Column and the Dacian Wars*, 1971).

War’s hard hand begins with civilization and no less so does “suicidal terrorism,” whether committed by groups or the solitary assassin. While the meaning and origin of “assassin” from the Shiite “Assassins” of 12th century Syria (and Iran) has been debated at some length (i.e. assassin after “hashish-smoker,” a Fatimid pejorative most likely, more probably assassin after the *Asās*, or “foundation” of the Ismaili belief), the original assassins struck down Christian and Muslim leaders alike. The great Kurdish sultan Salah-ad-Din (Saladin) survived three such attempts and eventually resorted to various defenses and alliances to escape the assassins’ nefarious plots. Another sultan felled by an assassin was the Ottoman sultan Murad I, killed by a Serb assassin the evening before the epic battle of Kosovo (1389), won by his son and successor Beyazid, which made Serbia part of the Ottoman Empire.

Assassins appear no less among the Greeks and Romans. The Athenian democratic tradition rested on the popular belief that two assassins, Aristogeiton and Harmodius, failed in their heroic attempt on the life of the tyrant Hippias, who ruled Athens in the late 6th century BC. Their plans foiled, these aristocratic assassins instead killed Hipparchus, the tyrant’s brother. In fact, politics had little to do with the affair; it was the result of a love triangle gone bad! (So Aristotle, or a writer in his school, reports in the “Athenian Constitution.”)

Greek traditions had a way of shaping Roman, so it is no surprise to find tales of Roman assassins similarly striking down tyrants, or at least trying to. As newly independent Rome struggled to remain free, Gaius Mucius went on a suicide mission to kill the Etruscan war lord Lars Porsenna, who threatened to recover Rome for its Etruscan overlords. Foiled, Porsenna condemned Mucius to torture by fire that only inspired the young Roman to thrust his right hand defiantly into the flames. Amazed by this act, Porsenna released Mucius, who became known as “Scaevola,” or the “left-handed one,” a nickname his heirs ever after proudly bore (Livy 2.12-13.5). Likely fiction, the story attests assassination as just another weapon in the toolbox of war.

In brief, terror amidst war is as old as civilization. Assas-
sins too have long been known, though today’s heirs of Mucius Scaevola may more safely accomplish their missions with duds, C-4, and cell phones, and with a little less fear for their personal safety. A major difference between ancient and modern practices of war is that formerly, commanders and armies cared little for ensuring the security of the peoples among whom they fought. Alexander and Caesar, both widely regarded as the “greatest” commanders of all time, paid little attention to the living hell they brought to those they conquered. (Just to be fair, I imagine that in 1258 Hulagu Khan paid little attention to the Baghdadis about to be slaughtered. Here the image of Salah ad-Din before Jerusalem in 1187 stands in sharp contrast.)

Today, greater care is extended to non-combatants, and as George Packer writes in a recent New Yorker essay (July 20, 2015), there are no My Lais from Iraq, and the bombing of Afghanistan is nothing like that of North Vietnam, Japan, or Germany. While true, who speaks for the hundreds of Iraqi soldiers killed in June 2014 by ISIS forces at former American Camp Speicher? Who today remembers the dead of Haditha or the children of Gaza (in 2006, 2012, 2014)? Drones and smart bombs, increasingly the weapons of choice, lull the American public and their political leaders into imagining that war’s terror and violence can be softened while still achieving military and political objectives. Yet the hard hand of war continues to be felt, its mistakes too often described as only “collateral damage” and too often inciting more terror and violence in response, much to the surprise of so many.

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Petschauer’s Psychohistorical Poetry

Howard F. Stein—University of Oklahoma

Peter Petschauer, long a leading psychohistorian, is now a leading poet of psychohistory. His poems take us to the inner experience of history, without which there would be no psychohistory. In them, and in others in this journal, he addresses personal, historical, and psychohistorical themes that he not only observed but lived: haunting memory, grief, remorse, guilt, shame, family, his father and many mothers, suicide, identity and its loss, unanswered questions, Imperial Europe and its crumbling, World War II, the Holocaust, Stalin’s terror, and much more. Petschauer gives us the disturbing experience of intimate familiarity with history. His poetry gives both him and the reader no place to hide in “data.” Petschauer’s poetry is as much the substance of psychohistory as are his scholarly works.

Howard F. Stein, PhD, a psychoanalytic anthropologist, psychohistorian, poet, and the author of 27 books, has contributed many articles and poems to Clio’s Psyche. He may be reached at howard-stein@ouhsc.edu.

Attila, Fencer, Jew

Peter W. Petschauer—Appalachian State University

I rediscovered you
not so long ago
on the Internet, no less.
Surely not by accident –
this other man with my father’s name,
Hungarian and Jew, journalist and fencer!

Did my father know you?
Did you know my father?
Did either of you know Wilda?
The actor and writer –
our namesake in Prague?
A Jew as well, unlike my father,
who thought himself German –
from another province of Austria-Hungary.
The empire that had been home for you all.
Self-inflicted war destroyed
this collection of nations and ethnicities.
At Versailles the Allies freed each of you
from your imperial home --
they said you should fend for yourself.
Instead, you fought one another –
having discovered your separate identities.

What were your parents thinking
when they named you Attila –
scourge of Europe centuries ago?
Did they anticipate your fame –
at the Olympics in 1928 and 1932?

Fencing was your métier.
You harvested medals –
became a national hero –
celebrated in press and radio.
But the Nazis overran your country.
And like your namesake in Prague –
they tortured you to death
in a concentration camp.

Attila, how dare you disturb
my peace with your heritage?
A heritage that questions my own?
German and American –
son of a German from Slovenia.

Did my father know you?
Did my father know of you?
Did my father stay quiet –
to avoid guilt by association
and death by camp?

**Back into the Future**

*Peter W. Petschauer*—Appalachian State University

They keep coming back –
the outrageous memories of the past.
They torture my dreams –
turn miserable my days.
Irresistibly they remain with me –
the men and women in uniform –
striped, tattered, and stained.
The children, aged and infirm as well –
on their way to chambers of death.
Trains brought them to camps in Europe –
trucks rolled them to forests in Siberia.
Once more, they walk –
naked and harangued
 to a shower that sprays gas instead of water.
In a field far to the East
 others stand naked and ashamed –
 waiting for a bullet.
And they come to me again –
 men, women, and children,
citizens of Germany, Austria, Poland,
 and Russia.
Doctors, painters, carpenters, plumbers,
 and their wives.
Teachers, preachers, professors, rabbis,
 and their wives.
Composers, tailors, musicians, lawyers,
 and their wives.
With certainty they knew
the Gestapo would spare them:
They had worked hard for the common good.
Trustingly they thought
the NKVD would not knock on their door:
They had worked incessantly for Party and country.
Why let into dreams and awareness
long-ago tales of woe?
Why re-run horrors of generations ago?
Don’t we have our own?

Behind their black masks,
killers smirk at lessons from the past:
Do not kill, torture, and abuse.
They enjoy their endless spree
of bloodshed, destruction, and depravity.
It is the double-edged sword
of the past:
Religion perverted.
Traditions distorted.
Laws corrupted.
Humanity abandoned.

Toward the End—April 1945

Peter W. Petschauer—Appalachian State University

They dangled from the rafters –
a lieutenant and a captain.
Belts held them off the floor –
four eyes staring nowhere.

My God!
Oh my God!

An overturned cot –
a polished boot on the ground –
a wet spot spread on a pair of pants –
a tongue dangling from a mouth.

How many more? she asked.
No others today, he said.
Three yesterday.
There’ll be more tomorrow.

We came for food –
she fumbled for her words.

We have no food today,
the enemy blew up the truck
on its way.

Oh no, not again.

You hang there so grizzly,
telling us part of your tale.

Young warriors:
Why, tell us, why?
What did you hear?
What did you see?
What did you do?
Was it despair or disillusion?
Or both –
that brought you to this end?

Did you predict more hangings tomorrow?
Don’t know, he said,
Don’t know!

Maybe we’ll get some food tomorrow?
Don’t know, he said.
Maybe, maybe not!
It’s not over yet.

Peter Petschauer’s three poems were delivered at the International Psychohistorical Association’s June 3, 2015 panel on Psychohistory at the Crossroad and written in honor of Howard Stein. He wrote “Toward the End” in honor of Micky Petschauer, his stepmother. Additional information on Attila Petschauer may be found at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Attila_Petschauer.

Beyond Killing: Torture of Women during the Holocaust

Eva Fogelman—Private Practice

Gitta Sereny, who interviewed the infamous commandant of Treblinka and Sobibor, Franz Stangl, asked him, “Why, if they were going to kill them [the Jews] anyway, what was the point of all the humiliation, why the cruelty?” If Hitler’s aspiration with the “Final Solution” was a state-sponsored plan to annihilate all European Jews, how did sexual violence and other forms of torture advance the ultimate goal? Stangl replied, “To condition those who actually had to carry out the policies. To make it possible for them to do what they did.” Auschwitz survivor Primo Levi elaborates with his own explanation in The Drowned and the Saved (1986): “Before dying the victim must be degraded, so that the murderer will be less burdened by guilt. This is an explanation not devoid of logic but it shouts to heaven: it is the sole usefulness of useless violence.”

Hitler understood the challenges of getting Germans from all walks of life, ordinary Germans, including policeman who are supposedly protectors, to kill innocent human beings. The propaganda machinery was a major and relentless operation from the very beginning of the Third Reich, whose mission it was to distin-
guish the Jews as “the other,” and therefore (as psychohistorian Robert J. Lifton put it) “life unworthy of life.” Adolescents in the Hitler Youth Movement were taken on weekend retreats to learn how to shoot animals. Animals were equated with Jews. This process of dehumanization is the first stage in stripping a person of his or her identity and community. Social psychologist Herbert Kelman explains that individuals lose empathy and compassion for the people whose identity and community they undermine as subhuman.

No one psychological theory explains the capacity of human beings to torture women and children, which went beyond just killing them. Women in particular were tortured sexually. It has been suggested by Kirsty Chatwood, an independent researcher, that rape is a “by-product of the dehumanization process of genocide” (“(Re)-Interpreting Stories of Sexual Violence: The Multiple Testimonies of Lucille Eichengreen” in Esther Herzog, ed., Life, Death and Sacrifice: Women and Family in the Holocaust, 2008, 162). What is of interest is that during most genocides (except the Nazi Holocaust and in Cambodia), rape was used as a weapon. Rape was not as rampant or pervasive during the Holocaust as it was in Bangladesh, or in the former Yugoslavia (particularly in Croatia and Bosnia), or in Rwanda, among other genocides; but sexual humiliation by the guards in the concentration camps was ever present. This was despite the 1935 Nuremberg Law for the Protection of German Blood and German Honor, Rassenschande, whereby German or kindred blood could not have social or physical contact with Jews. This law did not prevent rape of Jewish women, men, and children in public or in private spaces.

With all the recent research that has been done on rape, it has become common knowledge that rape is not a manifestation of sexuality, but rather an aggressive act which is fueled by rage, violence, and dominance over the victim. Without a doubt, the social, political, and cultural contexts play a role in the manifestation of this form of torture. For example, during the Holocaust, when sexual torture was performed in a public place, it enhanced the humiliation and dehumanization of the victim.

Dagmar Herzog, a historian who writes about sexuality and gender in the 20th century, summarizes torture of victims—specifically of rape and sexual violence in the Nazi concentration camps—in a volume edited by Carol Rittner and John Roth, Rape: Weapon of War and Genocide (2012). It was a way for the perpe-
trators “to compete and entertain each other. Outdoing each other in a spiral of ever greater grotesquerie was the goal” (39). This was particularly prevalent among guards in the camps who were bored. Also, the sharing in “excess cruelty” or “gratuitous cruelty” solidifies bonds between the culprits.

Herzog goes on to describe how, when women were stripped of their clothes and with heads shaved as they were on the selection line for murder by Zyklon B gas or for life, they were abused with riding crops jabbed into breasts, deflowered with fingers, and subjected to verbal ridicule. Sexual violence was a way to rob the women of their dignity, self-worth, and their humanity. Hence, the perpetrators can have less emotional angst about killing. In addition, historian Doris Bergen suggests that “taboo-breaking sexual violence” such as carrying sexual dismemberment of both men and women, intimidates the victim population and the perpetrator exerts a power hierarchy over the victim.

Motivation to rape Jewish women was not monolithic. The least torturous was what I called “entitlement rape” – the perpetrator feels entitled to rape a woman because he has done or will do her a favor, or has proclaimed his sexual desire for her. In the labor or concentration camps, women were forced to do sexual favors for an extra piece of bread, a spoon, shoes, or information from the men’s side. Many of these interactions took place in the latrine poignantly described in Gisella Perl’s memoir, *I Was a Doctor in Auschwitz* (1948).

The second motivation, though neither are mutually exclusive, is “sadistic rape”—when the act is not consensual. Omnipotent feelings of the perpetrator are often accompanied by worthless feelings of being “a powerless cog in a vast machine controlled by unseen others” (Robert Jay Lifton, *The Nazi Doctors: Medical Killing and the Psychology of Genocide*, 1986, 127). These “polarized feelings” are explained in terms of the Nazis doctors with “sadism” as “an aspect of omnipotence, an effort to eradicate one’s own vulnerability and susceptibility to pain and death” (*The Nazi Doctors*, 449). From this one can conclude that omnipotence increases exponentially with more harm to the victim.

The “sadistic rape” is often accompanied by a kind of sexual perversion described by psychoanalyst Louise J. Kaplan. She explains in *Female Perversions: The Temptations of Emma Bovary* (1991) that “every perversion is an effort to give some expression
to, while yet controlling, the full length of potentially murderous impulses to chew up, tear apart, explode, hack to pieces, burn to ashes, rip through to create one hole out of mouth, belly, anus, and vagina” (127).

The third motivating factor I call “masculine ego-gratification rape.” This kind of rape is often identified with gang or mass rape. The act of rape adds to the enhanced self-esteem ordinary individuals felt in being a part of the Nazi machinery when their new positions came with increased professional advancement and having power and privileges. The situational factor of committing the atrocity with a group of others often amplifies the barbarity. Sigmund Freud explains in Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego (1921) that when an individual is part of a group, they will tend to give up their own power and feel in harmony with the group by joining group efforts rather than acting in opposition to the group. Freud explains, “The individual gives up his ego ideal and substitutes for it the group ideal embodied in the leader” (78). Additionally, the group stimulates behavior that an individual might not consider doing on his or her own.

Social psychologist Stanley Milgram (well-known for his studies on submission to authority) explains in Obedience to Authority (1974) that “the conscience, which regulates impulsive aggressive action, is per force diminished at the point of entering a hierarchical structure” (132). Milgram calls such altered attitudes an “agentic state,” whereby a person “sees himself as an agent for carrying out another person’s wishes.” This is the opposite of feeling like an autonomous person and an individual feels that they are not responsible for their own actions. Rather, one defines oneself as “an instrument in carrying out the wishes of others” (132-134).

From another social psychologist, Philip Zimbardo (known for his prisoner-dilemma experiments), we learn that when laboratory situations replicate prisoners and guards, one third of the guards went overboard in their treatment of the inmates; they insulted and humiliated them to the point that the experiment had to be stopped.

If this is what happens under controlled conditions with specific instructions, one can only imagine what inmates of concentration camps had to endure with guards who did not feel they were responsible for their actions, were getting ego gratification from torturing their prisoners, and were preparing themselves for the ulti-
mate goal of mass extermination.

Unfortunately, the end of World War II did not mean that women were safe from sexual abuse. Liberating forces, particularly the Russians, were raping women. Although the sadistic torture was not prevalent, the sexual violence was unexpected from those who were supposed to be liberators, hence, protectors. Even more shocking were the incidents where girls and women received refuge with families where the men molested them. The tendency to de-value and blame the victim, particularly in violations of sexuality, has limited our understanding of the severity and extent of this problem.

_Eva Fogelman, PhD_, is a psychoanalytic psychotherapist and psychologist in private practice in New York City, a pioneer scholar of the intergenerational impact of the Holocaust, a filmmaker, and author of _Conscience and Courage: Rescuers of Jews during the Holocaust_. She may be contacted at evafogelman@aol.com.

Psychohistorical Interviews

_Historian and Psychoanalyst: D. J. Fisher_

Paul Elovitz & Jack Szaluta—Psychohistory Forum

_David James Fisher was born on November 24, 1946 in Brooklyn to Martin Milton Fisher, an internist with a practice in New York City, and Bess Kaufman Fisher, a housewife and mother. He is the oldest of three sons in a non-observant Jewish liberal professional middle class family. When he was seven, the family moved to the suburbs and he graduated from New Rochelle High School in 1964. He graduated as a history major from the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 1968. At New York University he earned an MA in education (1968) and in history (1969), where he worked with Frank Manuel and Leo Gershoy. For his doctoral degree, in 1973 he went to the University of Wisconsin where George Mosse was his major professor. Important influences were the European cultural and intellectual historian Mosse, historian of socialism and social movements Harvey Goldberg, and Professor of French Literature and Camus scholar Germaine Bree. At the Sixieme Section of the Ecole pratique des hautes etudes, he attended the postdoctoral seminar of Georges Haupt, an historian's historian and specialist on the history of socialism and communism._
As a historian he has published three books: Bettelheim: Living and Dying (2008), Romain Rolland and the Politics of Intellectual Engagement (1988, 2004), and Cultural Theory and Psychoanalytic Tradition (1991, 2009). In the introductions to these valuable contributions to scholarship, he has shown a remarkable openness to writing about his own feelings, thoughts, and emotional and intellectual growth as a consequence of his life experience and psychoanalysis. In addition to these books, Dr. Fisher has authored over 50 journal articles and book chapters in contemporary French cultural history and the history of psychoanalysis, including essays on Freud, Lacan, Foucault, Sartre, Fenichel, Spielrein, and Stoller. He has published essays on the history of the European free clinics, the politics and ideologies of analytics institutes, and the technical and theoretical issues involved in working with erotic countertransference. A recent essay on Peter Loewenberg deals with the history of the Lake Arrowhead University of California Interdisciplinary Psychoanalytic Consortium and the critical importance of the clinical training of Research Psychoanalysts.

Fisher has worked as an Associate Editor of North America for the International Journal of Psychoanalysis (IJP), on the advisory board of its Society, and as the editor of The Los Angeles Psychoanalytic Bulletin. He has lectured extensively, speaking in France, Canada, and Great Britain, as well as at a number of prominent universities, including the California Institute of Technology, M.I.T., Brandeis, and Emory University. In addition, he has lectured at the Shanghai Mental Health Center and the Fudan University in Shanghai, China. Dr. Fisher is the father of two children and practices psychoanalysis and psychoanalytic psychotherapy in Los Angeles.

Paul Elovitz (PHE): What brought you to psychological history?

David James Fisher (DJF): I became interested in psychohistory in graduate school after having developed a deep intellectual interest in Freud and the seminal impact of psychoanalytic theories on the cultural history of the 20th century. George Mosse always taught texts by Freud in his Western Civilization survey and upper level courses in Modern European cultural history. He also introduced us to Jung’s thoughts and complicity with aspects of National Socialist ideology.

During the years 1968-69 while at New York University, I
had the privilege of studying European intellectual history with Frank Manuel. That was the year he published his psychoanalytic biography of Newton, which was incredibly stimulating to me. His approach to the history of ideas almost always included a subtle analytic understanding of the various thinkers on his syllabus, including utopian thinkers. At the University of Wisconsin from 1969-73, we graduate students had an interest in psychohistorical perspectives and, above all, the writings of Erik Erikson. We were also interested in many of Peter Loewenberg’s articles published in the *American Historical Review*. I never entirely embraced the methodology of psychohistory, but it was important in my itinerary of moving from European cultural history to the practice of psychoanalysis. I would call myself a fellow traveler of psychohistory. If labels must be used, I am a cultural historian with a psychoanalytic perspective and an analyst who thinks historically. I define myself as a psychoanalyst. I have been practicing for over 35 years and it was a critical aspect of my professional identity. I still remain fascinated by applied psychoanalysis and have written pieces on the psychology of literary texts, films, and art.

**PHE:** How do you define psychohistory?

**DJF:** I am not sure how to define psychohistory. It would depend on which historian is practicing it and in what specific context. Psychohistory presupposes the primacy of psychology as the motivating force in history. In exploring the character structure of various personalities in history, psychohistorians privilege the understanding of drive and defense if they embrace a conflict model; of trauma and dissociation if they embrace a deficit or relational model; or of grandiosity and self-devaluation if they embrace a self psychological or intersubjective model. Contemporary psychohistorians may be reluctant to pathologize their subjects, emphasizing the creative and transformational possibilities of individual experience. They would insist on the concept of over-determination in terms of reflecting on the psychological motives of individuals in frameworks not of their choosing. Each of these approaches can add a crucial dimension of understanding missing from conventional historical accounts. The latter tends to posit a rationalism, pragmatism, and self-interest on the part of historical actors that appears naive to those grounded in depth psychology. I also think good psychohistorians may contribute to the understanding of collective behavior and group psychology, to what French Annales historians call “mentalite.”
PHE: When and why did you develop interest in French and Western European history, which led to you becoming fluent in both?

DJF: I was always interested in history. I did well in social studies and had an aptitude to remember narratives and to analyze historical phenomena. It stoked my curiosity. It still does. I like to tell and to listen to stories. I developed an early interest in my own family’s history, in Jewish history, and in the history of Western European cultural and intellectual life, which seemed pertinent (the word we used then was relevant) to understanding and then changing history in the present. I became fascinated by the history of revolutions from the French Revolution to the Russian Revolution, the history of socialism and communism, and to ideas and cultural movements that were subversive. Psychoanalysis, at least early psychoanalysis, appeared to fit this model as a revolution in mind. I initially saw it as a way of challenging aspects of bourgeois morality and conformism, of middle class respectability and hypocrisy; it helped me to develop a more profound grasp of the individual’s unconscious dynamics, his or her sexuality, fantasies, and affective states. It was critically important in understanding trauma and the role of deficit and vulnerability in the inner world of the individual. It opened access to the dynamics of narcissism, of primitive states of resentment and envy, sadism and masochism, and the deepest longings and insatiable desires of the individual. I was impressed with how the early generations of analysts, beginning with Freud, would challenge some of the standard clichés about reason, self-interest, morality, and conventional ways of thinking about the individual in society.

Psychoanalysis also resonated with my own personal dynamics and with an imperative to understand my family. Reading Freud helped me to understand my family system and myself. Studying and transmitting the contemporary analytic literature does the same. I am currently teaching seminars on the English Object Relations School. This opens up vast insights into the inner world of my patients and myself, to the arena of the internal object, to the dynamics of countertransference, and to the significance of the analytic dyad. As to fluency in French and Western European cultural history, I would be more modest about it. I have a certain base of knowledge. I have not always been able to keep up with the literature since I transitioned to become a full time analyst. I have preferred to investigate a given author or theme, say Sartre or the
theme of anti-Semitism, in-depth rather than focusing on a general overview. I have privileged depth over surface. This was true of my training as a classical psychoanalyst, where depth is emphasized. As a cultural historian, it was the decisive influence of culture or ideology on the minds and behavior of individuals. Only recently in thinking about the approaches of Foucault and Lacan (and certain contemporary painters and artists) have I been able to appreciate the importance of surfaces. The unconscious is present on the surface, in language, and in obvious modes of communication. We don’t have to plunge to the depths. We just need to open our ears, minds, eyes, and hearts to be receptive to it.

PHE: Why did you choose to write about Bettelheim, Lacan, and Rolland?

DJF: I choose to write about Romain Rolland for both political and intellectual reasons. Curiously, Rolland was a hero to two of the professors I most esteemed, George Mosse and Harvey Goldberg. Mosse was my major professor and a fabulous lecturer and distinguished scholar with a vast knowledge of early modern and modern European history. He had an uncanny, generative knack for raising fabulous questions, questions that opened up areas of research and investigation. I believe he supervised over 29 dissertations, his students producing first-rate scholarship in contemporary European history. Goldberg was a highly valued European social historian at the University of Wisconsin, a scholar with a photographic memory and an unparalleled orator—actually an oratorical genius. Rolland was one of the most exceptional and earliest writers to oppose the Great War. I came to him in the context of opposition to American involvement in the Vietnam War. I was unconsciously looking for someone who had the courage and insight to protest the war, go against the prevailing nationalist, militarist, and imperialist forces of that period. He was influential in developing a pacifist and Gandhian point of view, his biography of Gandhi putting the Mahatma on the cultural map not only in Western Europe but also in America and Asia. I was preoccupied, probably obsessed, by the theme of the responsibility of the intellectual. Noam Chomsky wrote an influential essay with that title, published in *The New York Review of Books*. Rolland was such a responsible intellectual, speaking truth to power and conscience to power. I also found his evolution from internationalist to pacifist to anti-fascist to fellow traveler of communism worth researching and pondering. I guess I was trying to find out the deeper motivations and
limits of the engaged intellectual stance. Obviously many of my generation of baby boomers, who came into consciousness in the 1960’s, were deeply educated and inspired by Camus and Sartre. This was clearly the case for me. I saw Rolland as a precursor to Camus and Sartre. (They did not, but it did not bother me.) Other committed intellectuals stamped their imprint upon me in the 60’s, including Herbert Marcuse, R. D. Laing, C. Wright Mills, and Franz Fanon.

I came to Lacan in my years of living in Paris in the middle 1970’s. I was alienated from America, from American politics, and in some ways all things American. I participated in a post-doctoral seminar with the social historian Georges Haupt on “the geography of Marxism.” Marxism was beginning its eclipse, though we were unaware of it. We studied the penetration and diffusion of Marxism into Western Europe and the world from Kautsky to the present. When I write about the history of psychoanalysis, I still borrow from the methodology of Haupt’s seminar, now looking at the resistance to and adaptation of analytic ideas and practices. This plays into my interest in the history of psychoanalysis and the history of sexuality. My Paris years coincided with the structuralist moment in France, the age of Barthes, Levi-Strauss, Foucault, Lacan, and Derrida.

My former wife, Clarice Fisher, became interested in Lacan, carefully reading and annotating Lacan’s medical doctoral thesis, a case study of a paranoid patient. Lacan was lecturing in Paris; in fact, it was a happening scene, a place for the “tout Paris,” including some of his patients. I regret never having gone to hear him lecture. I told myself I wouldn’t be able to understand his French (which was probably true). But I think I was going against the current by not attending his lectures. He was popular so I decided I wouldn’t be part of the crowd idealizing and worshipping him. There is a funny vignette about encountering a young Parisian couple in the summer of 1975, who asserted that Lacan’s texts, his “Écrits,” were now “the revolution.” That is, that the cultural revolution of the 1960’s was over, and that Lacan’s understanding of language and the linguistic unconscious was the heir to the emancipatory potential of the human sciences. I thought of them as somewhat ridiculous, but their words stuck with me. When I returned to America, I started to study Lacan more closely. Sherry Turkle’s book on Lacan, Psychoanalytic Politics: Freud’s French Revolution, stoked my curiosity. After many years of teaching Lacan at
analytic institutes, I think there is much merit and brilliance in many of his ideas, as well as a lot of wildness, irresponsibility, and nonsense. But he remains a major part of my analytic repertoire and I still hear his words and counsel as useful counters to thinking conventionally and being smug about my own insights and understanding of my patients. I believe I was the first person to deliver a formal paper on Lacan at the meetings of the American Psychoanalytic Association in 1980.

With Bettelheim, the story is more complicated and more ambivalent. I first heard his name mentioned in Mosse’s lectures. Mosse always put his students onto writing that was controversial, textured, and penetrating. I remember seeing Bettelheim interviewed on the Dick Cavett television show in the late 1960’s. I found him outrageously arrogant and authoritarian. He was extremely dismissive of the anti-war students and of the entire social and political movement to end the War in Vietnam and issue in radical change. I said out loud to my friends, if this is the voice of psychoanalysis, then psychoanalysis is now the enemy. Things changed when I started to study his works, above all his early writings on Nazi concentration camps, including his own incarceration. I was moved and found areas of agreement with his essay, “Freud and Man’s Soul,” resonating to his empathy and to his portrait of a humanistic, soulful Freud. I think his fairytale book, The Uses of Enchantment, is a masterpiece of applied psychoanalysis, one of the classics in the literature. Actually, it is a rare sample of the wisdom literature of psychoanalysis. I remember sending him several of my publications; he replied quickly and in a friendly and supportive manner. He was both receptive to and critical of my writings on Freud’s Civilization and Its Discontents and Freud’s relationship and debates with Romain Rolland.

When Bettelheim moved to Los Angeles in the late 1980’s, I wrote, asking him if he were open to a visit. He immediately called me and we developed an intense, mutually affectionate friendship. I saw him often, had meals with him, took him to concerts, got him to talk about his life and the history of psychoanalysis. He offered to send me patients. I convinced him to go into therapy with a local German-speaking colleague. I went to him for advice on intimate matters. He was the most naturally empathic and attuned man I have ever met. He could also be harsh, cruel, and go directly to my unconscious conflicts with an amazing clarity and insensitivity. A man who carried many residues of shame, he
could be shaming. In short, he was a complicated and a difficult man. He once told me he regretted that I did not know him as a younger man. A recurring theme of our conversations was suicide, his intention to not go on existing and his desire to take his life. I was in my middle 40’s during the two brief years of this friendship. I was just beginning to start my family. I would leave these discussions about suicide exhausted and sometimes numb. But they were unbelievably intimate, however paradoxical that may sound. They were part of my maturational process and I cherish their memory.

I believe my Bettelheim book, a book of collected essays on him, was an attempt to work through my ambivalence about him and male paternal figures. I have been drawn to powerful, charismatic, brilliant, and flamboyant Central European father figures. I was fortunate enough to develop an understanding of these idealizing transference dynamics in my training analysis with Rudolf Eksstein, a Viennese analyst and philosopher. Incidentally, I learned what topics to avoid with Bettelheim. For example, I never spoke to him about the 60’s, about the student radicals of that era, of the project to fuse Freud and Marx. Yet our conversations were rich and thought-provoking. I believe another motive to write about him was to oppose the mindless current of Bettelheim bashing that occurred after his suicide. He was no longer around to answer. I tried to write a balanced and nuanced account of the man and his writings. I hope his work will be revived and that students, scholars, and clinicians will take another look at Bettelheim. There is a great deal of substance and nuance in his writings. It is too easy to dismiss him as a patient abuser and bully.

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

DJF: I am most proud of two pieces of writing. The first is one published in my late 20s on the relationship and debates between Freud and Romain Rolland (“Sigmund Freud and Romain Rolland: The Terrestrial Animal and his Great Oceanic Friend”). This essay is based on archival work I did in the 1970’s at the Archives Romain Rolland in Paris on Boulevard du Montparnasse, Rolland’s former apartment. It deals with the private and public aspects of their debate on what Rolland called the “oceanic feeling” spilling over into Chapter One of Freud’s magnificent and ambiguous Civilization and Its Discontents. It also contextualizes and explicates Freud’s 1936 paper, “A Disturbance of Memory on the Acropolis,” written to honor Rolland’s 70th birthday. This is a beautiful text, brimming with insight and self-analysis of the 80-year-old Freud,
still at the peak of his analytic power. Besides having discovered some unpublished letters from Freud to Rolland and Rolland to Freud, the essay concludes with a section psychoanalyzing Freud based on their friendship and arguments. Quite audacious for a kid still in his 20’s.

The paper also alerted me to the power and importance of affects, given that the oceanic feeling was a feeling, which in that period of my life I tended to disavow. What I discovered in my analysis of Freud became the dominant issues in my ten-year training analysis with Ekstein. I did not recognize it at the time. This essay was published in a French translation in a psychoanalytic journal and in “American Imago.” Its publication helped to get me accepted for analytic training, marking the beginning of my transition from a historian to a practicing psychoanalyst. I realized one could go only so far in psychoanalyzing others until I myself had been analyzed and before undergoing psychoanalytic training. A follow up essay, “Reading Freud’s ‘Civilization and Its Discontents,’” offered my own critical analysis of the oceanic feeling from the point of view of the dynamics of narcissism and the ways in which the oceanic feeling may veil powerful feelings of anger and aggression.

A second favorite paper is called “Father’s Day 1994.” It is about my last visit to my father at a nursing home three months prior to his death. I tried to write something deeply intimate about his condition without recourse to analytic jargon or academic prose. It helped me during a period of intense mourning, writing becoming a form of grief work. It is revealing about my own state of mind during that period, disclosing the subjective states of feeling helpless in witnessing the decline and death of an elderly parent. This piece has been republished several times. It reverberates with an audience unlike anything else I have written. It is an emotionally honest and authentic piece of writing dealing with a significant rite of passage in my life and obviously in others.

PHE: What are you working on now? What is its importance and when do you expect to have it published?

DJF: I am currently working on a critical analysis of an early autobiographical song by Leonard Cohen, “Famous Blue Raincoat.” I examine the tenderness and sorrow in the song, the role of psychic splitting, the alternation between omnipotence and sad, nihilistic, and suicidal feelings. Listening to Cohen’s songs have be-
come a source of joy and stimulation to me, even though he has been part of my psychic playlist since the 1960’s. I hope to write about it without jargon and in a direct fashion with respect for the composer and yet include a direct expression of my subjectivity and feelings. I plan to send it to the International Journal of Psychoanalysis for publication. I also have a case study of a narcissistic patient who had a pattern of lying in his intimate life. It is someone I treated for over 15 years, making it an interesting study of the false self/true self opposition. I recently presented it in China, where the Chinese clinicians showed a genuine interest in working with narcissistic patients.

**PHE:** What is your primary affiliation?

**DJF:** Psychoanalysis is my primary affiliation. I teach and supervise at two analytic institutes. I have been a training and supervising analyst at the Institute for Contemporary Psychoanalysis for the past 25 years. I am on the Board of Directors at the New Center for Psychoanalysis. I recently won an award I am quite proud of: Faculty of the Year Award for 2015. Still, my primary responsibility is to my patients and to the psychoanalytic cause, which I still see as a socio-political and cultural movement.

**PHE:** What special training was most helpful in your doing psychohistorical work?

**DJF:** Formal, clinical psychoanalytic training has been fundamental in my life. I believe it is vital for those doing psychohistory, or psychoanalytically informed history. Without it, the issues of personality remain abstract and intellectualized. Psychohistorians, without clinical training and without having had the experience of a long character analysis, can sound wild, non-empathic, lacking in the capacity to understand fragile persons often in fragile circumstances. I deal with “The Question of Psychohistory” and these themes in an essay in my book, *Cultural Theory and Psychoanalytic Tradition*. It is a detailed discussion of Peter Gay’s *Freud for Historians* and Peter Loewenberg’s *Decoding the Past*. I also published a detailed analysis of Manuel’s *A Portrait of Isaac Newton* in that same book; it is called “Narcissistic Themes in a Psychobiography of Isaac Newton.”

**PHE:** Have you published, or do you plan to publish, an autobiography or any autobiographical writings?

**DJF:** I have published several autobiographical introductions
to books I have written. In part, everything I write is autobiographical. I only write about things that I care about, things that have meaning or multiple meanings for me. I have gotten away from “objective history,” even though I was trained in that discourse. I was always suspicious about it. But I am also suspicious about overly subjective forms of writing. Trusting and suspicious. I am also trusting and suspicious of my own interpretive work with patients, but often not suspicious enough.

PHE: What books were important to your development?

DJF: The most important psychohistorical books for me include:

Frank Manuel, *A Portrait of Isaac Newton*, which I have already written about here.

Erik Erikson’s *Gandhi’s Truth*, particularly his chapter “An Open Letter to the Mahatma,” dealing with his countertransference in a powerful and poignant manner.

Maynard Solomon’s *Beethoven*, a beautiful analytically oriented biography on a figure I revere and whose music I find inspiring.

Vamik Volkan’s *Nixon*, about which I have been highly critical, a text to be studied for what not to do in terms of psychohistory.

Bettelheim’s *The Uses of Enchantment* for a subtle and incisive approach to the psychology of fairytales and the importance of the relational experience of parents reading to their children. The book is less a historical study than a reading of the fairytale literature from the point of view of an astute analytic literary critic with vast knowledge of the psychology of children and the dilemmas of parents.

PHE: In your experience and life, are high achievers more identified with their fathers?

DJF: Regarding identification with the fathers and high achieving, I am not sure about this. I haven’t studied the question, or examined the research findings. I would like to write a paper on the role of fathers in the formation of psychoanalysts, with particular emphasis on how many of us had fathers as physicians. It would be fascinating to know about these early identifications. There are five or six individuals who fit this description in Los Angeles alone—
that is, analysts whose fathers were doctors, caretakers.

**PHE:** Please tell us about the University of California Interdisciplinary Psychoanalytic Consortium and how it furthers applied psychoanalysis (psychohistory)?

**DJF:** I have written on the University of California Interdisciplinary Psychoanalytic Consortium in my piece on Loewenberg in Clio’s Psyche. I have been attending these conferences for over 25 years. At the New Center for Psychoanalysis we are trying to get this annual conference at Lake Arrowhead funded. It has been highly successful in terms of encouraging academics who use analytic methods in their research, and stimulating graduate students to present their work and to consider formal analytic training. The U.C.I.P.C. brings together academics and clinicians in an informal and relaxed fashion, fostering dialogue and critical exchange. It gathers together three generations of students and professors, apprentices and master clinicians. Many of us have presented early drafts of works at the conference. Early versions of my papers on Stoller and erotic countertransference, as well as my Leonard Cohen paper, originated up there at the “magic mountain,” our private name for this lovely spot in the San Bernardino Mountains. It is a wonderful and unique association. We need more like it.

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

**DJF:** I have been fortunate to have had many male mentors. I believe that I unconsciously sought them out. These have included George Mosse, Harvey Goldberg, Frank Manuel, Michel de Certeau, Robert Stoller, Peter Loewenberg, Bruno Bettelheim, and Rudolf Ekstein. Germaine Bree was a female role model and mentor. I have written about all of them. They continue to influence me, to help me organize my thoughts, and to make me feel safe and protected when I don’t understand something clinical or intellectual or political, which is quite often. I have been fortunate in my choice of and experiences with these ego ideals. One down side: it may have impeded my ability to find my own voice, my own unique way of understanding. It may account for a long period of my apprenticeship and a susceptibility to discipleship, which I continue to struggle against. I now believe that these identifications and counter-identifications exist in some complicated dialectical relationship, informing my clinical work and my writing. It is not so easy
to disentangle these identifications. I am also increasingly critical of hero worshippers, knowing full well I have been one of them. This began as a child with my love of the Brooklyn Dodgers, the “Boys of Summer” team. My earliest heroes were Duke Snyder, Jackie Robinson, Roy Campanella, Carl Erskine, and Sandy Koufax. Perhaps I have never entirely grown up in terms of those dynamics, but it may help keep me young, playful, vital, and open to new experiences. It has changed as I became a parent, mentor and transference figure to others. It is still strange to be idealized by others. I am becoming more comfortable with it, seeing its healing qualities and its potential to center, hold, and contain vulnerable individuals, while simulating thinking and creative activity.

**PHE:** Thank you for sharing your story and insights with us.

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**Paul Elovitz on the Past, Present, and Future of Clio’s Psyche**

**Juhani Ihanus**—University of Helsinki

**Juhani Ihanus (JI):** When I first participated in the International Psychohistorical Association (IPA) Convention in New York in June 1994, I met you and Bob Lentz in an Italian restaurant holding in your hands the brand new first issue of *Clio’s Psyche* with the subheading “Examining the ‘Why’ of History.” I remember how proud and enthusiastic you were about this enterprise, and how you had great plans so that the quarterly would flourish, and it has done that. From the initial modest eight-page newsletter, the journal has developed into a major publication in the field of psychohistory. How do you remember the initial steps toward *Clio’s Psyche*?

**Paul H. Elovitz (PHE):** In the building of Clio’s Psyche, our goal was to create a journal that would grow psychohistory and maintain a record of the interdisciplinary meetings I had been organizing since the mid-1970s—39 years to date. As a psychohistorian I am a highly collaborative worker, especially when I initiate a new adventure. Thus, I started the Psychistory Forum with the late Henry Lawton (2014) as Co-Director, although after several years he left
the Co-Director position to start his psychohistorical film group. In starting Clio, I searched for like-minded colleagues and two candidates quite readily emerged. One, a talented and accomplished professor at a major university, had considerable editorial experience but a dissimilar view of psychohistory, little sense of the unconscious, and a contrarian inclination. Consequently I chose to work with Bob Lentz, an American living in Canada who had very little background in psychohistory but an unusually good head on his shoulders and an eagerness to learn. For nine years Bob served wonderfully as Associate Editor, as we built Clio from an eight-page newsletter to become a lengthy quarterly, scholarly journal of current events, politics, and history viewed from psychoanalytic and psychological perspectives. Bob’s abilities wonderfully complemented my own and he did an incredible amount of work and now occasionally guest edits special issues that fit his interests. Fortunately, he still serves on our Editorial Board.

**JI:** How did you manage to organize the impressive development of Clio’s Psyche, including so many distinguished Editorial Board members, high-level contributions, and large extensions in the subject area, as reflected in the subheading (starting from 1998) “Understanding the ‘Why’ of Culture, Current Events, History, and Society”?

**PHE:** It is nice that you see us achieving the goals of having quality members and contributions, and expanding the range of psychohistorical subject matter. This has always been our goal, and we have been able to get high quality people on our Editorial Board because they’ve shared the vision. The great challenge has been to turn a board of editors, who to a great extent started out as figureheads, into a working and vital part of our journal. Because these are such top-notch individuals doing so much path-breaking work in their separate fields, it is not always easy to get them to write, publish, and referee. Of late, we have worked harder to have them all make a more hands-on commitment, and we have made this a condition for new people who accept the honor and responsibility of service. Sometimes it appears to me that my strength is greater as a networker, rather than as a long-term planner who obsessively sets out a five-year plan to achieve my goals. I’ve always got a half dozen or so different ideas for special issues or features kicking around in my head. The crucial question is, how do I find colleagues to write on an issue, guest Co-Editors to work with, and mainly, the time and energy to devote to each of these? When col-
leagues write me about a subject that is meaningful to them I often propose that we work together on it so it is not just an abstract idea but also becomes something very concrete when they accept the invitation. Of course, there are a number of colleagues who prefer to stay focused on their own work, which I respect but often regret when I realize that we will not be able to psychohistorically develop an excellent idea that they have. Major events and emotional shifts in our society may determine when we will develop certain special issues and symposia. Thus, when George W. Bush was preparing the country to go to what is now called his “War of Choice,” I wrote on teaching students about the issue prior to the outbreak of the war, and it even became a symposium issue in the *Journal of Psychohistory*.

**JI:** What was the breakdown of the disciplinary backgrounds of the Editorial Board at the founding of Clio’s Psyche and what is it at the present time?

**PHE:** Initially, most of the members of the Editorial Board were historians at universities who had published psychohistorically. In identifying colleagues to join in our endeavor, I showed a marked preference for historians with a long-term commitment to the integration of psychology with history. Since psychohistory is an interdisciplinary enterprise, we have always had colleagues from a variety of fields; at the moment we have: political science, psychology, sociology, and the laity. In 1995 when we first listed the board of editors, we had seven historians, a literature professor, and a psychiatrist who was also an excellent Darwin scholar—the following year we added an academic psychologist. Now we have five historians and three colleagues who are also psychoanalytically trained; then we had only two who were trained as analysts. Our Board has always included some wonderful psychohistorians. Colleagues on the board of editors are increasingly expected to play a more active role and the standard is that each should be at least a Supporting Member of the Psychohistory Forum, which I am, while I also donate over a thousand hours a year to the activities of Clio and the Psychohistory Forum that supports it.

**JI:** At the start, how did you position Clio’s Psyche in the field of other psychohistorical, political psychology, and applied psychoanalysis publications, and how do you see its position now?

**PHE:** It has always been my strong conviction that if you have interesting things to say, you will find readers, and that there can
never be too many psychohistorical journals. In its early days the Psychohistory Review was focused on the literature and methodology of the field as well as teaching; then on doing work primarily with historical subjects, although after Chuck Strozier moved to New York City and became a practicing psychoanalyst, it seems to have become more open to therapeutic ideas. The Journal of Psychohistory was increasingly focused on fantasy analysis which has never been one of our primary foci. The older psychoanalytic journals, such as American Imago and The Psychoanalytic Review, have been inclined to do literary criticism far more than applied psychoanalysis, psychobiography, and the history of childhood, which are three primary areas of psychohistorical concern. Mentality/Mentalities was a valuable and somewhat psychohistorical journal published in New Zealand by an émigré Brooklynite but regrettably it ceased publication in 2012.

JI: How has Clio’s Online Forum influenced publications in the journal?

PHE: Through it I have occasionally met additional people who have become members of the Forum. Sometimes I’ve invited them to write for Clio or, as in the case of Arnold Richards, interview on his role in enlarging psychoanalysis’ online presence. While I generally do not have time to keep up with the activities of our discussion group when there’s a major shift of emotion, such as during Hurricane Sandy and the tragic Newtown, Connecticut shootings, I have become involved. I invited individuals who joined the discussion to write articles for Clio’s Psyche and, in the case of the shootings, went online the same day the shootings occurred asking my colleagues to write their emotional responses to the tragic events without getting into the issue of gun control, which I feared would change the tone. For the next four months we had a multitude of responses. Ultimately I extracted and edited over 40 pages of this material for the March 2013 issue.

There is enormous variation in the quantity and quality of responses on the Online Forum, with most participants not even being members of the Psychohistory Forum or readers of our journal. Indeed, I am concerned that the Online Forum’s content often is not psychohistorical and some younger colleagues have told me that they read Clio’s Psyche, when in fact they only sometimes read the forum.

We need to increase our online presence by establishing hy-
perlinks to our articles and website. Indeed, a University of Colorado political science professor just wrote me declaring that if it is not online, it is as if it does not exist. Ken Fuchsman of our Editorial Board has also expressed the same concern. This lack of awareness is especially true for the younger generation, scholars around the world, and the popular media which disseminates ideas. The issue is how to make this happen. If you have any ideas on how to overcome this weakness, please share them with me.

JI: Journals that are both printed and electronic, and maintain an online discussion forum, have a “multiple” presence, and they activate different audiences. Online discussions are often unpredictable, and, as you said, the responses vary enormously in quantity and quality. However, such discussions can be very up to date, exciting, and freely moving. How to choose and edit such material for the journal, without losing liveliness, is a hard question. I would also put it the other way around: How to extract material from the journal for developing extended online presence, and activating new readers? Hyperlinks to articles and the website are the traditional way, but they are not enough. There should also be quick and intense “fishing” periods, right after the new journal issue has appeared, or even before it has appeared, when some exemplary texts, short quotations, theme condensations, “teasers,” and even provocations (suggestions, claims, arguments, questions) are sent from the editors to different social media forums attached to the journal. The online visitations can provide clues to how online interests are emphasized and distributed. In practice, it would demand that some people get involved in operating as disseminators of material, and as moderators of online discussions, and further reflections. I wonder if this is possible in Clio’s Psyche. Perhaps not only editors and editorial board members but also some of the writers (or new potential writers) could be enthusiastic about this kind of activation.

PHE: Thank you for your most helpful suggestions. Let us see if some of our colleagues volunteer to assist with turning these possibilities into realities.

JI: In Clio’s Psyche, you always prefer non-technical, jargon-free language. That is actually a very ambitious aim since, for academicians at least, it is often hard to discard certain phrases, conceptualizations, and theoretical formulations. Have you considered the possible criticism against this demand for language without jargon? It can be claimed that such language favors unscientific populariza-
tion, and that eclecticism is bound to favor a theoretical and naïve approach. How do you meet these critical voices?

**PHE:** Yes, it is an ambitious aim to write psychohistorically with a strong preference for non-technical, jargon-free language. We academics love to use elaborate conceptualizations and theoretical formulations, and all too often confuse them with the reality of the human experience. At times, these formulations can be invaluable, but most of the time, they serve to cut us off from people outside of our particular fields, sub-fields, and sub-sub-fields, etc. In classes, we have captive audiences who are trained in how to look like they’re paying attention as professors become even more theoretical.

Certainly, I am aware that my ideal of writing in plain English can be very difficult. This helps to explain why at times we’ve allowed exceptions to the rule, as with our late Editorial Board member Andrew Brink (1932-2011), a literary scholar with some psychoanalytic training who has a great appreciation for the various theoretical approaches to knowledge. Thus, Andrew not only reviewed three lengthy books on object relations, but these were reprinted for many years in the various compendiums of our journal. I suspect most readers are aware that whenever somebody uses the term “object relations,” I suggest some way of eliminating or downplaying the concept. However, the author remains devoted to the term, and it usually ends up that a substitute term is followed by a parenthesis that states: “object relations in the language of psychoanalysis.”

Regarding the charge that “such language favors unscientific popularization, and that eclecticism is bound to favor atheoretical and naïve approaches,” it might make sense to have a debate about this on Clio’s Psyche’s Online Forum and subsequently in print. I doubt that there is enough general interest in the subject for us to have a Saturday Workshop meeting on this topic.

**JI:** What changes do you foresee for Clio’s Psyche?

**PHE:** Even though many colleagues compliment our short article format, it needs to be supplemented more with long articles so as to lessen the work of the Editor. We also need to bring additional colleagues into the editorial processes.

**JI:** Your own first steps, in an academic setting, toward psychohistory were taken at the Ambler Campus of Temple University in
the History Department when you were writing your doctoral dissertation. In 1968 you met the historian of ancient times Professor Sidney Halpern who helped you overcome some obstacles. What did you learn from him?

**PHE:** To listen to myself and see value in my ideas. Sidney Halpern opened up the world of the unconscious to me, as we talked about how we were differently teaching a course on Western Civilization with the same name. He had been in psychoanalytic training, but instead of becoming an analyst built a successful business and then became a professor.

When I sought assistance overcoming my obstacles to writing my dissertation, I remember sitting together and that brilliant colleague’s affirmation of my ideas for organizing the voluminous materials I was working with enabled me to move forward again. My dissertation had been getting shoved to the back burner amidst my full-time teaching load, part-time jobs driving trucks, working in warehouses, cleaning offices, and adjuncting at a distant community college, to say nothing of my parental responsibilities. In the end, it was his reflecting back to me what I said about my research materials on the English Industrial Revolution that helped me regain confidence in the project. My first memories of writing were of not being able to do it: as a young child I was told to write a letter to my maternal grandfather, whom I didn’t know and my father disliked. When conflicted, self-doubt and writer’s block came easily to me.

**JI:** What works were important in your self-education at that time?

**PHE:** Self-education is ultimately the most important type of learning. I jumped into reading Freud, Erikson, and the popularizing psychoanalyst Edmund Bergler. The last’s applied psychoanalysis appeared to me before very long as quite reductionistic, but it was valuable for my developing a fuller understanding of how the unconscious works. Remembering this, as a teacher and colleague, I’ve often bit my tongue to inhibit my inclination to criticize a particular author that was mentioned to me in a most enthusiastic manner, since I decided we so often gain vital knowledge from less than perfect exponents. I scanned the entire psychoanalytic and applied psychoanalytic literatures to find any and all books and articles that dealt with the psychological study of history and society. In those days before the Internet, it was a much more tedious task than it is
today, but it also was extremely beneficial to my growth.

**JI:** You have also mentioned that when you were introduced to psychoanalysis at Temple University, you felt that psychoanalysis had the “power of poetry and music” in reaching the “subjective heart of the human condition.” Concerning psychohistory, on a personal level, was there a similar kind of feeling? Was it a straight “plunge-in” or a more gradual growth into the field?

**PHE:** Poetry and music can get to the emotions quite quickly and powerfully. Psychoanalysis opened me to the understanding of what lays behind so much of the intellectualizations that academics and polite society generally thrive on. Psychohistory offered the opportunity to go to a much deeper, more profound level of understanding of history and society that I had always been fascinated by. Although I read a lot of bad, mostly theoretically-based or poorly written studies, I kept coming to a deeper knowledge. Naturally, my growth into the field was a gradual process, as I struggled to overcome my own resistances and understand conflicting theoretical viewpoints.

**JI:** Were there some more personal early (childhood/parental/family) backgrounds to your way to choosing certain psychohistorical themes (e.g., presidents, family secrets)? You have given some personal clues in your works about immigration and your own family history. How do you construct your emotional/autobiographical memory in your present life situation?

**PHE:** The basis of all knowledge is to, as Socrates says, “know thyself.” Psychoanalysis helped me to see that the exploration of the self was not a matter of self-indulgence, but a vital part of the learning process, since we see the world through our own perspective based on our past history, personality, life traumas, and so forth. It is true that in the course of writing, I often seek to humanize the subject I’m encountering by discussing my own past in relationship to the subject. It is clear to me why I wrote on my own family secrets as part of my lost therapy upon the death of so many of my loved ones in a short period of time. My family was a contradictory mixture of honesty and secretiveness, with much of the latter being related to the dangerous climate of America during the McCarthy period. I’ve never thought too much as to why I’ve focused upon presidents, beyond the fact that they have so much power over me, my loved ones, and society, but I will give it some more thought. Perhaps part of the answer will show up in my
dreams. When I was researching President Jimmy Carter, and had a dream of being his psychoanalyst, I came to realize some of my motivation for studying him. (In retrospect, before he was even elected, I recognized his self-defeating tendencies and thought that he needed a psychoanalyst more than a political analysis.)

JI: You are more into psychobiography than group psychohistory or fantasy analysis. What are your guidelines for doing psychobiographical research?

PHE: Exploring the psychobiography of a single individual, or two individuals comparatively—as I have done with candidates for the presidency—is quite challenging, but far more manageable than getting involved in fantasy analysis. The problem with fantasy analysis is that it is hard to know about large groups of people, and the ability of the analyst to project her or his own fantasy onto the subject matter is an ever-present danger. Together with Henry Lawton and George Luhrmann, I organized a fantasy analysis research program back in 1985 and, in using a questionnaire sent out to a variety of psychohistorically inclined colleagues, we were able to establish that there was some merit in the methodology. I then put in for a major grant, which would provide for some in-depth analysis by people who were experts in the unconscious to further test the system. Regrettably, this support was not forthcoming. In conversation, I’ve often likened doing fantasy analysis to brain surgery, in which the surgeons are using instruments not specifically refined for the process. In doing psychobiographical work, I usually start with childhood, family dynamics, life crises, and the mechanisms of defense such as denial, projection, regression, repression, reaction formation, splitting, and intellectualization.

JI: You seem to prefer doing psychohistory by theorizing autobiographically, through your own life, and not by one guiding master theory. Is this impression right?

PHE: I’m not sure I understand what you mean by “theorizing autobiographically” throughout my life. Certainly, I prefer to deal with concrete situations and individuals than to wander much into grand theory. In a published exchange with my late friend Rudy Binion (1927-2011), I, falling back on the usage by Leo Tolstoy and Isaiah Berlin, refer to being like a fox who sniffs around and knows many separate things, as opposed to an intellectual hedgehog who looks out over the prairie and makes grand statements. Karl Marx was a striking example of such a hedgehog. The broad
generalizations that I do have are usually arrived at over time after extensive research and I am slow to put them in print.

**JI:** You also try to avoid pathologizing and labeling the subjects with diagnostic categories that support expertise and authoritarian psychopower rather than insightful understanding about human subjects and their doings. However, occasionally you have yourself used diagnostic and clinical terms, for example, when writing on Jimmy Carter and his “narcissistic personality with obsessive compulsive defenses” and his childhood “oral rage characteristic of narcissistic personalities.” Certainly, you have to refer to some psychological concepts (for example, “disorders,” “defenses,” etc.), but how can you use them without the danger of forced labeling?

**PHE:** Your term “authoritarian psychopower,” both baffles and bemuses me. What do you mean? It is true that occasionally I use diagnostic and clinical terms, although far less than in my initial psychojournalistic article, “Three Days in Plains,” where I became very insecure about what I was presenting regarding a sitting president of the United States and wanted to cover over my insecurity by labeling Carter a “narcissistic personality with obsessive compulsive defenses.” I remember my insecurity regarding publishing and these ideas came to me as I sat in a psychoanalytic course on narcissism and borderline personalities. Before the article was even in print, I realized that the labeling, on which I have occasionally been complimented, was a defensive act on my part. Subsequently, when I had the same impulse, I sought to find out why I was thinking of putting technical terminologies into print. You will find that many of my subsequent usages are suggestive, rather than diagnoses of my subjects. Thus, in writing about William Jefferson Clinton, I suggested that he, like perhaps all presidents, was similar to a Rorschach test for much of the electorate, and that the term “superego lacunae” was perhaps a helpful idea to understand some of the anomalies in his behavior.

**JI:** You stress empathy and countertransference as important research tools. Other researchers also use these tools. Why do you choose these tools above others in the psychoanalytical toolbox?

**PHE:** Empathy is an essential tool, I’m almost tempted to say the essential tool, of the psychobiographer. We need to get as close to our subject’s reality as possible if we are going to do a good job. Like a psychoanalyst with a patient, a psychohistorian needs to understand the feelings induced by the subject, as well as those
brought to the situation out of his or her own past or emotional needs.

**JI:** What kind of psychology of research/researchers do such methods imply?

**PHE:** A methodology in which the researcher is willing to probe deeply into the self. Because I have chosen to write on presidential candidates and presidents, this has been extremely important. I have strong feelings about the direction in which my country is going and where certain individuals would take it.

**JI:** What has guided you in your teaching of psychohistory? I read your interesting early paper “Helping People Learn” (Psychohistory: Bulletin of the International Psychohistorical Association, 3 [1], 1979) in which you confess, “I know down deep I’ve never been able to teach anyone. My function is helping others to learn.” You have also mentioned that the quest for knowledge means integrating powerful emotion with intellect, and for that purpose you have sometimes taken advantage of a “teachable moment,” deviating from pre-conceived plans and focusing on seemingly unrelated materials on your students’ minds. Can you elaborate on that special “moment”?

**PHE:** On a number of occasions, I’ve written on the process of teaching psychohistorically and of teaching psychohistory itself. Indeed, at the request of the editor of the Journal of Psychohistory, I am writing a collaborative article with two students on this very subject. Helping others to learn is a complex business because people have both an enormous quest for knowledge and great resistance to it. “Teachable moments” occur on many occasions. For example, September 11, 2001 occurred while I was teaching a class some 30 miles from Ground Zero. I kept on teaching, and indeed was able to start the next course, which happened to be on psychohistory, working to get the students to have some understanding of their feelings on this tragedy. In the next two years, I taught four sections of senior seminar, called “9/11 and the Psychology of Terrorism,” which the students started by writing a 10 page paper on their experience of the events. I discarded this course when too many of the students showed that they had their personal reality overwritten by the collective memory that was formulated by our political leaders and reflected in the media. Another teachable moment occurred when my students responded to the Challenger spaceship disaster.
JI: Have you had supervision concerning your teaching?

PHE: Teaching supervision is an excellent idea, which was never directly available to me early in my career. Indirectly, some of it occurred in the course of my own psychoanalysis and in lengthy conversations with colleagues. In the 21st century, my college has added a Resource Center for teachers, which includes “Teaching Circles” in which colleagues share their experiences in the classroom. Peer supervision in teaching is quite valuable, as I had found it to be in psychoanalytic practice where I had a number of lengthy supervisions.

JI: What kind of training do you see suitable for psychohistorians?

PHE: Self-trained psychohistorians have done a wonderful job of enlarging our knowledge. In an ideal situation, a psychohistorian would be trained in both an analytic institute and history department, something that Peter Loewenberg, now retired to do other things, did at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) with those grad students who were open to it. Most colleagues come to psychohistory when they are working on a specific project and need to deepen their knowledge, or they uncover a new source. There’s no single route to doing first-rate psychohistory, but if one could do only one thing, I would recommend an in-depth personal analysis as a starting point.

JI: First, Lloyd deMause maintained the independence of psychohistory among the academic disciplines, but later many academics wanted to place psychohistory out of academia, claiming psychohistorical research equaled unfounded personal fantasizing that “shrinks history.” How do you see the academic position of psychohistory in the present?

PHE: History and psychology departments are inclined to be hostile to the idea of psychohistory, but in fact individual scholars are inclined to use psychohistorical methodologies and concepts when they confront problems in their work. Anthropology, literature, political science, and sociology departments are inclined to be more open to our concepts and methods.

JI: With the death of Henry Lawton and Lloyd deMause’s illness, you are the only colleague to have taken part in every annual convention of the International Psychohistorical Association (your first presentation was “The Childhood of Jimmy Carter”). You
have also presented in the convention quite intensively. In addition, there is the Psychohistory Forum (started in 1983) that you direct. What kind of historic and cultural roles (connected to splits, loyalties, urges, dependencies, differentiations, and autonomies) do both of these organizations play on the stage of your mind?

**PHE:** Compared to other organizations, there have not been many splits in the IPA; rather, there has been an inclination for people to drop out and do other things, sometimes in other fields, and sometimes within psychohistory. Like a family, this organization is complex, and I suspect someday, someone will write a psychohistory of it.

**JI:** Psychohistory has traditionally applied psychoanalytic and/or psychodynamic theories and methods in its endeavors. Rudolph Binion called the clinical psychoanalytic inclination, the speculative linking of historical events with clinical material, a “false start” for psychohistory. It included a shortage of historical material on childhood, the failure to immerse both intellectually and emotionally on the subject of human history and culture, and their motivational underpinnings. It also prioritized individual psychology over group psychology and pathology over normalcy. What is your relation to such criticisms against applying psychoanalysis to psychohistory?

**PHE:** My brilliant and erudite friend Rudy Binion certainly viewed our field very differently than I do. I learned an enormous amount from him and he, for all of our differences, liked to say that Clio’s Psyche was the one journal he picked up and read from start to finish.

**JI:** Could a renewal of psychohistory navigate it toward cognitive research and even toward neuroscience? Some humanities (for example literary research) are trying to find interdisciplinary allies in natural sciences. Lloyd deMauser has called for using neurobiological knowledge for psychohistorically examining the dissociated (traumatized) neural network and its manifestations on the social stage and through the “social alters.” I once proposed a prospect for (evolutionary) “neuropsychohistory” that would gain from cognitive, attachment, and neurodevelopmental research; brain studies; and evolutionary psychology. Do you find such a prospect possible?

**PHE:** Yes, but there are more knowledgeable colleagues to speak to about these issues so I will pass.
JI: What about applying quantitative techniques to historical data? For example, Dean Keith Simonton has reminded psychohistorians about the assets of utilizing what he has called “historiometry” (measurement and statistical techniques) in the service of psychological-historical analysis.

PHE: Facts are quite powerful, and I have great respect for them. Dean Keith Simonton is a brilliant colleague who sometimes writes for and subscribes to our journal.

JI: You have a keen and profound interest in the history of psychohistory, and you have already written many exciting articles in that area. What are you working on now concerning the history of psychohistory? Are you planning to publish a compilation work on that subject?

PHE: Yes, I have a profound interest in the history of our field and will finish writing my book, *Pioneers of Insights: The Makers and Making of Psychohistory*.

JI: How can we invite new people to the field?

PHE: By doing good work and using electronic media more effectively.

JI: The contexts of American and European historical research are not identical, which gives possibilities for not only fruitful dialogues but also for splits and estrangement. This traditional divide is not the only one. The “growing economies” of China, India, Brazil, and parts of Africa present new challenges for research cooperation. How can we advance multicultural and multidisciplinary psychohistorical research? Are we still narcissistically unipolar (for example, American-centered and self-satisfied, claiming that “we already have a long history of immigration and multicultural experience”), and defensive against “them,” while the strict division into “us” and “them” has actually disappeared?

PHE: I am heartened by the spread of psychohistory around the world. This last summer there were valuable psychohistorical activities in Germany and France. I know of several colleagues in Brazil doing similar work. It is promising that the new Book Review Editor of the *Journal of Psychohistory* is located in China. Also, we have added the category of International Membership to the Psychohistory Forum.

JI: Just shortly (because you have already written on this),
what kind of thoughts do you now have about the future of psychohistory? In Clio’s Psyche (March 2000), you looked back and detected the partial success but also “bright prospects” of psychohistory since “psychoanalytic, psychological, psychohistorical, and therapeutic concepts permeate all aspects of society, and have transformed the way that we see the world.” Is this assessment still valid, or has the “psycho” become “psychobabble”? More popular, indeed, but without natural scientific backing?

**PHE:** I remain optimistic about the prospects of our field, although not as enthusiastically so as in 2000. So many of our ideas, concerns, and much of our language has gone mainstream in society. Our last issue has considerable discussion of the past, present, and future prospects of our field.

**JI:** The classic question that you perhaps have not answered before: Which three of your works are you most proud of, and why?

**PHE:** What I am working on at the moment is usually my favorite. When I look back at my more than 300 articles (most rather short), chapters, edited volumes, etc., there are a few that stand out. In terms of my 25 articles on presidents, presidential candidates, and elections, my favorite is on Paul Tsongas, “Character, Cancer and Economic Regeneration in the 1992 Presidential Campaign of Senator Paul E. Tsongas.” This is because I found the late senator to be the most genuine and open human being of all those I have studied. He dealt with an extremely important subject of economic regeneration and his friends and relatives whom I interviewed were extraordinarily open, honest, and positive in discussing him. I do have a fond spot for my chapter, “Lies My Parents Told Me: The Impact of Immigrant Parents on Their Son” in my co-edited book *Immigrant Experiences* (1997). “The Successes and Obstacles to the Interdisciplinary Marriage of Psychology and History,” in Cristian Tileagă and Jovan Byford, eds., *Psychology and History, Interdisciplinary Explorations* (Cambridge University Press, 2014), took an enormous amount of work and is a piece I take great pride in having written.

**JI:** An important aspect in applying psychohistorical knowledge is the perspective for intra- and interpersonal change and human constructive potential worldwide. How has psychohistory changed you in your personal development, and how do you see its influence on worldwide psychosocial and psychocultural
change under corporate fundamentalisms and emerging anti-corporate rebellion?

**PHE:** It is impossible for me to separate my long personal and group psychoanalysis, which was completed before the foundation of our journal, from my growth as an individual and editor. I certainly have a much greater knowledge and confidence in the direction we have chosen to follow than when we started in 1994. It is hard to definitively show any influence of psychohistory on worldwide change. If you see it happening, as well as an “anti-corporate rebellion,” perhaps you would like to write this up and submit it to Clio’s Psyche as an article.

**JI:** What future special issues of Clio’s Psyche do you have in mind?

**PHE:** I always have a variety of ideas for symposia, special features, and special issues. At the present time I am interested in publishing on the psychology/psychoanalysis of the following:

- Psychobiography; Election 2016 Candidates, Emotions, and Political Illusions
- The Impact of Celebrity Culture on America
- Dependency and Independency in the Family, Politics, and Society
- TV as Object Relations: Our Emotional Connection to Fantasy
- Entrepreneurship, Innovation, and Business Success
- Images and Psychology of Enemies and Hatred through the Ages
- The Intrapsychic and Societal Processes of the American Acceptance of Homosexuality
- Environmentalism and Anti-Environmentalism
- The Contemporary American Fascination with Animals
- Anti-Government Fantasies and Civilization

The problem is not coming up with ideas, but finding authors to write on them from a psychohistorical perspective. When guest editors come up with good ideas I am delighted to assist their endeavors, provided they are willing to do the serious work involved.

Thanks for sending me these questions several years ago and checking the interview.

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Applied Psychohistory

Putin’s Fulfillment of Russian History

Peter Petschauer—Appalachian State University

Introduction

Vladimir Putin, Russia’s president until 2018, seems set on antagonizing leaders of countries surrounding Russia and others who must deal with his increasingly aggressive foreign policy decisions. Western leaders, the public, and the media, for the most part, denounce his attempts to regain territories he argues are and always have belonged to “Mother Russia.” Thus he is seen as continuously endeavoring to reintegrate “lost Russian provinces” rather than independent countries. Even when outsiders seem to understand him, such as in an interview, he may set off in an unexpected direction, thus confounding those who might actually support him.

Putin and his countrymen see the situation differently. They argue that the NATO affiliated countries that surround Western Russia are threatening its borders, if not its very existence. Additionally, they argue that Russia’s interests must be defended wherever possible. Furthermore, that the many millions of Russian speakers must be reintegrated into the Russian fold, by means of force if necessary. More than this, Putin and the Russian public seem tuned to the same chord; they see Russia as a great power, as it has been idealized under Peter the Great, Stalin, and other rulers.

Nuanced approaches to these different visions have become almost impossible. However, understanding Putin’s background and his internal motivations better would be especially helpful for Western nations.

Siege, War, KGB, and Russian History

Putin, born in 1952 as the third and only surviving son of a
Leningrad (now again St. Petersburg) couple, was deeply influenced and shaped by several major circumstances and events.

First, during his childhood, the city had just begun to recover from the terrible, nearly 900-day siege by the German armed forces. Important for Putin’s development is that his older brother died in 1942 during the siege and his father barely rescued his mother during the same time as she was about to be carted off as dead by a crew removing bodies from apartments and streets. There is an additional undertone to this experience; the city is associated with Peter the Great and yet remained for long periods of time at the periphery of the vast Russian Empire. Despite its importance, it could not because of distance and did not because of a lack of will receive sufficient support from the central government during the siege.

Because Putin was born after WWII, he experienced neither the encirclement of the city nor the war itself, but his worldview was shaped in part by the stories of that time and the tangible destruction. When I visited the city for the first time in the early 60s, it had just begun to recover in demonstrable ways, but even then the evidence of the war remained readily discernable.

To support my point, 70 years after the liberation of Leningrad, Putin movingly spoke at the Leningrad war memorial about his city’s encirclement and the heroism of the Soviet soldiers who finally freed the city from the German forces on January 26, 1944.

Indeed, the physical encirclement of Leningrad fed into Putin’s childhood understanding of the world, as did throwing off the siege and winning the Great Patriotic War. Today the hardships of the siege and the heroism of the war reverberate in his and his fellow citizens’ psyche as both a perceived and real fear of NATO and other encirclements that must be resisted and broken. His father’s wartime sacrifices and his dramatic rescue of his mother have led Putin to assume/integrate how he, as the son, can and must save the Motherland. There would be no greater fulfillment of his father’s memory than to reenact his sacrifice and heroism. Like father, like son.

Putin’s KGB training and its associated assignment in East Germany reinforced his fear of outsiders. He served there during the height of the Cold War with American missiles staring down from the West and Chinese armies threatening from the East. My lengthy conversations with one of Nikita Khrushchev’s attendants in New York City in the early 1960s confirmed this paranoia. The
young KGB officer was deeply afraid of Chinese hordes coming across the Mongolian border and overwhelming lesser Soviet forces. Coincidentally, he was from Leningrad, but I did not understand then the potential connection between paranoia of outsiders and the past of that city.

Second, the trauma of the post-siege experience and losses of the Second World War lingered throughout Soviet and Russian society and in Putin’s own family. His father fought and was wounded during that war; he related to his son details of his combat exposures. These tales intrigued the boy and influenced him sufficiently to have specialists later double-check and, ultimately, confirm his father’s experiences.

Along with what Putin learned about the trauma of Leningrad’s encirclement, his father’s stories, and other sources of information about WWII (including movies of the 50s and 60s that often glorified the war), the young man grew convinced that war was a viable, and possibly desirable, test of internal strength and greatness. The then Soviet Union was nearly overrun by the German armed forces and the Western parts of the country experienced a brutal occupation, an enormous loss of human life, and the destruction of almost the entire area’s infrastructure. One important aspect learned was that the Soviet Union recovered, like the Russian Empire had many times before, and that part of this lesson was and is that only courage, fighting, and sacrifice can break encirclements and serve Russia’s true national interests. For example, he said at the Victory Day Parade on May 10, 2015: “Our fathers and grandfathers lived through unbearable sufferings, hardships and losses. They worked till exhaustion, at the limit of human capacity. They fought even unto death. They proved the example of honour [sic] and true patriotism” (http://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/vladimir-putin-victory-day-not-my-grandmother).

Third, it is a valid assumption that Putin, like the vast majority of Russian children then, was swaddled and beaten regularly both at home and in school. In an exception to the rule though, he was beaten by his father, not his mother. While some psychohistorians have argued that one should not over-emphasize the impact of swaddling and abusive childrearing practices like beating and shaming, most children tend to repeat the practices of their parents. While psychohistorian Lloyd deMause argued that some children learn from the abuse of their parents not to do the same to their own children and thus potentially create a new psycho-class, many chil-
dren copy parental abuse and later practice it as a tool for their own private and public gain. Their experience, in other words, can become a crude or sophisticated approach to manipulate and oppress those around them. In Putin’s case, we know that he not only beat his wife while he served in the KGB in then East Germany, but he also “slept around,” freeing himself, in a sense, from the hold of her authority. His KGB training in addition helped him refine his thinking about how to deal with internal dissent.

Fourth, Putin’s first name fits well with Russia’s past. Named after Vladimir, the Grand Prince of Kiev, Putin did not openly write or speak of his namesake, but it would be surprising if he did not find himself attracted to this medieval conqueror and saint. As a matter of fact, he argued during a 60 Minutes interview in September 2015 that Kiev was part of Russian history from the very beginning. Indeed, even American, Russian, and Soviet history courses for decades began with Kievan Rus (present day Ukraine).

This is a central aspect of Putin’s understanding of the past and explains much about the Russian psyche and the support for his approach to internal and foreign policy. Specifically, Russia has experienced multiple cycles of expansion and contraction since the time of Kievan Rus. From then, there was an expansion during the reign of Vladimir the Great that was followed by a gradual decline that culminated in the attack by Tatars in the 1240s. The small principality of Muscovy survived this onslaught and thrived over the next 200 years in the northern forests, content to be tax collectors for the Tatars, and far away from their main strongholds. It took its greatest initial steps outward under Ivan the Terrible (1547-84) but that expansion was almost immediately followed by external attacks and the massive contraction of the early 17th century during the Time of Troubles.

After a gradual stabilizing of the kingdom, Peter the Great (1694-1725) in the early 18th century pushed toward the northwest, southeast, and into Siberia. The lull of mid-eighteenth century was followed later in the century by Catherine the Great’s push southward and westward. In the 19th century, Alexander I (1801-25) incorporated Finland and Nicolas I moved toward the Caucasus and Central Asia. These successes were followed by the contraction during WWI. The Soviet Union recovered many of these territories only to lose them at the outset of WWII. Stalin (1924-53) then used this war to move further into Eastern Europe, only for this territory to be lost in the contraction after the Soviet Union’s collapse.
Putin and other Russians felt betrayed when the West did not live up to President George H.W. Bush’s promise to Mikhail S. Gorbachev that the former Soviet dominated areas in Eastern Europe joining NATO would not mean U.S. and other western troops would not be moved to the Russian frontier. One could argue that Putin’s attacks in Georgia and South Ossetia, and then in Ukraine voided this promise.

Past Russian rulers succeeded in three major ways: One, through internal administrative, military, economic, and religious reforms. Two, through internal oppression of opposition by nobles, military and secret police, provincial leaders and oligarchs and, more recently, dissident voices. Three, though external diplomatic and military initiatives.

**Confluences**

Putin’s childhood experiences of swaddling, beating, and shaming were not unlike those of most of his contemporaries. He wanted and continues to want, like others, to escape from this past and yet repeats it on a personal and familial level. All the while, there is admiration for those who escape these fetters and rise to positions of influence. Thus his efforts to reach the top of the society and to be in charge are demonstrated by showing himself as heroic, strong, on horseback, bare-chested, shooting bow and arrow, and associating with rough gangs, etc. These seemingly outrageous behaviors fit the image of himself as having overcome his restraints and thus an encouragement to others to do the same. In his eyes these are positive ways to escape the burdens of the past and he places it, even if he does not himself always follow it, counter to escaping alcohol and abuse.

Putin’s understanding of Russia’s past, including the rather immediate and horrific events of WWII and more specifically those of Leningrad (St. Petersburg), overlap with the collective Russian experience. His general education reinforced the understanding of the successes and failures of Imperial Russia and the Soviet Union, all of which was enhanced by KGB training. Thus, he was indoctrinated to the governing cycles of internal reforms, manipulation, expansion, and oppression of internal opposition.

Russians generally approve of Putin’s efforts to resurrect the glorious past with which they associate themselves. As a group, they see their nation as having been a world power, one not pushed around by foreign leaders and nations. They resent President
Obama’s recent statement that Russia has become no more than a regional power. Because of the collective desire for Russians to ward off such impressions and to assert their perception of Russia as a great nation, they accept the current hardships in the assumption that their suffering will lead to the desired result. They are also willing to support and participate in the tools Russian leaders have used in the past including oppression, deprivation, diplomacy, and warfare.

No one who has carefully studied Russian history, from child-rearing to war-making, should be surprised that Putin tries to reconquer lost territories in the Caucasus, the Crimea and Ukraine, and finally attempt to control the outcome in Syria and search for oil in the Arctic. As Supreme Commander of Russian forces and interests, as he understands it, Putin is doing no more than fulfilling his own and Russia’s destiny to be free to explore the full extent of its greatness.

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**Mad Men and the Psychology of Nostalgia**

**David Beisel**—RCC-SUNY

Seven years and millions of fans, Emmys as the best drama on television four years running, Golden Globe Awards, numerous toy spin-offs, displays in the windows of Banana Republic, influence in the design of new Brooks Brothers suits, Internet dialogues, books, a blog, extensive media coverage—all clearly mark the popular AMC television series *Mad Men* (2007-2015) as a major cultural phenomenon. The series has now ended its seventh and final season. It is time for serious psychological analysis. A number of books have already appeared, among them Stephanie Newman’s *Mad Men on the Couch* (2012) and *Mad Men, Mad World: Sex,
Politics, Style, and the 1960s (2013), edited by Lauren Goodlad, Lila Kaganovski, and Robert A. Ruskin. Succeeding in some ways, failing in others, these books fail to put the series in the correct context.

At the core of Mad Men’s popularity—at least as one of its components—is the central theme of the collective psychology of nostalgia. Recent psychological studies claim to have shown that nostalgia has healing properties. There may be something to this since invoking memories of an earlier idealized Eden-like era can provide warm, pleasant feelings and help define one’s life path, neither of which has to do with escapism. On the other hand, we recognize that the bitter-sweet feelings that can be evoked by reminiscing has something to do with mourning, while the allure of a particular past may be driven by unconscious needs to resolve unresolved issues in the present as well as by compulsions to relive a traumatized past.

Some of those issues revolve around memories of childhood. Mad Men’s usually close-mouthed creator, Matthew Weiner, revealed in a New Yorker interview (March 23, 2015) that he has gotten many comments about his main character, Don Draper, as a father. People say: “Don reminds me of my dad. I never know what he’s thinking” (38). Don himself comments on nostalgia in “The Wheel” episode from 2007: “Teddy told me that in Greek, ‘nostalgia’ literally means ‘the pain from an old wound.’ It’s a twinge in your heart far more powerful than memory alone. It goes backwards, and forwards…it takes us to a place where we ache to go again… It lets us travel the way a child travels—around and around.”

It is not just the traumatic components of nostalgia that matter. Whatever past each era chooses to be nostalgic about shifts over time, almost from decade to decade. If we take current designer trends as our guide, the nostalgia system of 2015 focuses on the 1990s. If we take the popularity of television programs as our guide, the nostalgia of the 1970s was focused on the 1950s (Mash, Happy Days). Why does a particular group pick a particular era and not another to be nostalgic about? What historical psychodynamics lie behind such choices? Whose nostalgia is it exactly? What ages and occupational and social groups are attracted? For what reasons? Assuming a consistent quality of production, since my hypothesis is that it is a particular historical period that attracts, I’ll look first at the historical world invoked by the Mad Men series.
The title *Mad Men* derives from a phrase coined back in the late 1950s. So many advertising firms were located on Manhattan’s Madison Avenue that Americans began using the metaphor “Madison Avenue” as a symbolic shorthand for the advertising industry as a whole. The shorter phrase “Mad Men” thus abbreviated “Madison Avenue” while artfully folding “ad” into “Mad” and adding the word “Men” to emphasize the male dominance of the industry. (Some readers may be inclined to consider deeper associations of the word “mad” to anger and insanity.)

The series begins at the start of the 1960s. Each episode follows the private and professional fortunes of a number of central characters, most notably Don Draper (played by actor John Hamm), employed by the fictional advertising firm Sterling Cooper (named after its two founding partners). Many women are central to the drama, chief among them Don’s first wife Betsy and two of the women who work at the firm: Peggy Olson, a naïve, ambitious, and talented worker who comes to represent the emerging counterculture and feminist awareness of the 1960s; and Joan Harris, a hip, sexy office manager who wears brightly-colored tight dresses and is filled with manipulative wisdom. Both in their own ways are learning how to negotiate success in a man’s world.

The show is about more than the shifting roles of women. It explores compelling universal questions such as the structure of company politics and Machiavellian power plays. It looks at questions of creativity, who owns, exploits, and steals intellectual property—issues as alive today as they were then—not to mention complex personal interactions between men/women and adults/children.

Like any good mini-series, individual programs sometimes leave viewers wondering about an unsolved mystery or two. Each new episode provides just enough new information to expose unexpected twists meant to reveal hidden layers to this or that character. *Mad Men* is most emphatically entertainment, not a historical documentary. Each episode’s main focus is on what’s happening in the firm Sterling Cooper and in the private lives of the show’s major characters, not on the historical events surrounding those lives. Yet, whenever a work of fiction places itself in a historical moment—the nostalgic bait—it automatically invites questions about how well that fiction re-presents that history. Because *Mad Men* offers a fictional window into a particular past—America in the early 1960s—it’s fair to wonder how authentically that past is portrayed. So we must think ourselves back into the early 1960s.
This was a time when men wore hats, when quaint antiques like gas-guzzling autos equipped with enormous tailfins roamed the roads, when 12-inch black-and-white television sets with rabbit ears offered a mere seven channels, when telephone booths and dial phones were common, when everyone smoked cigarettes and only jazz musicians snorted coke. Some social historians have distorted this picture by paying too much attention to the forerunners of the later 60s counterculture. In fact, a relative few radical (and exciting) “rebels-without-a-cause” actually took to the road with Jack Kerouac, howled with Allen Ginsberg and other Beats, smoked a little grass, consumed the music of John Coltrane, or were hip to the outrageous cutting-edge humor of Lenny Bruce.

Most button-down Americans were quite satisfied with the lives they led. It is well known that at the time the family was portrayed as perfection itself—so the media told us. The patriarchal family was not only the best way a family could be organized, it was the only way. Never mind the possibility of alternatives; there were no alternatives. Father always knew best.

In a man’s world, women were second-class citizens, idealized either as perfect Madonna-like objects, or seen as exciting sexual beings fragmented into body parts, exploited in either case and ridiculed as objects. Magazines, novels, radio, television, and movies all perpetuated the same stereotypes: men were rational and logical, women irrational and emotional. All women regardless of hair color were seen as “dumb blondes.” No matter how old, competent, or wise a woman might be she was inevitably referred to as “girl.” These well-known stereotypes are seen in nearly every episode of Mad Men. The techniques used to invoke the era are masterfully handled. Writing, acting, directing, editing, clothing styles, furnishings, and the superb set designs work successfully to recapture the era. This is crucial. Scrupulous attention to detail sustains that particular era’s nostalgic grip, something British television is particularly good at (The Tudors, Wolf Hall, Downton Abbey).

Each Mad Men episode artfully weaves historical events into the fabric of each character’s story. The Korean War is central to the show’s main male character, Don Draper. With the Cold War and McCarthyite paranoia as backdrop, in ensuing seasons we traverse the 1960s from the Cuban Missile Crisis to JFK’s assassination, through race relations, the Civil Rights Movement, the Vietnam War, the King and Kennedy assassinations, the moon landing, and the 1969 New York Mets World Series Championship.
In early episodes of the first season, the Kennedy-Nixon presidential race is on. The men at Sterling Cooper make fun of JFK’s youth and good looks. They are certain Nixon’s going to win. Anti-Semitism, rampant among the WASP elite, is accepted as a matter of course. So are racism and sexism, all quite blatant. Many statements are made reminding us that we are in the time of segregated southern universities and lunch counters: there were no women at Princeton and only one Jew at Yale.

References to sporting events—the Cassius Clay-Sonny Liston fight—make episodes seem real, as do references to actual advertising campaigns (Playtex gloves, Jantzen bathing suits, Life cereal, Samsonite luggage, American Airlines). Popular high-end restaurants are mentioned (the Pen & Pencil, 21, and popular watering holes such as P.J. Clarke’s). The Automat is present as are popular television programs such as the original Twilight Zone. People read newspapers like The Journal-American which no longer exist. All are used in overt and subtle ways to successfully interweave the historical, the psychological, and the personal. Case in point is the beautifully crafted sequence involving Don and his wife on Valentine’s Day, 1962.

Draper and Betsy have had drinks in the bar of the exclusive Savoy Hotel then impulsively take a room for a spontaneous romantic evening. Though his wife is a stunningly beautiful woman who emerges from the bathroom in a sexy outfit, Don—a ladies’ man with a long resume of extramarital flings—can’t perform.

They lie together in the bed in the dark. Don, now holding a primitive-looking remote device, turns on the television set (rabbit ears and small screen), only to find First Lady Jacqueline Kennedy conducting the first ever guided tour of the White House, an actual televised event watched in fascination by millions of Americans on Valentine’s Day exactly 50 years ago when this episode was aired. What the Mad Men script writers leave unsaid, but is implicit in the juxtaposition of these events, is the irony between Don’s dysfunctional, failing marriage—caused in part by his own womanizing—in contrast with the idealized fantasy held by millions of Americans of JFK and Jackie’s “perfect” marriage, despite, as we now know, JFK’s incessant behind-the-scenes philandering. This puts me finally in mind of the theme of deception, an ongoing thread central to each show’s episode.

It turns out that many presented realities are not always what
they seem. Early on in the series viewers learn that “Don Draper” is really not Don Draper. He has had (and is having) a secret life. He has disguised himself, draped himself in the identity of another. It is a deception which makes him a perfect fit for the advertising world, as indeed are so many of his fellow workers. Don not only creates illusions for a living but is himself an illusion, having assumed the identity of another during the Korean War. In doing so he has transformed himself into the perfect symbolic manifestation and personality type for the job of manufacturing imaginary wants and urges, selling them to Americans as their own. It is a perfect reflection of the digitized America we have come to know in the 21st century.

The same is true for Don’s colleagues. It is both their game and who they are. The Mad Men of Sterling Cooper are after all professional deceivers. It’s their business to sell fantasies and hidden and denied impulses through a combination of outright lies, deceptions, distortions, and sophisticated nuances, a business culture that attracts men of that kind, or that eventually rubs off on them, spilling over into their private lives and corrupting them in certain ways, especially in their relationships with women. A few have some degree of integrity, yet it is clear that many have lost their moral compass, perhaps even their souls, as is symbolized in the fall from Grace represented by the falling shadow figure viewers see in the opening credits of each episode.

Earlier seasons included many revealing flashbacks to Don’s early years as a lonely, unwanted, physically abused “whore child” who grew up in a brothel. They offer clues from his childhood history to the person he has become as an adult. In several episodes Don tries again and again to escape awareness of his own underlying self-deceptions by denying the insights of psychology: he debunks Freud, making reference at more than one point to “some bullshit psychological research.” This carries broader implications. It echoes journalist Vance Packard’s 1957 expose, The Hidden Persuaders, which showed the deceptive and subliminal practices advertising firms were employing, and still employ.

The irony is that we are looking at a process that is being used on us. The show deceives, seducing us into believing we’re witnessing an actual narrative from the early 1960s when it’s nothing more than a television program unfolding in the 21st century. We’ve bought the illusion wholesale, become participants in our own deception. It is the show’s historical authenticity which rein-
forces its nostalgic appeal. Nevertheless, some critics have raised questions about its historical authenticity.

An enormous amount of drinking and smoking takes place in each episode, so that at times it seems to be a caricature. People I’ve consulted testify to the reality of the portrayal, insisting it really was that way back then.

About three years ago, a critic wrote a cranky critique of Mad Men in The New York Review of Books. One of his complaints was that the male-female interaction depicted in the show was exaggerated and inauthentic. Here are the responses of two women who should know: Gloria Steinem and Molly Haskell.

When asked in early March 2012 at a presentation at the 92nd Street Y in Manhattan about the authenticity of how women are portrayed in the Mad Men series, feminist icon Gloria Steinem said the recently ill-fated TV series The Playboy Club was a more accurate depiction since it presented a world even more demeaning of women than Mad Men. Mad Men treats women with a little dignity and respect—at least some of the time.

The well-known film critic and writer Molly Haskell wrote a response to the commentary in The New York Review of Books, (NYRB) identifying herself “As a card-carrying member of the Mad Men generation,” confessing that “having cut my professional teeth in advertising/PR, I’m unnerved at how closely…[the show] mirrors the workplace in which I came of age” (February 24, 2011). She came to New York in 1962

with an English degree newly in hand. After a humiliating series of interviews for ‘writing’ jobs in publishing and advertising, I leapt at the chance to become a ‘Girl Friday’ at Univac, the computer division of Sperry Rand. There would be secretarial duties for a senior male copywriter, but I would also write press releases and eventually have my own cubicle. In other words I was Peggy, with a slightly better wardrobe and at least a passing knowledge of birth control. The head of the department, on whom I had a violent crush, was a blonde John Hamm, devastatingly handsome, mysterious, and hard-driving. There was a buxom Joan-like secretary who was having an affair with one of the executives, and pointedly shed me of some of my illusions and sartorial naivetés (NYRB, March 24, 2011).

In addition, writes Haskell, “We socialized together, had three-
martini lunches…. For those of us who’d grown up in the Fifties, there was as yet no idea of sexual equality or equal pay to which we could attach ourselves.”

To Haskell, the appeal of the series has to do with “its deft blend of satire and sympathy,” confessing it “has had the cathartic effect of well-imagined art in allowing me to both recognize and gain a forgiving distance from a sometimes embarrassing younger self.” For that younger self, things were about to change. The Feminist Movement was ready to take off. In that process women not only impacted their own lives but impacted and helped invigorate other social movements, including the Civil Rights Movement, the Gay Rights Movement, and the Children’s Rights movement.

We are nostalgic because that particular past allows us to re-imagine ourselves in our youthful, idealistic exuberance, marvel at how naïve we were, and remember our journey to maturity as we mourn lost things. It seems clear that whatever era we chose to be nostalgic about has to do with age cohorts, partly corroborated by my non-scientific survey of 150 of my students (ages 18-22) which reveals that while half have never heard of Mad Men, among those who have, only a handful have actually watched it. The program is for those who were young adults in the 1960s now in their 60s, and for those now in their 40s who were children in the 1960s.

For reasons beyond the scope of this paper, something of a sea of change occurred about three years ago when many ardent fans suddenly found the show boring, “not up to the level of past episodes,” and refused to tune in any longer. Since neither production values nor historical authenticity nor the levels of acting had changed, I assume what had changed was something in the audience. As the 2000s became the 2010s, whatever hidden emotions needed to be worked through in the 2000s had been touched upon sufficiently to make a large portion of Mad Men’s fan base ready to link their nostalgia systems to a new era.

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Resistances and Counter-Resistances in Psychohistory

Juhani Ihanus—University of Helsinki

Psychohistorians, like psychoanalysts before them, have become accustomed to detecting and revealing persistent resistances to their field from other disciplinary fields. In several instances, Lloyd deMause repeated the idea that psychohistory, as an emerging investigative enterprise, was surrounded by hostile, reluctant, or indifferent opponents. The opponents were accused of missing the crucial points of psychohistorical orientation and research. Such argumentation claimed that the opponents misunderstood historical data, for example, concerning the history of childhood, and the psychodynamics of small or large groups and their leaders. They seemed to fail or refuse to accept the role personal attachments, childhood experiences, unconscious conflicts and motivations, and embodied emotional traumas played in human (both distant and contemporary) history, including relations to past and present leaders and ideologies.

When Lloyd deMause encountered surprising evasions from a group of American psychotherapists to express their professional appraisals on political issues (e.g. Richard Nixon’s personality and its influence on his enemy chase, the imminent threat of nuclear war), he concluded that they did not want to get involved with personally menacing problems. Instead of that, they had formed “The Group-fantasy of Specialization” that “denies the direct application of the insights of psychotherapy to history” (deMause, “Psychohistory and Psychotherapy,” in Lloyd deMause, ed., The New Psychohistory, 1975, 309). The burden of research on historical and political events was de-emotionalized and handed over to the social sciences. However, deMause made an acute observation by stating that “most of the theories of the ‘social sciences’ have been motivated by a flight from psychology, a vast defensive response to the growing discoveries of depth psychology” (310).

Although there are several orientations in psychology, most of them have made important findings on how the human mind works. Psychohistorians’ task is to apply psychological knowledge to highlighting how the human mind works in historical and political settings. It may be that leaning heavily on “depth psychology,” psychoanalysis, or psychodynamically oriented psychology was a
“false start” for psychohistory (see Rudolph Binion, “Psychohistory’s False Start,” Clio's Psyche, 6, 4, 2000, 133, 138–39). Even if mainstream academic psychology is currently cognitively and neuroscientifically oriented, psychohistorians can learn from, and creatively use, different orientations of psychology. No single theory should be prioritized in the psychological interpretations of history. An urgent work for psychohistorians is to be open not only to dissident views but to their own ambivalences, defensiveness, and resistance.

As David R. Beisel has shown, there is strong resistance to psychology in Holocaust studies (“Resistance to Holocaust Scholarship,” The Journal of Psychohistory, 27, 2, 1999, 124–35), and in history at large (“Psychohistory and the Historians: 1970–2015,” Clio's Psyche, 22, 1–2, 2015, 15–20). Resistance has prevailed from non-psychohistorians, and in the psychohistorians themselves to non-psychological historians, thus making transdisciplinary dialogues and negotiations difficult. History of psychohistory has plenty of examples of psychohistorical interpreters who have had their theoretical fixations approaching reductionist “psychologism.”

Psychoanalysts, as well as psychohistorians, have recognized that the core of resistance often contains an unconscious conflict between being bound to the past and striving toward new extensions. Several forms of resistance have been analyzed and becoming conscious of resistance has been used as a tool both in psychotherapy and in psychohistory. Like the psychotherapeutic process, psychohistorical research opens unpleasant and distressing possibilities from which people shelter to seemingly more secure hiding places. Insights about growth and development can be painful and are evaded through excuses and self-deceptions. Psychohistorical thinking and reasoning are neither separate from individual and collective emotional conflicts and memories nor from the experiential history of the individual and sociocultural mind-brain-body.

In the psychoanalytic setting, resistance is directed to communication, contact, content, and, finally, change. Freud differentiated ego, id, and superego resistances according to his structural model of the mind in Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety (1926, S. E. XX). Especially important in the psychoanalytic process are expressions of resistance that are linked to repression, transference, the feelings of guilt and shame, and the fear of change. In psychoanalytic work, the focus has been on the resistance phenomena of the analysands though, of course, analysts have their own profes-
sional and personal fixations, customs, and repetitions that may disturb the analytic process. Freud made it clear in “The Future Prospects of Psychoanalytic Therapy” that no psychoanalyst can professionally reach further than his or her own complexes and inner resistances allow (1910, S. E. XI). Wilhelm Reich proposed in Character Analysis that “character resistance” manifests itself in the whole personality and concentrates on the exclusion of new and surprising initiatives (1933/1972).

In psychohistorical work, resistance has been mostly located outside the psychohistorical “us group.” Becoming conscious of and working through one’s inner and “in group” resistance is tedious and demands patience, but it can lead to positive change in the continuous professionalization of psychohistory. At the same time resistance appears, there is much meaningful, humanly touching value that cannot be forced or precipitated. Psychohistorians can develop their skills for studying and clarifying the motivational bases of resistance: social, cultural, political, and historical rituals, routines, manners, and repetitions. What makes us maintain resistance, the avoidance of the unknown? Does it ease one’s living, or take one’s resources that would be needed for realizing one’s potential?

Psychohistorians have transferences to their research data (people, events, settings, etc.). What psychoanalysts call countertransference, the unconscious emotions of the analyst in relation to the analysand’s thoughts, emotions, and behavior, is also present in the psychohistorians’ relations to the representatives of other disciplines and their interpretations of history. Countertransference can fuse with regressive states that imply, for example, impatience, unbelief, arrogance, and manipulative maneuvers that are directed against resistances to psychohistory from other fields of knowledge. These states I call psychohistorians’ “counter-resistances,” which may actually sabotage collaborative efforts and new insights. Beisel has given an example: “Sometimes psychohistorians brought the wrath of historians down upon themselves, defensively blaming historians for being ‘too defensive.’ One self-defeating example was Lloyd deMause’s essay, ‘The Independence of Psychohistory,’ published in (…) 1975, wherein he asserted psychohistory was a science and called historians astrologers” (2015, 15–16).

Personality features, attachment styles, and defenses of psychohistorians can be inflexible, such as the stance, “here I stand and I cannot do otherwise.” Unconscious and only partly conscious
counter-resistances of psychohistorians can hinder interdisciplinary contacts, but they can also block new ideas that originate from those who are seen to be stubborn opponents of psychohistory. Perhaps it is easier to become aware of others’ resistance phenomena than of one’s own counter-resistances that hide obsessive ideas, fixed principles, and the ritualized devaluations of other routes to knowledge. Epistemological inflexibility can include opposition to emerging dissident theories that are considered irritating and adding too many painful challenges. Adopted “right doctrines” are thus defended against “false notions.” The specialties of psychohistorical knowledge construction do not justify isolation from the scientific community and its critical, often provocative debates. What deMause called “The Group-fantasy of Specialization” of psychotherapists may have transformed into “The Group-fantasy of Exceptionalism” among psychohistorians. Psychohistory has certainly met simplified, distorted, and hostile receptions in scientific discussion. Psychohistorical approaches evoke both intellectual and emotional involvement and may thus lead to resistance and outright maliciousness that help the critics of psychohistory to camouflage fears of their own unconscious conflicts.

Psychohistorical or any other knowledge does not get constructed only so that I know, or we know, what is permanently right. Observing and knowing one’s self otherwise gives a changing ground to the personal and professional development of psychohistorians. Mutual efforts at creating new connections and horizons for understanding complex and dynamic phenomena are needed. The “theoretical identities” of psychohistorians reflect their personal proclivities, attitudes, and values. In psychotherapy research, psychodynamically oriented psychotherapists have usually scored higher than (cognitive) behavior therapists in intuition, openness for experience, need for cognition, risk-taking, and ambiguity tolerance. Whether this applies to the theoretical orientations of psychohistorians as well has not yet been studied. There are also biases in scientific research connected with using too much intuition, and tolerating ambiguity and unfounded assumptions.

Contradictions between different approaches can be a guarantee of lively scientific discussion. Progress in research is often enhanced by multiple approaches and voices. Dialogical psychohistory is a part of human sciences that may have fruitful contacts with several scientific fields, opening up resistance and
heading toward updated insights in our historical self-observation, self-knowledge, and self-realization.

In his pilot study, “In the Mind of the Teacher,” reported at the XVIII International Forum of Psychoanalysis in Kaunas (September 17, 2014), Miguel Angel Gonzalez-Torres compared psychoanalytic journals with psychiatric, general medicine, and theoretical physics journals, noting the number of bibliographical references and the number of recent references (published within the last ten years). The percentages of recent references were in psychoanalytic journals only around 20%, while in psychiatric and theoretical physics journals it was around 50%, and in the field of general medicine it was 80%. Such results raise a disturbing doubt that psychoanalytic knowledge is heavily dependent on old authorities, avoiding confrontations with their views. Nobody has studied psychohistorical journals and their references in this way. However, we can ask whether psychohistory has the same kind of situation as American psychoanalysis, and “more a multiplicity of authoritarian orthodoxies rather than a truly scientific discourse,” as depicted by Arnold M. Cooper (“American Psychoanalysis Today: A Plurality of Orthodoxies,” Journal of the American Academy of Psychoanalysis and Dynamic Psychiatry, 36, 2, 2008, 235–53).

It is not the repetition of old errors but openness to rethinking that characterizes scientific advancement within psychohistory. Psychohistory is not a closed knowledge system but an unfinished enterprise, ready for self-evaluation and change. Its radical reformism and awakening of consciousness are based on re-appraising personal, social, and cultural issues that were formerly considered self-evident. Surely, psychohistorians do not resist observing and reanalyzing their own conceptions, do they?

See page 185 for Juhani Ihanus’ biography.

Book Reviews

Psychodynamic Inquiry is Verifiable

Burton Seitler—Psychoanalytic Private Practice

The charges that psychoanalysis cannot be subject to the rigors of empirical observation, intensive scientific investigation, or that they are “unfalsifiable” (Karl Popper’s critique), have been repeated so often that many analysts themselves have assumed them to be true without further examination. William R. Meyers, former faculty member at Harvard and M.I.T., Research Director of the Peace Corps, and Professor Emeritus of the University of Cincinnati clearly demonstrates that these charges are unfounded in his book *Social Science Methods for Psychodynamic Inquiry: The Unconscious on the World Scene* (2015).

Meyers has produced a book about research methodologies that is quite readable and thoroughly enjoyable. In other words, one does not have to be a techno-research nerd like me to appreciate this book. Unlike a host of books about research that are dry, obtuse, indecipherable, and frequently off-putting, Meyers’ style and content have contributed to a book that is both comprehensible and relevant to understanding internal mental life and current world events. Instead of operating in an abstract conceptual vacuum of an ivory tower laboratory distant from the down-to-earth muck and grime of everyday life, he shows how scientific methodologies may be applied to and test for some of the grimmer, more primitive, and irrational (thus unconscious) aspects of reality.

He cites the rampant worldwide irrational violence seen in the Balkans, the Middle East, Darfur, Sudan, and Myanmar and explains how psychodynamic scientific methodologies may be employed to understand ISIS, Boko Haram, the murders at Charlie Hebdo, and the Hyper Cacher Kosher Supermarket as well as rape, child abuse, and so on. Meyers points out that these are irrational acts emanating from the unconscious and explains that we cannot understand these and other behaviors until we closely scrutinize their relation to the unconscious. He describes how to go about doing that by asking empirical questions and subjecting them to systematic investigations. Meyers is not satisfied that rational explanations involving stimulus-response, economic utility maximization, or cognitive psychological concepts like framing, integrative complexity, decision theory, or role analysis, etc., are deep enough or sufficiently robust to explain mental processes, suffused with ideation that extends beyond the scope of conscious awareness.
At the same time, Meyers cautions the reader to recognize that, much like psychoanalytic treatment itself, undertaking an in-depth, systematic empirical examination of the unconscious is not for the faint of heart. This may be because scrutiny of the unconscious requires the ability to hold opposites in mind simultaneously. Thus, like dream interpretation—what you see on the surface (the manifest content)—may not be what you get, with respect to underlying meanings (the latent content). In other words, motivations for certain behaviors are associated with unconscious fantasies that precede irrational behaviors. In the unconscious, opposites lie side by side in equivalence. Time does not exist. It is only in the present. Thinking does not directly correspond to logic. Instead, it is magical, sometimes concrete, or even syncretistic, and practically always idiosyncratic.

These factors would make an ordinary researcher’s life miserable. However, Meyers is no run-of-the-mill apparatchik who simply abides by the so-called tried and true, although he also knows those methods quite well. He adds several new dimensions to his level of inquiry and has developed ways to explore them. In keeping with this, he is intrepid in his choice of subject material and methods of research. He challenges us to recognize that we do not want to acknowledge the “too-close-to-home” existence of irrationality filled with its primitive impulses, urges, monstrous fantasies, burning desires, lustful ideation, or destructive images. He is unafraid to assume the role of Star Trek’s Captain Kirk, who “dared to go where no man has gone before.” For example, he examines human trafficking and asks questions about the subsidizers (i.e. customers) of this deplorable industry.

Dr. Meyers confronts the issues of falsifiability, testability, and disconfirmability as well as providing social science methods and techniques to address these concerns in order to establish whether a set of assertions or a particular theory is valid or not. At the same time, his claims are not without modesty. He makes no presumption that his methods are the be-all end-all or that they can be applied to every case. He describes their limitations and when they are appropriate and when they are not, stipulating that his techniques are “not all-powerful.” He even points out that subjectivity and objectivity are not necessarily mutually exclusive and that the very act of looking at certain datum, as opposed to a different set of data, is based on subjectivity (even though the data may have an objective base). These are not distinctions without much of a dif-
ference; they are important differentiations. Yet, as he says, “where the differences in interpretation [of the data] are mutually contradictory, a good answer is to expose the assertions resulting from each study to disconfirmation.”

In addition, Meyers addresses the reflexivity of the researcher as affected by the transference-countertransference phenomena. Not only does the very act of looking at something transform what is being observed, but the observer (researcher) too is impacted by what is gleaned. He describes reductionism and notes that his methods purposely avoid it for several reasons, among them the complex and irreducible nature of confluent factors that often go into behavior. He even makes a compelling case for the legitimacy of studies involving an N of 1 trial (a single subject clinical trial).

For those of you who wish to use this book as a bedtime soporific in order to overcome insomnia, this is not the book for you, deep and heady as it may be. It may not be everyone’s cup of tea, but it was stimulating enough for me to recommend to anyone who prefers to ask questions a la the method of inquiry over the method of authority in which the king, organized religion, or the government dictate what constitutes the truth.

Burton Norman Seiter, PhD, a clinical psychologist in private practice and Director of Counseling and Psychotherapy Services (CAPS-R) in Ridgewood and Oakland, New Jersey, is the editor of the new Journal for the Advancement of Scientific Psychanalytic Empirical Research (J.A.S.P.E.R.). Dr. Seiter serves on the Board of Directors of the International Society for Ethical Psychiatry and Psychology, and is on the Editorial Board of the journal Ethical Human Psychology and Psychiatry. He is also a Research Associate of the Psychohistory Forum and may be contacted at binsightfl1@gmail.com. □

Call for Associate Editors

The Editorial Board of Clio’s Psyche welcomes applications for the position of Associate Editor. Included in the job description is editing a special issue on a yearly basis. Interested colleagues should direct inquiries to the Editor at pelovitz@aol.com.
From Shooting Animals to Soothing Dreams

Juhani Ihanus—University of Helsinki


In several ways, Vamik D. Volkan has advanced the global reconciliation of ethnic, national, ideological, and international conflicts. He also has a long working history in individual psychotherapy, counseling, and supervision. His concise work Animal Killer attests to his long interest in the treatment of traumatized internal worlds, and in illustrating psychoanalytic processes by means of a detailed case history.

Overall, case histories are, according to Volkan, the most important ways of teaching psychoanalytic technique. With his case history, reminiscent of a suspense novel, he manages to give both condensed theoretical accounts and practical advice to psychotherapists. However, the lucid style and minimal psychological jargon make this work accessible to larger audiences as well.

Although Volkan uses mostly psychoanalytic references, his ideas about the intergenerational transmission of traumas, and about adults “depositing” their traumatized self-images (with unfinished psychological tasks) within a child, are highly relevant to psychohistorians, too. The imprint of an adult’s mission, a kind of “psychological DNA,” is transferred to a child, but it is impossible to fulfill the mission (xii). The analysand here, Peter, is an example of malignant narcissistic personality organization deposited with aggressive, sadistic tasks by his stepfather Gregory, a survivor of the Bataan death march and Japanese prisoner-of-war camps, who taught Peter to hunt and to distance himself from the world of his mother and grandmother, his dominating maternal figures, the “witches” (20, 50, 68).

At the beginning of psychoanalytic treatment with Dr. Pine, first face to face than later on the couch, Peter had alcohol and bulimia problems. Above all, he was an avid and cruel hunter, a passionate taxidermist, and he was working in a high-level position for a military industrial, missile-producing corporation. During the
Vietnam War, Peter, as a helicopter pilot, had gunned enemies down, including women and children.

Volkan never met Peter while acting as Dr. Pine’s supervisor for the five-year-long psychoanalysis. Based on his notes, Volkan describes the treatment process that took place over two decades ago. The case history fits well with theoretical understanding about how the patient’s “grandiose self” is gradually transformed into the “hungry self,” and how his defensive split between the self-images and object images, and the “glass bubble” transference, are changed (8–9, 13–19). During the analytic process, the analyst’s image for Peter obtained “new” and “developmental” object images with which Peter could identify, thus enabling his progression to new internal personality structures (45–46).

After having lived in a self-indulgent “island empire,” showing his tough and sadistic outward self-representation and his addiction to the mass killing of animals and formerly humans, Peter started to remember his dreams that revealed the vulnerable and wounded little-boy self (11–23). He confessed, “the analyst was the only person ever to have seen him helpless and weeping as an adult” (39). Short but personally meaningful soothing dreams further paved the way for Peter so that he could abandon shooting animals, and instead offer to help to his wife take care of plants and flowers. He even donated to an animal shelter, while his daughter and her boyfriend were “animal lovers.”

In his work, Volkan tells a therapeutic success story, merging Peter’s self-exploration with cooperative efforts from the analyst and the supervisor. Sometimes the analyst’s countertransference reactions seem to oppose the patient’s omnipotent resistance to contact and change, and include phenomena such as exclusion, forgetfulness, boredom, frustration, and repulsion that I would like to call “counter-resistance.” Volkan highlights such potentially harmful phenomena but, of course, the supervisory process cannot provide a detailed analysis of what happened in the analytical setting concerning transference and resistance, and their reception by the analyst. The case histories tend to pay less attention to impasses, errors, and fumbling than to successful choices and interpretations from the side of the analyst.

When supervising his colleagues, Volkan is determined that they should not take part in suggesting, advising, or “managing”
their analysands. Volkan’s case description is vivid, insightful, and educating, permitting free space for the surprises of the human predicament. In medicine, psychoanalytic case histories are often criticized as not being evidence-based enough. However, starting from the pioneering era of psychoanalysis, and through Volkan’s recent example, the merits of careful narrative-based treatment reports are evident.

See page 185 for Juhani Ihanus’ biography.

Letter to the Editor

Defining “Terrorism”

Dear Editor,

I think it’s a quite basic scholarly practice to begin by carefully defining the key concepts and terms central to the argument to be advanced. This is especially necessary when a value-loaded term like “terrorism” is at stake, a term that I think is very difficult, if not impossible, to define objectively. Yet often people, even social scientists and psychohistorians, appear untroubled by this issue. They appear to think they know what “terrorism” is: Namely, a morally repugnant tactic sometimes resorted to by “the enemy.” The problem, of course, is that who counts as the enemy and, therefore, what counts as terrorism, depends on one’s point of view and politics.

In various parts of the world today many consider the current occupant of the White House, with his program of drone assassinations (among other measures), a major agent of world terrorism. I think in 1945 most Japanese were pretty clear, in light of the atom bombs exploded over Hiroshima, then again over Nagasaki, who the terrorists were.

It amazes me to see social “scientists” writing about “cults” while ignoring the fact that a “cult” is simply a religion someone dislikes. Roman Catholicism, for example, is a religion large and powerful enough as well as sufficiently liked by social scientists that, despite possessing many of the characteristics usually attributed to “cults,” it often manages to avoid being analyzed as one.

Similarly, America and its Western allies are sufficiently powerful and liked well enough by Western journalists, social sci-
entists, and psychohistorians that the terrorism they practice can often avoid being seen and analyzed as such. While the indoctrination and manipulation of vulnerable young people into being willing to kill and be killed is considered outrageous on the part of the “terrorist” enemy. Yet very similar practices of recruitment and indoctrination are seen as normal and unproblematic when practiced by “us” and not “them.” If social science is to have any credibility as science distinct from ideology and propaganda, it must rigorously attend to the issue of conflicting value perspectives, instead of unthinkingly adopting one and proceeding to pathologize or demonize others.

Sincerely yours,

Don Carveth

Don Carveth, PhD, is Emeritus Professor of Sociology and Social & Political Thought at York University, current Director of the Toronto Institute of Psychoanalysis, and author of The Still Small Voice: Psychoanalytic Reflections on Guilt and Conscience (2013). He may be found on the web at www.yorku.ca/dcarveth.

BULLETIN BOARD

CONFERENCES: Our next Psychohistory Forum Work-In-Progress Seminar will be on January 30, 2016 when David Lotto will speak on racism in the Republican Party. Additional seminars will be announced as details are finalized after papers are submitted and accepted. We wish to thank Denis O'Keefe (New York University) and Lawrence J. Friedman (Harvard University) for their September and November presentations and Jacques Szaluta (Merchant Marine Academy) for serving as moderator. Additional proposals are welcome and will be vetted by a committee once a presentation paper is submitted. Announcements and papers are sent out electronically to Psychohistory Forum members. Recent successful conferences in October and November were held by the Association for the Psychoanalysis of Culture and Society (APCS) at Rutgers University, the National Association for the Advancement of Psychoanalysis (NAAP) in Manhattan, and the Interdisciplinary Conference of the Forum for Psychoanalytic Education (IFPE) in Philadelphia. The Fordham psychology conference that Harold Takooshian has been organizing for 35 years sponsored “Psychobiography” on October 26, 2015 with presentations by Sudhir Kakar, Newton and Sarah LeVine, Joseph Ponterotto,
Dinesh Sharma, Uwe Geilen, Paul Elovitz, etc. Molly Castelloe presented her film, "Vamik’s Room," at the Peace and Justice Studies Organization’s annual meeting on October 17th in Harrisonburg, VA. Tom Ferraro contributed to the film Six Innings to Destiny. The International Psychohistorical Association’s (IPA) conference will be on June 1-3, 2016 at New York University; and the International Society for Political Psychology’s (ISPP) conference will be on July 14-17, 2016 in Warsaw, Poland. **WELCOME: Lawrence J. Friedman** to our Editorial Board. **CONGRATULATIONS:** To Carole Brooks Platt whose In Their Right Minds: The Lives and Shared Practices of Poetic Geniuses (2015) has been published by Imprint Academic in Exeter, UK and is available on Amazon. To David Beisel on the forthcoming publication of Wounded Centuries: A Selection of Poetry that has grown out of our publication and sessions on psychohistorical poetry. Circumstantial Productions in conjunction with Grollier Poetry Books is the publisher. The poems are by John Allman, Rudolph Binion, Dan Dervin, Irene Javors, Meryl Molofsky, Peter Petschauer, and Howard Stein. To Merle Molofsky on the publication of her novel, Streets (2015), by International Psychoanalytic Books. **OUR THANKS:** To our members and subscribers for the support that makes Clio’s Psyche possible. To Benefactors Bill Argus, Herbert Barry, David Beisel, Tom Ferraro, Peter Loewenberg, Marvasti Jamshid, and Mary Peace Sullivan; Patrons Peter Barglow, Ken Fuchsman, David Lotto, Alice Maher, Peter Petschauer, and Burton Norman Seitler; Sustaining Members Dick Booth, George and Carolyn Brown, David James Fisher, Ruth Ljitmaer, Alan Mohl, Joyce M. Rosenberg, and Arlene Steinberg; Supporting Members Paul H. Elovitz, Eva Fogelman, Judy Gardiner, John J. Hartman, Daniel Rancour-Laferriere, and Christina Stern; and Members Suzanne Adrion, Heiderose Butscher, Molly Castelloe, Susan Charney, Geoffrey Cocks, Lawrence J. Friedman, Michael S. Isaacs, Judith Logue, Merle Molofsky, Joseph V. Montville, Ruth Neubauer, Ken Rasmussen, Margery Quackenbush, and Howard Stein. Our special thanks for thought-provoking materials to Peter Barglow, Herbert Barry III, David Beisel, Don Carveth, Paul H. Elovitz, Eva Fogelman, David James Fisher, Tom Gibbs, Juhani Ihanus, Victor Meladze, Peter Petschauer, Joyce M. Rosenberg, Burton Norman Seitler, Norman Simms, Howard F. Stein, Jacques Szaluta, and Lawrence Tittle. To Nicole D’Andria for editing, proofing, and Publisher 2013 software application, Caitlin Gaynor and Joyce Rosenberg for editing and proofing, and David Cifelli
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Our Diligent,  
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Call for Papers

Clio’s Psyche Call for Papers
for Future Issues

Clio’s Psyche is looking for articles on a variety of subjects. Here are some special issues that we would welcome psychologically informed guest editor or co-editors for and articles on:

- Psychobiography; Election 2016 Candidates, Emotions, and Political Illusions
- The Impact of Celebrity Culture on America
- Dependency and Independency in the Family, Politics, and Society
- TV as Object Relations: Our Emotional Connection to Fantasy
- Entrepreneurship, Innovation, and Business Success
- Images and Psychology of Enemies and Hatred through the Ages
- The Intrapsychic and Societal Processes of the American Acceptance of Homosexuality
- Environmentalism and Anti-Environmentalism
- The Contemporary American Fascination with Animals
- Anti-Government Fantasies and Civilization

We seek articles from 1,500 to 2,000 words—including your brief biography. Some 3,500 word essays are also welcome provided they are outstanding scholarship and well written. We do not publish bibliographies and usually have citations only for direct quotes. Before writing it is good to examine issues from the last decade on cliospsych.org/archives. Articles, abstracts, and queries should be sent to the editor: Paul H. Elovitz, PhD, at pelovitz@aol.com.