
Clio's Psyche

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

Volume 12 Number 4

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Teaching Psychohistory—Part II Group Psychohistory Symposium

Teaching About Groups

David R. Beisel
SUNY-Rockland

I've always felt that articles on teaching were broadly relevant and could help those working outside as well as inside the classroom because anyone discussing psychological history or publishing a scholarly paper or making a presentation at a scholarly conference is doing a kind of teaching.

Over the years I've written several pieces on varied aspects of teaching psychological history—for
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Love, Distance, and Marriage Special Feature

Marriage at-a-Distance

Jean Hantman
Psychoanalyst—Philadelphia
Donald Carveth
Psychoanalyst and York University

Introduction

The success of our nine-year marriage at-a-distance is not easily explained to people whose conception of marriage requires a couple to share the same house, bedroom, and bed. We live 502 miles away from each other in separate countries. Though
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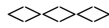
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certainly not without its trials and tribulations, and while we eagerly look forward to living together in the near future, our marriage at-a-distance has sustained us for almost a decade. We are both psychoanalysts who met in a psychoanalytic online discussion group. Below we separately describe and analyze our experience.



Part I: Jean Hantman

The movie *You've Got Mail* tells the story of two people who, like my husband and me, met on the Internet and fell in love before ever seeing each other. I've seen it about eleven times and every time I view it I notice something new and true about love and relationships, and computers.

The last time I saw it I realized it depicts something that was occurring *sociologically* in the mid-to-late 1990's, when half of us had made the leap "online" and the other half hadn't. In fact, the stodgy *resisted* knowing about it. You could be living with your wife and children, or parents, brothers and sisters, or girlfriend or boyfriend, and disappear into a whole new private world they knew nothing about *and didn't want to know*.

In *You've Got Mail*, Kathleen Kelly (Meg Ryan) was living with her boyfriend and Joe Fox (Tom Hanks) with his girlfriend. Their partners had no idea what kind of social revolution was taking place, what private lives were unfolding right in front of their eyes at the dining room table on the computer.

Nora Ephron, who wrote and directed the movie, seems to posit that, by the late 90's, *the resistance to getting online* had become a character flaw that undermined, in fact ended, many already-bad relationships. Kathleen's boyfriend, Frank (Greg Kinnear), was obsessed with typewriters, and romantically, pompously opposed to computers, while Kathleen secretly slipped away into her e-mail and instant messaging relationship with Joe. (Instant messaging involves Internet exchanges between parties simultaneously connected electronically.) One gets the feeling that, along with all the other incompatibilities in each of the two relationships, resisting computers might have been perhaps the worst: the relationship-breaker.

Frank: Name me one thing, one that we've gained from technology

Kathleen: Electricity.

Frank: [points to computer] You think this machine is your friend but it's not.

For a short time between 1993 (the year *You've Got Mail* came out) and 2000, there was a split in our society: those whose open-minded, voracious curiosity led them into a spectacular new way of connecting with like-minded people from all over the world, impossible to imagine ten years earlier; and those who started looking more and more provincial, prehistoric, stubbornly clinging to Remington typewriters, power lunches *in person*, and the P.T.A. "In person" became obsolete temporarily, as personal and business relationships moved online and our collective, highly-charged libidinal energy shifted from in person to e-mail.

Half of us were online having discussions with psychoanalysts in Turkey and Montreal; anonymously posting to message boards for help with relationships and addictions; finding the recipe for anything in three seconds flat from a chef in Brazil; and (according to Nora Ephron and the online rest of us) the other group was *dangerously* out of the loop.

So in 1994, divorced with three young children and working on my PhD, I bought a computer. Instantly, I signed up for America Online and, like Lucy, slipped through the wardrobe into the Internet. ("Lucy's siblings insist that Lucy was only gone for seconds and not for hours as she claims." See *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*). Any fan of the *Chronicles of Narnia*, and the Internet can relate to the feeling of stepping into an extraordinary new world without ever leaving the house. (This phenomenon happens with many inventions. Until they become simply tools, or manifest their downside, there is a heavenly glow around the new: sewing machines, birth control pills, *www.com*, *etc.*)

In 1996 I joined an online psychoanalytic discussion group that worked liked this: a member would write his or her thoughts, questions and opinions about psychoanalytic topics and when he or she clicked "send," all 700 members of the fo-

rum would receive this "posting" in their e-mail inbox. This was how my husband and I met. I posted a thought about psychoanalysis to 700 anonymous members of this online forum and he posted back. Lively discussions ensued. There were others posting opinions about psychoanalysis but it became clear soon enough that Dr. Carveth and I were beginning to form a personal bond, in separate countries, that the rest of the (mostly anonymous) members watched.

I didn't know what he looked like or how old he was. I may have known by then that he lived in Toronto and had a six-year-old son. All I could tell was that he was brilliant and accessible—friendly, undefended. He had no "art," no armor. He was who he was and I admired this because, at the time, I was *only* art and armor, more sweet than friendly, and cautious, having recently experienced the meltdown of my first marriage.

After a month of group discussion, he privately e-mailed me with an offer to help with my dissertation, saying that, as a professor, he had

coached many grad students on their road to doctorates. That started stage two of our relationship. Still *never having seen each other*, without knowing the slightest thing about each other's appearance, or age, or location or any of the things that normal dating reveals at the outset, we moved to the second stage of our long-distance relationship: *private e-mail*. This brings to mind an exchange from *You've Got Mail*.

Joe: You're crazy about him....
Kathleen: Yes. I am.
Joe: Then why don't you run off with him? What are you waiting for?
Kathleen: I don't actually know him.
Joe: Really? -
Kathleen: We only know each other - oh, God, you're not going to believe this...
Joe: Let me guess. *From the Internet*.
Kathleen: Yes.
Joe: *You've got mail*.
Kathleen: Yes.
Joe: *Three very powerful words*.
Kathleen: Yes.

I knew about instant messaging (IM) because I was on AOL, but Don hadn't yet discovered it. I didn't tell him about it because I loved the pace and rhythm of our e-mail correspondence at the beginning. Epistolary was more my style for relationships with far away friends than the phone. Having something to do with my hermetic personality, combined with what I had learned about the nature of desire, I preferred the space and time between e-mails to the immediacy of an IM or a phone call. But we shifted from e-mail to both telephone and instant messaging after about two months. We still hadn't met in person.

We Meet in New York City, Break up Fourteen Times, and Get Married: One afternoon we were talking on the phone and I said, "It's too bad we'll never meet, but let's be long-distance friends forever." Don replied, "I'm coming to New York in December for a conference. Why don't you meet me there?"

This set off warning bells because I had by now had too much experience with dating "blind," meeting men online, thinking they sounded interesting and then the letdown at the actual meeting because there was no *chemistry*. In fact, I didn't believe in chemistry until I started Internet dating and discovered how much of the physical is in-

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volved at the beginning of a relationship. Don was convinced that we would be as compatible in person as we had grown to be long-distance. But I'm a pessimist and I wasn't as sure. Don assured me that there would be chemistry because, he said, "all women love me." I was incapable of opposing his mixture of bravado and optimism and so we did meet, on December 18, 1996, at the winter meetings of the American Psychoanalytic Association at the Waldorf. At that point, our real long-distance relationship started.

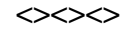
"I Wanted It to be You": The movie, from which the quote in the heading was taken, ends at this point, when the two characters meet, but our story continued on. When I tell women about my long-distance marriage almost all of them say, "Wow, you have the best of both worlds. You have a great marriage and your own space." When I tell men about my long-distance marriage they express a wide range of negative emotions, from skepticism to dismay. I ask women what they make of this difference in response. In general, they tell me that men need women around more, they need to live with a woman. Occasionally the word "needy" is used. I don't think men are needier; I think they are more companionable than women. They need less time to regroup after clashes; they are faster to forgive, to love again.

We went from visiting each other about four or five times a year at the beginning to now seeing each other twice a month: I usually fly to Toronto. I much prefer visiting Don in Toronto than having him come to Philadelphia. I have always been a "runaway" and traveling suits me. Don is a "homeboy" with many close ties to Toronto institutions and organizations, and being visited at home by a runaway suits him.

I should say, though, that the reason we didn't pick one city to live in together is not a reflection of either one of our styles, gender or personality. We haven't lived together yet because I have been finishing raising my three children in Philadelphia and Don has an even younger son in Toronto. Next fall my youngest starts college, and so I have started the immigration process.

Through overcoming the struggles involved in nurturing our marriage in two different countries, over and over again, I have actually

changed more significantly than through twenty years of psychoanalysis. I won't go into the literally long list of shifts in my way of thinking about love, fidelity, commitment, and desire. Through the struggle I have learned *faith* most of all, that is, the ability to hold onto something that is out of sight knowing that it is right there all the time.



Part II: Don Carveth

I too have changed more significantly through my relationship with Jeanie than through my three analyses combined. But it was all that analytic work that gave me the capacity to respond to the gift the Internet had given me—my encountering her in an online psychoanalytic discussion group—and then to follow through rather than retreat from the challenge of love.

Jeanie has described our meeting. At first I didn't even realize I was dialoguing with a woman. I teach in a bilingual (French/English) liberal arts college where it is not unusual for me to have male colleagues named "Jean." I'm not entirely certain why I assumed "she" was a "he"—perhaps it was the somewhat "phallic" way she had of writing, at least in those days. (Has there been something of a softening? I think so.) There was Marcio in Baltimore, and Bernard just outside New York. For some reason I imagined this "fellow" Jean resided in Belgium—something about the name "Hantman" I suppose. In any case, I slowly began to notice that this "Jean's" postings on the list in response to mine seemed unusually warm, even affectionate. I began to imagine that "he" might be gay. That was okay, I thought. Now in my fifties, I felt I'd overcome my youthful homophobia and I could allow myself to enjoy this young man's apparent admiring response to me. When "he" spoke of his difficulties with his psychoanalytically oriented doctoral dissertation I even found myself offering to help mentor him.

It was at this point that some of the other members of the list, who had been online with Jean for some months prior to my joining and who knew of her gender—and who had no doubt been amused by my misunderstanding—posted comments that caused the scales to fall from my eyes. That occasioned my sending her my first, off-list, private e-mail, in which I asked if it was really true

that she belonged to my favourite gender. She replied in a private e-mail with the subject-line: "XX not XY." I was overjoyed. With intensified private e-mail contact and the addition of telephone communication, I soon realized I was in love, even before the exchange of photographs. The fateful meeting that Christmas in New York merely clinched the deal. We left New York in separate cabs, hers heading to Penn Station, mine to La Guardia. For a few blocks we travelled side by side, until hers turned off. I felt as if my heart was breaking and I couldn't refrain from muttering to the cabbie: "There goes the love of my life."

Encountering one's "soul-mate" can be terrifying. It forces one to revise one's view of one's whole past life and relationships. It presents a frightening challenge: is one willing and able to radically renovate one's life structure in light of the revelation, or will one use "sophisticated" arguments to rationalize a retreat and justify adherence to established patterns?

Our relationship was highly impractical. We lived many miles apart, in different countries. We each had young children to raise. She was unable to move here; I was unable to move there. It seemed the sensible thing to do was say goodbye. We tried, many times, but found it impossible to part. So there seemed no alternative but to embrace a long-distance relationship, which soon became a marriage at-a-distance.

One of the things that made the relationship appear doomed from the outset, at least to Jeanie, was her Freudianism. Accepting the view that the sexual drive is rooted in a bodily source and therefore essentially biological and ineradicable, she was pessimistic regarding my capacity to remain faithful while living apart. Drive tension would build up and, in her absence, I would need and find an outlet. (Oddly enough, she seemed not to apply this theory to herself, but only to me, as if drive theory only really obtains in the case of the male!)

Respecting the power of the unconscious compulsion to repeat and aware of how difficult it is for "a leopard to change his spots," she was doubtful that a man who had been married twice before and for whom *Eros* is important could be emotionally and sexually "contained" in a relation-

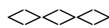
ship based on weekend meetings every three or four weeks, supplemented by holiday get-togethers, and otherwise dependent upon e-mail, instant messaging (sometimes enhanced by videocam) and telephone contacts. She was convinced my loneliness and libidinal tensions, plus the availability of other women in both my academic and psychoanalytic communities, would inevitably lead me astray. I worked hard to counter her fears, arguing against Freud's (and the popular) view of sexuality as "bubbling up" from the body, as it were, in favour of an existential and self-psychological view of human sexuality.

According to Jean Paul Sartre, the human self has an "eccentric" (ec-centric or off-center) relation with the body. As children, we not only have to learn to identify our selves with our bodies, but under various circumstances we can disidentify from our bodies and what may be happening to them. We can put ourselves into a wide range of different "projects" (e.g., into political goals for which we may be prepared even to sacrifice our bodily life altogether) and into various "disembodied" forms of "intercourse" (e.g., into our words, enjoying conversation) or into our intellects (enjoying intellectual intercourse). Or we can decide to "incarnate" ourselves—put our "selves" into our bodies (specifically our sexual organs)—and enjoy sexual intercourse, after which, still embodied, we might shift from a genital to an oral project and enjoy a smoke or a meal together. Freud, of course, privileged the sexual channel of our multi-channel human universe, viewing it as somehow primary and all others—friendship, altruistic love, sports, music, whatever—as somehow derivative, "sublimations" or transformations of the "real thing."

I have always found it difficult to convincingly argue this Sartrean view to colleagues steeped in the Freudian privileging of sexuality. They are quick to assume the argument is motivated by some defensive flight from our animality and our sexuality. Matters only get worse when such colleagues learn of my Christianity. They are quick to assume some sexually repressed choir-boy is at work in this critique of drive theory. (Suffice it to say that in light of her familiarity with my history and personality, Jeanie appreciates the irony in this analysis.) But to refuse to reduce

Eros, the drive to connect, to integrate, to unite, to the one channel of sexual intercourse, and to see all other forms of connection as merely derivative, is in no way to de-value the sexual channel. I confess it's my favourite channel, but it remains only one of the ways in which *Eros* may be gratified.

Freud himself had moved "beyond the pleasure principle" but had done so only partially, never entirely transcending the tension-reduction, drive-discharge model which, for both the Scottish psychoanalyst W.R.D. Fairbairn and for Heinz Kohut and his followers in self psychology, describes pathology, not health. For these psychoanalysts, our primary drive is for satisfying, holistic personal relationships and in the absence of these we fall back upon pleasure-seeking. The idea of human "driven-ness" as a "breakdown product" due to frustration of the need for positive personal relations is an important supplement to mainstream psychoanalysis.



Part III: Conclusion

Don Carveth

Early on I assured Jeanie that since, for the first time in my life I had found someone with whom I enjoyed mature personal relations (seeing, valuing and respecting one another's separateness and differences, as well as similarities) and from whom I received a level of validation, empathy and responsiveness that made me feel reliably "seen," "held" and loved, I felt released from my narcissistic "driven-ness" enough to be able to return her love, to give as well as receive these gifts—that is, to idealize (not idolize) her, in a stable, realistic, enduring and "faith-full" way.

Who can blame her for being sceptical? It *sounded* good. But time has proven me (and Fairbairn and Kohut) right. The narrow sexual frustration inevitably entailed in marriage at-a-distance is not really a problem as long as one's need for a loving, responsive and empathic partner is reliably and frequently gratified. On average we have conversed, screen to screen as it were, for at least two uninterrupted hours every single night, online or on the phone or both, for the past nine years. This is more direct communication than that enjoyed by many married couples who live together. Ironically, the residual anxiety that, for Jeanie, accom-

panies her love causes her to keep an eye on me in ways that both gratify my need for her attention and reinforce my devotion and desire. It works.

Jean Hantman, PhD, is a modern psychoanalyst in private practice in Philadelphia. She has published papers on doing psychotherapy individually with spouses, partners and relatives, on the applied psychoanalysis of film and, with her husband, on guilt evasion. A list of her papers and talks can be found on her website: <http://www.psychoanalysisfrp.com>. Don Carveth, PhD, is a sociologist and psychoanalyst teaching at Glendon College of York University for over thirty-five years. He is a training and supervising psychoanalyst in the Canadian Institute of Psychoanalysis and past Editor-in-Chief of the Canadian Journal of Psychoanalysis/Revue Canadienne de Psychanalyse. Professor Carveth has published extensively, and of late has focused on guilt evasion in Harry Guntrip and others. Many of his papers are on his website: <http://www.yorku.ca/dcarveth>. □

E-mail Love

Joan Lachkar

New Center for Psychoanalysis

Never before have mental health professionals witnessed such a display of diversity as we see in our consultation rooms today. We live in an ever-growing, ever-changing world filled with individuals and couples from varied backgrounds. Clinicians are becoming aware of and recognizing the multiplicity of our patients—multicultural couples, interracial couples, interethnic couples, intermarriage, same-sex marriages, blended marriages/families, stepfamily marriages, etc. These patients are all changing the landscape of marriage and relationships. Yet, as mental health professionals, we have insufficiently studied two important contemporary categories—e-mail and long distance relationships. The ubiquity of the Internet results in people connecting today in ways never before imagined.

E-mail dating and the resulting love relationships are becoming the most unique ways of meeting and communicating with people since the advent of the telephone. People have the freedom to respond, not respond, or take their time to think

things through regarding a potential suitor. The written word, as we learned from many famous Victorian writers, is one of the most powerful and seductive ways of communication. It is striking how after a few e-mails relationships can begin to deepen and grow into strong attachments. As in the case of Donald Carveth and Jean Hantman, this occurs without knowing the person's age, personal life, or appearance. Yet something powerful happens.

Both Jean and Don are talented authors who share the same profession, love for discovery, and curiosity about psychoanalytic discovery. Both are a real find: she is an independent woman, skillful writer, successful psychoanalyst, and mother raising her three children alone. He is a trained psychoanalyst, professor, thoughtful author, and a loving father. Their match appears "to be made in heaven."

From the inside looking out, this couple seems to have a perfect fit, an arrangement that works in harmony and synchronicity. They each have their own space and can do their own thing. Yet from the outside looking in from an object relations point of view, the relationship has an out of the ordinary, split-apart quality. Families generally live together and work through conflict—envy, sibling rivalry, domination, control, and jealousy—rather than avoiding it. This couple plays it "safe," giving the kids the message that relationships are to be detached or far away, and that children come first and love and intimacy come next. One wonders about the impact on the children, and what kind of message it gives them. It appears that the guilt of the divorce on both sides may have created such trauma that they have found a way to enter much more tentatively into a close relationship. The essential question is, "Will this relationship, built at a distance, be enough to carry them through life's journey and will it satisfy them when they are living together?"

Joan Lachkar, PhD, a psychohistorian and psychotherapist in private practice in California in Brentwood and Tarzana, is the author of The Many Faces of Abuse: Treating the Emotional Abuse of High-Functioning Women, The Narcissistic/Borderline Couple: A Psychoanalytic Perspective on Marital Treatment, and numerous publications on marital and political conflict. Cur-

rently she is writing The "V Spot" - Healing Your Innermost Vulnerabilities from Emotional Abuse. Dr. Lachkar is an affiliate member and instructor at the New Center for Psychoanalysis, an adjunct professor at Mount Saint Mary's College, and on the editorial board of the Journal of Emotional Abuse. She may be contacted at <jlachkar@aol.com>. □

Different Approaches to Marriage

Paul H. Elovitz

Ramapo College & the Psychohistory Forum

Love and marriage in the modern world are being transformed by high-speed electronic communication and travel, feminism, and the expansion of individual rights. Heterosexuals and homosexuals alike are developing new ways of being with each other and creating families. The social history of marriage has changed enormously since my grandparent's arranged marriage in Poland prior to World War I.

The marriage at-a-distance of Donald Carveth and Jean Hantman reflects these possibilities. This couple tells their charming story with warmth and insight. Below, I discuss a movie (*You've Got Mail*)—speaking to many issues in their relationship), write about issues of closeness and distance in my own life, comment on the transformational power of love, and raise issues that may impact on their future happiness when they live together in Toronto later this year. This is written from the perspective of a psychotherapist and psychohistorian believing that in contemporary North American society, with its belief in individual autonomy, personal fulfillment, and romantic love, it is quite difficult for couples to live together over an extended period of time unless they work hard at their relationships.

The adaptations and inventiveness of human kind never cease to amaze me. When I first began to form intimate relations that might lead to marriage, the Internet was not yet an idea being developed by the Defense Department as an instrument of national defense in the event that Washington was destroyed. Consequently, there was no such thing as e-mail. In that time period I knew

about marriage at-a-distance. It was the situation of soldiers who left their brides to go overseas to fight for as long as four or five years. It involved immigrants, political refugees, and migrant workers who later sent for their wives and children: both my grandfathers spent World War I in America while their wives and small children were back in Poland and Ukraine. It was the circumstance of the wives of businessmen who were transferred temporarily to inhospitable locations far from home. However, the notion that in "normal times" a couple would choose to marry and live at a great distance from each other was unimaginable.

The idea of marriage at-a-distance in the era of the Internet took a new form when it came to my attention that two members of our scholarly community were married to people who lived at a considerable distance—in one case, in separate countries. My interest intensified when I met Jean Hantman of Philadelphia and her husband Don Carveth of Toronto. Their marriage at-a-distance has endured for nine years; last September I found them to be a warm and engaging couple who finish each other's sentences, and who appear to have genuine intimacy! Their warmth flew in the face of my fantasies on such couples as highly intellectualized and perhaps incapable of any sustained intimacy up close.

Soon I came across analogous situations. Nancy Dobosiewicz, who does part-time work for Clio's Psyche, just celebrated the fourth anniversary of a marriage in which she lives with her teenage daughter in her own home forty miles from her husband's home where he dwells with his two teenage sons. My wife describes the long-term marriages of many of her older co-workers as involving considerable emotional and sometimes physical distance. On the other hand, an academic colleague explained her divorce as caused by her husband and her gradually coming to live separately in their two homes after their children were grown and on their own. In "Intimacy on the Internet: The Dilemmas, Limits, and Opportunities for Intimacy Online and Offline" (Clio's Psyche [September, 1999]), I began the process of probing the issues of just how close one could be to someone only known electronically. In this article, I compared the intimacy I shared with my wife with the closeness I felt for a new Canadian friend who

is a woman therapist. I raised the question of just how real the friendship was and whether it could endure. Clearly, I found it easy to be close with women at-a-distance partly because I did not have to worry about sexual fantasies that might arise between a man and a woman of comparable age. After six years, I would say that we are friendly colleagues, rather than good friends.

Jean Hantman focuses much of her article on *You've Got Mail*. In this 1998 film, the Meg Ryan (Kathleen Kelly) and Tom Hanks (Joe Fox) characters have grown bored with and distant from their live-in lovers as they develop a wonderful and increasingly flirtatious relationship over the Internet. On the Internet one does not necessarily know if the correspondent is in the next room, on the next block, or half a world away. The Internet romance of Meg and Tom, two very attractive actors, is about falling in love rather than *being* in love over a sustained period of time. Each has grown bored and emotionally distant from the individual with whom they share their life and bed, leading to the search for friendship and ultimately romance on the World Wide Web. In the film we do not see any character solving the problem of long-term romance and marriage. Meg's mother lives alone, Tom's father is a serial monogamist, and his grandfather is married to a much younger woman.

The late Sidney Halpern of Temple University liked to tell the story of an underling who excitedly came to a great movie mogul, Louis B. Mayer of Metro Goldwyn Mayer, declaring that he had a great plot for a movie. He was dismissed out of hand with the words, "I've got the plot: boy meets girl, boy loses girl, boy gets girl back. What I need are good scripts." This classic movie element is the plot of Nora Ephron's *You've Got Mail*. The boy loses girl part occurs when Meg Ryan discovers that Tom Hanks is the executive behind the mega bookstore that is putting her customer-centered, individually-owned, utterly delightful The Shop Around the Corner children's bookstore out of business. Subsequently, there is a touching scene in which Meg swallows the consequences of the "invisible hand" of the market, tearfully helping a customer in Joe's super store where the clerks do not know and love children's books. Of course, the girl and boy getting back together again happens in this romantic comedy. However, we do

not see them navigating the ups and downs of everyday life together. Though Meg Ryan and Tom Hanks are two of my favorite actors, *You've Got Mail* appeared to me to be one of their weaker movies, mostly because I found the script to be contrived.

The real-life *You've Got Mail* romance of Don Carveth and Jean Hantman is quite powerful. They are both bright and attractive individuals, who make an appealing couple to whom others are drawn. They have developed a romantic marriage at-a-distance that is quite satisfying. But when they live together in Toronto later this year, will they be able to negotiate everyday life as successfully? Who will take out the garbage? Furthermore, Jean calls herself a "runaway" and describes Don as a "homeboy." One wonders about the implications of this when they are living together in Toronto. Will her impulse to run away and the possibility of his looking for sexual satisfaction outside of marriage be controllable? The reference to having broken up "fourteen times" prior to marrying is an indication that there has not always been smooth sailing in their relationship, as well as a powerful desire to overcome all obstacles. Theirs' is such a lovely romantic story and they are such nice people that I hope they continue to overcome all barriers to their future marital happiness.

My own personal history and experience doing marital therapy certainly influences how I view the Hantman/Carveth marriage. The first time I fell in love was when I was on a weekend pass from the U.S. Army five months prior to being shipped overseas for an extended period. Somehow knowing that I was leaving America left me freer to fall in love, in the same way it is easier to speak about intimate issues to a stranger on a plane or train whom one never expects to see again. Weekend visits on train and bus from Virginia and Maryland to Boston, where she went to college, were thrilling, romantic, and exhausting. The courting continued by correspondence from Germany where I was stationed—I have a large box full of my letters reflecting my hopes, dreams, and fantasies. In retrospect, I see my ex-wife and I as ill prepared to actually live together. The gulf between our romantic fantasies and the reality of living together was never bridged as we struggled with my getting a doctoral degree, making a living,

and raising three children without knowing how to adequately communicate our feelings. Along the way we stopped liking each other—our love turned sour as we did not sufficiently reconcile our dreams and the realities of our relationship. We had to confront this widening gulf after we achieved children, home ownership, a doctoral degree, and a good position at a newly-created college—the latter two turned out to be much more my dreams than hers as she began to question her own marital ideals.

A message that the Carveth and Hantman relationship has clearly given is that children come first. Jean will stay in Philadelphia until her youngest child has graduated high school and gone to college later this year. Don's sixteen-year-old guitar-playing son lives with him in Toronto ninety percent of the time, along with his black Labrador retriever. The conflicts in second and third marriages in blended families are so often centered on the spouse's children. Of course, other people's children have less potential to cause marital discord if the children are not living with the couple, as may be the case in several years.

Dr. Hantman comments that women's normal response to her long-distance marriage is that she has "the best of both worlds. You have a great marriage and your own space." This resonates with my wife, whose response to the annoyances of living with another person is to fantasize and joke about having her own house next door. My smiling response is that if she is living next door, my arm isn't long enough to rub her head and back, which she loves. I am less sure about Jean's point that men normally respond negatively to the notion of long-distance marriage because "they are more companionable than women, needing less time to regroup after clashes because they are faster to forgive and to love again." Perhaps this is correct to the extent that men are usually more inclined to reconnect sexually than women do after a conflict.

When Don Carveth writes that it is terrifying to encounter your soul mate, I wonder why. Is it the sense of vulnerability that one feels when you want to open up completely to another human being? Carveth's focus on Jean Paul Sartre interests me, though I am reminded of Sartre's treating his companion and virtual common law wife

(Simon de Bouvier) rather badly.

The transformational possibilities in love is an interesting idea that Don puts forth with his statement that he has changed more as a result of his "relationship with Jeanie than through my three analyses combined," though he adds that the analyses made the change possible. I agree that love can be transformational, but I am also aware that our reality-testing under the spell of love can be less than perfect. Certainly, the everyday quality of living with a beloved person can be transformational, as I would vouch for in my own marriage, but is it truly transformational if people are not living together? This is not a question I can readily answer from my own experience, nor from my experience or training in psychotherapy, including marital therapy. My doubts may, in the end, be based on my own needs being so different from those of these talented colleagues. Living—that is eating, sleeping, touching, laughing, loving, fighting, worrying, reading, shopping, and even cleaning the house and gardening—up close is essential to my idea and ideal of marriage. I wish Don and Jean well in their ongoing exploration of a new marital paradigm.

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Separate Households

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My road to love and marriage at-a-distance involves my life as a battered wife, a single parent, and as a partner in a second marriage at-a-distance. Since 2001, my husband Joe and I have had a fulfilling marriage living forty miles apart in separate households with our teenage children from previous marriages. The road is often bumpy, mainly due to arguments over finances, childrearing, and religion (my daughter and I are Baptists and Joe is Catholic), and arguments involving trust. Despite these differences, Joe and I have managed a successful marriage at-a-distance. Below I describe my background and marriage.

At twenty-three I was completely confused about the direction my life was taking. Though my parents did not divorce until I was eighteen, I was

raised primarily by my mother who had tolerated years of turmoil, infidelity, and battery. Consequently, I felt desperate to create the home life I'd never had. When given the opportunity to be with a man I had thought I was in love with as a teenager, I quickly got myself in the "family way" and we were married within weeks. The next three and one half years were filled with painful and violent events that nearly stripped me of all self-esteem and dignity. At the major turning point of my life, I managed the courage to stand up to the man who had abused me for so long and eliminate him from my life through divorce. I know this strength stemmed mostly from the love I felt for my daughter Leah. I specifically recall the day when I looked into her two and one half year-old sweet, innocent face and thought to myself that if I didn't make a change, I would condemn her to the same life I had chosen for myself and that my mother had brought me into. I realized then that if I didn't start to love myself again, I would never be able to teach her how to love or be loved. From that moment on, the chain of abuse was broken.

The next eight years were relatively quiet. I dated very little and devoted myself completely to raising my child and building my confidence. During this time I had thought often about simply staying single and raising my daughter without the companionship of a man. However, I began to wonder if this was the best thing for Leah. Being a good mother was vital, but showing her through example what a good marriage with a good man was supposed to be like was something I though might be more significant. I believed that through positive observation, she might gain a sense of what she wanted for herself in the future.

In 1999, I began working for a lighting manufacturer as the executive assistant to the president of the company. On September 7, 1999 I was introduced to Joe walking out of the office coffee room. As he walked away, the human resources manager whispered to me that he was also a single parent raising his two boys. I felt an immediate attraction to Joe and by December of 1999 I was dating him exclusively.

My relationship with Joe progressed in the usual way; we first only spent time together, eventually introducing one another to the children, and finally, doing things together with the children,

almost as if we were a family. However, the turning point in our relationship came in February of 2000 when some unusual and disturbing test results came back from my physician, requiring a biopsy and surgical removal of lumps from my breast. I was just thirty-four and I was terrified at the prospect of losing my breast and even my life—this fear completely overwhelmed me. Then Joe sat with me, comforted me, and never left my side for one moment—he truly loved me. Fortunately, my concerns were erased when the masses proved to be benign and a mere three months into our courtship I knew I would love this man for the rest of my life.

One Saturday afternoon in early July of 2001, we were lying around his house relaxing. I had noticed on the wall the plaque Joe received following his graduation from Montclair State University. “Joe Dobosiewicz,” I said aloud, “what a nice name.” It was then and there that he officially proposed marriage to me by offering me his name. It was the most romantic moment I could have ever imagined.

Since we both had been married before, the prospect of a big wedding was completely unnecessary. We decided to pack up the children and elope to Las Vegas for a private ceremony. We spent the next week making preparations, arranging for a chapel, a photographer, wedding clothes, and hotel reservations. We never once told anyone of our plans. On the morning of our flight, we first told our three children where we were going and why. Their initial concern naturally was regarding living arrangements. We explained to them that we felt it was best for them to leave everything the way it was. Joe, along with Joey and Bobby, would keep their residence in Linden and Leah and I would keep ours in Mahwah. No one would have to move and we would essentially have what is commonly referred to as a “commuter marriage,” at least until they graduated high school. It was our sincere belief that the needs of our children outweighed our needs at the time and so they would have to be the priority. We felt our love and commitment toward one another was strong enough to carry us through the years to come.

Almost five years later, after our marriage on July 15, 2001, our beliefs are still the same. Our children are now in high school and I feel they

are healthier for our sacrifice. My stepsons confide in me, respect me and share with me many aspects of their lives regarding friends and school that, had they been forced to make a change and move away from their home, may not have been the case. Leah loves her stepfather and has even remarked that he has been more of a father to her than her biological father. Neither Joe nor I are trying to take the place of the former spouse with regard to parenting of one another's children, however, friendships between step-parent and step-child have developed; a level of respect has become evident over the years that can only be attributed to our decision to live separately. On one hand that is remarkable, as it seems unusual for step-children to be so close to the step-parent. On the other hand, I believe that the sacrifice Joe and I made actually strengthened the family by not tearing the children away from the lives they felt secure in before the marriage.

Now, in the year 2006, Joe and I still live separately and we will continue to do so at least until Bobby, our youngest, graduates high school in 2009. There are many challenges in this arrangement: the continuing added cost of maintaining two households, the pressure of my returning to school full time while continuing to work to support my household, often burdening Joe for financial support, and the belief of our families that this arrangement will never work. Also, there are the differences in opinion regarding the raising of our three children, as they transitioned from respectable adolescents to sometimes rebellious teens. Keeping it all together is not easy and sometimes we don't succeed.

Joe and I argue and occasionally the battle verges on an unhealthy situation as living separately makes ignoring one another convenient. When couples live together I am told it is not likely they will go to bed angry. In our case, since we rarely sleep in the same bed, or even the same house, it is easy to have an argument and not make up for several days. That is where the burden comes in and the real challenge starts. For us, the challenge is simply in keeping the lines of communication open when we are angry, especially when the forty-mile distance affords the perfect opportunity to simply ignore one another. At these times we both feel like completely separate people, not

even in a marriage at all: I have to remember how important it is for us to get past our differences and simply work out the issues. Since I'm the type of person who will generally fly off the handle and he is the type of person who will lay back and take it, it doesn't really make for a fair balance. Yet, he forgives me for my faults and I forgive him for his. So far, there hasn't been an argument between us that was not resolved by some good face-to-face communication.

Perhaps one day, after the children have all gone on to college, Joe and I will consolidate our homes into one. We really haven't discussed that much because the idea always seemed so far away. The truth is, I don't want to leave Mahwah and he doesn't want to leave Linden. The realization that one of us will eventually need to make the sacrifice if we are ever going to cohabitate actually scares me. I've always believed that one day we would live together but, as the years pass, I wonder if we won't. Joe and I have a wonderful life as a married couple, sharing many interests and friends. We have wonderful but brief times together that I look forward to with anticipation. We also enjoy our separate interests. Joe plays golf with friends fairly regularly and even occasionally takes a trip to North Carolina to play for the weekend. I have my personal interests and love the time I have to spend alone. My biggest fear regarding changing our current situation is that living together will eliminate that feeling of anticipation. I wonder if resentment toward one another will develop: I just don't know. Marriage is demanding enough without the added obstacles and I like my marriage exactly the way it is in our separate households.

I believe there are certain elements to marriage of any kind that will help to keep it strong regardless of the living arrangements. For example, Joe and I talk to one another on the telephone every morning when we wake up and every evening before going to sleep. Sometimes these conversations consist of nothing more than "have a good day." Sometimes they are in much more depth. Usually we talk about school, work, our families, the children, upcoming social events, friends, our health, vacations, money, feelings, worries and concerns. We discuss our trust in one another and sometimes the lack of trust in one another. We argue, we make up and argue

again. But at the end of the day, we find that we have a strong marriage built on a solid foundation of mutual love and respect. This is more than most marriages residing under one roof can boast and I am so proud of our relationship. I'm not sure what the future will bring or what will happen when our children finally graduate high school and we have the opportunity to live together. To that I can say only this: I like to believe that the closeness of our distance through communication is what provides us with the strength now and is exactly the ingredient which will sustain us throughout our future together. Despite the lack of tradition in my marriage, it is still one that I believe in with a passion—even from a distance.

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Keynes: The Homosexual as a Married Man

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Perhaps, the greatest accomplishment of John Maynard Keynes (1883-1946), the 20th century's greatest economist, was his marriage to the Russian ballet dancer Lydia Lopokova, characterized by his friend and former lover Lytton Strachey as a "half-witted canary." Virginia Woolf, representing the view of the Bloomsbury group and complaining that his razor-like intellect was being dulled by marriage to a nonintellectual dancer, wrote "And they say you can only talk to Maynard with the words of one syllable."

Bloomsbury included Duncan Grant, who had been Maynard's greatest love; Virginia's sister, the painter Vanessa Bell; her husband Clive Bell, who was an appreciator of art and women living in mid-distance from his wife's ménage which included Duncan Grant as her painting and living partner; Virginia's husband, Leonard Woolf, a Labour Party colonial expert and publisher with her of the Hogarth Press; and Lytton Strachey.

Speaking for the public, the London *Evening Standard*, however, carried the headline starring the bride and ignoring the groom, "FAMOUS DANCER'S MARRIAGE SURPRISE." Others

also vigorously disagreed with Bloomsbury. The widow of England's senior economist Alfred Marshall said of the marriage: "The best thing Maynard ever did." When Lydia was in Paris on a dancing engagement, Maynard, referring to three couples with whom she was friendly, wrote her: "I consider how your circle follows you... Veras, Sams, Florries all in Paris... You are their elixir and without you they are not fully alive. I want some of that elixir." Keynes's brother Geoffrey, a balletomaniac admirer, pronounced, "She brought joy to us all, especially to Maynard." Bloomsbury itself was never comfortable with Lydia, however intelligent she showed herself to be on her own terms, but neither she nor Maynard let that disturb them. Bloomsbury came around.

Any marital prognosis would not have been optimistic, Keynes having arrived at Lydia after some twenty years of homosexual activity. Firmly established in the homosexual world since Eton, he has left a meticulous record of his romantic and gutter-cruising encounters. In 1906 until mid-1915 he noted 683 such contacts. A graph-making economist, he listed them in such a way that he could tell at a glance how a given quarter compared statistically with any previous quarter. Two lists he kept mentioned many of his sexual partners, friends like Duncan Grant and Lytton Strachey, also other friends, former students, street pick-ups like the "Lift Boy of Vauxhall," and, ominously, "the Blackmailer" and "the Blackmailer of Bordeaux." He appears not to have suffered either blackmail or venereal disease.

How had Maynard risen from the homosexual gutter to the heights of the hymeneal bed? I suggest that young Maynard had been encouraged to repress his heterosexual side by family and environment. John Neville Keynes, a truly fine economist, was an anxious and highly emotional man subject to dramatic psychosomatic attacks. Falling in love with the infant, he established a closeness to him that shut out the mother while also slapping and "whipping" (Neville's word) the normally rambunctious boy on disciplinary principle. If Neville expressed a feminine sensibility, Florence Ada Keynes began to function with an efficiency normally attributed to the masculine, progressing through charitable work to become the first woman as Cambridge Borough councilor and, ultimately,

mayor. Until the boy went off to Eton at sixteen, his father, while hypersensitive to noise or other disturbances (thus the whippings), had him doing his homework in his study. Yet Florence Ada was a deeply loving, if slightly distant person. Eton reinforced this skewed balance. Only later did the unqualified feminine reach Maynard. In 1913, at the age of thirty, he wrote to Duncan Grant, no longer a lover but a lifetime friend, "I'm leaving for Egypt. . . I just learned that 'bed and boy' is prepared." A month later he reported, however, that he had "had a w-m-n." Meanwhile, his father became dim mentally and withdrawn in his early sixties and his mother grew closer to him. He also had developed a warm relationship with Vanessa Bell, the other strong, responsible power in Bloomsbury. But then Maynard had always *liked* women.

Maynard first met Lydia in September 1918, when she was a principal dancer with the Ballets Russes. At the time he found she had a "stiff bottom" and preferred her male partner, but his interest in male beauties was subsiding. He reported to Lytton Strachey on May 17, 1920, "Yes, the shallow waters are the attraction—up to the middle—at my age." Another meeting with Lydia on December 11, 1921 ignited the romance. By December 30 it was an affair. By February Maynard had taken over Lydia, whose employment had vanished with the disappearing, debt-ridden Ballets Russes. With Vanessa painting in France, Maynard installed Lydia in her flat in Gordon Square, the group's capital near the British Museum. Vanessa refused to be offended by his presumption, but defended her part-interest in him. On the matter of greater importance she tried hard, writing, "*Don't* marry her.... [S]he'd be a very expensive wife & is altogether...to be preferred as a mistress (dancing)." Vanessa failed to discourage Maynard, and had sense enough not to attack the *fait accompli*.

A nullity suit was necessary to invalidate formally a marriage Lydia had entered into without knowing that the "husband" had failed to obtain a decree *absolute* erasing his marriage to an American woman. It was not until August 1925 that Maynard and Lydia were married. The relationship was nevertheless absolute from the beginning, Maynard and Lydia settling into it as into a preor-

dained pattern. Yet, considering his homosexual adventures, the scheduling of their cohabitation might seem to confirm its shakiness. During the teaching half of the year, although they were otherwise together, they spent five of the seven days of the week apart. From Thursday to Tuesday Maynard was operating in his bachelor don's quarters in Cambridge. One might ask if Keynes completely left his homosexual habits behind? Yet, if he had an occasional relapse (for which there is absolutely no evidence), it would not have been important. Yet in one sense he never left his homoerotic life behind. He remained a part of Cambridge University's homosexual community and happily participated in its gossip, but this was as far it went. Maynard remained a happily married man.

Both Maynard and Lydia were consummate professionals; each *had* to do his/her thing. Among too many other activities, the work-compulsive busybody Maynard was teaching at Cambridge conscientiously, holding his Political Economy Club meetings and attending important King's College committee meetings as bursar and member of the Estates Committee, writing his numerous articles and books, chairing the opinion journal *Nation*, editing the *Economic Journal* of the Royal Economic Society, directing two insurance companies, and advising the government on economic policy. Assisted by Maynard's contacts and money, Lydia, presiding alone over all-day Sunday lunches in Gordon Square, pursued her career as a freelance dancer and her life in the world of the ballet. The separation produced a steady flow of letters totaling a third of a million words.

Maynard and Lydia, as the letters document, were *nice* to each other. Maynard, who could be arrogantly dominating and rude, was never so to Lydia. She could become angry with him only when his compulsions endangered his health. This led to "stormy conflicts of will," according to one biographer. Their life together began with a burst of uninhibited sexual ardor, with Lydia leading. During the early spring of their love she writes, "I gobble you dear Maynard ... I re-gobble you...I blend into my mouth and heart to you ... I have so much intensity for you." Maynard's response was cooperative but clumsily imitative: "I want to be

gobbled abundantly." The best he could do was to quote a Babylonian poem: "'Come to me, my Ish-tavar and show your virile strength.'" Lydia returns, "I smiled from head to foot." Her next sentence strains English but is clear enough: "When I tell to you 'thrillings' she sais 'touch with it my little place,' a 'positive woman' she no doubt was."

The intensity moderated as Maynard suffered his continual bouts of ill health. From inexplicable boyhood fevers he had progressed through pneumonia, diphtheria, an appendectomy on the kitchen table in Gordon Square, influenza, and always colds. Vanessa Bell told him, "But I don't pity you very much as no doubt Lydia dances attendance on you very nicely and I remember her saying she always likes people when they are ill." Given Lydia's instincts for caring, the illnesses eventually became more of a bond than sex. By the end of the 1920s Lydia's references to the physical became wistful, more reminiscent than actual.

From 1931 to 1937 Maynard was complaining of more and more cardiac discomfort. On May 16, 1937 he collapsed from a massive heart attack. This did not prevent the cardiac invalid from becoming a major player in British-American financial negotiations in World War II—to the extent of six heart-straining and dangerous missions to the United States. Inaction would surely have killed him sooner. Accompanying him always, Lydia kept him alive for nine more years after the attack—until Easter Sunday 1946, a few weeks short of his 63rd birthday. Lydia lived another thirty-five years, to 1981. Living at Tilton, Maynard's Sussex County property, she was accompanied most of those years, one imagines with Maynard's posthumous approval, by the farm manager he had installed there.

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The Making of Darwin's Marital Happiness

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Emma and Charles Darwin's marriage lasted forty-three years and produced ten children. Though Charles Darwin wrote down his thoughts about the pros and cons of marriage, including his fear that he would become an impoverished "slave" to wife and family, and suffered anxiety about entering matrimony, he would have a happy marriage despite ill health, the death of three of the children, and differences over religion. The world-traveling Darwin spent most of his life in the bosom of his family in the small community of Down. This essay will explore the elements in Darwin's life that led to his happy marriage, only touching on his marital life. These elements will include his relationship and attitude to women and marriage as well as his childhood and personality.

Much has been written and said about sexless or loveless Victorian marriages, especially in the wake of Phyllis Rose, *Parallel Lives: Five Victorian Marriages* (NY: Vintage, 1983). The Darwins' loving marriage was quite different than those depicted in Professor Rose's interesting book. It is described in some detail in Edna Healey, *Emma Darwin: The Inspirational Wife of a Genius* (London: Headline Books, 2001).

There are special problems in writing about Charles Darwin's personality, interpersonal relations, and marriage that go well beyond Victorian censorship—including self-censorship. Darwin, while self-deprecating and even humble in many respects, was an extreme idealizer of his loved ones. This makes it more difficult for the psycho-biographer to get past vague generalities. Furthermore, the historical biographer of nineteenth century individuals is much less inclined to put forth hypotheses than the psychoanalyst may be in working with a contemporary patient: after all, s/he is much less able to elicit new materials while testing hypotheses. However, a few such hypotheses merit further in-depth research and a more careful reading of existing autobiographies, letters, and other primary sources.

The example of his parents' marriage was not a strong presence in Darwin's life because his mother died shortly after his eighth birthday and he reports clearly remembering only three things about her, none of which are related to marriage. Charles Robert Darwin was born in Shrewsbury on February 12, 1809 as the second son and fifth of seven children (five girls and two boys) of Dr. Robert Waring Darwin (1766-1848) and his wife Susannah Wedgwood (1765-1817). The couple, from two accomplished families known for a strong interest in science, married in 1796 and appear to have had a happy union. "Owing to their great grief; and partly to her previous invalid state" his sisters "were never being able to speak about her [their mother] or mention her name," thus Darwin really had little information about her and from her regarding her marriage (p. 22). An older sister zealously took over some of the parenting from their mother. Of his sisters he said they "all were extremely kind and affectionate towards me during their whole lives" (p. 43). Except where otherwise noted, all citations are to *The Autobiography of Charles Darwin: 1809-1882*, edited by Nora Barlow, his granddaughter (NY: W.W. Norton, 1958). For a valuable guide to Darwin's autobiographical writing, see Ralph Colp, "Notes on Charles Darwin's Autobiography," *Journal of the History of Biology*, Vol. 18 (3) [Fall, 1985], pp. 357-401.

Perhaps "mother nature" was the mother Charles Darwin knew best? While most of his memories of Susannah were shadowy, he had no inhibitions about observing, studying, and remembering nature. Indeed, the student who struggled to learn the classics which were the mainstay of his education, had a fine memory for natural phenomena and was distinguished by a love of collecting and comparing different [natural] objects. He credits his "success as a man of science" as most importantly being a result of his "love of science" (pp. 144-145), reporting that "my love of natural science has been steady and ardent" (p. 141). As a scientist Darwin was not experimental in his approach, indeed, the two rulers in his laboratory gave varying measurements. Rather, he was a marvelous observer of natural phenomena whose "mind seems to have become a kind of machine for grinding general laws out of a large collection of facts" (p. 139). Whether or not this speculation

that Darwin transferred his search for motherly love from his barely remembered, invalidated, and then deceased mother to "mother nature," his father's character, ideas, experience with women, and advice are more accessible to the historian.

Based upon the description in Charles Darwin's *Autobiography*, a view not contradicted by other sources, his father would have been considered a model husband for his era. Robert Darwin's characteristics of being in "high spirits" most of the time (p. 39), having "unbounded" "kindness" (p. 40) "and to be always scheming to give pleasure to others" (p. 29), together with his sobriety and considerable economic success, are positive indications of a satisfying marriage. Dr. Darwin, who was widely respected and "deeply loved" (p. 40), made his living as a doctor who had a special ability to win the confidence of women. Since he hated the sight of blood, and bleeding was the primary treatment of his era, he practiced a type of psychological medicine "as a sort of Father-Confessor" to women especially those "suffering in their minds," commonly from "family quarrels" (p. 31). The senior Darwin, referred to on this occasion as "The Governor" by his famous son, recommended marrying fairly young when "one's character is more flexible" and to avoid missing out on "so much good pure happiness" stemming from a good marriage (p. 233). The influence of Robert on his son can not be underestimated, especially in the light of Charles viewing his father, on whom he was economically dependent, as "the largest man whom I [have] ever saw" (pp. 28-29), a man with an extraordinary memory (p. 39) capable of "reading" people's "characters" and even their "thoughts" (p. 32).

Not all of Darwin's experience with and knowledge about women and marriage were positive. His nine-year-old sister Caroline was, during his boyhood, so overzealous to improve him that he remembers thinking when she entered the room, "what will she blame me for now?" (p. 22) Furthermore, his father "often remarked how many miserable wives he had known" (p. 32) which encouraged doubts as to the prospects of happiness in marriage. When planning to marry, Charles had a frightening dream of being executed (Ralph Colp, "Charles Darwin's Dream of His Double Execution," *Journal of Psychohistory*, Vol. 13, #3, pp.

277-292). Thus he had many fears and concerns about marriage—to be discussed below. First, we must examine the issue of his personality and the impact of living primarily in an all male society from the death of his mother through age twenty-six.

Charles Darwin was a modest man who, even when hailed as a great scientist, saw his abilities as "moderate" (p. 145), focusing on his inadequate knowledge of dissection (p. 47), mathematics (pp. 58-59), and language—"during my whole life I have been singularly incapable of mastering [he in fact read French and German] any language" (p. 27). He had an especially low opinion of his own abilities as a boy. He saw himself as "in many way a naughty boy" (p. 22), "much given to inventing deliberate falsehoods," (p. 23), and "a very ordinary boy, rather below the common standard in intellect" (p. 28). Indeed, "as far as the academic studies were concerned," he felt his time at school, Edinburgh, and Cambridge "was wasted" (p.58). On a more positive note, Darwin thought he had a "very affectionate" disposition in his childhood (p. 45).

Charles' great love and capabilities were not for academics, but for nature and collecting natural specimens. However, Dr. Robert Darwin disparaged these activities which he connected to his own father Erasmus's speculative poetry of evolution, which resulted in the word "darwinising" (p. 150) being coined by Coleridge to mean wild speculation about nature before Charles was even born. (Because of his hatred of blood in an era when bleeding was the most common form of treatment, Robert had never wanted to be a doctor and he felt that his father Erasmus had wasted time on biological studies that he might have used to make money in his own medical practice, thus saving his blood-hating son from having to be a physician). In a rare moment of great anger Robert had declared to his second son that "you care for nothing but shooting, dogs, and rat-catching, and you will be a disgrace to yourself and all your family." This hurt Charles terribly, quite probably prompting him to work harder, to become "dogged" to prove himself in his unpaid profession of naturalist, just as he had in the face of his sister's criticism (p. 22).

Though Darwin had five sisters, his contact

with the opposite sex was limited after his mother died when he was eight. Charles spent most of his early life in the company of boys and men in an era of educational gender segregation. He went to a day school for a year, then spent ages nine through sixteen boarding at "Dr. Butler's great school" in Shrewsbury (p. 25), the next two years studying medicine at the University of Edinburgh, three happy years at Cambridge, and then five years aboard the *Beagle* with its all male crew. Though fear of homosexuality could not be spoken about directly, Dr. Darwin's objection as "disreputable to my [his] character as a clergyman" (p. 228) to Charles' accepting the unpaid position of naturalist on the *Beagle* may have reflected this concern. (This was the first of eight objections Darwin successfully responded to with the help of his Uncle Josh Wedgwood.)

We know less than we would like about Charles Darwin's thoughts and attitudes toward sexuality. Though many of his scientific papers focused on sexual questions in simpler forms of life in nature and he bred animals (p. 144), he says nothing about human sexuality in his *Autobiography*. Indeed, he wrote nothing in his log or letters home about the sexually uninhibited and nearly naked women of Polynesia. When he notes "the sight of a naked savage in his native land is an event which can never be forgotten," it is the male he writes about (p. 80). In medical school "the subject [of human anatomy]... disgusted me" (p. 47). His hatred of the sight of blood was so intense that he ran out of the room while watching "two very bad operations" (p. 48)—this aversion and the sense that his father would leave him "property enough to subsist on with some comfort" (p. 46), would spell the end to his medical career. Given his feelings toward blood, one wonders how he felt about menstruating women or the messy process of childbirth?

In the period (1837-38) before his marriage, Charles Darwin scribbled some fascinating notes under the headings of "This is the Question" with separate columns entitled, "Work Finished" and "Work Finished [stet]," and then "MARRY" and "Not MARRY" (pp. 231-234). In the first, duplicated category the left column focused on the reasons not to marry and the right on the possible costs of marriage to scientific achievement. In the

"MARRY," "Not MARRY" categories issues involved in marriage are the main emphasis. The reverse side of the page sums up with the conclusion, "There is many a happy slave." Throughout the focus on not marrying is to achieve in science. He cites his desire to travel in Europe or perhaps America for geological research, take summer specimen-collecting tours, become more zoological, work on the "transmission of species," and live in London systematizing his work. His thoughts on the downside of marriage were that it would lead to "limited means," "obstacles to science and poverty," feeling the "duty to work for money" (something he never in fact did), and perhaps teaching at Cambridge where he would be "a fish out of water."

By the time Darwin gets to the "MARRY" "Not MARRY" columns he is clearly sold on matrimony. "Children—(if it please God) constant companion, (friend in old age)...[were to him] to be beloved and played with—better than a dog anyhow." He thought the "charms of music and female chit-chat...[are] good for one's health and decided that "it is intolerable to think of one's whole life, like a neuter bee, working, working.... By contrast he pictured "a nice soft wife on a sofa with good fire, and books and music...[and concluded] Marry—Marry—Marry...." Darwin's "Not MARRY" and the notes scribbled on the back of the page, reflect both his decision to marry and fears about the result of marriage on his scientific work, especially the loss of time and his trepidation that he would be sentenced by marriage "to banishment and degradation with indolent idle fool." Together with his fear of the loss of opportunity, of becoming a poor slave, "you will be worse than a negro" was the hope that his spouse would be "an angel."

Emma would turn out to be the "angel" the great naturalist had hoped for. Like his mother she was a Wedgwood nine months older than her husband. She was also his first cousin, something which did not concern him at the time, but would later on when he worried the consanguinity might have a negative impact on their children, which indeed it probably had (James Moore, "Good Breeding," *Natural History* Vol. 114, {9} [November 2005], pp. 45-46). How Emma and Charles came to wed is of interest. They knew

each other from early childhood. Charles had “vivid pictures in my [his] mind” of “delightful” summer evenings sitting on steps of the porch of the Wedgwood’s home with the whole family (pp. 55-56). She knew of his love for nature and would support him in his scientific work throughout his lifetime. He was quite fond of her father—“Uncle Josh”—whose intervention on his behalf had made possible Robert Darwin’s acceptance of his son taking the position of naturalist on the *Beagle*. Several years after his famous voyage, Charles was finding life in London to be lonely and becoming more open to the idea of matrimony. These nuptials were welcomed by both families.

Despite Darwin, like a good Victorian, revealing little about his own sexuality in his *Autobiography*, I can reconstruct some sense of it in and before his marriage with the help of one of his most knowledgeable biographers (Dr. Ralph Colp, personal communications, January 16 & 29, 2006). He enjoyed the female body and appeared to have a positive attitude toward sexuality. In his twenties he spent time with Fanny Owen and perhaps had sex with her. Despite the issue of ill health, it appears the Darwins continued the sex life that resulted in the birth of their ten children. In his latter years Charles loved to have romantic novels read aloud to him, provided “they do not end unhappily—against which a law ought to be passed” and there is a loveable person—“if a pretty woman all the better” (pp. 138-139).

The focus of the marriage was Charles’ scientific work, their family, the health of all concerned, and the running of Down House with its servants. The great naturalist was an extraordinarily devoted husband and father. When his first son was born late in 1839 he assiduously observed the baby, taking notes to eventually be used in his best-selling book, *The Expression of the Emotions in Men and Animals* (1872). His concern for his children was intense, so when illness threatened their, or Emma’s health, he was profoundly affected. The death of ten-year-old Annie in 1851 was so devastating that he wrote a sketch of her and, even toward the end of his life, tears “come into my eyes at the mention of her sweet ways” (p. 98). Emma’s migraines and sixteen years of pregnancies upset him, nor could he bear her “pain in a difficult labour” (Healey, *Emma Darwin*, pp. 173-

174). His wife found his “deep compassion for others” to be one of her husband’s most outstanding characteristics (p. 238).

What Charles writes about Emma reflects his love, appreciation, and idealization of her. In old age, he marveled that she “consented to be my wife” (p. 97). “He describes her as having been, “my greatest blessing...[who] in my whole life I have never heard her utter one word which I had rather have been unsaid.” He goes on to say that “she has never failed in the kindest sympathy towards me, and has borne with the utmost patience my frequent complaints from ill-health and discomfort” (p. 96). His isolation from the world for reasons of health meant that his world centered on his work, Emma, and the children to an amazing degree. For her part, Emma writes in an undated letter to her husband “how happy he makes me and how dearly I love him and thank him for all his affection which makes the happiness of my life more and more every day” (p. 237). Their mutual devotion and idealization of each other is striking in an era stressing marital propriety more than affection. Some hints as to what underlie the relationship are present in their correspondence and elsewhere. For example, Charles referred to his wife as “Mammy” on at least one occasion (Healey, *Emma Darwin*, p. 206), called himself her “Negro,” and she wrote to him as “my own dear nigger” (p. 237). Since they both abominated slavery, it is clear that this reflected both his devotion and need for her as a maternal figure (Colp, February 21, 2006).

Only one issue came between husband and wife: religion, or rather his growing disbelief in it as representing divine intervention (p. 86). Darwin, whose attendance at Cambridge University had been in preparation for the ministry, had come to join his father and brother in a quiet skepticism. His father had warned that one should not discuss theology with women, but he could not bring himself to keep something from his beloved. Emma was profoundly offended by the idea that they would not be sharing, in her view, an afterlife together (“that we did not belong to each other for ever” p. 237), as well as for theological reasons. Even though he went out of his way to declare himself a theist in his autobiography (p. 93), rather than as an agnostic which would be a better de-

scription of his belief, after his death she censored it, eliminating certain theologically offensive materials. Fortunately, their granddaughter Nora Barlow restored these materials which seem quite innocuous to the modern reader.

In conclusion, this essay has explained what in Charles Darwin's childhood, personality, and life experience prepared him for or stood in the way of the happy marriage he would have for forty-three years with his cousin Emma Wedgwood. It focuses on his fears of marriage and subsequent intense love and appreciation of his wife, which was reciprocated. At Down House the health of everyone in the family, but especially Charles, was a central focal point (See Ralph Colp, *To Be an Invalid: The Illness of Charles Darwin* [Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1977]). Since the excitement of going out into society or receiving friends "almost always" resulted "in his suffering from violent shivering and vomiting attacks" (p. 115), Darwin mostly limited his contacts to his family. The man who had circumnavigated the world and who dreamed of traveling to additional parts of the world and going "up in a Balloon" (p. 234), could not even tolerate the excitement of going to London or having visitors. But what need did Darwin have of travel, or even other people, when he had his "angel" and children by his side? The Darwins' marriage was quite fulfilling for both parties.

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Teaching About Groups

(continued from page 169)

the American Historical Association's *Perspectives*, *The Journal of Psychohistory*, and *Clio's Psyche*—on how I introduce my courses, the nature of course content, aspects of student resistance, ways of handling it, teaching the psychohistory of war, and the like.

Although group psychohistory has been part of my introductory classes for the past 27 years (three sections per semester and an additional Psychohistory II class in the spring), I've never tackled a formal paper on how I go about teaching groups until Paul Elovitz asked me to describe my approach for this issue of *Clio's Psyche*.

There is a specific section of my three-credit introductory course devoted to groups. First, I will describe the structure of the course before examining it. Part I studies the ego defenses and how they've operated in individuals and groups in various historical periods. Part II studies the history of childhood. Part III looks at psychobiography. When I begin turning to systematic discussions of group life in Part IV, the semester is a little more than half over. That's generally a good thing since, by then, most students have become more comfortable with thinking psychologically and are better able to add psychological ways of seeing to the traditional political, economic, and social categories they've brought with them to class from the very first day.

By the time we get to groups—the ninth or tenth week of the semester—I hope students have been convinced, or at least partly convinced, that the unconscious exists; that what's in the unconscious can motivate behavior; that what happens in a person's childhood can influence their adult actions; and that psychobiography, especially on US presidents, living and dead, can enrich our understanding of history.

It's a simple step from there to the notion that because groups are made up of individuals, it's possible to assert that when many individuals experience the same things, or nearly the same things—such as childhoods or traumatic events—we should expect them to sometimes think, act, and feel in the same ways that others in the group

think, act, and feel. This point may strike some readers as mundane since we often assume it's one of the givens of the social science. Yet, in teaching psychological history, I've found it helpful to spell things out as often as possible and move through the material step by careful step, especially when transitioning from individual to group psychology. Students find it helpful as well, since the findings of group psychology are sometimes startlingly different from what they've experienced, subconsciously assume, and consciously expect and are in some ways different from what they've learned in the first half of the course. It doesn't hurt either to mention that sociology conceptualizes some group behaviors in much the same way that psychological history does—that is, the notion of socialization—except that in psychological history socialization also includes the aftermaths of poor child-care, developmental dislocations, fixations, and trauma, both individual and collective.

As for trauma, students were introduced to full-scale discussions of it during the introductory portion of the course. Since it's already a familiar notion to them, they need only a brush-up on what constitutes trauma—rape, child abuse, war zones, natural disasters, and so on—as well as post-traumatic stress disorder's short- and long-term consequences. This allows me to move directly to the subject of groups seen psychologically and psychohistorically.

That, to be sure, is a massive subject in its own right and there's an extensive scholarly literature in many fields, sociology, philosophy, psychiatry, group therapy, and social psychology, as well as psychology and history. Indeed, there are semester-long and full year undergraduate and graduate courses devoted to the study of small groups alone. To make things more manageable, (and to allow us to move in a timely way to the last part of the course, Hitler and Nazi Germany as psychohistorical "laboratories"), I simplify, and to some extent oversimplify, by dividing this rich literature into two types, that for large groups and for small groups, noting that while all of psychology constitutes one body of knowledge, it's possible to conceptualize several kinds of psychologies—the kind that studies individuals, the kind that studies couples, a third that studies family dynamics, and a fourth and fifth that study the psychology of small

groups and large groups respectively. It's not that individual psychodynamics, or relationships within dyads or families, do not interact with group behavior. They do (or may). It's just to state again the well-known maxim that people sometimes act differently in large and small groups from the ways they act as individuals.

The reason we're studying small groups at all, I remind them, is that presidents and CEOs don't always make choices on their own. Many major decisions take place in small group contexts, from presidential cabinets to the Board of Directors of IBM. Research also shows that people in small groups—like our classroom, for example—often behave according to identifiable patterns.

To get things rolling, I introduce the findings of Bion, highlighting his division of groups into work and Basic Assumption groups, explain why he labeled his Basic Assumption groups "dependency", "fight/flight", and "pairing", and mention Tavistock, its work in conflict resolution, and so on. I mostly use Bion as a touchstone for the findings of other researchers, such as John Hartman, adding the notion of messianic fantasy groups to Bion's tripartite division.

The central point here is to show that small groups can (or do) operate on two levels at once: the rational, reasonable, conscious work group level where group members work cooperatively to achieve a common attainable work task; and the unacknowledged Basic Assumption, or unconscious group fantasy level where the acting out of unconscious fantasies has the consequence of sabotaging the group's work task. One process operates above, another beneath the surface. It's necessary to point out that acting out can be (but need not be) continuous, that acting-out group members are usually the delegates of others, expressing what many, if not all, group members are feeling, and that when such acting out does occur, even periodical acting out, it helps explain—as virtually everyone in the class comes to recognize—why people in groups act in irrational ways and why it's so difficult for groups to get things done.

These ideas set the stage for a transition to the study of large groups, such as countries. It's necessary to point out that one cannot automatically assume that what holds for small groups also

holds for large groups; it's misleading and unscientific. Some parallels may exist, and they're worth thinking about, but large groups need to be studied on their own. Still, it helps to suggest that perhaps the same type of processes as elucidated by Bion—a conscious one above, an unconscious one beneath the surface—may be operating, or may be operating at times, in large groups too.

It's appropriate to remind students that many people over the years have noted similarities between large groups and mentally disturbed individuals. Scores of experts can be cited to illustrate this "group-as-crazy-individual" metaphor, but the one I've used in recent years (after first explaining who he was), is Tennessee Williams. He once said: "If people behaved in the way nations do they would all be put in straightjackets." This isn't always the case, of course, but is sometimes the case, and is one good reason why we want to understand how and why large groups sometimes fail to act in ways that are in their rational self-interest.

To impress upon students that what we're embarking upon is serious business, I remind them that indifference to the topic may be defensive. As a nation we're all in the same boat, an uncomfortable reality that we may not want to see if the group we're in is acting irrationally. Secondly, I point out that the topic is important to me personally since the central question which has driven my own research for many years is: why do some people act in ways that bring about the very thing they are most trying to avoid? The evidence shows the phenomenon can be found in large groups as well as individuals. Our first question is how to identify collective feelings and fantasies, then how to get hold of unconscious ones.

Clearly, the kind of opinion polls that ask questions about the president's performance can be used over time as a rough gauge to graphically depict the public's general mood and can serve as one kind of emotional index. (When Gulf War I broke out, for example, the president's approval rating, according to *USA Today*, soared to an unheard of 90 percent. This nearly unanimous collective feeling needs explaining.)

To provide a working theoretical framework, I introduce Lloyd deMause's group fantasy theory. (Students are familiar with him since

they've already read his "Evolution of Childhood" essay and an interview with him in *The Best of Clio's Psyche, 1994-2005*, one of their required readings.) Students are already familiar with the concepts of projection, projective containers, the designated patient, scapegoats, stereotyping, and various kinds of delegation, so one can move immediately into the group fantasy theory.

Readers will remember that deMause hypothesizes that collective sentiments, the group's specific hidden wishes, fears, and thoughts, can be identified by a systematic analysis of the shared images appearing on the covers of the nation's newsweeklies and by a systematic daily analysis of the themes and images drawn by the nation's major political cartoonists. Images connect here to the revealing symbolic pictures experienced in an individual's sleep-dream cycle, for if dreams are the royal road to the unconscious, then the shared "dream images" of a large group should constitute the royal road to the group's unconscious.

DeMause says the work he's done on the US media from 1960 to the present reveals regular, cyclical patterns, a four-stage cycle he's labeled "Strong," "Cracking," "Collapse," and "Upheaval," each stage representing a progressive deterioration of the group's defenses, particularly repression. In the last, or "Upheaval" stage, those intolerable repressed feelings—aggression, out-of-control sexuality, homosexual feelings, lawlessness, craziness, powerlessness, personal badness experienced as poison, and so on—that are now streaming into consciousness are projected into scapegoat ("poison") container groups.

Throughout history, says deMause, large groups have engineered escapes from these intolerable feelings by way of one of three means: finding an enemy with whom to go to war (Saddam); finding a domestic group to persecute (Jews, Communists, liberals); sacrificing the leader by voting him or her out of office (the Jimmy Carter solution), by forcing a resignation (the Johnson, Nixon solutions), or by circulating assassination messages in the media which some group delegate eventually acts out (the Kennedy "solution"). Any of these events shore up the group's emotional defenses, which are now restored and firmly in place, returning it to the "Strong" stage, and the cycle begins anew.

Parts of the theory have merit, and I've used them profitably in my own writing. For their part, students like the simplicity of the model. But with things so neatly tied in a bow, they don't take it kindly when we begin to look at what some of the critics have had to say.

As mandated by the Regents for all State University of New York (SUNY) general education courses, it's my obligation to improve critical thinking among my students. In all history courses we're supposed to help them look critically at their ingrained assumptions about how the world works—that is, the traditional political, social, and economic categories—and examine their deeply held beliefs about human nature. Critical thinking, of course, extends to psychological history as well. As part of this critique as regards group fantasy theory in particular, I share with students not only the criticisms of others but impressions based upon my own work. In twenty years of research on the origins of the Second World War in Europe, I found no cyclical patterns of any kind, while my research on the US in the last thirty years has found no rigid, "lawful" cyclical patterns there either. The evidence shows, I think, that most groups are pretty much in emotional "upheavals" all the time and move out of "crisis mode" by various devices, then back again as stress levels increase.

One can counter, as students sometimes do, that my above perception reveals little about the external world, but everything about myself, that like "all" psychological historians, I'm merely projecting my own stuff into the world, which I then call "history." Whether this critical viewpoint tells us how defended the *other* person might be, the fact remains that students regularly mention this idea. It's a notion that's not likely to go away anytime soon and is something psychological historians have to live with. I mention this because I've found it important not to dismiss the student's statement out of hand, at least if we want to continue to have an audience.

It is better to acknowledge that the student's statement contains at least a kernel of truth and that many, if not most, psychological historians would agree with it, at least in part. Although on careful analysis, the writings of many narrative

historians pay no more than lip service to the historicist dogmas they learned in graduate school, one cannot ignore subjectivity as part of the social sciences. On the other hand, simply because something is "in here" does not mean it's not "out there." Erikson's notion of disciplined subjectivity persuasively argued that what's in here can actually clue us to what's out there. The research topics we take on (and the sources we select to help unravel them) do to some extent reflect our own inner needs and conflicts, what I think Peter Pet-schauer means when he says, "the topic chooses us." That those sources and topics have objective, intrinsic, merit is also true, so it's really a kind of two-way street.

Nor do we always start with ourselves. We must go to the documents first. But, as I tell my classes, since we are part of America, what we're feeling and fantasizing may be a clue to what others are feeling and fantasizing. Corroboration or disconfirmation, deciding on whether or not these personal impressions match group phenomena (and to what extent they match them), depends on several things, including all of us working as hard as we can to maintain awareness of our own biases, remaining committed to the discovery of our own blind spots, and, as always and as much as we can, allowing the documents to tell their own tales.

Students eventually appreciate various aspects of the group fantasy theory's explanatory power and find some insights quite invaluable, including the idea of leaders as group fantasy delegates. At the same time, they come to feel that deMause's largely unproven connections to fetal and birth trauma (his "fighting fetuses" and "poisonous placentas"), his insistence that everyone in the group shares one group fantasy rather than several, his contention that leaders are mere delegates of the group fantasy and have little or no importance in themselves, his search for Immutable Laws of Universal Human Behavior, and his attempt to construct a "scientific" psychohistory, along with the overall rigidity of his model, limit its usefulness as an explanatory tool for a full understanding of messy reality. For those interested, I recommend students to deMause's *The Emotional Life of Nations* (2002), and to Dan Dervin's *Enactments: American Modes and Psychohistorical Models* (1996).

This is a good time to show Sam Keen's *Faces of the Enemy*, a documentary based on his book of the same name. The film offers a slightly different take from deMause's on group rage and the manufacturing of enemies and has the added advantage of containing several brief segments from an interview with Robert Jay Lifton. This allows me to introduce some of Lifton's psycho-historical work, say a word about his scholarship on nuclearism and the apocalyptic, and recommend his book (with Greg Mitchell) on *Hiroshima in America: Fifty Years of Denial* (1996). I ask students to read an interview with him and assign several articles on apocalyptic groups written by other authors, which originally appeared in *Clio's Psyche*.

As my classes try to make sense of the group fantasy theory and of groups in general, their discussions, predictably, almost always lead to several related topics, the role and functions of the media, the question of whether media violence begets more violence, and the group fantasy role of popular films. Disentangling these things is not easy, and since nearly everyone has views about them—some very passionate—one can expect lively exchanges. Sometimes those exchanges end up with students leaving the class confused and with the sense that all they've learned is that people disagree, which they already knew when they walked through the door on the first day of class.

To remedy these impressions, and to help students feel they're actually learning something, I like to narrow the class's focus and, after several freewheeling discussions, list on the board a particular subject's logical limits. Listing logical limits has its downside by forcing students to think only inside the box, but has the advantage of encouraging systematic, structured thinking, and in any case students are familiar with the technique since I've used it twice in the past, once in discussions of denial and once for the history of childhood.

When discussing denial earlier in the semester, I had pointed out that only three reactions are possible when one hears new information. The person hearing the news says either: 1) Yes, the evidence convinces me; or, 2) I'm still unsure about it but will keep an open mind; or, 3) What I'm hearing is downright wrong. If number 3 is

the person's response (that is, if the person rejects the information) only two further options remain: the person is correct, the information *is* wrong; or—as is more likely if the rejection is immediate, excited, dogmatic, and spontaneous—the person is in denial. (To keep the likelihood of frequent denial fresh in students' minds, this model needs repeating several times during the semester.)

As for the history of childhood, even before one looks at a single document or dips into the writings of a single historian—no matter what one's opinion is at first or becomes later—long-term trends reduce to four fundamental options. Either: 1) childhood has improved over time; 2) childcare has gotten worse over time; 3) childcare has stayed about the same; or, 4) childhood has gotten better or worse, depending on circumstances (the arrival of plagues, wars, or economic depression.) It helps our understanding if we can think within this framework as we look at and critique the evidence.

(I realize what I'm explaining here may seem quite mundane, tedious, and obvious. Still, I've been asked to describe what I do when I teach about groups and that's what I'm describing.)

The themes that always seem to be spun off from freeform discussions of group psychohistory are several issues pertaining to the media generally and to violent images in particular. To help students better structure their thinking, I offer three lists of logical possibilities on these topics, one each for the influence of the media, the functions of the media, and the question of media violence.

The influence of the media on group fantasy can be reduced to five logical options: 1) there is no influence; 2) the media manipulates us, putting images into our minds to which we respond; or 3), the exact opposite, that is, the media simply mirrors, or plays back to us, our collective conscious and unconscious wishes, impulses, and emotional issues; or, 4) both media and society are engaged in a dialogue, at once creating and mirroring our collective fantasies; or, option Number 5) which holds that either 1, 2, 3, or 4 are at work, depending on what specific historical events and media images are under discussion. (I inform students that deMause holds view Number 3, their professor, view Number 4, and that what we

should probably do each and every time is look at each situation case by case, that is, option Number 5.)

I remind students that most people deny their own participation in constructing group fantasy images and maintain the popular conviction that it's the media doing things to us; we're never responsible. To counter this conventional wisdom, it helps to point out what I've heard in interviews with the heads of the television networks on many occasions. Time and again they state their conviction that television's job is to deliver an audience to a product, not the other way around; if America wants the New York Philharmonic 24 hours a day, they say, that's what they'll give us. It's really a question of the bottom line, advertising revenues driving programming, which in group fantasy terms means we are the ones telling the networks and cable stations what group fantasies we want to share when we tune to programs X, Y, or Z.

A striking example of this aspect of group fantasy comes from the cable news coverage of the shooting rampage in Virginia a couple of years back. As authorities were beginning to close in on the snipers, there was a moment when CNN, MSNBC, and FOX News all ran the same image for several hours: producers inserted a picture of a tree stump outside a house somewhere in the Northwest—Seattle, I think it was—into the backdrop of another image, a convenience store-gas station in Virginia where the most recent shooting had taken place. The feed was exactly the same for all three stations. It went on, unchanged, for several hours. When the producers at CNN decided they'd shift to some headline news—fearing they'd begin losing an audience growing tired of the same image—they were shocked when tens of thousands of viewers switched from CNN to those other stations. It shortly returned to images of the tree stump and the convenience store-gas station, joining the other stations because that's what Americans wanted.

The issue of the functions of the media is a related but separate question from how media influence group fantasies. The functions of the media—economic, political, emotional—also reduce to a few logical options. The media: 1) provides information; 2) offers entertainment; 3) distracts us from uncomfortable realities; 4) promotes particu-

lar political agendas; 5) employs intra-psychic defenses (rationalization, denial, displacement, projection, and so forth) to keep us in the dark and emotionally defended. Things are played down, de-emphasized, the pretense maintained that certain things don't exist, or we're told certain issues have no answers, or we're told the causes of certain things are so obscure they'll never be known, or, if we are not told they can never be known, we're treated to so many alternative theories that it amounts to the same thing. While other functions can doubtless be added, I end my list with a sixth: the media circulates group fantasies so our inner life can be confirmed by outer images so that we are safe in the conviction that the world is really the way we imagine it to be, a necessity if we are to remain sane.

The third theme naturally emerging from discussions of group psychohistory is the connection between violent images and violent social behavior. This can likewise be handled by reducing the question to three simple propositions, which help students focus. Either: 1) violent images produce more violent behavior; 2) violent images produce less violent behavior; or, 3) violent images have no relationship whatsoever to violent behavior. In discussions, hardly anyone opts for option 3—until we begin to wonder if video games count. Since so many students continue to play them as young adults, one expects a certain degree of defensiveness in the discussion.

The consensus among Americans, of course, is that media violence produces more acting out. There's ample psychological evidence to support it, and sooner or later one of my students mentions the idea that repeated exposure to violent images de-sensitizes us, requiring ever more violent images to excite us. And there's psychological evidence for that too.

Predictably, when I mention the second listed option—that violent images can actually *reduce* the incidence of violent acting out—students begin to frown. How, they wonder, can violent images reduce violence?

I explain this view by citing Martin Scorsese, quoted in a *Time* or *Newsweek* article sometime back, as saying that exposure to cinematic violence is largely therapeutic. Through vi-

carious identification with the action, he says, the more violence an audience witnesses, the more it discharges pent-up rage; instead of going home and beating up your wife or girlfriend, you watch a cinematic surrogate do it for you. This becomes a somewhat different but related question when we reframe it to ask: do pornographic images contribute to violence against women? What happens when women are seen as body parts, not as human beings? Is pornography causally connected to rape? What does the class think and what do the scientific studies say?

Before moving on to our next large topic, a last area of group psychohistory and group fantasy needs to be highlighted, namely, the idea that popular films can be used as a way of identifying a group's unconscious fantasy (or fantasies). The topic usually generates much heat as well as lively discussion. There's nothing students find more upsetting than suggesting that films may provide possible roadmaps to their unconscious. It often produces angry denials.

When that happens it's worth reminding them that other kinds of psychohistorical statements also seem guaranteed to make students angry: any reference to religion as regressive, or calling prayer magical thinking, or pointing out that some people reject the very notion of the unconscious while giving credence to dubious ideas such as UFOs, UFO abductions, precognition, out-of-body experiences, telepathy, telekinesis, psychic readings, and past life regressions, or suggesting that someone in the class is in denial, or that what's happening in class is the same as the irrational small-group dynamics we've been studying. Experience has taught me that even the thought that popular films can offer clues to the disowned fantasies of large groups tends to produce the same reaction.

Denial runs deep since psychohistory goes to the very heart of the matter and to the very heart of the filmgoer—the student sitting in my class. Mention that any current or past film favorite may contain group fantasy material and someone is sure to shout out, “That’s a good movie,” or “It’s my favorite movie,” as if that somehow *disproves* the contention. The very thought that a film’s content may reveal something about our unconscious, that

we inhabit a larger community in which each of us is unconsciously moving in unison like a flock of birds or a school of fish seems almost un-American. Besides, we make choices as individuals, don't we? Well yes, I say, but then we find ourselves sitting in the cineplex watching this week's blockbuster movie as millions of others across the country are viewing it at the same time.

Good movie or no, as psychological historians we're looking for themes and images that cluster at particular times. It's not a question of whether you, or I, or a critic somewhere like the film. It may in fact have superior merit as an aesthetic work of cinematic art, but that's irrelevant here. We're interested only in looking at popular films that pull large audiences, not at their aesthetic merits.

I mention here the ongoing work of the Group for the Psychohistorical Study of Film, recommend Paul Monaco's study of post-World War I French and German films, *Cinema & Society* (1976), and note that every Monday's *New York Times* business section provides lists of the most popular films in terms of box office take as well as the top DVD purchases and rentals for the preceding week. Not every popular film is necessarily an indicator of group fantasies, but some must be.

To advance the argument I note several things. That we're not necessarily talking about series films—the *Godfathers*, the *Rocky* series or *Star Wars* trilogies and prequels; all tend to be popular because of the followings they've generated. Almost all horror films are popular, geared to teenage audiences, and do well at the box office. It's not the release of an isolated disaster film, for example, that clues us to the existence of a particular group fantasy so much as it is a slew of them appearing at the same time. *Titanic* is one thing, but it looks more than coincidental when *Dante's Peak*, *Volcano*, *Independence Day*, *Twister*, *Deep Impact*, and *Apocalypse* all appear about the same time. Does this tell us anything about the apocalyptic fears (or wishes) we may be unconsciously experiencing at that moment?

Spielberg's *Jaws* was enormously popular even in Iowa where the chances of meeting a Great White Shark were rather remote. Does the popularity of *Jaws* tell us something about America's

devouring oral rage? Why were the sequels, *Jaws II* and *III*, so poorly received at the box office? Students reply almost always that the sequels weren't as good as the original, a statement implying that a good film is a good film anytime, anywhere. This allows mention of the fact that when *Jaws* opened in Paris (where American films are adored), it was a box office disappointment—it just wasn't as emotionally compelling to the French that season as it was to Americans. The same phenomenon holds true for Oliver Stone's *Platoon*, winner of the Academy Award for Best Picture, which, when shown at that year's Berlin Film Festival, received hisses and boos before half the audience walked out. One might object that this was because the Vietnam War wasn't as compelling to a German audience as it was to a US audience, but that's precisely the psychohistorical point.

From here one can point out that we need to be alert to film critics who can sometimes identify group fantasy trends (they usually make little of them psychohistorically) when they say things like, "this season there are a lot of films about fathers and sons," or, "films these days are showing men as wimps and women on top," or, "there are an awful lot of abandoned kids in movies these days." Class discussion naturally springs up over the possible symbolic meaning of our current favorites. Right now I'm asking my students to consider the significance, if any, of this television season's cluster of new shows—*Surface*, *Invasion*, and *Threshold*—on alien invasion themes, and if they're any way emotionally connected to Spielberg's recent film *War of the Worlds*. (Here's a good place to assign Jacques Szaluta's Clio's Psyche essay on Steven Spielberg.)

That about brings my unit on the psychohistory of groups to a close. But before I bring my essay to a close, I need to point out that one important approach to group psychohistory has been left out of these proceedings, Rudolph Binion's several studies on the principles of trauma and traumatic reliving. I keep Binion's approach under wraps before unveiling it in the next and last unit of the course because his work on the traumatic causes of Hitler's murderous anti-Semitism and on Nazi Germany's traumatic compulsion to war work best there. (The same holds for Peter Loewenberg's classic study on the Nazi youth cohort, which stu-

dents read in full in his *Decoding the Past* [1996], required reading, along with Binion's *Hitler Among the Germans* [1976], for Psychohistory II.)

Students are ready for the next portion of the course because they are already familiar with Binion's name, having met him in an interview and having read three of his short essays, on reductionism, on Bismarck, and on 9/11 and the early days of Gulf War II, as part of their required readings. Students are already familiar with examples of individual and group traumatic reliving, with the idea of intergenerational transmission, including possible intergenerational transmissions of the consequences of trauma impacting on one, two, or three generations or more (the Holocaust, the Irish famine, the genocide of native Americans, slavery, the Black Death). For those who want to go deeper into examples of group traumatic reliving, and for the several other kinds of group processes Binion examines, I'm prepared to recommend his new book, *Past Impersonal: Group Process in Human History*, just published by Northern Illinois University Press (2005).

These skills in place, my classes are now ready to turn their attentions to the strange and deadly world of Nazi Germany.

David R. Beisel, PhD, teaches honors history and psychohistory at Rockland Community College, State University of New York, where he has taught psychohistory to over 6,000 students since 1976. He has been president of the International Psychohistorical Association, editor of *The Journal of Psychohistory*, and is on the Editorial Board of Clio's Psyche. He is the recipient of both the national NISOD Award for Teaching Excellence and the State of New York Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Teaching. He has published many articles on American and European history. His book, *The Suicidal Embrace: Hitler, the Allies, and the Origins of the Second World War*, was published last year. Professor Beisel dedicates this essay to his students. He may be contacted at dbeisel@sunyrockland.edu.

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Beisel's Fortunate Students

Kenneth Alan Adams
Jacksonville State University

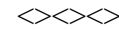
Professor Beisel is a master of both the psychodynamics of group functioning and the subtle ability to convey this information to students. His presentation of data and theories strikes just the right balance between scholarly erudition and everyday sagacity. He does not try to overwhelm students with irrefutable truth or undeniable factuality, but instead chooses to engage their curiosity and to solicit their efforts, encouraging—sometimes, perhaps cajoling—them to look at reality in an alternate way and contribute their observations and insights to enrich the experience. Students learn that critical thought is encouraged, as are honesty and self-scrutiny.

Professor Beisel is secure enough in his understanding of psychohistory to succeed year after year in providing an overview of the field, and he is confident enough to be both authoritative and spontaneous in his presentations, giving students structure and the chance to enjoy the process of coming to terms with psychohistory and groups. Students usually appreciate a teacher who encourages them to explore the course material from different perspectives, and Professor Beisel's multifaceted approach insures that the classroom is an arena where insight, reflection, and comprehension are honored. Students have the experiential opportunity to examine their reactions and emotions and cultivate an appreciation of the applicability of group dynamics to the personal world as well as the institutions of society and the currents of history.

Students at Rockland Community College who have the luck or wisdom to enroll in Professor Beisel's class in psychohistory have a remarkable educational opportunity awaiting them. David's commitment to historiography and psychohistory are a rare combination in contemporary academia. His affability and generosity are even rarer. We should all be so lucky as to learn psychohistory under his tutelage.

Kenneth Alan Adams, PhD, is a graduate of Harvard University, where he worked with Erik Erikson and Robert Coles. He obtained his PhD

from Brandeis University, focusing on psychoanalytic sociology with Philip E. Slater and Gordon Fellman. While in the graduate program, he was selected for the Seminar for Social Scientists at the Boston Psychoanalytic Society. Now a Professor Emeritus of Sociology at Jacksonville State University and a Contributing Editor to the Journal of Psychohistory, he currently teaches at Auburn University-Montgomery and Troy University. He may be contacted at <KAAPSYSY@aol.com>.



Powerful Emotions in the Classroom

C. Fred Alford
University of Maryland

In reading Professor Beisel's essay on how he teaches his students about groups, it is not surprising to learn that he is a winner of several teaching excellence awards. One of the measures of a teacher is the extent to which the student is prompted to apply the lessons of the class to her or his own experience and life. Beisel's fine essay prompted me to reflect on some of my experiences as a professor bringing psychoanalytic/psychohistorical concepts into the classroom. This will be the focus of my comment.

For several years I tried to teach group theory to my graduate students. In that period I was active in the A. K. Rice Institute, the American branch of the Tavistock Institute in London at a time when it was dominated by the work of Bion and his followers. (Today, I'm afraid, the theoretical Tavistock foundations are much more eclectic—a nice word for disorderly.) I'd attended a number of group relations conferences, including a nine-day residential conference, and was certified as a consultant-in-training. Since that time I have become a full-fledged consultant, though I no longer consult.

My idea was that my graduate students would not just read about group psychology, they would experience it in the course. We would spend the first month reading Freud, Bion, and some whose work followed in that tradition, such as Elliott Jaques. We also saw the *Faces of the*

Enemy film to which Beisel refers. It's a great and humane film, built around a comparison between the thought processes of a psychotic killer and that of nations.

After the first month of classes, we sat in a circle after changed rooms and roles—I went from professor to consultant and the class became a study group. There was no explicit task, other than that the group study itself, whatever that means exactly. No homework, no leadership on my part, other than an occasional Delphic comment on the group process. Even more than in my usual work as a consultant, I distanced myself from the group, because they knew me as their professor, and I wanted to sharpen the role differentiation. (Remember, I was new at this.)

One of the great problems of the study group methodology is that there is not enough time to process the experience. Participants often feel that something profound and important has happened to them, but they don't know what. I was determined to use the time we had available not to repeat that mistake, and so we used the rest of the semester, about a month, to review the experience. This included reading Bion again, reading Christopher Browning's *Ordinary Men*, which is about a group of middle-aged German soldiers who became mass murderers out of what can only be called peer pressure.

All in all I thought it was a wonderful course; it received stellar evaluations. Because we spent a semester together the students had enough time to read and reflect about the group processes they went through. This meant they could turn emotion into cognitive learning. Yet I would not do the course again; I would not recommend it to my colleagues without serious reservations. All in all, I think Professor Beisel's approach is likely the better one.

My approach was playing with fire. Groups of even presumably stable graduate students who know what the "game" is all about are drawn deeply into primitive group process. The first time I ran the study group, one woman had a virtual nervous breakdown and had to be removed from the group. I should never have let her join the group in the first place, but a phone call to her previous professor, whom I happened to know,

convinced me otherwise.

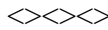
The other two times I taught the course were not quite so dramatic, but I was surprised that the defenses I thought would contain the chaos of the unconscious didn't work very well. What were these defenses? The structured and contained environment of a university class, in which students know each other, and have some cognitive resources to draw on. Nor did I discourage intellectualized cognitive defenses. Nevertheless, the primitive forces to which Bion refers are so strong that knowing about what happens in similar small groups (students first read from articles in the *Group Relations Reader*, now in its fourth volume, published by the A. K. Rice Institute) didn't contain them. Possibly this knowledge served to egg the students on. As in, "Oh, we can do better than that!"

In any case, Professor Beisel's reflections on "Teaching About Groups" reminded me of the disjunction between theory and practice. In theory, having students experience the chaos and primitive defenses of small groups is the best way to teach about them. In practice, it's a dangerous business. No one who is not properly trained in the practice of group consultation should even consider running a class in this manner—even then it is risky business.

A colleague of mine, Professor Jerrold Post, at George Washington University, has developed a variant of this approach, in which two groups of students are given the task of negotiating an international crisis, while the consultants focus almost entirely on the group process. I have consulted once to this version, and the task-oriented focus seems to contain the anxiety better than the pure study group. Perhaps that is a reasonable compromise. In any case, the teacher should always remember that he or she is dealing with powerful, unconscious forces that may emerge in dangerous and threatening ways: in the world, and even in the classroom. This came through in Professor Beisel's remarks, and that is what pleased me most—his attempt to link the cognitive learning to emotional experience, without which our knowledge of groups remains arid.

C. Fred Alford, PhD, is Professor of Government and Distinguished Scholar-Teacher at the

University of Maryland, College Park. He is author of over a dozen books in moral psychology, including *The Psychology of the Natural Law of Reparation* (Cambridge University Press, forthcoming). Professor Alford is Executive Director of the Association for Psychoanalysis, Culture, and Society, and Co-Editor of the *Psychoanalysis and Society Series* published by Cornell University Press. He may be contacted at <falford@gvpt.Umd.edu>.



Subjectivity, Resistance, and the Role of the Individual

James William Anderson
Northwestern University

David R. Beisel is a gifted teacher with a comprehensive grasp of group psychohistory. I could discuss what I agree with in his article, but I would merely be repeating much of what he already has said. Instead, I thought I would comment on four topics on which I have some disagreement with Beisel or about which I believe I have something to add.

Psychohistorians Are Said to Project Their Own “Stuff” onto the World: Beisel reports that his students sometimes charge that he and other psychohistorians do no more than project their own personal concerns onto their subjects. Beisel replies that the “research topics we take on...do to some extent reflect our own inner needs and conflicts,” but the topics also have “objective, intrinsic merit,” “so it’s really a kind of two-way street.”

I agree, but I would go further. Many students may have a fantasy that scholars are simply disinterested researchers doing objective studies, but that is not the way things are. I would maintain that there is always a connection between scholars’ inner concerns, conflicts, and preoccupations, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, the area that they study and the conclusions that they reach. It is that intimate connection that energizes creative insight.

For example, Freud was troubled by his own intense Oedipus complex. It was his deep

concern about his own feelings that sensitized him to see such conflicts in others and that motivated him to study, and to conceptualize about, such conflicts; because they mattered to him, he wanted to understand them. Of course, just because someone studies something does not mean that he or she is correct. We have other means of determining the value of different theories. But I would argue that, far from dismissing research because it has a subjective element, we should encourage our students to understand the creative process and to realize that all valuable studies in a field like group psychohistory come from scholars who have a personal relationship with their work.

The Theories of Lloyd deMause: Beisel apparently spends a great deal of time in his course on the highly speculative theories of Lloyd deMause. He not only devotes a section of the group-psychohistory portion of the course to deMause’s “group fantasy theory,” but he has readings earlier in the course on deMausian theory. There has been much criticism of this work, as Beisel points out. Beisel himself found deMause’s work to be seriously flawed. He tells us that, in his twenty years of research on the causes of World War II, he found “no cyclical patterns” as posited by deMause of any kind, and in research in the United States he also found “no rigid, ‘lawful’ cyclical patterns.” Given the groundswell of criticism of deMause’s work, its lack of standing in academia, and Beisel’s own evidence in contradiction of it, would it not make sense for Beisel to omit it from the course?

Students’ Resistance: Beisel laments the resistance he receives from students when he speaks of religion and especially when he argues that films may contain fantasy group material. Early in my career, whenever I taught about psychoanalysis and the unconscious, I encountered similar resistance; it was especially virulent in my first teaching job at Williams College in Massachusetts where the students, though bright, were predominantly conservative New Englanders who believed in self-sufficiency and found the idea anathema that their emotional experiences during childhood may have played a central role in their becoming the people they were.

Over the years, I developed a strategy that has served me well and that I recommend to other teachers. When I teach about Sigmund Freud, for

example, I simply do not invite extensive discussion of whether or not he is right. On what basis would the students make judgments anyway? (Incidentally, I do present some of the material on experimental validation and contradiction of Freud's concepts, and I also let the students know of my own mixed assessment of Freud.) I tell the students that they are under no obligation to accept Freud's theories, but, since those theories have been so influential, and in fact, large tracts of psychology were developed in opposition to Freud, I tell the students that their task is to learn what Freud said.

When we are studying Freud, I bring up various clinical incidents from my own practice as a clinical psychologist. For example, one patient, a male college student, told me of how, as a teenager in a Chicago suburb, he had an affair lasting two years with a middle-aged man even though he, the student, is not and never was gay himself. He explained that he participated in this affair because he wanted to protect the other teenagers in his suburb from being preyed on by this man. He had not desired sex with this man but slept with him as a selfless act that would help his fellow high-school boys. I challenge the students to figure out how Freud would have explained this incident and suggest that they might consider his concepts of the unconscious and of rationalization.

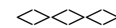
Individual Psychology as It Underlies Group Psychology: I come last to my main point. There is no such thing, I would emphasize, as psychology that does not come down to the personal level. Beisel tells his students that many commentators have said there are "similarities between large groups and mentally disturbed individuals." But such a parallel is misleading. A group does not have a mind; only a person has a mind. I would like to see a course on group psychohistory always keeping the individual in sight.

Group phenomena, it seems to me, take place because they perform a similar function for many individuals. For example, one might argue that a considerable number of people in Germany felt humiliated by their country's defeat in World War I and further mortified by the demeaning terms of the Versailles Treaty. Others have pointed out that, in addition, social factors threatened the roles of many people. Hitler's message of

the superiority of the Aryan people appealed to many individuals because it worked in their minds to help them overcome their humiliation and helped counter feelings of inferiority.

I am not saying that Beisel disagrees with me. I am sure that much of what he teaches assumes this point about the role of the individual. My recommendation is simply that in a course on group psychotherapy this point would be placed front and center throughout the course.

James William Anderson, PhD, a psychoanalyst and clinical psychologist, is Professor of Clinical Psychology at Northwestern University Medical School, a faculty member of the Chicago Institute for Psychoanalysis, the Associate Editor of the Annual of Psychoanalysis, and a Member of the Editorial Board of this publication. A psychobiographer, he has written on such figures as William and Henry James, Woodrow Wilson, Edith Wharton, Frank Lloyd Wright, and Sigmund Freud, as well as on the methodology of psychobiography. Dr. Anderson may be contacted at j-anderson3@northwestern.edu.



A Model for Psychohistorical Teaching

Donald L. Carveth
Glendon College of York University

David Beisel's "Introduction to Psychohistory" is a model of good undergraduate teaching. It shows him to be an educator who has attempted to think through how best to present his materials in ways that will maximize understanding and minimize emotional resistance. Over the years he has obviously paid close attention to his students' reception of his teaching and the result is a logical, step-by-step approach in which concepts and topics are introduced in a careful and meaningful sequence. While in no way treating students as patients, Beisel's presentation of challenging and at times threatening psychoanalytic ideas seems guided by an almost therapeutic awareness in which empathy, tact and timing are as important in the classroom as they are in the clinical consulting room.

I was pleasantly surprised to learn that the Regents of the State University of New York actually mandate a focus upon critical thinking in all general education courses. Beisel provides several good examples of this. One is his introduction of Lloyd deMause's appealing group fantasy theory, followed by a critique based on his own research in which he had found no cyclical patterns of the sort the theory predicts. Another is his thoughtful way of dealing with the argument advanced by some students that psychohistorical interpretation may amount to little more than projection of the psychohistorian's personal psychology. Allowing that there may be some degree of validity in this idea, Beisel introduces the view that "simply because something is 'in here' does not mean it's not 'out there,'" that sometimes "what's in here can actually clue us to what's out there" and, in any case, we don't start with ourselves but with the documentary evidence.

One wonders whether the whole idea of a "group unconscious" is subjected to the sort of critique that sociologists have long directed to the notion of a "group mind" and the possible "organic fallacy" this entails. The debate between "holism" (the idea that society has a reality *sui generis* above and beyond the individuals composing it) and "nominalism" (the idea that society is merely an abstract term describing the patterned actions of individuals) seems relevant here.

Beisel finds it useful to point out to students that "sociology conceptualizes some group behaviours in much the same way that psychological history does—that is, the notion of socialization—except that in psychological history, socialization also includes the aftermaths of poor child-care, developmental dislocations, fixations, and trauma, both individual and collective." But this represents a very big exception as it embodies the adherence of psychological history to something it shares with psychoanalysis but not at all with much sociology: the notion of pathology and the acceptance of certain norms deviation from which constitutes pathology. Much sociology describes but does not embrace or accept social norms. It is committed to a relativistic outlook that sees socialization as a process of passive internalization of socio-cultural contents. It not only abstains from value judgement of such contents, it is also largely

blind to anything in human nature or in the child, viewed as *tabula rasa*, with which such contents might conflict. I think it is to the credit of psychological history that in this regard it has more in common with psychoanalysis than with sociology.

Perhaps American readers will understand Beisel's reference to the fact that in their coverage of the Virginia shooting rampage certain cable networks chose for a time to run the same image from the same feed for several hours. To me as a Canadian reader it is not at all clear why the networks chose to do this, or why people reacted as they did when these networks shifted to some headline news.

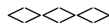
In response to angry reactions from students to the suggestion that popular films may reveal something of their unconscious, Beisel reminds them that other kinds of psychohistorical statements also seem to make them angry—such as "any reference to religion as regressive, or calling prayer magical thinking." I'm not certain of the point here as, in my view, anger is entirely justified in reaction to such reductive and indiscriminating statements that are all too commonly made by psychoanalysts who fail to recognize the dogmatic nature of their own secular humanist ideology or distinguish the radically different meanings of religion and prayer in what Melanie Klein called the "depressive" and the "paranoid-schizoid" positions.

An aspect of Beisel's attempt to help students better structure their thinking that I find particularly valuable is his use of the method of listing logical limits: spelling out the logically available positions that can be taken with respect to any issue or question. Oddly, I've not encountered this method before and I look forward to employing it in my own teaching.

In seeking to get students to question the popular conviction that we are victims of the media rather than playing an active role in constructing the group fantasy images the media then feed back to us, it might be useful to refer to the contrasting views of Freud and Bion on group leadership. For Freud the group is dominated by its leader, whereas for Bion the group rejects leaders it doesn't want and adopts those who suit it.

In summary, David Beisel has provided us with an example of excellent course design and teaching methodology. His approach is respectful and sensitive to students' needs and interests. He seeks to help them overcome resistances to the open exploration of emotionally threatening ideas while, at the same time, subjecting these ideas to scholarly critique. His essay inspires me to seek to improve my own work in this area.

Don Carveth, PhD, is a sociologist and psychoanalyst teaching at Glendon College of York University for over thirty-five years. He is a training and supervising psychoanalyst in the Canadian Institute of Psychoanalysis and past Editor-in-Chief of the Canadian Journal of Psychoanalysis/Revue Canadienne de Psychanalyse. Professor Carveth has published extensively and of late has focused on guilt evasion in Harry Guntrip and others. Many of his papers are on his website <http://www.yorku.ca/dcarveth>.



Psychohistory in My Introductory World Religions Course

Dereck Daschke
Truman State University

David Beisel's "Teaching about Groups" must certainly be a welcome contribution to anyone who faces the task of helping students, whether as undergraduates or graduates, come to grips with using psychoanalytic thought to understand history. By carefully demarcating different sizes of groups to be examined on their own terms, and by bringing in a variety of theoretical and empirical approaches to each, Beisel articulates what many of us in this forum probably have done somewhat intuitively, surely less precisely: overcome the inherent difficulty in applying an hermeneutical model designed to flesh out *individual* motivations and behaviors that are otherwise not observable, and apply them to *masses* of individuals, which lack certain important elements at the center of psychoanalytic interpretation, such as an unconscious or a childhood.

However, my classroom duties do not call for me to be a psychohistorian in an explicit man-

ner. While I do regularly teach a course on the psychology of religion, most of my time is spent on the 100-level introductory survey course on world religions. Does Beisel's essay speak to this set of information? Indeed it does. The goals for the course, in fact, emphasize my desire "to convey the sense of religions as part of the lived experience of the day-to-day life of individuals and their communities, and involved in world history, politics, economics, conflict, stability, social order, artistic expression, etc." Moreover, I state as I cover these goals at the start of the course, like the people that make them up, religions are born, grow up, fight with others, fall in love, break up, make mistakes, are creative, and die. There is, therefore, a clear psychohistorical framework underlying the class (echoed by my choice of textbook, Mary Pat Fisher's *Living Religions*). Given this assumption, then, several of the subjects that Beisel lays out for his students are particularly relevant for a class such as mine. To give one example, *trauma* is a key concept for discussing Jewish history—in presenting the fall of the Temple in Jerusalem to the Babylonians, and then in discussing the cultural dynamics that have given rise to anti-Semitism and the Shoah.

The trauma of the Babylonian exile, at the largest level of Judean culture, could have lead to a kind of post-traumatic paralysis, wherein the distinctive culture, like so many others, would have failed to cope with the blow and simply disappeared. On an individual level, we see this very response in the early chapters of the Prophet Ezekiel. But the Book of Ezekiel points to something else: recovery, from the trauma, of the future. So too, on a small group level, the exiled Judeans—now the Jews—found ways to reconnect as a community, through synagogues and texts. On a large group level, the Jews as a whole were able to rework their past and reframe traditions as a new "memory" of their history, one which made sense of their experience, and hence made it less traumatic and anomic. These three levels are indubitably related, both historically and theoretically. Yet it is illuminating to see which dynamics are at work in each, yielding very different real-world results, all of which tell us something about the Jews' experience in Exile and afterward.

The fantasy issue that Beisel also develops

in his paper coincides with the conceptualization of trauma as well, especially in discussing anti-Semitism, the Shoah, and the recurrent projection of attitudes that, in a psychohistorical model, explain the irrational animosity toward powerless groups in society. As I point out in the classroom, we are all different in that very room in many of the ways that have led to genocide and mass persecution at various times and places throughout history—racially, economically, sexually—and yet, somehow, we are not at each others' throats! So mere difference or social weakness *is not* explanatory for violent action of one group or individual against another. In either case, the difference must somehow become a *threat*. Invariably, the threat by the different, weaker party is a projection, a fantasy, by the group in power, or by an individual from that group; but what brings it about? Once again, Beisel's paper, on many counts, could profitably guide discussion about any number of actual groups, large and small, who have faced traumas such as war, economic downturn, famine, disease, or change in social structure and thus lashed out at their own invented enemies—and do so in a way that seeks specificity (Why *this* group and not *that*? Why *here* and not *there*?) that too often eludes the more grandiose endeavors into psychoanalytic theorizing.

Many other examples could be brought to bear from this introductory class in religion, not to mention my upper-level undergraduate courses in Psychology and Religion; Judaism; Religion, Health, and Healing; and the Millennium and the Apocalypse. Suffice to say, David Beisel has developed some extraordinary tools to do some of the difficult conceptual work in his courses in psychohistory, and I for one am thankful that he has generously made them available to the readership of this journal.

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A Welcome Contribution on Teaching

Dan Dervin
Mary Washington University

David Beisel's refreshingly candid account of his approach to teaching psychohistory is a most welcome contribution. At the outset he tunes into both the difficult tenets of our field and the world of his students. He hopes they have at least partly been convinced "that the unconscious exists, that what's in the unconscious can motivate behavior, that what's in a person's childhood can influence their adult actions, and that psychobiography, especially on U.S. presidents living and dead, can enrich our understanding of history." That pretty well captures our shared aspirations in a nutshell.

On groups, he takes a page from Bion, noting that small groups operate on two levels simultaneously: ostensibly working "cooperatively to achieve a common attainable work task," while on another level "acting-out the unconscious fantasies" that undermine the group's avowed aims. In my current take on large groups, we are seemingly fighting in Iraq to introduce freedom and democracy, while what is actually happening is the sacrificial shedding of blood and the endangerment of democratic freedoms at home. By way of explaining why groups are irrational and often counterproductive, Professor Beisel notes that the "acting-out group members are usually the delegates of others, expressing what many" in the group are feeling. Thus subjective elements are manifested in baffling and contradictory ways.

What emphatically comes across throughout is Professor Beisel's willingness to test the premises of psychohistory along with an openness to accept up to a point where his students are coming from, and then to build on common bases. This brand of teaching is productive but emotionally demanding, requiring a great deal of give-and-take and careful balancing. He has to think on his feet while maintaining inclusive discussions. It also juggles not only a mastery of the field and an ability to sort out subjective from objective factors but also candor, modesty, and a superabundance of good will.

In view of these unusual demands, it is not difficult to grasp why psychohistory is shunned by mainstream historians. Oh, to stand at the podium and pontificate to huddled masses of silent note-takers.

Here are some further hurdles likely to arise. When I ran psychohistory courses in an interdisciplinary slot at a liberal arts college, I found that students who had already declared a major would most readily accept propositions that reinforced their discipline's assumptions. They either disparaged non-congruent ideas or simply imposed the rational assumptions of their chosen major onto the new and more unsettling material. For example, psychology majors in accord with standard behaviorism viewed Germans in the 1930s as being massively conditioned and in effect brain-washed by Hitler, thereby avoiding the disturbing role of anti-Semitism, not to mention lurking omnipotent fantasies about Herr Führer. A philosophy student once privately corrected my strictures about Heidegger's implication in Nazism because we all knew he was a great philosopher and beyond our mundane nitpicking. I in turn was grappling with the anti-Semitic strain in T.S. Eliot—a poet I would have liked to be kept immune from racist contamination. As Dr. Beisel remarks, psychohistory is a two-way street.

These anecdotes touch on the ways in which new information is processed and, as Beisel shows, is often resisted and denied. My above examples might suggest a defensive tactic familiar to us as Anna Freud's seminal "identification with the aggressor." In other words, students affiliate with a given department at least in part for membership in a strong protective, quasi-familial group and guard against that identification being jeopardized. Other students told me frankly they wanted the certitude of multiple-choice questions and are not likely to cotton to the uncertainties of psychohistory. Clear-cut answers are equivalent to the happy endings rarely afforded in life; that is, containing wishful components. It's true that there are many high-profile transgressive and subversive discourses currently swirling around academia, but these are highly intellectualized and supply handy scapegoat groups as compensation for rocking the boat.

I should note that identification-with-the-

aggressor is clinical short-hand for elusive processes. It could be rephrased as identification or affiliation with powerful figures of authority starting with one's parents and later reconfigured in more benign terms for mastery or survival. As such, the term is useful to describe various unconscious mechanisms because a form of it has acquired great cultural legitimacy as the "Stockholm Syndrome." To further appreciate its operations, we might recall Stanley Milgram's experiments in getting student guinea pigs to inflict pain under the auspices of seemingly benevolent scientific authorities. However, what may look like operant conditioning and positive reinforcement—those buzzwords of behaviorism—only work under coercion or when inner needs are engaged. We can avoid such responses in classroom situations as this fine teacher does by being honest and interactive.

I also found that students process unwelcome ideas by means of negation, or negatively-affirming, explored in one of Freud's most astute papers. Thus the telling preface: "I know this couldn't apply to me, but..." Similar variation on the covering, self-exempting syntax can raise red flags. I learned to ignore the No and to hear the Yes. The classroom, we may recall, is a busy intersection of fluctuating identities, of old identifications being shed and new ones tried on, of flagrant and often fleeting transferences, wherein as teachers we perform not unlike traffic cops. We maintain the flow with an eye on the signals.

In discussing the important role of media, especially for student participation, Beisel mentions Martin Scorsese's claiming a therapeutic benefit for cinematic violence. Here he is drawing on one of Western Civilization's oldest debates. Aristotle's Catharsis Theory, conceived to justify violent tragedies, was a rebuttal to Plato's banishing poets from his commonwealth lest their art stir insurrectional passions. This classical model has the advantage of enlarging the debate and allowing students a safe place to grapple with their feelings in a context of enduring issues. Stephen King also justified his meal-tickets of horror fiction and films as offering harmless outlets which turn us into law-abiding citizens. Which proves, I suppose, even the devil can quote scripture for his purposes.

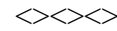
I'm intrigued by David Beisel's reference to recurring media images during the D.C. Sniper panic in the fall of 2002, especially since I felt myself a potential target then. He refers to a tree stump in Washington State juxtaposed with a service station in Virginia, as galvanizing group interest and apparently stirring group-fantasy. The tree-stump, I believe, indicates the locale of the tree the sniper had earlier used for target practice and since removed for forensic analysis; the service station was the scene of the sniper's killing at random. What these dots mean when associated on an unconscious level is tantalizing, but I haven't been able to connect them.

Finally, it is impossible for me to read Beisel's account without searching today's social and political climate for insights and applications, as I started doing above. Bush's clueless response to Hurricane Katrina, for example, suggests he was firmly and—evidently believed—securely wrapped inside his heroic savior role in the Iraq war. Mother Nature then performed as the return of the repressed, or anyway as a reality-check. However, another dimension of the catastrophe seems to have stemmed from secondhand news accounts and evidently baseless rumors about the numerous rapes and murders inside the crowded Superdome that projected a vision of primitive racial anarchy. Through this apparent disparity, we can witness group-fantasy exposed in all its subjective and lethal dynamics. In addition, it may have been these fears of uncontrolled violence that prohibited the school bus drivers from operating the 200 buses in nearby parking lots, thus adding to the helpless conditions.

Group-fantasy does not always eventuate in historical action, but sometimes it does. Historical action does not always arise from group-fantasy, but sometimes it does. This sorting out is psychohistory's task. Professor Beisel's work makes this arduous challenge a little more possible, and for that we are indeed grateful.

Daniel Dervin, PhD, is a longtime contributor to Clio's Psyche, a Featured Scholar in these pages, and a significant contributor to psychohistory. Among his numerous publications is Enactments: American Modes and Psychohistorical Models (1996). Before becoming Emeritus at Mary Washington University so he could devote

more time to scholarship, he taught the course, Hitler and the Holocaust: the Psychohistory of Evil. Professor Dervin is currently working on a history of childhood and may be contacted at ddervin@umw.edu.



Free Associations on Beisel's Article

Joseph Dorinson
Long Island University

Although I served as International Psycho-historical Association (IPA) convention chair in the early 1980s and instituted the publication of conference proceedings, it is so long since I have been active in any organized psychohistory group that I approach this assignment with a touch of Kierkegaardian "fear and trembling." After all, I have not attended a single session of IPA since 1988. At that time I left feeling frustrated with the extent to which unproven ideas such as "poisonous placentas" were being discussed by some of the attendees. My IPA experience left me concerned about the intellectual basis of some people's psychohistory. This will be the primary focus of my comment below.

Clearly, David Beisel's "Teaching About Groups" offers more insights into the mind of a fine professor than into the paradigms of Bion and deMause. Professor Beisel brings to the table a variety of meaty morsels spiced with clarity, humility, and empathy. It is little wonder that SUNY-Rockland has seen fit to bestow many honors on this learned pedagogue for exemplary teaching as well as the publications without which we academics perish—despite the failure of Moses, Jesus, Socrates, Confucius, and Gautama (the Buddha) to publish. A minimalist with maximum effectiveness, Professor Beisel lays out his methodology with little breast-beating and fanfare. To his credit he has absorbed the salient literature in this fertile field. He is honest to a fault, acknowledging oversimplification in the process of teaching and citing Bion, Tavistock, and Hartman as seminal sources. These pioneers carry him to the far country of group fantasies as they play out in the real

world of political history, the subject of a recent resurgence for those, like this commentator, who travel in academic circles.

“To provide a working theoretical framework,” Beisel employs Lloyd deMause’s dubious group fantasy theory. Though often brilliant in his earlier analysis, especially of the history of childhood, deMause’s flight into a “systematic analysis of shared images” in major national periodicals invites a skeptical response. Since there is patently no empirical evidence for the de Mauseian four-stage cycle, I find it problematic that he even attempts to teach this material.

Unlike deMause, who sees things in black and white terms, Beisel teaches his students about the possibility of and speaks of the need to apply Erik Erikson’s construct of “disciplined subjectivity.” As we follow Beisel’s journey into what Conrad aptly called “the heart of darkness,” he beams bright light along with critical commentary of deMause’s penchant for “poisonous placentas” and “fighting fetuses.” Clearly, he has separated himself from the untenable formulation of “immutable laws” put forth by the founder of the IPA and the editor of the *Journal of Psychohistory*.

David Beisel gathers his materials from a variety of sources. He incorporates a documentary film by Sam Keen based on Keen’s book featuring Robert Jay Lifton, whose monumental studies have contributed to the legitimization of psychohistory as much as any other practitioner with the possible exception of Bruce Mazlish. While acknowledging that to experienced teachers some of what he presents may be “mundane, tedious, and obvious” formulations, Beisel deftly explores the options concerning the history of childhood. Then, he tackles the media on group options: selecting option four as the most germane, to wit, that both media and society interact as both catalysts and reflectors of our collective fantasies. Again, Beisel differs from deMause who insists that media simply select and replay our collective unconscious desires.

In dealing with violence, Beisel initially occupies solid ground. He cites the American consensus that media violence promotes actual violence: as we grow more desensitized, the media becomes more violent. I am troubled, however, by

his citation of Martin Scorsese to the effect that movie violence is therapeutic because it comes from an *auteur* whose bread is buttered by unbri-dled aggression and gratuitous bloodbaths. Also, Beisel’s selection of prototypical films—*Godfathers*, *Rock*, *Star Wars*, *Jaws*, *et al.*—seem arbitrary to this commentator. Are these films definitive, informative, representative? In probing the American experience, I prefer *Casablanca*, *Cabin on the Sky*, *Citizen Kane*, *The Grapes of Wrath*, *Modern Times*, *The Best Years of Our Lives*, and *The Home of the Brave*.

As a professor, I also do group work in my classroom. Together, students and instructor ponder the arenas of sports and the culture of comedy for clues to core values, conflicts in class, race, and gender as well as the once vital center eroded by the current administration and its allies.

Beisel’s coda brings Rudolph Binion to center stage. He is cited as an authority on group traumas and readers are exhorted to tackle Binion’s new book, *Past Impersonal*. To this wise counsel, let me tout a book that impressed my students—Arthur G. Neal’s *National Trauma and Collective Memory* (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1998). At Columbia University, where I learned the historian’s trade and where Binion taught briefly, psychohistory had little or no favor. Perhaps with intellectual heavyweights like Binion and Beisel, scholars can now weave a richer, more eclectic tapestry with psychology as a vital strand in the house of Clio: one endowed with many mansions and bereft of arbitrary borders.

Joe Dorinson did his graduate work at Columbia University before becoming a professor at Long Island University. He teaches and researches popular culture, most specifically on the history of Brooklyn, humor, Russian immigrants, sports history, and World War II movies and music. Among his many publications are the co-edited books, Paul Robeson: Essays on his Life and Legacy (2002) and Jackie Robinson: Race, Sports and the American Dream (1998) Professor Dorinson may be contacted at <Joseph.Dorinson@liu.edu>.

**Save April 8, 2006 for David Lotto’s
Work-in -Progress Seminar on the
Psychology of Vengeance**

Psychohistorical Pedagogy

Paul H. Elovitz

Ramapo College and Clio's Psyche

Once again David Beisel has led the way in psychohistory. Groups are such a complex and multi-determined entity that most of us have focused on, researched, and taught psychobiography far more than group psychohistory. David Beisel, Rudolph Binion (see the September 2005 issue of this publication), and a few other path-breaking individuals among us have been leading the way in approaching groups. Professor Beisel, who has taught more psychohistory students than anyone else in the world, has provided us with a step-by-step description and analysis of his pedagogical methods with his usual emphasis on how to overcome student resistance.

Beisel is an outstanding teacher. While some colleagues have suffered professionally as a result of teaching psychohistory, despite the doubts others harbored, Professor Beisel survived de-tenuring at his institution *because* his psychohistory classes were overflowing with students. Administrators may have not understood or cared about psychohistory, but they understood his overflowing classes and ability to inspire students.

My knowledge of Professor Beisel's pedagogy is based upon a variety of sources extending over a period of three decades. I have spoken in his classes, met or taught a fair number of his students and former students, and chatted with them at conferences. I have done workshops on teaching psychohistory with him, discussed teaching at length, and been a person to whom he ventilated when student resistance was intense before and after our weekly racquetball games that extended for the greater part of two decades.

David Beisel is as passionately committed to his teaching as he is to his scholarship. For years, I called him the Stakhanovite of psychohistory and SUNY-Rockland. (For those of you unfamiliar with Soviet Russian propaganda, Aleksei Grigor'evich Stakhanov [1906-77] was a model worker whose gargantuan coal mining production was heralded as a model for all other citizens of the Soviet Union.) My racquetball partner would listen patiently and sympathetically as I com-

plained about having to teach four preparations and fifteen credits to 135 students. However, my face reddened with embarrassment when this Stakhanovite of higher education answered my question as to how many credits he was teaching. Each semester for five years he reported teaching twenty-four credits with a total of 246 students. The last time I seriously recollect complaining to him at length was when I taught fifteen credits to 130 students with five different preparations in a semester back in the 1980s.

In higher education, there is a common prejudice against community colleges: many assume their faculty and students to be inferior to those of four-year colleges and universities. Though I have never systematically studied the issue, I personally found the students I taught at Middlesex Community College to be not very different in their abilities and willingness to work than those I instructed in the same course at Temple, Rutgers, and Fairleigh Dickinson universities, as well as at Ramapo College. The over six thousand students Beisel has taught psychohistory to at Rockland have gone on to schools as prestigious as Brandeis, Brown, Duke, Harvard, Penn, Ramapo, Rutgers, and Yale. Some have earned doctoral degrees and all who were open minded benefited from their experience with a brilliant intellectual and teacher. Denis O'Keefe, a talented young social worker/therapist who now makes yearly psychohistorical presentations, told me last summer that he was an accounting major who had never read a book that was not assigned to him when he first took Dr. B's course. Awakened to social ills, psychology, and the life of the mind by this extraordinary teacher, he now devours books.

It has often been my thought that if Professor Beisel had entered our field during a period of growth, rather than of shrinking departments and de-tenuring, and published earlier in his career, that today he would be a star at an Ivy League college or top notch state university. The Ivy Leagues' loss has been SUNY-Rockland's gain.

How did he get so good? Some suggestions may be found in Clio's Psyche's inaugural issue (June, 1994) where Professor Beisel was our first featured scholar. But mostly you must look elsewhere for the answers. In the early days of organized psychohistory I noted his quiet eager-

ness to soak up the new knowledge he was encountering at the Institute for Psychohistory and the International Psychohistorical Association (IPA). At the IPA, he most ably served as the first convention chair in 1978 before becoming president and then going on to edit the *Journal of Psychohistory* for nearly a decade. Personally, I can vouch for just how much one can learn as a psychohistorical editor.

David Beisel has always had a wonderful ability to pick up ideas that are in the air and turn them into something quite worthwhile. In 1976, while I agonized over the propriety of researching and writing about a candidate for the presidency, David spent the month of August on the beach writing a very fine piece on Jimmy Carter's psychobiography. This helped motivate me to go down to Plains, Georgia to gather my materials for the first of many articles on candidate and presidential psychobiographies.

There have been some elements of cooperation and competition in our relationship, which would not blossom into a friendship for about a decade. David has been much more private in his psychohistorical groping whereas I have been more public. Developing pedagogic methodologies in organized psychohistory has always been enormously important to me so I sponsored the first IPA workshop on teaching psychohistory and with psychohistorical materials in traditional courses. These workshops, though not always well attended, were most enjoyable when Professor Beisel agreed to co-lead them.

It is a complex issue to deal with the explosive emotions that students and all humans are capable of harboring. While most colleagues who teach psychohistory appear to act as if the emotions are among the "other" safely outside of the classroom, Professor Beisel struggles to get his students to acknowledge their own emotions and fantasies. He correctly, perhaps courageously, acknowledges to the students that he may be expressing his own fantasies. I take this a step further and assert to my students that everyone's world is created mostly out of their own histories and fantasies. Teaching even the same courses is so interesting because of the resulting variations among students.

Managing anxiety within the classroom is

an important issue. First and foremost, there is the anxiety of the professor, since s/he has the most impact within this setting. Student anxiety is quite important and something the professor must address in order to be effective. Professor David Beisel is one of the few teachers of psychohistory who, to the best of my knowledge, works hard to bring the emotion within the classroom to the classes' attention. These become teachable moments of great importance. One of his techniques for dealing with student uncertainties and anxieties is to provide very clear methodologies of knowledge. A method he wrote about in these pages in June, 1999 is to put five categories of knowing on the board that revolve around the facts, causation, consequences, judgment, and how to improve the situation. In his taxonomy they are as follows:

One, the level of description, the facts.

Two, the causal level, what produced the behavior under examination.

Three, what follows from the events, the consequences.

Four, the level of judgment, the situation's right and wrong, good and bad.

Five, the prescriptive level of what should be done or not done to meliorate the situation.

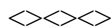
When students came to his classes, shaken by the murders of Columbine, or the horrors of the September 11, 2001 suicide bombings, he would apply this methodology to much advantage, teaching them that even at moments of great emotionality and panic, reason rather than the wild emotionality of the talk radio host need to prevail. I have found his technique to be quite helpful.

Professor Beisel is also willing to confront head-on the issue of subjectivity. He acknowledges that there is always the possibility that anyone, including him, may be projecting his own subjectivity onto his findings, however, he insists that the existence of something "in here" [the analyst] does not mean it's not "out there." Based upon my own research and observations, I would take this a step further, positing that breakthroughs in knowledge come precisely because certain individuals have a profound personal need to probe a subject matter of great psychological importance to them. This minor difference aside, in most respects, I am in complete agreement with Beisel. The *Suicidal Embrace: Hitler, the Allies, and the Origins of the Second World War* (2003) is a brilliant book of

great erudition that Beisel published after over two decades of painstaking work. However, it is not an easy book for undergraduate students to comprehend. Typically, this master teacher confronted this problem head-on by showing several documentary films for background and then by working out elaborate exercises involving students writing themes of different chapters and short essays. I just finished teaching the volume using his system and the results were excellent.

In conclusion, David Beisel is a master craftsman who has honed the teacher's art to such a fine edge that he can teach the most complex of psychohistorical materials with great effectiveness. Higher education and our field are much richer for his work.

Paul H. Elovitz, PhD, has taught at Temple, Rutgers, and Fairleigh Dickinson universities as well as at Middlesex Community College before becoming a founding faculty member at Ramapo College. He won the 1990 Ramapo College Alumni Award for outstanding leadership and teaching.



Countering Student Objections To Psychohistory

Kenneth Fuchsman
University of Connecticut

Teaching undergraduate students about the psychohistory of groups presents special challenges, as illustrated by David Beisel's wonderful essay, "Teaching About Groups." Getting the student acclimated to psychohistorical thinking is a significant challenge and Dr. Beisel is up to this formidable task. He structures the course as a series of building blocks; he starts with ego defenses and psychobiography and then builds up to the study of groups before later examining Hitler and Nazi Germany. He not only familiarizes the students with some of the foundational writings in the field, but demonstrates how and why psychohistorians differ. The variety of interpretations sets up lively class discussions and raises important epistemological questions, to which we will return. Beisel teaches psychohistory by stimulating a dia-

logue between the students and him.

To engage and challenge the students, Dr. Beisel brings in subjects for psychohistorical examination that are close to the student's everyday experience: video games, films and television. When he proposes "popular films can be used as a way of identifying a group's unconscious fantasy (or fantasies)" the "topic usually generates much heat." Indeed, suggesting "that films may provide possible roadmaps to their unconscious...often produces angry denials" from the students. One of the recurring themes in Beisel's article is the dialogue between the professor and the students about the validity of the psychohistorical approach. Having taught psychohistory for twenty-seven years, Beisel anticipates "student resistance" and has developed "ways of handling it." In his essay, he discusses more how students resist psychohistory than embrace it.

What then are the student objections to psychohistory, how does Beisel counter them and what issues do they raise? Students, Beisel writes, sometimes say that my "perception reveals little about the external world, but everything about myself, that like 'all' psychological historians, I'm merely projecting my own stuff into the world, which I call 'history.'" This student observation is reminiscent of when Freud's friend, Wilhelm Fliess, tells Sigmund in 1901 "that 'the reader of thoughts merely reads his own thoughts into other people.'" To Freud, this "renders all my efforts valueless." (Sigmund Freud, *The Complete Letters of Sigmund Freud to Wilhelm Fliess 1887-1904*. [Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985], p. 447). The sense that psychoanalysis and psychohistory are merely projections and not really perceptions is one side of a perennial critique of the therapeutic professions.

The student concern about projection can easily be extended from psychohistory to history, psychology, and all knowledge, as psychological and theoretical assumptions are widespread in many fields. This student concern with projection is a primitive postmodernism, a questioning of the foundation of all knowledge. It fits in well with the popular notion that everything is a matter of opinion or point of view.

Beisel advises that it "is better to acknowl-

edge that the student's statement contains at least a kernel of truth," and that "one cannot ignore subjectivity as part of the social sciences." As Beisel reports, students regularly bring up the critique of psychohistorical findings as subjective. This becomes an impediment to convincing students of the merits of psychohistory.

It is worth reviewing how to respond to these criticisms. I would tell the student that whether the objection is restricted to psychohistory or extended further, there are problems inherent in this position. In fields other than psychohistory, the researcher's perspective impacts on the findings. It is a commonplace that all data is value laden, that is why the old dichotomy between fact and value has been abandoned. Many recognize that data alone may not lead to valid conclusions. In physics, there is a phenomenon known as underdetermination; in which there can be two incompatible theories consistent with all current and future evidence, and the evidence itself can not determine that one theory is correct. In addition to underdetermination, as biologist Ernst Mayr declares: in certain circumstances "different underlying ideologies" in science make consensus "hard to achieve" (Ernst Mayr, *This Is Biology* [Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997], p. 103).

A belief prominent in the natural sciences is physicalism, the belief that most properties can be reduced to physical ones. This conviction may help explain many inanimate phenomenon, but it is not as successful in explaining intentionality or the twists and turns of human feeling.

Once intentionality rears its ugly head, the notions of the human mind and subjectivity trail along with it. As John Searle writes: "the existence of subjectivity is an objective scientific fact like any other...any domain of facts whatever is a subject of scientific investigation...if the fact of subjectivity runs counter to a certain definition of 'science,' then it is the definition and not the fact which we will have to abandon" (John Searle, *Minds, Brains and Sciences* [Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984], p. 25). Any adequate investigation of subjectivity must then understand the nature of both conscious and unconscious factors. Many cognitive psychologists have shown how unconscious processes impact on human thought and behavior.

Examining the various aspects of human mentality can not only rely on methods dominant in the physical sciences. The student concern that projection undermines psychohistorical findings should to be met with the recognition that subjective methods are needed to understand the different forms taken by human thought and feeling. Imagination and fantasy are central elements in human mentality. Human consciousness has an evocative, associative component. One thought may lead to another in free flight. Human thought and feeling can take a variety of forms from joy to depression, from sanity to madness, from impulse to reflection. Human thought can be associative, on one hand, or denotative, on the other. The more evocative element in human subjectivity is best understood by methods different from the methods needed to understand the more precise denotations of logic or science.

Individuals who understand imaginative flights and the depth of human emotions will be able to illuminate those aspects of human reality. A way of obtaining this understanding is through the scientific findings in cognition and emotionality. Another way of gaining this knowledge is through personal experience and reflection. In other words, the depth of one's subjective understandings can be a positive contribution to understanding the darker places of the human mind and the course of history. Subjective explorations need not be a block to psychohistorical understanding, but, in certain ways, can be a positive contribution to it. There is the danger of projection in any discipline, but in psychohistory rigorous self-understanding combined with a critical evaluation of the evidence may lead to important insights. The deeper one's understandings the more illuminating one's psychohistorical conceptions can be.

This rigorous self-understanding is earned not only by experience and reflection, but by training and education. Historians learn about standards of evaluating evidence and how to develop cogent historical arguments. Psychologists, psychiatrists, psychoanalysts, and other mental health professions go through formal coursework and practical training.

Still in many human investigations, there are evidentiary grounds for difference. In physics

there is underdetermination, in history, for example, there are often strong evidentiary grounds for divergent accounts. Historian Hayden White notes: "any historical object can sustain a number of equally plausible description or narrative of its processes" (Hayden White, *The Content of the Form* [Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987], p. 76). Similarly, there are a variety of approaches in psychology, many schools of psychotherapy, and in psychoanalysis divergent conceptions have emerged with no single standard of evaluating competing findings.

This prevalence of a variety of interpretations with divergent standards of evaluation lends some support to the critic of psychohistory. For is not the worry of the objecting student that there is little validity to the rival claims of psychohistorians? Agreement and certainty as well as uncertainty and controversy can emerge in any form of human inquiry. Nevertheless, there are general criteria for evaluating findings. (1) There is a real problem to investigate. (2) The conceptions used are sufficient to address and investigate the issue. (3) All the necessary and available evidence is gathered from all the relevant academic disciplines. (4) The evidence is thoroughly examined for reliability and validity. (5) A coherent account of all the pertinent evidence and concepts is presented that shows how alternative explanations are not adequate. Following these criteria may assist in solving certain problems and can advance intellectual and academic inquiry. Resolution will occur in many but not all cases. Underdetermination and competing ideologies will still be present.

In addition, given that human understanding may be, in certain circumstances, a double-edged sword; what reveals may also conceal, what illuminates can also distort. Most explanations have limits and are partial. The conscientious investigator must work to be comprehensive, to incorporate a variety of perspectives and findings in his or her synthesis. Breadth, precision and depth are helpful in psychohistorical studies.

Ultimately, to the students who object that psychohistory is really projection of the historian, I would say this criticism verges on an *ad hominem* argument. You are turning the argument to the person rather than discussing the issues at hand and the standards for evaluating particular claims. As

David Beisel says, "simply because something is 'in here' does not mean it's not 'out there.'" The argument for projection, for all the worth of its warnings, is an easy way out of the hard work of investigation and evaluation. This criticism of psychohistory is a way of avoiding the psychological within the historical. David Beisel's classroom approach can help students begin to understand why the study of subjectivity through psychohistory is important for the field of history and the conduct of life.

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Is Psychohistory Feasible in the Classroom?

**Anna Geifman
Boston University**

Paul Elovitz could not have chosen a better time to ask me to comment on David R. Beisel's article on "Teaching about Groups." I have taught my own "Psychohistory" course at Boston University successfully for several years and had no reason to question my teaching methods—until this semester the seminar has revealed some rough edges. Our students—like our children—have low tolerance for complacency. A degree of confusion in the classroom and students' tentative and sometimes resistant reaction to various discussion topics caused me to reconsider the idea of teaching psychohistory to the undergraduates. David Beisel's reflections on explaining group psychology provided the framework and additional motivation for the reconsideration.

Professor Beisel asserts that having been introduced to such concepts as the ego defenses and the history of childhood, toward the middle of a semester his students are "more comfortable with thinking psychologically." Based upon my recent experience I am a bit less optimistic. In fact, I have found that it is not always easy for them "to add psychological ways of seeing," if only because most of them have little or no idea of what psy-

chology is about. I do my best to refrain from psycho-jargon and even strict, professionally-accepted definitions. On the other hand, I find it useful to begin the seminar with having students read selected excerpts from Freud—simply to introduce the basic concepts and traditional frame of reference. At the same time, I state from the outset that the course is not based on a dogma or a strictly-followed psychological approach, and students do appreciate a taste of Jung, Horney, or Adler because this brief acquaintance with the classics gives them the awareness of a big “world of psychology out there.” Here, of course, I concur with Beisel: the first task of any psychohistory teacher is to make it clear that the unconscious exists and motivates behavior. The idea is not as trivial as it may seem because initially some students strongly suspect that the unconscious exists only in their teacher’s imagination.

I also agree that the best way to introduce group psychology is to find its roots in individual behavior patterns. Students, however, do resist the notion that like individuals, national cultures have characters and fantasies. It seems that their resistance is partly due to mechanical application of political-correctness-as-precondition-to-thinking. Several times in a row I’ve assigned Daniel Rancour-Laferriere’s provocative *Slave Soul of Russia*, and students’ response was anything but apathy. While Beisel found it useful to remind his students that “indifference to the topic may be defensive,” I repeatedly had to defend myself against passionate accusations of “cultural bias” against the Russians. (As a first-generation émigré from St. Petersburg, I feel vulnerable about my own sentimentality toward “the old country” to a much greater extent than about any allegation of bigotry. The good news is that being confronted by the students on this point provides a number of opportunities to experience my ambivalence to the country with which my family has severed ties years ago.) For their part, students appreciate the paradox when I point out that to deny a national culture its unique inner tendencies and behavior patterns is to debase it. This may be no less “politically incorrect” than an attempt to deprive an individual of his personal history for the sake of generic “equality.”

Here is where it is especially helpful to introduce Jung’s “collective unconscious.” The ex-

ample which seems to impress students particularly has to do with dreams shared by many East European Jews born decades after the end of WWII: in their nightmares, they see themselves in the Nazi death camps or escaping from the SS. The ensuing discussion allows us to debate the relevance of dreams as psychohistorical tools and to identify the Holocaust as a new archetype.

One would assume that the influence of childhood and childhood traumas on adult thinking and actions are a given, but I have found this hardly to be the case and, again, largely due to the diktat of our mainstream cultural preconceptions. Since the “correct” way of thinking is that one can overcome any obstacle to personal success, students often resent the very idea that detrimental circumstances in early years create life-long problems. Time and again they remind me that one can always forget about childhood abuse, the trauma of abandonment, or emotional neglect and simply choose a life free from effects of the earlier patterns. Time and again I remind them that traumatized individuals often have trouble remembering, let alone forgetting, and frequently have no notion that the choice to become free is open to them. One must own something before he is capable of disowning it, and perhaps it’s best to tactfully alert students to their resistance as a possible defense against delving deeply into their own childhood, traumatized or not. But, as Beisel said, “denial runs deep since psychohistory goes to the very heart of the matter.”

I too, always acknowledge when a topic is important for me personally, and this brings us to the ever-present issue of projection—including the author’s unavoidable presence in his creation, even if this happens to be an honest work of academic history. When discussing the concept of “social sciences,” students invariably emphasize the latter and I the former. Perhaps I go even further than Beisel in insisting that “one cannot ignore subjectivity as part of social sciences.” I sense serious tension—not to say a neurotic conflict—in a situation when one wishes to enjoy the book’s authorship and simultaneously denies ever having approached “the final product” closer than allowed by the conventions of “objective distance.”

I have found that some students latch on to the principle of scholarly detachment and fight the

notion of subjectivity to the last intellectual bullet. Often, they are anxious about losing the comfort of the supposedly dependable grasp of "objective scholarly material," should it lose its stylized quality and absorb the unpredictability of the genuine human participation. It is a bewildering necessity to come to terms with the multifaceted and erratic "I" that permeates historical sources—and, to a large degree, historical studies. Sometimes students just want to know exactly how many projections they need to discover to earn an "A."

Perhaps what they defend against is uncertainty; yet the old "don't confuse me with facts" seems to be no longer an issue. Like all of us, undergraduates are drowning in the sea of information, but in seminars students often resist every attempt to organize material according to psychological patterns, preferring to "go under" the familiar way. Having found this paradox particularly glaring in psychohistory courses, I do discuss it in class, hoping to get this point across: anxiety-provoking though it may be, confusion is not necessarily a state detrimental to knowledge. It could be not such a bad thing after all to put up with all the baffling nuances of the human life or the life of a group—for a while at least, until out of the mystifying emotional chaos some blueprint, or outline, of an order began to emerge, like the contours of *Life* from the archetypal *Chaos*.

Anna Geifman, PhD, Professor of History at Boston University, is the author of *Thou Shalt Kill: Revolutionary Terrorism in Russia, 1894-1917* (Princeton University Press), and *Entangled in Terror: The Azef Affair and the Russian Revolution* (Scholarly Resources). She is the editor of *Russia Under the Last Tsar: Opposition and Subversion, 1894-1917* (Blackwell). Her last major publication is a book-length psychohistorical essay, *La mort sera votre dieu: du nihilisme russe au terrorisme islamiste* (Paris:La Table Ronde, 2005). Professor Geifman can be contacted at <geifman@bu.edu>.

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A Sociologist's Perspective on Teaching Psychohistory

Ted Goertzel

Rutgers University at Camden

David Beisel's title, "Teaching About Groups," surprised me because I know him as the author of *The Suicidal Embrace: Hitler, the Allies and the Origins of the Second World War*. His book is a fascinating study of leadership and mass psychology, but there is little about the groups within the societies involved. As a sociologist, my teaching focuses on the social movements, political parties, social classes, and interest groups within each society. Beisel teaches a psychohistory class which begins with the psychology of individual leaders, then moves to the psychology of nation states, largely skipping the intermediate levels of social organization. Instead of talking about small groups, as the title suggests, Beisel uses Bion's theory of small groups to analyze "large groups" or what we sociologists call "societies".

Once I got beyond the terminological confusion and the disciplinary differences, however, I found that Beisel and I have often ended up at surprisingly similar places. I discuss Lloyd deMause's theory of the emotional life of nations in my course, *Methods and Techniques of Social Research*, and I share Beisel's doubts about its empirical validity. I share with my students a content analysis study I did testing deMause's theory which is available on my website. I use Bion's theory of group dynamics in my social movements course, where I discuss Jim Bishop's New Jewel Movement in Grenada and Jim Jones' People's Temple Movement that led to mass suicide in Guyana. Focusing on groups that were so clearly irrational and self-defeating makes it easy to point out the psychological dynamics, something I also do in my book, *Turncoats and True Believers*.

In my teaching, I use a full range of theories and perspectives, focusing on the contribution each can make to understanding the problem at hand. If I were to do a course on the rise of Hitler, I would give as much time to economic and sociological factors as to the leadership and the mass psychology. In my course on social movements, I treat emotional factors as one of the elements to be

considered along with rational calculation and the mobilization of resources. In my course on political sociology, I include the usual sections on Marx, Weber, and Durkheim, then add a section on Freud.

Of course, covering a wide range of perspectives in each course means that none can be covered in great depth, and students may come away with a hodgepodge of facts and theories instead of a coherent understanding. I can see the pedagogical advantage of immersing the students in a single perspective for a semester. On the other hand, I may run into less student resistance than Beisel reports because most students find at least some of my views acceptable. Students are generally receptive to psychological analyses of terrorists such as Osama bin Laden, Timothy McVeigh, Velupillai Prabhakaran, Abimael Guzmán, and Bommi Baumann in the essay on "Terrorist Beliefs and Terrorist Lives" on my website. Many students are quite ready to tear George W. Bush's psyche apart. But they are resistant to considering any possible psychological functions of their own beliefs, a trait I have also found among intellectuals in various groups, including psychological ones.

My approach does not give students as firm a grounding in psychohistory as Beisel's does. But there may be other instructors who would be willing to add a unit of psychohistory to their courses, although they would not teach an entire course from that perspective. Perhaps students, also, will find it easier to absorb psychohistorical insights when they learn how to combine them with other perspectives.

Ted Goertzel, PhD, is Professor of Sociology at Rutgers in Camden, a Research Associate of the Psychohistory Forum, and a prolific author. Among his books are Fernando Henrique Cardoso: Reinventing Democracy in Brazil (1999), Linus Pauling: A Life in Science and Politics (1995), and Turncoats and True Believers: The Dynamics of Political Belief and Disillusionment (1992). In 2004 he updated and co-edited his parents' 1962 book, Cradles of Eminence: Childhoods of More Than 700 Famous Men and Women. Prof. Goertzel may be contacted at goertzel@camden.rutgers.edu.

The Emotional Experience of Students

John J. Hartman
University of South Florida

I very much enjoyed reading Dave Beisel's description of his course and his approach to teaching psychohistory to undergraduates. It is not often that we hear so directly and in such detail about a master teacher's approach to teaching. I want to briefly touch on two aspects of his report which bear, I think, on effective college teaching in general: attention to process as well as content and attention to the affective experience of students.

While Beisel gives us an idea of the ambitious program of psychohistory content of his course, it is his sensitivity to the group process of the classroom which stands out for me. Unlike the unstructured classrooms Dick Mann, Graham, Gibbard, and I have studied, Beisel's is a structured class with lectures, discussions, media presentations, and the like. However, he is suggesting that the same affective currents are running in the structured classroom as in the unstructured groups, and that he has to pay attention to them and deal with them in a variety of ways. He is especially sensitive to areas which arouse "resistance" and demonstrates to us ways to deal with it, not as a therapist but as an effective teacher. Sometimes he encourages open discussion and sometimes he sets limits on the students' intellectual options.

I get a sense from his report, then, that the emotional experiences of the students as they grapple with the subject matter of psychohistory is very much a part of the student's intellectual experience. Beisel is aware of this, encourages emotional exploration, but has a firm hand on its limits and limitations. This is an ideal match with the subject matter which after all is the emotional experience of members of a society and the role of these psychological factors in history. So while this is not an "experiential group" in the usual sense, Beisel makes use of his students' emotional experiences with the subject matter to demonstrate the reality and utility of emotions and irrationality in the understanding of history. When this can be combined with challenging subject matter in the hands of a master teacher, you have the recipe for a

most effective college learning experience.

I was involved in a research project led by Dick Mann on the college classroom which led to a book entitled, *The College Classroom: Conflict, Change, and Learning*. (New York: Wiley, 1970). We used the psychodynamically-derived scoring system from our previous small group research to analyze sessions of college classrooms taught by a variety of teachers. This is a book worth reading for those interested in a psychodynamic study of college teaching. What this study concluded was exactly what Beisel has demonstrated in his report: the emotional experiences of students and their effective handling by the teacher are just as important elements in the effectiveness of the class as the content. Among the many interesting findings of the study was a typology of six teacher identities, a description of the teacher's relationship with the class: The Teacher as Expert; The Teacher as Formal Authority; The Teacher as Socializing Agent; The Teacher as Class Facilitator; The Teacher as Ego Ideal; and The Teacher as Person. Students vary in the degree to which they may want their teacher to adopt one or another of these identities although many students may hope for and need elements of all of these at different points in a class. The master teacher is one who has incorporated and integrated enough of these diverse identities to be able to adapt to the variety of students' needs at various points in the history of a course. Beisel is certainly one of these. We can all learn a great deal from his experience.

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Group Possession

J. Donald Hughes
University of Denver

Dave Beisel presents a pedagogical methodology for psychohistorical teaching about groups that is systematic and convincing. I commend it, and find little to criticize or add except to comment on an experience of my own in teaching similar material. I relate the notion of group fantasy to the idea of possession. That is, group fantasy as an image preserves an impression of originality and awareness on the part of the group that may not be empirically present.

My class is composed of thirteen first-term freshmen honors students, all of whom are of high intelligence and motivation, and who actually do the assigned readings and write on them. At least three of them are genuinely brilliant. I call the class "Animals, Mortals, Gods," and conduct it as a seminar with readings of ancient and modern texts, selected video recordings, student essays, and discussion.

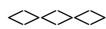
As a first reading, I give them Daniel Quinn's *Ishmael*, a sort of Platonic dialogue in which a gorilla (Ishmael) takes the role of Socrates. Ishmael divides all human societies into two kinds of groups, Takers (those like us who take the control of the world into their own hands) and Leavers (those who leave the world in the hands of the gods). The main point to note here is that Takers are shown to be prisoners of a world view (a group fantasy, if you like) of which they are unaware, since the bars of the prison are unquestioned assumptions.

Late in the course we read Euripides' *Bacchae* (404 BCE), in which the vengeful god Dionysus returns to his birthplace, the city of Thebes, and destroys its ruling house by entering first the women and then the men, and possessing them. One result is that Agave, the mother of the ruler, Pentheus, sees her son as a lion and with her bacchant companions tears him to pieces, then carries the severed head in triumph into the city. As one student wrote, "these women are entirely unconscious of their being possessed." That is the characteristic of possession, isn't it? Furthermore, it is

group possession; hence the title. Cadmus, Agave's father, is able to "heal" Agave to some extent by bringing her out of the state of possession, but at the price of ending her participation in the group—she must go into exile permanently.

The moral is obvious. A group will struggle violently against anything and anyone who threaten to end its state of possession. It is too facile to see religions as the states of possession that afflict modern groups. Deeper archetypes are implicated. Dionysus, it appears, is not dead. Nor, unfortunately, are Mars and Kali.

J. Donald Hughes, PhD, is John Evans Distinguished Professor in History at the University of Denver. He has written a number of articles and books on the history of dreams and environmental history, the latter including [An Environmental History of the World: Humanity's Changing Role in the Community of Life](#) (Routledge, 2001). Professor Hughes may be contacted at <dhughes@du.edu>.



A "Master Teacher" Reflects on Being a Beisel Student

Donald Kantrowitz
Christopher Columbus High School

David Beisel is an extraordinary psychohistory teacher at the State University of New York (SUNY). While his essay describes what he teaches in his psychohistory course at RCC, what no article can really convey in words is just *how* he does so. I have had a hundred teachers in my life and worked with a thousand more. Yet, *none* of them could teach the psychohistory course and make it live, breathe and motivate as does David R. Beisel. Below I convey, as best it can be described, just how he does it.

Beisel is so real—what my students call "for *real*." He is in touch with his emotions: never afraid to express what he feels and let you know it. In class, there have been disagreements and denial but I have never heard it suggested that "Doctor B" is conjuring things up or doesn't believe what he states. This "Beisel Effect" fills his classrooms and brings droves of students to his evening psy-

chohistory lectures: after a hard day of work or school they turned up to hear guest psychohistorians give totally optional, non-credit lecture/discussions. His students can feel just how much he loves teaching and bringing psychohistory to them.

In my four semesters of sabbatical study, I have taken nearly every course he offers: attending even his basic European history class where I gained numerous new insights into my major field of study. The first insight I gained decades ago was that I *am* a teacher of psychohistory. Before I ever heard of Clio's Psyche, *The Journal of Psychohistory*, Binion, and deMause, I was trying to get my students into the heads of the world's leaders to attempt to figure out just why they did what they did. Kids have feelings. I used that to try to have them understand how similar feelings could create similar behavior in adult figures in history. Political and economic causation just didn't answer the perplexities of human behavior. An example I used was a situation involving Germany obtaining two unique French guns, the ammunition for which were only made in France. During the war, French manufacturers supplied this ammunition through Switzerland, knowing full well that its only use was to be fired back at French soldiers. Why they might do that elicited a large number of psychological insights from untrained high schoolers.

Upon completing the sabbatical, which allowed me to attend Beisel's classes, I returned to the high school classroom, where I worked to further integrate psychohistory into my courses. The impact of childhood experiences and abuse became a frequent component of my teaching. A lesson on Renaissance art, showing a stele of a swaddled infant led to a discussion of childrearing practices. Student experiences in groups from Boy Scouts to gangs led to discussions of groups in society and how that impacted history. Their fascination with "evil" figures in history led to examinations of how personal history can create "monsters" and why they are allowed power.

With the arrival of the Internet and the surge in "cribbed" papers, I moved to psychobiography as the topic of required outside reading. Selecting an individual from a list of figures pertinent to the course, students had to answer an assortment of questions regarding a leader's child-

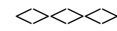
hood, influences, challenges and behavior—subjects not readily available in online biographies. In advanced classes, they “became” (role played) the person and faced the class in a mock press conference.

In recent years, psychohistory served an additional purpose. Students appeared increasingly more interested in the social aspects of school over the intellectual content. Consequently, getting their minds from the “hall” to the class became a chore. To counteract this, I used materials from everyday student lives, what they called the “real world,” to motivate a lesson on history. Everything they discussed became fair game—television, movies, relationships, etc.—to serve my educational purpose, as the following examples illustrate: a girl's breakup with her boyfriend segued into a lesson on “Munich.” An incident on a “dating” show prompted a discussion of Italian attitudes after WWI and the rise of Mussolini. The arrest of an arsonist, watching a fire he set, introduced the concept of traumatic reliving. A murder mystery led to an analysis of the differences between fundamental and immediate causes of war. Competition in sports was a frequent transition to national and international competition.

Since my students are three to four years younger than Dave's and are not yet eligible for our school's popular senior elective psychology course, I could not even begin to deal with many of the myriad concepts he discusses in his article. Group fantasies, projection, and poisonous placentas would fall on glazed eyes, but hopefully these eyes would open once these “primed” students graduated and arrived in Beisel 101.

Donald Kantrowitz, MA, considers himself a lifelong educator. He taught preschoolers in a social service environment, spent over thirty-five years teaching in a secondary school in the Bronx, and taught adult education in evening school. He won the Hood Award while earning degrees from the City University of New York (CUNY) and before earning dozens of additional postgraduate credits from NYU, Fordham, Columbia, and SUNY. He also served as an adjunct professor at Fordham and wrote numerous questions for the New York State Regents examinations. A number of his articles on postal history have been published in the philatelic press. He has been in the

forefront of such projects as “Mastery Learning,” team teaching, and mentoring. In 1993, out of a faculty of over 250, he was selected “Teacher of the Year.” Kantrowitz can be contacted at <Dancay@aol.com>.



On Group Dynamics and the Unconscious

Daniel Klenbort
Morehouse College

I was very impressed by David Beisel's description of his course. It is very well thought out and designed to help students see the psychological side of group behavior and history. Beisel is far better than I am at creating and conveying a coherent account of how the human psyche, as it operates in individuals and in groups, helps to explain history. My only regret is that he doesn't tell us more about how he applies his method to the concrete example he mentions, Nazi Germany. Undoubtedly he does in his book, but regrettably, I have not yet read it.

I am putting forth the following brief comments with some trepidation, as I am not an expert in psychological history and feel like someone entering in the middle of a conversation without knowing what has already been hashed out. I will confine myself to two main points on which I would at least modify Beisel's presentation of group psychology. The psychology of a group is not simply the sum of the psychologies of its individual members and the unconscious is both more and less than the Freudian unconscious.

One of my children, when he was going to college, said to me that in psychology class human psychology was fixed, while in anthropology class, human psychology was a product of culture. I complemented him on his acuity. It reminded me of the two disputants, who go to a rabbi to settle the dispute. One states his case and the rabbi says, “You're right.” The other angrily presents his case and the rabbi again says, “You're right.” The rabbi's wife then says, “They can't both be right.” “You're right.” says the rabbi.

Groups are made up of individuals, but in-

dividuals are themselves shaped, at least in part, by groups (families, cultures, societies). Neither the individual, nor the group is prior to the other. Neither the group nor the individual is an independent variable. A groupless individual would be literally speechless. Without individuals there are no human groups, but humans making up groups were not born blank slates.

By making the group a function of its individual members, Beisel is, I fear, playing into the American prejudice that we are ultimately individual and that our individual lives and life chances are determined by our individual effort.

Beisel asks, "Why do some people act in ways that bring about the very thing they are most trying to avoid?" His answer is that unconscious motives disrupt rational calculation. There are other possible explanations. A recent article in the *New York Times* discusses the following scenario. In a secret ballot, hockey players express a preference for wearing helmets. Yet, absent enforcement, they play without helmets. Why? My first answer was to think that hockey players are macho, and don't want to appear weak in front of their peers. Good or bad, this is a psychological explanation. The article, however, proposes a different sort of explanation. Not wearing a helmet gives a player a small advantage—better peripheral vision. So, in a competitive game there is a rational incentive not to wear a helmet. The same might be the case with taking steroids. Here, rational individual decisions can lead to an irrational outcome, recognized as irrational by the participants. (Think of an arms race, which both sides realize is crazy.) Readers familiar with the economics literature will recognize the similarity to the well-known example of the prisoners' dilemma. What we see is that the formation of the group dynamics have to be analyzed as something other than the sum of individual psychologies of group members. In other words, we need sociology.

In the case of the hockey helmets, there is no easy way to decide which of the two types of motives governs the response. Both may be operating. It is possible that the rational motive may be the conscious, while the irrational motive is unconscious. (I write this, in spite of my discomfort with the dichotomy or antithesis between conscious and

unconscious because this is not the place to go into that issue.) It is also possible for our hockey player to be perfectly conscious of not wanting to appear a wimp in front of his peers and his fans. It may even fill him with rage because he cannot take the actions he would prefer to take for his own safety.

Let me go back to Beisel's small group in which the subconscious disrupts the efficient working of the group. The disrupter of the group may be perfectly conscious of his desire to disrupt, as anyone who has participated in faculty committees knows first hand. This may even be true when the disruption harms the disrupter. Two neighbors in the Balkans or the Middle East hate each other. God comes to one and says, "I'll give you anything you want, but I'll give your neighbor double." The man thinks a while and says, "Put out one of my eyes."

One final point about the unconscious; it is unwise to present the unconscious as simply a seething cauldron of conflicting impulses at war with the rational conscious mind. Let me illustrate this. An outfielder chases down a fly ball. He is conscious of its being hit, of the wind, etc. but he is not conscious of how he gets to the ball and catches it. Call this the benevolent unconscious, which supports his conscious goal. Even the leader of the small group, or of a large group, may use both conscious and unconscious tactics to achieve his and the groups goals.

I have not said much about Beisel's course because I consider it systematically developed—in short an excellent one. Nor have I said anything about his discussion of large group fantasies, as I know far too little about popular movies. My comments are addressed solely to questions about groups and about the unconscious.

Daniel Klenbort, PhD, is a long time professor of history at Morehouse College. He started as a Russian historian, receiving his doctoral degree from the University of Chicago. More recently, he has been interested in long-term historical change and has presented numerous papers at the conferences of the World History Association. He may be reached at klenbort@mind.spring.com.

Learning From a Master

Henry Lawton

Group for the Psychohistorical Study of Film

During my long career as an independent psychohistorical scholar, I have been concerned with making psychohistorical theory intelligible and accessible to whomever may be interested. My *The Psychohistorian's Handbook* (1988) would have been a better book if I could have used David Beisel's teaching article for source material. Paul Elovitz deserves our thanks for making this article available to our field, especially those actively engaged in teaching psychohistory. It is the best guide that I have seen for anyone teaching or wanting to teach group psychohistory. The way Beisel helps students see the underlying emotional dynamics of group life seems to me a model of what teaching should be and so often is not. Over the years I have had the opportunity to talk with a number of his students; after reading this article it is easy to see why David Beisel is so strongly respected. He has done the field of psychohistory a major service in showing how he teaches about groups, large and small. David Beisel is a teacher in the best sense of the word.

That said I want to offer some additional elaboration on some of the ideas he offers for our consideration. In discussing the cyclical group-fantasy theory of Lloyd deMause, Beisel notes that in his research he found "no rigid, "lawful" cyclical patterns" in group fantasy. This struck me because the same has been true for my researches on popular film. How can we account for this? Is deMause wrong? No. What I think may be going on is the fact that group fantasy occurs on many more levels than deMause has described. Many popular films seem to reflect fantasies that surface repetitively over long periods of time. In essence, there are many shared fantasies that are always with us, but stay in the shadows as it were until they are called into the light of consciousness. It is as if the society repetitively works through certain fantasies over and over without ever quite coming to terms with them. What I offer here is tentative because I remain unclear as to what brings these hidden fantasies out of the shadows and why they go back to the unconscious darkness from which they emerged. Beisel's suggestion that "most

groups are pretty much in emotional 'upheavals' all the time and move out of 'crisis mode' by various devices, and then back again as stress levels increase" makes a lot of sense. Though this is beyond his scope I think it merits mention that all media, film especially, offers unconscious communication of shared fantasy. Popular media may be seen as successful communication; that which is not popular is like a trial balloon seeking acceptance. Media does not shape shared fantasy, rather it is an expression of fantasy and popular because what it offers speaks to the shared feelings/fantasies of the group. None of this is easy because of the element of unconscious communication, but it is endlessly fascinating.

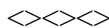
Beisel's thoughts on methodology are very much to the point. We must rigorously practice "disciplined subjectivity" in our work and know ourselves as best we can. Therapy can be helpful here. It is not enough just to read sources; we must try to listen to the voices of the past with as much honesty and respect as we can muster. If we are to understand historical motivation we cannot view our subjects as examples of pathology, we must try to understand them as real people with all their complexities, failures and greatness. This is never easy, which is one reason psychohistory is not for everybody.

While his criticism of deMause's "insistence that everyone in the group shares one group fantasy rather than several, his search for Immutable Laws of Universal Human Behavior, and his attempt to construct a 'scientific' psychohistory, along with the overall rigidity of his model, limit its usefulness as an explanatory tool" has merit, we would do well to remember that the work of Lloyd deMause is a basic building block on which much of what we do depends. Scholars are able to move beyond deMause because of his work. Beisel is right in his insistence that students be familiar not only with deMause but with the work of Lifton, Sam Keen, Dan Dervin, Rudolph Binion, etc. No one person defines what psychohistory is about.

I was quite fascinated by Beisel's discussion of the importance of media, especially popular film, as a useful tool to aid our comprehension of group fantasy felt by our society. "There's nothing that students find more upsetting than suggesting

that films may provide possible roadmaps to their unconscious," as well as the idea "that popular films can offer clues to the disowned fantasies of large groups." I had never thought of the notion that shared fantasy is "disowned" but the more I think of it Beisel is right. Working with a more psychologically minded audience, I had not realized that our work on film and media can and does evoke the strong emotions that Beisel describes. I found all this a happy reinforcement of the importance of what we have been seeking to do in the Group for the Psychohistorical Study of Film over the last fifteen years. Sometimes it is hard to know that our scholarly work has had worth in the eyes of others. David Beisel has demonstrated this to me and I thank him for that. It is gratifying to know that our work counts for more than we ever imagined.

Henry Lawton, MA, MLS, a retired child welfare caseworker, has been an independent scholar in psychohistory for the last thirty years. He is a charter member, long time Secretary, and past President of the International Psychohistorical Association. He is also Book Review Editor of the Journal of Psychohistory and the founder/director of the Group for the Psychohistorical Study of Film. He wrote The Psychohistorian's Handbook (1988), still the only available text on how to do psychohistorical work. He has published extensively on film, psychobiography, group psychohistory, philosophy of psychohistory and related subjects. His current research is on the life of Joseph Smith, Jr. and the Mormons, large group process, and popular film/media. Lawton may be reached at <hwlipa@gmail.com> .



Helpful Teaching Approaches and Tools

Ruth Meyer
Pacifica Graduate School

When I researched teaching psychohistory in England during 1997-1998 there were relatively few articles that I found really helpful. David Beisel's article is a welcome addition to the literature on teaching psychohistory. I can observe certain similarities in our approach with regard to

group fantasy and film even though his students are much older than mine since I teach high school, and Professor Beisel is going into much more psychohistorical depth than I am permitted.

The main area where our teaching overlaps is in our use of Lloyd deMause's group fantasy theory. I share with David Beisel the obligation to improve critical thinking among my students and it was with this aim in mind that I exposed my senior class of world history students (age seventeen-eighteen) to deMause's ideas. In particular, I used his 1982 index of the main tools for group fantasy analysis as set out in *Foundations of Psychohistory* to examine the state of mind of Hitler and his generals in the period of December 1944-January 1945 of the Second World War prior to its end in early May of 1945.

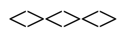
I wanted to see if Lloyd deMause's checklist could help the students deepen their analysis of the documents and in particular help weaker students go beyond paraphrasing documents. I found that by giving the students a list of things to look for, such as similes, metaphors, body language, strong feeling tones, strong emotional states and repetitive and unusual word usages, we were able to get beyond the superficial meaning of the documents. The list gave students something concrete to look for which would help elicit the unconscious meaning behind his words.

The other area of interest for me in David Beisel's article was his discussion of group fantasy and the psychohistorical study of film. Here my point of entry has been to analyze the anachronisms in Ridley Scott's movie *Gladiator* as a possible clue for the unconscious fantasies at work. The nostalgia that the protagonist Maximus (Russell Crowe) feels for his simple farming life and the desire to clear up the corruption in Rome and return to the values of the Republic are clearly anachronistic for the time of Marcus Aurelius and Commodus. But if *Gladiator* is viewed as an indicator of American group fantasies then perhaps Maximus' desire to restore a pure Republic to Rome mirrors the American audience's desire to return to family values and to clean up corruption in Washington.

Beisel comments on the possible significance of groups in movies and TV series with

similar themes. I am currently fascinated by the recurrence of epic movies about the classical world such as *Gladiator*, *Troy*, *Alexander the Great* and the current HBO series *Rome*. Beisel's article set me thinking about possible group fantasies concerning the corruption of the Republic and the collapse of empire.

Ruth Dale Meyer earned her undergraduate degree at Oxford University prior to completing her doctoral degree in 2005 at Pacifica Graduate Institute. She teaches world history in a college preparatory school in San Jose, California and can be contacted at <rutdal@yahoo.com>.



Reflections of an Intellectual Historian

Vivian Rosenberg
Drexel University

The material covered here is what I wish I had studied years ago. Through forty years of teaching the History of Ideas, I have explored ideas as they emerged in different eras, but I often found myself wondering why particular individuals and groups were especially drawn to certain ideas and what unconscious needs and what hopes and fears and expectations—conscious and unconscious—influenced their decisions and actions.

Beisel's course is a review of materials significant for any student of human history. The following topics seem to me especially important: the recognition of the unconscious and how it influences behavior; the life-long impact of childhood experiences, especially how children are treated in their earliest years; the impact of trauma on individuals and groups; the fact that individuals in groups may behave differently than they would if they were alone; the power of unconscious group fantasies; the strategies large groups use to escape from intolerable feelings; the relationship between group fantasies and the media; and the role of denial in human affairs.

As someone who never taught such a course, I was sorry Beisel did not include a list of the books and articles he assigns and some indication of the kinds of writing assignments he re-

quires. It would also be useful to know the approximate number of students in his classes, whether most of his students are history majors, and whether students do classroom presentations, either separately or in teams.

Beisel's inclusion of the psychological impact of the media in his discussion of group psychology seems to me to be particularly important. It's not surprising that this material stimulates a great deal of debate among his students; they have grown up in a visual culture, and are more likely to see films and watch TV than to read books. It is certainly important for them to understand how they are influenced and even manipulated by the media. This unit alone seems to me rich enough to fill an entire semester. One would hope that much of this material is also taught in communications courses, but here they are able to see not only how TV and film affect individuals, but also how they both mirror and shape group fantasies and, sometimes, group behavior.

To his credit, Beisel acknowledges the common query about whether researchers aren't simply projecting their own unconscious needs and assumptions as they interpret historical events. He stresses how hard all of us must work "to maintain awareness of our own biases," attempt to discover "our own blind spots," and allow "the documents to tell their own tales." All of this is good advice, although easier said than done. But at least Beisel acknowledges the subjectivity of the social sciences. Perhaps we would not be so uncomfortable about this if we reminded students (and ourselves) that disagreements among experts in the "hard" sciences are not uncommon, either. Still, this is more of a problem, and a different kind of problem, in the social sciences where we are dealing with living human beings who cannot be dissected or put into test tubes, and who cannot be examined apart from their cultural contexts.

I was especially impressed with Beisel's commitment to improving students' critical thinking skills. He does not shy away from awkward questions about subjectivity and objectivity and tries to present different perspectives on at least some topics. That he presented critiques of a number of deMause's theories is not surprising since his own research contradicted some of deMause's findings. However, I wonder how often instructors

are inclined to present critiques of interpretations that are consistent with their own. Of course, given the vast number of topics covered in the course, it would be impossible to present multiple perspectives along with critiques of each one. But at least Beisel tries to alert students to the fact that different scholars interpret these issues in different ways.

Beisel worries, as most of us do, that when students see a range of different experts' opinions, they will leave the course confused, feeling that "all they've learned is that people disagree, which they already knew when they walked through the door on the first day of class." However, we live in a world of ambiguity and uncertainty, and we can't, and shouldn't, protect students from this reality. In fact, it is part of our charge as educators to help students see that uncertainty, while often unavoidable, is not totally paralyzing.

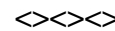
Beisel himself seems to function as an excellent role model for his students. He acknowledges a multiplicity of perspectives; he has strategies that help him sort through complex material; he is able to develop some criteria by which he chooses one idea over another; and he takes responsibility for making informed decisions about which ideas seem, to him, most valid. I have no doubt that students understand that as he studies different perspectives, he is open to changing direction when he finds compelling evidence to do so. Thus Beisel appropriately presents himself as a knowledgeable person who is tolerant and open-minded, skeptical and questioning—and yet capable of making thoughtful decisions.

In his book, *Forms of Intellectual and Ethical Development in the College Years* (1970), William G. Perry mapped the emotional and cognitive processes students go through as they encounter new and complex material. He was particularly sensitive, as is Beisel, to the confusion and disappointment students experience in higher education, especially those who believed that the quest for knowledge would lead to certainty. Perry's work ignited a movement of Perry followers who continued his research and organized conferences to discuss strategies for dealing with the discomfort students feel when they realize that even the experts disagree and that there isn't one right answer to complex realities. I have lost touch with this

group, but I know that Lee Knefelkamp, who studied with Perry, continues his fine work at Columbia's Teacher's College, as do others here and abroad who are involved with "The Perry Network."

I suspect the Perry researchers would question whether Beisel is attempting to cover more material in one semester than most students can possibly assimilate. I understand the desire to include all these fascinating topics. Still, I can feel, in his packed description, a kind of pressure and tension. Perhaps we need to remind ourselves that, more often than we like to admit, less is more; we can't teach, in one class, all our favorite ideas and insights. But even as I write this, I know how hard it is to decide what to leave out, and I know that I, too, usually plan more than is feasible in one semester. It must be very frustrating for Beisel not to be able to give two sequenced courses, with one building on the other. Nevertheless, it is obvious that this instructor loves this material, and I have no doubt that his excitement and enthusiasm contribute to his success as a teacher.

Vivian M. Rosenberg, PhD, majored in philosophy at Wellesley College and received her MA and PhD in the History of Ideas from Brandeis University before she taught Humanities at Drexel University for thirty-seven years. She won the Lindback Award for Excellence in Teaching and the Langer Award for her work on the idea of empathy and is an active participant in the field of critical thinking. Her book, Reading, Writing, and Thinking: Critical Connections, was one of the first basic texts to address issues related to emotional intelligence and learning. Dr. Rosenberg can be contacted at <rosenbvs@drexel.edu>.



David R. Beisel: Master Teacher of Psychohistory

Howard F. Stein
University of Oklahoma
Health Sciences Center

David Beisel is rightfully recognized not only as one of the finest psychohistorical scholars, but also as one of its most accomplished teachers.

This new paper shows why. Beisel's depth of psychohistorical probing in the classroom matches the breadth of topics he selects.

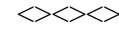
Professor Beisel employs the generic term, *group*, rather than emphasize a particular symbolic form the group takes over cultural and historic time—e.g., ethnic, tribal, national, religious, occupational, social class. That is, he explores recurrent, even universal, processes that manifest themselves in virtually any kind of large group. Years ago, I made a similar plea in an article in the *Canadian Review of Studies in Nationalism*; I called it "The Internal and Group Milieux of Ethnicity: Identifying Generic Group Psychodynamic Issues" (17[1-2]1990: 107-130). Most recently Vamik Volkan has done similarly in his book, *Blind Trust: Large Groups and Their Leaders in Times of Crisis and Terror* (Charlottesville, VA: Pitchstone, 2004).

From the enthusiasm and inquisitive tone of Beisel's paper as well as its content, it is clear that he encourages his students to *think* and to *feel* openly about the psychohistoric subject under consideration. For example, recognizing and accepting one's own resistances is inherent to the process of psychohistorical understanding. This contrasts with academic dogmatism and its not-so-hidden authoritarianism. Beisel's respect for students' thoughts and feelings as a point of departure teaches them to think—gives them a space with which to *play* with ideas—rather than obligates them to believe. I sense that his classes must be therapeutic as well as informative for those in them.

I have but one suggestion, one that draws on Beisel's use of the class members' experience of the subject matter of psychohistory: to pay attention to the class "itself" as exemplifying at least some of the group processes he identifies on the larger, official, historical stage. His psychohistory classes are already clearly quite emotionally as well as intellectually alive. My small suggestion would build on this aliveness.

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most recent of his many books are Beneath the Crust of Culture (Rodopi, 2004) and a book of poems, From My Life (Finishing Line Press, 2005). He can be reached at <howard-stein@ouhsc.edu>.



Methods and Challenges in Teaching Psychohistory

Jacques Szaluta

United States Merchant Marine Academy

Professor David Beisel tackles the critical subject of how to teach psychohistory, a most consequential field of inquiry, because teaching it in college can be particularly challenging. The field is controversial, and it poses unique difficulties for the instructor. Despite its enormous growth and many successes, psychohistory remains controversial—opposed even by many professional historians. Due to its challenging nature, student resistance to the subject can become an obstacle. However, the compensation for the instructor is that the field can be exciting and rewarding. Beisel's paper is impressive because it comprehensively covers a wide range of issues.

The professor of psychohistory introduces students to the irrational, unconscious motivation, self-destructive behavior, trauma, aggression, rage, and so forth. He may incorporate the use of film to illustrate these psychological manifestations and analytical concepts. In comparison to the traditional approach to history, such topics are *de rigueur*, the stock in trade of the psychohistorian. Because of the explicit nature of such feelings, some students may not respond positively. However, this is hardly an issue strictly for younger students. Most conventional historians who are assumed to be open-minded respond with a less than receptive attitude, just as their students do. For example, William Langer's 1957 American Historical Association presidential inaugural address, "The Next Assignment," which called for a psychoanalytic approach to the study of history, was met with much consternation from many audience members.

The teaching of psychohistory must also be considered in a wider intellectual and political con-

text, as it transcends the classroom. Not only does Professor Beisel deal with pedagogy, but he also notes that the Regents of the State University of New York (SUNY) mandate that for all general education courses it is his "obligation to improve critical thinking among [his] students." Furthermore, "In all history courses we're supposed to help them look critically at their ingrained assumptions about how the world works—that is, the traditional political, social, and economic categories—and examine their deeply held beliefs about human nature." Coming from such an authoritative figure, this is indeed commendable. However, should such a directive be necessary for college instructors? This raises related issues of academic teaching standards and the training of instructors. To what extent do professors maintain the explicit directive of the Regents of SUNY to raise the intellectual level of students? Throughout the United States there is concern over the issue of standards, which have been related to the role of instructors. The widespread concerns deal with the instructor's commitment to his students and with feeling comfortable with his authority.

To foster critical thinking, I use the "directed discussion method" in all the courses I teach. This approach, which has its basis in Progressive Education, is popularly known as the Socratic method. The aim is to motivate students to realize for themselves the relevance of what they are learning. This methodology grew out of the Enlightenment and was pioneered by such great educational reformers as the Swiss Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Johann Pestalozzi and pursued in the twentieth century by the American educator John Dewey. It revolutionized teaching and learning, advocating a radical approach at variance with the former authoritarian methods of the Middle Ages. Instead of teaching through lecture only, the great reformers made learning a student-centered experience.

The above approach is advocated by the Dean of the United States Merchant Marine Academy who argues for "engaging" the students (midshipmen). This means that students are expected to be active participants in the learning process held "accountable" by their instructors. The Superintendent (college president) of the Academy has taken a direct interest in teaching by

speaking to the faculty, visiting classes, and expecting instructors to maintain that midshipmen be attentive. I have invited the Dean, Superintendent, and several colleagues to observe my classes many times. Correspondingly, with the approval of the administration, I have been observing instructors in their classes. I also offer seminars in teaching to all members of the faculty outside of my field, although it is a maritime college. For three years now I have been engaged in peer mentoring in all departments at Kings Point, in both academic and professional departments, supported in these endeavors by the leaders mentioned above.

Initially, I taught one psychohistory elective approximately once a year. Recently, this course was expanded to become a required course in the Department of Humanities. As an elective, resistance to it was negligible; there was at least an intellectual acceptance of the subject. Once required, the course became more challenging, and complaints from students increased. The issues we deal with in psychohistory are complex and can be threatening, for it is not just a matter of being intellectually curious. In my introductory remarks, I point out that the study of psychohistory will engage students personally as no other course will; that it will cause them to relate to themselves what they learn, about individuals, groups, and childhood. I advise them that the course is not a psychology course, but that it is primarily history enhanced by the psychohistorical approach, which is more comprehensive than a traditional history course. At the beginning of the semester, I inform students of my office hours and encourage them to see me if anything in the material that I cover gives them cause for concern. In some cases, I reach out to a student after class to have a private conversation. Students always welcome this gesture, and as I attend many school functions, they note that I am readily available to speak to.

By and large, I have found the midshipmen at the United States Merchant Marine Academy very responsive to psychohistory and, more characteristically, many are fascinated by this innovative approach. The successful teaching of sophisticated psychohistorical concepts is also dependent on the academic quality of students. In the case of Kings Point, the student body is of a high academic caliber, comparable to those in the most selective

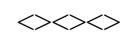
colleges in the country. Because Kings Point is a federal academy, every midshipman is, in effect, on a four-year scholarship. There are sources available to the instructor that can aid even the most skeptical student in understanding the theoretical framework of psychoanalysis and its relationship to history. An excellent aid and supplement is the medium of film, as Professor Beisel notes. Many good feature films that have instructive psychological themes are viewed by mass audiences and well received. One such example, a commercial movie, which I have shown for many years and highly recommend as it is visually dramatic and emotionally appealing, is the 1962 commercial film entitled *Freud*, which remains relevant. It serves as an excellent introduction to the study of psychohistory because many of the main tenets of psychoanalysis are presented in a dramatic and convincing form. Some of the key concepts demonstrated and developed that may be discerned in this film are infantile sexuality, the Oedipus complex, free association, making the unconscious conscious, the importance of dreams and their interpretation, psychosomatic illness, symptoms of neurosis, psychosis, repression, psychical determinism, guilt and undoing, the oral stage, the transference, slips of the tongue, resistance, and irrationality. Clearly, this film is rich in psychoanalytic content and is both emotionally and intellectually absorbing for the viewer.

Students are profoundly impressed by *Freud* and are motivated to pursue psychohistorical subjects. Indeed, it is the rare student who summarily dismisses the substance of this superbly acted film. Therefore, the merits of this biographical cinema are several: it shows how Freud arrived at his revolutionary theories; it presents the main theories of psychoanalysis; and it deals with the social and intellectual reactions to Freud's ideas at the end of the nineteenth century.

For the study of psychohistory in general and psychobiography in particular, the use of film can be a valuable supplement to classroom instruction and the reading assignments. *Freud* has the effect of integrating psychological motifs in human behavior. It enables students to recognize a connection between psychology and history. As the course progresses, there is not only an acceptance by the vast majority of students of this new con-

ceptual framework and scientific method in the study of historical events, but for many, an enthusiasm develops for the subject, as they can now identify with the possibilities for better understanding themselves and others. The film makes students more introspective and conscious of history. They recognize that the psychohistorical approach is more insightful, more empathic, more encompassing, and more humanist than other approaches to the study of history, of mankind, and of society.

Jacques Szaluta, PhD, is Professor Emeritus of History at the United States Merchant Marine Academy at Kings Point, New York, where he conducts seminars on teaching and does peer mentoring of instructors, observing their classes, in maritime, engineering, technical and scientific fields as well as in the humanities. He received The Sue Alice McNulty Award for Distinguished Teaching, an annual award to a member of the faculty, presented to him by the graduating Class of 1994, and the Bronze Medal Award for Teaching from the U.S. Maritime Administration, its highest award, at the 34th Annual Awards Ceremony in Washington, D.C. in 1999. Among his many publications is his book *Psychohistory: Theory and Practice*, Peter Lang, 1999. He is also a graduate of the New York Center for Psychoanalytic Training and may be reached at <szalutaj@USMMA.EDU>.



A Master Practices His Craft

Nancy Unger
Santa Clara University

Even the casual reader of David Beisel's "Teaching about Groups" will have no trouble understanding why Beisel has been the recipient of prestigious awards for teaching excellence. This essay has much to offer those of us involved in psychohistory, but anyone who teaches an introductory course in virtually any field will find in it a gold mine of guiding principles and practical examples.

Beisel performs an amazing balancing act in this introductory class: he requires extensive reading of his students and surveys an enormous range of topics and yet it's clear that he under-

stands that a course is not so much about the subject one teaches, but how one facilitates actual learning. Despite his clear eagerness to immerse his students in sophisticated thinking about psychohistory, Beisel wisely notes at the onset of his essay, and reinforces throughout, that it is helpful “to spell things out as often as possible and move through the material step by careful step.”

Beisel communicates the basics, not by “dumbing down” his curriculum, but by presenting it in ways that his students can easily grasp. His wonderful quote from Tennessee Williams (“If people behaved in the way nations do they would all be put in straightjackets”) puts a complex idea into terms student can understand. (Had Williams been trying to make the point particularly vivid to academics, perhaps he would have substituted “as they do at department meetings” for “in the way nations do.”)

Of course the argument can also be made that for all of the pitfalls of this nation in particular living out the “group-as-crazy-individual” metaphor, this may still be preferable to having just plain crazy individuals in control. Lawrence B. Wilkerson, looking back on his tenure as chief of staff to Secretary of State Colin Powell puts it succinctly in a recent *Los Angeles Times* editorial: “I’d choose a frustrating bureaucracy over an efficient cabal every time.” Avoiding entirely the “inevitable but often frustrating dissent” that comes with working with groups may allow for “quick and painless decisions,” Wilkerson warns, “but when government agencies are confronted with decisions in which they did not participate and with which they frequently disagree, their implementation of those decisions is fractured, uncoordinated, and inefficient.”

My university, like SUNY, requires me to hone my students’ critical thinking skills. In fact, professors are evaluated by students on their success (or failure) in this area in the end-of-course forms that are required in each class, with the results reported to the department chair and the dean as well as the professor. Students are so confused about what “critical thinking” actually means that I have taken to pointing it out as it is happening when we’re involved in some especially thorny discussion or debate. Beisel’s methods of eliciting critical thinking are so successful that he, I am

sure, never stoops to such pandering. Instead, he makes his subject matter so personal to his students that they are eager to think critically.

Beisel’s brief discussion of Erikson’s notion of disciplined subjectivity makes the crucial point, one brand new to many undergraduates, that in history not only is total objectivity impossible, it’s not even desirable. We want to know what happened, but also why it happened. Was it good or bad? Worthy of emulation, or to be avoided at all costs? When “the topic chooses us” because of our inner needs and conflicts, we bring not only our skills as historians, but our passion to answer those questions. In the words of environmental historian William Cronon, “Rather than evade [making personal value judgments]—which is in any event impossible—we must learn to use [them] consciously, responsibly, and self-critically. To try to escape the value judgments that come with storytelling is to miss the point of history itself.” To move students, as Beisel does, beyond “history is the study of immutable truths” and into “the study of history enables us to think critically about events and people of the past and in so doing better understand the present and ourselves,” is to facilitate a vitally important and empowering transition.

At the same time Beisel is repeating to his students’ concepts about groups about which he has taken pains to communicate in accessible language, he refuses to let things rest at the “neatly tied in a bow” stage. The study of Nazi Germany is, understandably, a favorite topic for many psychohistorians interested in group thinking. Laurence Rees’s *Auschwitz: A New History* (Public Affairs, 2005) is the latest, and one of the best, investigations into the thinking of regular Germans, the Nazi high command, SS camp administrators, guards, and prisoners. Beisel could easily restrict the portion of his course dedicated to the study of groups to this grim but intensely instructive period, a focus that would protect his students from any uncomfortable considerations of their own roles in groups, allowing them instead to focus their understanding of the role of groups exclusively on “the other”—people in an entirely different place and time. Beisel resists this temptation, however, in favor of a far riskier exercise: involving students in a discussion of their own participation in group behaviors, including the construction of group fan-

tasy images. Beisel skillfully counters their resistance to overcoming the “uncomfortable reality that we may not want to see if a group we’re in is acting irrationally.” He wisely doesn’t reject out of hand his students’ resistance, their charges that he is projecting his own “stuff,” but gives their views careful and respectful consideration, granting at least “a kernel of truth” to their charges. He also doesn’t hesitate to push his students to confront ideas and topics that are not only increasingly sophisticated, but that can make students uncomfortable, even downright defensive.

For a generation immersed in television, film, and popular music, Beisel’s examples drawn from recent televised news reporting and popular film not surprisingly hit home with his students. Beisel’s talking about their favorite movie, and suggesting that it is not only that film’s artistic merit (or lack thereof—consider the huge popularity of *The Blair Witch Project*) that has made it so appealing to them. The concept of one’s own unconscious participation in a shared group fantasy can be anxiety-producing even in students like Beisel’s, who have been immersed in discussions of the role of the unconscious in the human condition. But it’s the personal nature of these topics that, once Beisel helps them to overcome their initial resistance, make them such a potentially profound learning experience.

Beisel’s discussion of the role group fantasy plays in what makes and stays news is fascinating. It brought to my mind the two recent media obsessions: the Lacy Peterson case (in which a young pregnant woman was murdered by her husband), and the disappearance in Aruba of Alabama teen Natalee Holloway. The unfortunate fates of these two attractive, white, middle class women were stories that refused to die, garnering far more press than significant economic and political upheavals, both domestic and international. A discussion of the group fantasy behind the insatiable appetite for more information about these two cases (and whatever current “obsession of the month”) would make for fruitful class discussion.

Beisel’s fascinating questions about the appeal of popular films seem virtually guaranteed to involve his students in passionate discussion of the psychological study of groups. To the many questions he poses in his article concerning film, I

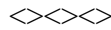
would add one more: why do some films perform disappointingly at the box office, only to attain status as “classics” (from *It’s a Wonderful Life* to *The Shawshank Redemption*) through subsequent airings on television or as DVD’s? I would also ask, in view of the large role popular music plays in the lives of my students, currently made virtually omnipresent by the iPod, why some bands that are enormously popular in the United States generate little interest outside the country, while other bands that struggle for audiences here have large followings abroad? What has the role of group fantasy played in the rise (and in some cases the fall) of popular music trends, including rock and roll, disco, punk, rap and hip hop? A final consideration that might appeal especially to college-aged audiences: what might we learn about group fantasy by studying the best-selling/most popular Halloween costumes of various time periods, especially the political masks?

Like Beisel’s students, I frown at the notion that violent images can actually *reduce* the incidence of acting out. I would counter the quote from Martin Scorsese about exposure to cinematic violence being largely therapeutic with the first hand experience of writer, producer, and director Ron Nyswaner which he relates in the documentary *The Celluloid Closet*. Some of what inspired Nyswaner to write the screenplay *Philadelphia*, which features a sympathetically depicted gay man, was to counteract the violent homophobic reactions evoked by William Friedkin’s film *Cruising*. When physically attacked by a group of street youths, Nyswaner and his partner were told during the beating, “If you’d seen the movie *Cruising*, you’d know why.” The questions that Beisel poses about group fantasy and the impact of film violence, pornography, and rape are important ones that are not only controversial, but can engender intense debate and be emotionally upsetting. It takes enormous skill to discuss such intense subjects productively in a classroom setting, and I think many of us might shy away from such potential minefields. Beisel’s courage in tackling such subjects is to his credit and his students’ benefit.

In short, David Beisel’s essay “Teaching About Groups” gives insight into the philosophies and practices of a master teacher, one who understands and respects both his subject and his stu-

dents. I wish I could take his class.

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David Beisel Responds

This Symposium caught me doubly by surprise. In the first instance, I wrote the essay as a straightforward outline detailing how I treat group psychohistory in my classes, never imagining it would become the occasion for a Symposium, and when our editor suggested he circulate it for comment I never dreamt it would stir so many responses. I'm glad it happened that way. Writing while looking over my shoulder would have surely produced a different essay.

My second surprise has to do with the number of positive responses. I'm honored and delighted, of course, and doubly honored since I've long respected the work of each of the respondents, whose work, I'm happy to acknowledge, has found its way into my own thinking and classrooms over the years.

As academics, we're not particularly practiced at handling praise, at least I'm not. Part of the academic game, learned with ruthless efficiency in graduate school, is that one must always be as critical as possible, pounce on, then flail away at what others haven't said, while never, ever praising another's work, but if you must, give it only the most imperceptible nod, otherwise you'll lose points. In any case, psychological historians

(except from fellow psychohistorians) are more accustomed to insults, so a great deal of praise is new to me.

Uncertain now how to react, I find myself wanting to adopt an embarrassed, "it was nothing special" posture, but it doesn't feel quite right and is potentially insulting to those who've said such thoughtful and nice things about my teaching. As a possible way out, I keep hearing Golda Meier's words to Moïse Dayan, "Don't be so modest. You're not that important."

I learned as a child that one way to escape getting a swelled head (as my mom would have said), or becoming too big for my britches (another colloquialism worth further analysis), was to throw myself into work, no doubt part of the "Stakhanovite" drive that allows me an immediate escape from some of my feelings. After days of preparation, I'm now ready to write my reply at length from the thumb-thick pile of handwritten notes on 8 1/2 x 11 typing paper I've compiled which contain my thoughts on each of the commentaries, but am now told by our editor that time is short, the current issue needs to be put to bed, and space restraints demand I keep my comments to a bare minimum. Ideally, I'd like to address each response in turn, but will instead keep my general observations to a few short paragraphs while promising to engage in detailed dialogue with each contributor via e-mail.

The commentaries reduce, I think, to three main areas: 1) content; 2) issues of teaching; and 3) places where content and pedagogy meet. Some respondents focus on all three, others on only one.

Issues of course content—that is, what to teach—span the whole psychohistorical spectrum, the respondents' ideas moving in several directions beyond the merely psychological and the psychohistory of groups. Wide associations are to be expected here, of course, connecting in many ways to the personal issues we all bring to the table, including disagreements on what should and should not be taught on the psychohistory of groups, but also reflecting questions of what should be taught in psychohistory courses in general.

On how to teach the material, some respondents offer thoughts specifically on teaching about groups, others on teaching psychohistory, while

others invoke issues not related to teaching psychohistory but to teaching in general (From them I think I'm beginning to see something I've never seen before, a difference between teaching psychohistory and teaching psychohistorically. Could the first be about the content and the second mostly about the method?)

I see I should have added to my original essay a number of things I didn't mention there but always mention in my classes—groupthink, for example, and President Lyndon Johnson's need to surround himself with a coterie of "Yes Men," John McCone and George Ball falling from favor because they told the truth, Robert McNamara staying in power because he didn't. These are possible parallels to George W. Bush's directive that he be given only good news about the war in Iraq, in contrast to Kennedy's leadership style.

I also now see that my essay, as my course, gives sociologists short shrift, pays insufficient attention to the ideas of Jung and to questions of national character, and completely ignores groups of intermediate size. I need to rethink some of this in hopes of finding ways to integrate these points in future discussions.

Looking over the commentaries in general, I see a few themes, which seem to preoccupy most of the respondents in various ways. They include issues of subjectivity, of experiential teaching, what to do with Lloyd deMause, handling resistance, the use of Freud, and various aspects of the psychohistorical use and understanding of film. I'll say a brief word about each in turn.

The Issue of Subjectivity: As respondents make clear, subjectivity, real and perceived, is a crucial matter, and not just for psychohistory. Historicism—only recently high-jacked and made unrecognizable by the deconstructionists—has a long tradition of its own, its nuances difficult for today's students to grasp given the current cultural mandate for all of us to be totally self-absorbed, as several respondents say or imply. Since the Me Decade didn't disappear with the scholarly discovery of the culture of narcissism, I'm thinking it might be helpful to have a handy one-paragraph handout delineating the main points made about subjectivity in the commentaries above. It can serve as both starting and ending point if, after a

brief discussion, students are asked to keep it safely with their notes so they can refer to it when necessary in order for the class to remain on track when the problem of subjectivity arises again, which, defensively, it almost certainly will. Having Plato and Aristotle fight it out for us is also a good idea, and possibly cathartic.

Experiential Teaching: I, too, tried teaching in a leaderless group—once. I was naïf and ill-prepared. It was a bloody disaster. The students who unanimously agreed to the experiment ended up asking the college for a refund. (Try explaining Bion to an angry vice-president.) I'll never do it again. Yet failed experiments can enlighten, and I've often described the disaster to my classes, which, by letting them know that "even" their teacher can make mistakes, may contribute to a more relaxed in-class atmosphere by proving that whatever he may say at other times, the instructor isn't always infallible.

Dealing with deMause: No one, of course, should expect anyone to accept every aspect of an elaborate, multi-sided theory, one supported by limited empirical evidence, without having some reservations. It's unrealistic. When teaching about groups, it seems to me that the issue is not so much about keeping students from encountering what some perceive as a discredited theory so much as it is to inform them that the theory is controversial, but only after presenting it as accurately and as dispassionately as one has other theories. An American history course, for example, should never avoid mentioning J. Franklin Jamison's suggestion that the American Revolution was not much of a revolution or Charles Beard's evidence that the Constitution was designed to preserve the wealth of a few rich men simply because the current scholarly fashion emphasizes the Founding Father's idealism. My obligation is to help students master the fundamentals of psychohistory. Group fantasy, as much as the notion of collective trauma, is a prominent part of that. In any case, psychohistory courses aren't about Lloyd deMause. Students are apprised, where appropriate, of Bion, Binion, Coleman, Fogelman, Freud, Gonen, Hogman, Kren, Lifton, Loewenberg, Mazlish, and Volkan, along with the work of many of the participants in this Symposium. Besides, any careful reader of my book *The Suicidal Em-*

brace will find I've used some of deMause's group fantasy ideas there, and mention to my students, as I did in my essay, that I've found parts of it helpful in my own scholarly work. As for helping students think critically (a professional obligation we all took seriously long before a mandate arrived from the leaders of SUNY), it should be clear that deMause's theories are not the only ones my classes look at critically. Indeed, students come to critical assessments of deMause on their own long before I say a single word about corroboration or disconfirmation. Whatever the theory or bit of data they're looking at, they don't need much encouraging from me; they're already skeptical enough.

Resistance of Students and Others: This fruitful area deserves a great deal of discussion since it also has to do with our own countertransference and the ways we might unexpectedly encourage students to act out our own resistance (mentioned only briefly in the Symposium, and certainly not in my essay). It's illustrative that in the hands of master teachers, the paradigm can be successfully brought to high school students. They, we are told (and I don't doubt it), are often more receptive than college students, especially after those college students declare majors. It makes sense to me in ways it never did before how, armed with new identities that tend to preclude the intake of new ideas, they become linked to a hide-bound professoriate, which keeps them happily within the proscribed boundaries of their newly assigned disciplinary box, and raises the question of how to reach them anyway, then and later.

There is no time for it here, but I think we need to develop strategies to help those who want to get psychohistory courses (or units) approved by their skeptical departments and passed by hostile curriculum committees, and we need to share the ways we've handled open contempt as well as passive aggressive collegial hostility, like the economist, for example, who used to yell "Hey, psycho!" every time he passed me in the hall. In this regard, I'm eager to learn more about how a once-a-year psychohistory elective became a required course in the Humanities Division at one of our premier military academies.

Introducing and Reintroducing Freud: We probably need separate discussions on the various ways and times Freud should be introduced into a

course and when and how to reintroduce him. Showing John Huston's film *Freud* is a good idea. In addition to the several intriguing suggestions in the Symposium, we need to share strategies of timing and connected arguments as much as we need to build an arsenal of phrases that make psychoanalytic ways of thinking more accessible to students. I found many commentators writing sentences so succinctly and with such perfect phrasing—even with such beauty—that I'm convinced their descriptions couldn't be improved. I suspect some of them might find their way into my own writing (with attribution, of course).

The Role of Films and Other Issues Needing to be Covered: Film is an enormously important subject for which there is no time to develop in this essay. Besides film, the Symposium raises other issues that need clarifying and elaboration: the notion of a reified "group mind," the thin line between organic metaphors and organic fantasies, lists of logical possibilities as a pedagogic device, and what I owe to teaching at a community college. Perhaps at another time I will be able to elaborate on this.

Conclusion: My comments, as in my classes and encounters in our professional congresses, strike me as having given too much attention to psychohistory's Sturm und Drang, anxieties stirred by our topics, student resistance, academic skepticism, and collegial contempt. Maybe it's time to lighten up. Except for the occasional historian or psychoanalytically oriented folklorist, we've probably paid too little attention to jokes and their relation to *our* unconscious. Our work is almost Teutonic in its seriousness. Yet humor, especially self-deprecating humor, can help prepare safe spaces so crucial for real learning. While we can't always achieve it, may never achieve it, or may only partly achieve it part of the time, classrooms (as one respondent reminds us) can become serious playgrounds, true intellectual funscapes. Those magical moments, rare when they happen, must also be counted as part of the psychohistory of groups.

The historiography of psychological history has shown that the beginnings of systematic psychohistory date back to the early 1970's. Thirty-five years later, there's thirty-five years of accumulated scholarship, some of it surely superficial, poorly documented, and filled with untenable

leaps of logic, but much of it scrupulously accurate, on-target, and quite respectable. If some so-called mainstream historians still can't "get it," I'm inclined these days to think—and I hope not arrogantly—that, in the final analysis, it's their problem, not ours, especially if they continue making dogmatic pronouncements about "psychobabble" without having read any serious psychological history. Nor will reminding those historians that we're now living in the twenty-first century likely make things different: as I mention to my students, psychohistory is not for everyone. Still, what they're missing is their loss as well as ours, especially when acknowledging the irrational and its dangers is nothing less than building a body of historical knowledge that's truly human. As several respondents comment, one of our tasks must be to help our students live with uncertainty, and there's still much to do. Yet what I see in the calm expertise, thoughtfulness, and seriousness exemplified by the scholar-teachers assembled in this Symposium is that psychological history has achieved certain levels of emotional maturity and intellectual integrity that argue persuasively for the continued growth we surely deserve.

David Beisel's biography may be found on page 194. □

Book Reviews

***The Shining* is Not a Holocaust Film**

Henry W. Lawton

Group for the Psychohistorical Study of Film

Review of Geoffrey Cocks, The Wolf at the Door: Stanley Kubrick, History, and the Holocaust. NY: Peter Lang, 2004, paperback, ISBN 0-8204-7115-1, pages xii, 338, \$29.95.

Stanley Kubrick, who directed fewer films than most well known directors, has produced more "classic" films than most directors. *Paths of Glory, Full Metal Jacket, Lolita, 2001: A Space Odyssey, Dr. Stangelove, and The Shining* established him as one of the great film makers of our time. The films of this unique man with his own vision are always well made and meticulously

thought out. Even though you may not always like it, when you see a Kubrick film you do not easily forget it. He is one of those film makers whose work stays with you long after you see it. I remember first seeing *Paths of Glory* when I was in high school. Even though I did not quite understand why, it stayed in my mind. It was only when I saw it again years later that I realized that it was a truly great film.

Professor Geoffrey Cocks' volume on Kubrick was a chance to learn more about one of my favorite filmmakers. As a psychohistorian I look at popular film and "classics" to try and understand what they communicate to us the audience about shared fantasies operating in the society. All films communicate, those that are popular succeed, and those, which are not, serve as "trial balloons" that somehow miss the dominant shared fantasies of the culture at the time they are released. This book is well written and appears to have been meticulously researched. This is not a psychobiography—Cocks gives general information about Kubrick's life but devotes most of the book to his films. He is most informative, although I am a keen student of cinema and have seen most of Kubrick's films at least once, I learned of several I had never even heard of before.

The Professor then makes his case that Kubrick wanted to do a film on the Holocaust and that *The Shining* was that film. Sadly, this is where this otherwise admirable book does not hold up despite the author's considerable ingenuity in seeking to prove his theory. Had Kubrick wanted to do a film on the Nazi assault on Jews, I am absolutely certain that it would have been a strong film. Cocks argues that "Kubrick developed his own creative strategy for representing the Holocaust, one that expands the definition of a Holocaust film to include reflecting a trauma-like discourse." Furthermore, "Kubrick's personal hesitations and artistic sensibilities are manifested most evidently in the systematic burial of a Holocaust subtext in *The Shining*," even though such an indirect approach "risks cold abstraction... The greatest problem with Kubrick's indirect approach is that his Holocaust subtext has gone almost – almost – unnoticed" (pp. 16,17). The Professor claims that Kubrick had, since the 1970's, been "actively pursuing the possibility of his own Holocaust film" (p.

167). He goes on to argue that hints of such concern can be seen in *A Clockwork Orange* and *Barry Lyndon*, but "such wisplike traces were to be manifested almost as subtly but also much more numerous and powerfully in *The Shining*" (p. 167). Much of the book is an explication of the author belief that *The Shining* is filled with symbols indicative of the Holocaust. It is not directly elaborated in the story, but rather through very elaborate and arcane schemes of symbols. In my view, Cocks is reaching way beyond his evidence and therefore his argument is simply not convincing. He is trying to create an interpretation where none previously existed. He even admits having virtually nothing to work with. As I read through *The Wolf at the Door*, I kept wondering why he bothered writing it.

Cocks leaves an important question unanswered: why would Kubrick need to be so indirect about the Holocaust? His other films are not indirect. Films like *Paths of Glory*, *Dr. Strangelove*, *Full Metal Jacket*, and *A Clockwork Orange* are very much the opposite. Why would someone who had the nerve to make a "comedy" like *Dr. Strangelove*, which makes a straightforward and powerful case that the world will end because our leaders and military are psychotic lunatics, need to be indirect about the Holocaust? I agree that films can be interpreted on a variety of levels, but much of Cocks' approach relies on the use of color, numbers and music which are presented in ways that seem essentially divorced from the story, consciously or unconsciously.

Ironically, Cocks fleetingly alludes to what, in my view, would be a much more forceful line of argument about Kubrick and his films: "There is throughout Kubrick's films an Oedipal pattern of youth against patriarchal authority... Whatever the specific successes or failures with Oedipal lineaments...the paternal order always reigns supreme." However, Cocks goes on to write, "there is more going on in Kubrick's films than the working out of an Oedipus complex, a pre-Oedipal fixation on his mother, or the repression of homosexuality. His films reflect an ongoing confrontation with the world outside the family that in a patriarchal family structure is almost always represented in psychodynamic terms by the father" (p. 26). Certainly, *The Shining* fits this ar-

gument far better and more clearly than the tortuous efforts Cocks makes in service of trying to convince us that it is about the Holocaust. *The Shining* has to do with fantasies of patricide (the son leads the father outside to his death in the freezing snow) and could more profitably be interpreted from that perspective. The abusive father goes mad and murderously turns on mother and son. The son vanquishes the father and becomes an Oedipal victor while the father joins the ranks of the many ghosts who haunt the hotel.

In conclusion, the fact that the author fails to take into account the more in-depth aspects of Kubrick's work, makes this book a major disappointment.

Henry Lawton, MA, MLS, is a retired child welfare worker, an industrious independent scholar, and past president of the International Psychohistorical Association, of which he is also the longtime secretary. He is founder and director of the Group for the Psychohistorical Study of Film and a productive author of articles, as well as The Handbook of Psychohistory (1988). Currently, Lawton's main research interests are on the founder of the Mormons (Joseph Smith, Jr.) and how popular film communicates shared fantasy. He may be reached at <hwlipa@gmail.com>. □

Using Family Systems Therapy in Literary Criticism

Gustavo Guerra
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Review of John V. Knapp and Kenneth Womack, Eds., Reading the Family Dance: Family Systems Therapy and Literary Study. Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2003. Hardcover. ISBN [087413823X](https://www.amazon.com/dp/087413823X), 333 pp., \$ 55.00.

The editors have put together a very interesting collection of interdisciplinary essays dealing with a wide variety of national literatures and periods. What is particularly engaging about these essays is their stylistic clarity, their freshness in approach, and their emphasis on looking at specific texts through a fairly new lens, that of family systems therapy theory.

The collection starts with an essay by

John Knapp that provides a much needed historical background and overview of family systems therapy that focuses on the family rather than the individual as the matrix of identity. Within this matrix, each member of the family usually fulfils a particular developmental role vis-à-vis the other characters. Of course, there is much more—families, according to this approach, have sub-systems, sibling difference, family secrets, conversational rules and the like. Knapp does a terrific job at summarizing what we could call the metapsychological issues in his opening chapter, introducing the materials and explaining the relationship of the theory to literary studies.

Family systems therapy deals with the family primarily, therefore, it lends itself well as a theoretical outlook applied to family dynamics as portrayed in realistic novels and plays. In the three parts that follow Knapp's introduction, *Reading the Family Dance* examines a number of novels and two Shakespeare plays using this family therapy as its main theoretical tool. In the first part, "The Self: Family Systems Therapy and the Quest for Identity," four essays discuss how, in various novels, characters develop a sense of self when, at the same time, the very idea of an individual self is threatened by various family dynamics. The second part deals with similar issues at the level of the community, and the third at the level of the larger culture and how it shapes family dynamics. The progression from individual to cultural dynamics works quite well, as it allows readers to see family systems therapy applied in a variety of contexts as a flexible literary-critical tool.

All in all, this is a very interesting, carefully put together, collection offering students of the humanities and the social sciences an appealing and provocative alternative to contemporary literary-theoretical approaches. Paradoxically, that is the book's main strength as well as its main weakness. It appears necessary, for most of the contributors, to define family systems therapy as oddly and stubbornly opposed to a very idiosyncratic understanding of classical psychoanalytic criticism, an understanding that they hardly seem to care to address in any detail.

Let me be more precise. In "The Enigmatic Jane Eyre: A Differentiation Story without Family in Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre*," Rosemary D. Babock, in a statement that I will utilize as a paradigmatic example, uses Knapp's ideas in order to validate her choice of family systems therapy as a helpful approach to understand the kind of questions that concern her. Babock writes "John Knapp....questions how Freudian concepts such as 'drive reduction and primary process,' concepts that are no longer accepted in contemporary psychology of how the mind and the brain function, can be taken as explanatory evidence useful to literary criticism." She goes on to write that "Knapp suggests that the 'limitations' of an intrapsychic psychology like Freud's—and more recently Lacan's—have kept literary critics from a thorough analysis of 'interpersonal difficulties' that many literary characters experience" (p. 48).

Comments like this pervade the book to a fault. Gary Storhoff's essay, for instance, starts by claiming that "Literary critics who employ family systems theory necessarily look beyond the psychoanalytic assumptions of the individual as an autonomous psychological entity" and instead, Storhoff's continues, clearly privileging family systems therapy over his understanding of classical psychoanalysis, "the critic discovers the sources of an individual's behavior within a much larger *interpersonal* dysfunction in the family as a whole" (p. 71). The reason why Storhoff feels this sense of privilege associated with family systems therapy is that "this kind of investigation," as he puts it, "expands our understanding of the possibilities of character constructs, and adds another dimension to the view that literature expresses fundamental ideas about how we live" (p.71). Ideas as to "how we live" have always been within the radar screen of classical psychoanalysis. Finally, as my last example of the similar comments in practically every single one of the essays in the collection, Jerome Bump concludes an interesting enumeration of the pros of family systems therapy by claiming that it is based on "extensive practice of family therapy and empirical studies, not speculation about dreams and fantasies" (p.153).

On first reading the book, I was obviously struck by some of these comments. I initially imagined that, consonant with Knapp's metaphor of calling family systems therapy the "new kid on the literary criticism block" (p.13), these comments were simply rhetorically oriented, intended to help family systems therapy theory define itself as somewhat opposed to other modes of literary criticism, such as psychoanalysis. The reason I was struck was that family systems therapy theory depends on some of the same Freudian principles the authors denigrates when family systems therapy is portrayed as a kid trying to take the place of the father.

Regardless, I find the whole tendency unnecessary, since, as Knapp himself claims, family systems therapy has already generated "much interest," in the academic world. (I think it is important to say also that Knapp wrote a groundbreaking book on the subject and, with Womack, also co-edited a special edition of the journal *Style* devoted specifically to the topic.) There is also an added, more serious, problem, one more detrimental to the book as a whole: nowhere in the text do any of the authors validate their comments that a particular set of Freudian principles are either no longer useful or based on either intellectualization or speculation. In fact, a more careful investigation into the current clinical literature dealing with the Freudian concepts the authors here claim are either outdated and useless, will reveal how this is simply not so and, further, how these same concepts are indeed essential in everyday psychoanalytic practice. Also, psychoanalytic-oriented literary criticism often focuses on the same issues the authors are interested in; i.e. family dynamics, sibling rivalry, aggression, etc. I am sure, to give just one example, that all of the authors are familiar with the burgeoning interest among psychoanalysts on what has come to be known as the "interpersonal or interrelational psychoanalytic" school of thought, a school which, as its name indicates, focuses not on the individual as a unit but as inevitably related to others and, more specifically, to familial others. This is, by the way, not a new idea, having its origins as far back—according to some—as the work of San-

dor Ferenczi. (I am again focusing on a single psychoanalytic concept whose treatment I find lacking and problematic, to indicate a larger concern with the same issue. The same thing is true in the way this text discusses such concepts as aggression, the drives, etc.) It is a bit puzzling, as a result, to understand the motivation behind this particular area aspect of the book.

Barring the reservations I have expressed above, I feel this is a terrific book, one whose overall strength lies in its making available one more lens from which to look at things. Let me make a classical psychoanalytic point that is also embraced by family systems therapy theory. It is time for the "new kid" to go out and thrive on her own without constant definition through an imagined, denigrated parent.

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In Memoriam: Elizabeth Wirth Marvick (1925-2005)

**Betty Glad
University of South Carolina**

Elizabeth Marvick, author of two major psychobiographies, *The Young Richelieu: A Psychoanalytic Approach to Leadership* (1983) and *Louis XIII: The Making of a King* (1986), died in her sleep on the night of May 18, 2005. She had played tennis the previous day and had a date for luncheon the day after her death.

A woman of extraordinary talent, with a wide range of interests, and a genuine relish for the

intellectual life, her work has been cut short. A study of the Founders of the U.S. who lived near each other in Virginia was nearly complete at the time of her death. Her goal was to study the geographic, cultural, class, and kinship ties connecting five Virginians (Washington, Jefferson, Madison, Marshall, and Edmund Randolph) to the creation of the U.S. government.

Traditional psychoanalytic thought had a great impact on both her personal and intellectual life. Her interpretative framework was primarily Freudian. Though she avoided psychological lingo, she saw the infantile and early childhood body and related sexual activities and fantasies as crucial to the development of the adult political leader. Her work on Louis XIII was a masterpiece along these lines. With the drive and tenacity of a historian and detective, she translated the journal of Louis's physician in which he noted, minute-by-minute, every intake and outtake of the royal baby from the day he was born. In addition, she discovered many entries that had previously been edited and suppressed. These included the physician's concerns with Louis's "constipation" in the first days of his life. In describing his attempts at bowel training, the physician also noted Louis's stubbornness. Later entries gave evidence of the physician's anxiety over Louis's homosexual tendencies. Having discovered this controlling force at work in Louis's life, Marvick began to do further research on the life of the doctor, which led to her first paper on the two men, which was published in the *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* in 1974.

For this scholar she had a major impact. My analysis of presidents and their relations to their aides was inspired by her work on the imperial courts. She was also a woman of vigor, with strong opinions that she expressed diplomatically, with a sparkle in her eye whenever the talk turned serious.

Her approach to psychobiography, she explains, was a kind of "spiral analysis" in which one evaluates the relationships between childhood experiences and adult decisions, a process which in turn leads to further investigation of the childhood, thus bringing to light new questions about the political behavior of the subject. But she was also a historian, immersing herself in the tedious job of

digging in large and small manuscript collections in an effort to find all the relevant and potentially available facts.

Her early history prepared her for the rich life she would lead. Her father, Louis Wirth, was the renowned sociologist of race relations, mass media, and public policy at the University of Chicago. Even before the civil rights movement in the US, the improvement of African-American relations and opportunities was a major concern of his. His oratorical skills and moral integrity were major touchstones for her. Her mother, Mary Bolton, was born and raised in Paducah, Kentucky. She met Louis when they were both students at the University of Chicago. After their marriage, they both worked as social workers until Wirth's dissertation was finished. For Elizabeth, her family provided her with a racially integrated social life when she was growing up and a setting in which she met many of the intellectual giants at the University of Chicago at the apex of its influence.

Marvick earned her MA in political science at the University of Chicago and then moved to Columbia University where she received her PhD in American politics. Like her mother before her, she also married a fellow student, Dwaine Marvick, who later became an eminent political scientist.

Her father never influenced her professional works directly, but most of the people who did were connected to him. Over time she became close friends with Ed Shils, Nathan Leites, Maure Goldschmidt, and Harold Lasswell. Later she met Fawn and Bernard Brodie, as well as other giants in American political, sociological and psychological circles.

She testified that she was influenced by Freudian psychology. Elizabeth Marvick had read Freud's work as a teenager, finding its explanations of people's functions to be compelling. During her studies, she also followed the works of Harold Lasswell, although he had already left Chicago, and she later came to know him personally. She also underwent a classical Freudian psychoanalysis with Dora K. Hartmann in New York. According to her own testimony, they met four or five sessions per week for about two years between 1948 and 1941 and employed a "pretty classical

Freudian interpretation" of the feminine psyche.

Certainly she relished the role of mother and wife. Quoting Margaret Mead in her interview in *Clio's Psyche*, she noted that "children—or at least one's own as Mead would have added—are more interesting than anything else and I became immersed in them." Her first son, Louis, was born in 1954, followed later by Andrew. During this period she began to study the psychoanalytical studies that had been done on children.

She also enjoyed, by her own testimony, a supportive relationship with her husband Dwaine. They stayed in touch with each other's studies, and she found him, next to her father, the "least chauvinist man she knew." He was very proud of a most deserved honor when the Women's Caucus named him a "Mentor of Distinction" for Political Science of the American Political Science Association in 1991.

Marvick's work, however, has not received the attention it merits. This is partly the result, as she recognized, of the dislike of Freudian analysis in academic circles. Her problems in finding a publisher for her book on Richelieu, though ultimately placed with the prestigious University of Chicago Press, bear witness to this problem. This might have been due to the fact that her work was interdisciplinary and therefore could not easily be pegged. But it was also undoubtedly due to the fact that she was an independent scholar—a woman without the place that would have given her work greater authority. She taught at several different institutions - at Elmira College, CCNY, the American University in Paris, Cal Tech, the Claremont Graduate Institute, and UCLA. But she was always freelancing. Her stint at UCLA between 1960 and 1990, proved to be her longest academic connection. There she taught courses on public opinion, propaganda, and the American Presidency. She also was able to set up and teach on "a psychoanalytic approach to world leaders."

She also held positions in the following scholarly organizations: Western Society of French History, International Society of Political Psychology, and the International Political Science Association of which she was one of the founders and Chair of the Research Committee.

Marvick's thoughts on the relevance of psychobiography to political analysis can also be found in several articles, including: "Beyond the Narcissistic Leader: Toward Comparing Psychopolitical Roles," found in *Mind and Human Interaction* (1997), and "Jefferson's Personality and his Politics," a paper written for *The Psychohistory Review* (1997) (which she said could have been called "Jefferson in a Nutshell," if not for the undesirable tone that it would have generated). She also felt that she had an original interpretation of George Washington's personality in "Family Imagery and Revolutionary Spirit" (in Mark J. Rozell, et al, eds., *George Washington and the Origins of the American Presidency* [2000]). Her latest work along these lines (which I co-authored with her) was "Personality Theory in the Analysis of Political Leadership" (to be published in *The World of Political Science – the Development of the Discipline*, IPSA Series, March 2006).

Like many other outstanding women, Elizabeth Marvick was, at least in part, a product of her time and place. No doubt influenced by her own inclinations and buttressed by a Freudian psychoanalysis, family came first and she pieced together a career around that primary fact. It was a choice that was satisfying to her, but it also meant that like many other females, her voice was not heard as far and wide as it might otherwise have been.

Betty Glad, PhD, is the Olin D. Johnston Professor of Political Science at the University of South Carolina. She formerly taught at the University of Illinois, Urbana, and received her PhD from the University of Chicago. She has appeared as a commentator on the PBS American Experience Series on Jimmy Carter, the McNeil Lehrer Report, and other national television and radio programs. Professor Glad's publications include Striking First (co-editor); The Russian Transformation: Political, Sociological and Psychological Aspects (co-editor and contributor); Jimmy Carter: In Search of the Great White House; The Psychological Dimensions of War; Key Pittman; and Charles Evans Hughes and the Illusions of Innocence. Presently, she is working on a volume covering Jimmy Carter's foreign policy advisors. Dr. Glad's awards include the Frank D. Goodnow Award of the American Political Science Association.

tion (2000) and the Harold Lasswell Award of the International Society for Political Psychology (1997). She has served as president of the International Society for Political Psychology and of the Presidency Group of the American Political Science Association, as well as vice president of the American Political Science Association. She may be reached at <glad@gwm.sc.edu>. □

Letters to the Editor

Booth and Fuchsman Continue the Dialogue on Online Education

This letter is a continuation of the dialogue on online education started in the Teaching Psychohistory Special Issue—Part I (December, 2005) when the editor interviewed Professor Kenneth Fuchsman of the University of Connecticut about his online education program. My goal is to address some of Fuchsman's notions, while offering some additional thoughts from my perspective as a teacher online and in the classroom.

While Fuchsman argues that there are *many* areas of overlap between classroom and online education, I have experienced only some. In the online instance, for example, the professor never sees or comes to know students as persons; the closest one gets to "knowing" students is knowing *about* them *via* a student "bio" and students' ideas in e-mails, formal papers, and discussion areas. On the other hand, in the classroom, particularly with twenty-five to thirty-five students, this can happen frequently both inside and outside the classroom, and it does in my field of psychology. There is no substitute for the student's need to "see," since watching or seeing greatly contributes to a sense of cognitive comprehension and interpretation of the professor, an important dimension of the educational process.

Both online and classroom education are committed to information-sharing, but the *mode* of transmitting information differs greatly between the two. In the classroom, students both see and hear an actual person, with emphases and gesticulations, challenging ideas and sharing ways of framing information. In classrooms, students actually see a learned person, while online learning permits only reading and writing. The reading level of the American population has decreased dramatically over the past decade, and to teach only to the reading and writing modes severely limits many students whose development was replete with pictorial and auditory modes of learning (e.g., television, hearing others, video games). Given this reality, the utilization of a combination of pictorial, auditory, and reading modes in the classroom would appear superior

to the limits of online learning. Even the gifted online student learns better when multi-modal educational strategies are in place.

Not every discipline or every course should be taught online, nor should students necessarily self-select for online courses. A significant amount of course material, especially in psychology, frequently leads to student confusion, misapplication of information, anxiety, self-diagnosis, and even obsession. These difficulties may not be noticed by an online instructor unless the student specifically mentions them. In the classroom, the professor has a significantly better chance of "reading" students' facial and other body cues, and sometimes being able to offset potential learning inhibitors before they become barriers to learning. I have discovered that courses such as Theories of Personality and Abnormal Psychology contain information that can be particularly ego-threatening. Students' conclusions often manifest like this: "Given all of these symptoms, I must be schizophrenic," or "Does this information mean that I will become an alcoholic like my father?" "Since I was abused and there is an abuse cycle, will I be a predator, too?" Further, students are often plagued by fears of betrayal, pressures to be perfect, and deep-seated preoccupations with real or imagined inadequacies. Some live with drug addictions, gender or sexual orientation confusion, binge drinking, or debilitating and severe loneliness. Some are self-mutilators or have eating disorders. Some are even suicidal. Students bring these sensitive topics into the offices of the clinical faculty, and we hear them every day. A professor must help students place these notions in proper perspective without becoming students' therapists. Online education cannot do this, since it merely imparts information about these life-challenges without addressing potential inner turmoil.

While, like Fuchsman, I have experienced "the spontaneous group interaction...that can be magical" in online classes, these experiences occur in remote and asynchronous ways and these "miracles" also happen in classrooms. There, the response is immediate and personal. I also agree with Fuchsman that students do, in some ways, identify with an "unseen professor" in online courses, but I perceive that online students identify with an *ersatz* person only. At most, they project onto, or experience transference toward, a Freudian "object" or *imago*, that is, no more than a cognitive construction of a person derived solely from a professor's picture and, absent that, only the professor's written words. There is an Eriksonian under-identification with the professor in the online venue due, in part, to a lack of both in-body presence and the modeling, or observational learning, that occurs in classrooms all the time.

We often underestimate the importance of modeling for our students. What we cannot do online is *show* students the manner in which an idea or argument might be thought through or a problem might be dissected and effectively solved. Neither can we model personality traits

that are conducive to good teaching or being a professional adult, nor can we show them subtlety (i.e., "incidental") information such as body movements, facial reactions, patience in teaching, or rational behavior in the face of disagreement. It is easy to overlook or forget the fact that professors may be the first people students have met who are truly serious about learning.

It is generally accepted that true modeling is conducive to the introjection (incorporation) of parts of the other. In the classroom, unlike online, students *directly* introject (take in) some of the ways of thinking, framing ideas, and drawing inferences that professors model.

Unlike Professor Fuchsman, I have found no difference in the way students react to me online or in the classroom, other than the fact that many students approach me informally when I teach in the classroom. I have not sensed that I am perceived as a father figure online any more than I am in a classroom. I do believe that ego development occurs in the classroom to a greater extent than it does online, partly due to the immediacy of the introjections discussed above.

Finally, the last word about differential "student success" with course outcomes is certainly not yet settled. Most of the information we have about success with online learning is anecdotal. I am reminded of the book, *No Significant Difference*, that still stands at the forefront when comparing online to classroom learning outcomes. If one considers only *measurable* outcomes and not the *processes and human interactions* that bring these outcomes about, the author concludes that there is no statistically significant difference between online and classroom learning relative to these measurable outcomes. But, regardless of whether this null is eventually struck down or not, the fundamental question remains: "Are teaching and learning nothing more than the acquisition of information measurable by tools that quantify outcome success?" If so, online learning is affirmatively responsive to this question. However, I view the learning as fundamentally natural and human, with powerful adaptive functions. This means that adding technological tools to the process is unnecessary, albeit practical at times. The purest form of learning occurs when human beings come together and share an experience in person, face to face. I see no type of human interaction more real or natural than this.

For my part, I will continue to teach online courses for one reason only: for some students, the alternative is the inability to take classes at all. Nonetheless, I remain convinced that it is only in the classroom that we can experience the miracles in the moment and watch the "light bulbs" turn on when a student finally sees the truth of what is being taught and learned.

Richard Booth, PhD, is Professor of Psychology at Black Hawk College, Moline, Illinois. He is also a licensed psychotherapist with Diplomate status and Adjunct Professor of Behavioral Science at University of Maryland University College in Adelphi, MD. Dr. Booth has pub-

lished widely in professional journals and can be reached at boothr@bhc.edu. □

Ken Fuchsman Responds

Professor Booth does not believe online education can offer students the educational quality of in-person classes. I believe a fullness and richness of being can occur when all five senses are active and people meet face-to-face, and the in-person college lecture is one of those places where such educational richness happens. But the fullness of being accompanies humanity into settings where people do not meet face-to-face and where all senses are not equally employed. Profound realizations can occur while reading *Crime and Punishment*, hearing a tape recorded college lecture, watching *Saving Private Ryan*, listening to recordings of Stravinsky or Coltrane, and even during a discussion in an asynchronous online college class.

To look at the contemporary college lecture course as natural while the online class as not, as Professor Booth does, involves some misunderstandings. He writes: "I view the learning process as fundamentally natural and human, with powerful adaptive functions. This means that adding technological tools to this process is unnecessary" (p. 4). Earlier in the paper, the author does recognize the interconnection between technology and education when he advocates combining "pictorial, auditory, and reading modes in the classroom" and using "multi-modal educational strategies" (p. 2). Before the hi-tech classroom, higher education for centuries has relied on the mass produced book, a technological marvel courtesy of the printing press. Though Professor Booth claims the educational process is natural, the contemporary college class is a cultural creation with technology an integral part of it.

It is not then an issue of technology versus naturalness, but as to whether something essential to learning is lost when the move is made from a face-to-face educational setting to an asynchronous online educational environment. Dr. Booth is convinced that it is "only in the classroom that we can experience the miracles in the moment and watch the 'light bulbs' turn on when a student finally sees the truth of what is being taught and learned" (pp. 4- 5). I disagree.

Much of the learning that goes on in college courses occurs outside of the classroom. A student reads a textbook in a library, or scans a scholarly article online. Students often study together. The moment the light bulb goes off for the student may occur during the professor's lecture or in an in-person classroom discussion. It may just as well happen while the student is reading alone late at night or in a conversation with classmates in the cafeteria. That moment of illumination can also occur when a student in an online class reads some exchanges between students and the professor that took place two days before, but somehow hits home when the online student reads it

for the first time. The face-to-face synchronous classroom is not the exclusive locale of educational miracles.

Professor Booth believes an online instructor is not in a good a position to perceive when students are having academic difficulties. He writes: a "significant amount of course material...frequently leads to student confusion.... In the classroom...the professor has a significantly better chance of 'reading' students' facial and other body cues, and sometimes being able to offset these potential learning inhibitors" (p. 2). While perceptive professors in the small classes of twenty-five to thirty-five that Professor Booth favors may be able to read the body language of most of the students, this is less likely to happen in classes of fifty or a hundred students. Dr. Booth also believes that student difficulties in comprehending the course material "may not be noticed by an online instructor unless the student specifically mentions them" (p. 2).

The online professor though does have ways of knowing when students are having academic problems. In the online classes at the University of Connecticut, where I teach, students have to post written answers to academic questions weekly or bi-weekly. The online instructor does not have to "read" the student's cues; he or she has submitted written assignments that reveal the extent to which the student understands the course material. When an online instructor realizes a student has academic difficulties, the professor writes privately to the student and works in private to assist the student.

The online class requires more regular and frequent student "recitations" than can often occur in a three credit 150 minute class with twenty-five to thirty-five students. This semester I have an online section with 29 students. We have completed the fifth week of the semester. There have been 619 postings and mailings in the class, almost 124 a week, and an average of over 20 per student. The online class is not as limited in class time as is the face-to-face class; there is generally more writing and discussion in the online class than is possible in the restricted class time of the in-person class. The online instructor then has a better chance of quickly catching the troubled student than in those face-to-face courses where there is not frequent writing.

One of Dr. Booth's main worries that the online classroom is not as authentic and real as is the face-to-face classroom. He says online students who might identify with their professor "identify with an *ersatz* person only" who is "no more than a cognitive construction of a person" (p. 3). He says, we can not demonstrate online "the manner in which an argument might be thought through or a problem might be dissected," nor can we model "patience in teaching, or rational behavior in the face of disagreement" (pp. 3-4). He writes: "the purest form of learning occurs when human beings come together and share an experience in-person, face-to-face. I see no type of human interaction more real or natural than this" (p. 4).

What makes communal face-to-face educational

experience a purer form of learning than say Einstein working primarily alone to discover the basics of relativity theory? Why the elevation of the face-to-face classroom experience over other forms of learning? Certainly there are peak educational experiences occurring regularly in face-to-face classes, in direct personal encounters, in solitary reading, and in online discussions. Ironically, there is often more "human interaction" in asynchronous classes than in many face-to-face classes, particularly those that are straight lectures with little or no classroom discussion.

An instructor who is genuine, knowledgeable, forthright and caring can communicate his or her authenticity in writing to online students. As well, many students open up, are intellectually adventurous, personally honest, and engage in meaningful discussions with their classmates in the online environment. It is not the medium alone that determines authenticity, but the way persons communicate and their willingness to learn. There are many ways for both online and in-person professors and students to be real and many ways of creating public personas that disguise "real" selves.

The fact that in online classes, people know each other through reading and writing does not mean that we identify with someone artificial. In reading St. Augustine's *Confessions* or *The Education of Henry Adams* do we believe we have encountered "a cognitive construction" or do many of us believe that the deepest feelings have been communicated through writing? If we believe the latter, then there is a chance the real personhood of the instructor can come through in the online environment. Dissecting an argument, modeling patience, and conducting rational discussions during disagreements occur in online classroom discussions and in many other venues, such as scholarly journals, where writing and reading are the main means of communication.

Is there something of special educational value that can occur when people encounter each other in-person that is different than what happens when they are not physically together? Of course there is. But human learning takes many forms. There can be authenticity in-person to person interaction and in primarily written communication, such as email exchanges or personal correspondence. Like many others, I personally have witnessed many magical educational moments in both face-to-face and online classrooms. There is little justification in claiming one of these natural and the other not fully real, when both are cultural constructions dependent on technology. If we recognize the diverse ways educational experiences occurs, we can let ourselves be open to the real educational opportunities prevalent in both online and in-person education, and continue our pursuit of excellence in education.

Kenneth Fuchsman, EdD, just stepped down as Executive Program Director of the Bachelor of General Studies program at the University of Connecticut to teach online interdisciplinary courses full-time at UCONN. His

research specialties are in the Freudian Oedipus complex and interdisciplinary studies. Dr. Fuchsman can be met face-to-face at Psychohistory Forum Work-In-Progress Seminar Meetings and reached at <ken.fuchsman@uconn.edu>. □

Bulletin Board

The next **Psychohistory Forum Work-In-Progress Saturday Seminar** will be on **April 8, 2006** when David Lotto will present "**The Psychohistory of Vengeance.**" Subsequent 2006 presentations will include **Eli Sagan** on a "Secular Sacred Response to Fundamentalism" and a session on suicide and on suicidal terrorism. **CONFERENCES:** The theme of the 29th annual meetings of the International Society of Political Psychology (ISPP) in Barcelona on July 12-16, 2006 will be "The Political Psychology of Liberation and Oppression." At the 29th Annual International Psychohistorical Association (IPA) meetings at Fordham University in Manhattan on June 7-9, 2006, students will be allowed in free for the first time. **NOTES ON MEMBERS:** **Peter Loewenberg** will assume the Sir Peter Ustinov Chair on Prejudice in Vienna this June, entailing extensive lecturing and seminar leadership in German. **David James Fisher** recently published, "In Memoriam: Rudolf Ekstein (1912-2005)," *American Imago*, Vol. 62 (2) 2005, pp. 225-233 and "The Correspondence of Bruno Bettelheim and Rudolf Ekstein. 1. Introduction. 2. The Correspondence," *Psychoanalysis and History*, Vol. 8 (1) 2006, pp. 65-124. **Flora Hogman** gave the talk, "The Double Edged Sword of Memory: Issues and Conflicts Faced by Survivors Remembering Their Holocaust Experiences," last December at the La Mama Theater in Manhattan. **Paul H. Elovitz** on February 14 gave the talk, "Darwin: The Man" to the Ramapo College History Club. **WELCOME:** To new members **Marvin Leibowitz** and **Stanley Teitelbaum**, New Jersey psychologist/psychoanalysts. **CORRECTIONS:** In the December 2005 issue in the article, "Remembering Paul Roazen," Eduardo Weisman should read Eduardo Weiss (p. 137) and in "Paul Roazen: In Memoriam," Tausk's analyst and Freud's analysand was Helene Deutsch rather than Lou Salome as printed (p. 166). Also, the shorter version, "Mariano Grondona on the Psychobiography of Argentine Politicians," of Ted Goertzel's article, "The

Psychobiography of Argentine Politicians," was published due to a combination of computer and human error. We recommend that you read the longer version, which contains much more biographical and childhood materials, under "Sample Articles" on our website cliopsyche.org or at <http://crab.rutgers.edu/~goertzel/Grondona ArgentinePols.doc>. Apologies to Peter Petschauer for omitting his name from the thank you notes for patrons in the last two issues. **OUR THANKS:** To our members and subscribers for the support that makes Clio's Psyche possible. To Benefactors Herbert Barry and Ralph Colp; Patrons David Beisel, Andrew Brink, Mary Lambert, Peter Loewenberg, David Lotto, Peter Petschauer, and Shirley Stewart; Sustaining Member Jacques Szaluta; Supporting Member Leon Solomon; and Members Alan Elms, Richard Harrison, Harry Keyishian, Marvin Leibowitz, Richard Morrock, Stanley Teitelbaum, Hanna Turken. Our appreciation to Forum hosts Ralph Colp, Mary Lambert, and Connalee and Lee Shneidman. Our thanks for thought provoking materials to Ken Adams, Fred Alford, James Anderson, David Beisel, Dick Booth, Don Carveth, Dereck Daschke, Dan Dervin, Nancy Dobosiewicz, Joseph Dorinson, David Felix, Kenneth Fuchsman, Anna Geifman, Betty Glad, Ted Goertzel, Gustavo Guerra, Jean Hantman, John Jacob Hartman, Donald Hughes, Don Kantrowitz, Daniel Klenbort, Joan Lachkar, Henry Lawton, Ruth Dale Meyer, Vivian Rosenberg, Howard Stein, Jacques Szaluta, and Nancy Unger. Our thanks to Nancy Dobosiewicz and Theresa Graziano for proofing/Publisher 2003 software application, and Tom Ossa for computer instruction/website development, and David Beisel for layout development. We wish to thank our numerous referees, who must remain anonymous. □

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