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Creative Lives—Part II: Psychobiographic Approaches

Repair Theory and Creativity

Andrew Brink—University of Toronto

What do the terms *reparation*, *restitution*, and *repair* mean in theories of creativity? They have been more or less precisely used for generations, each having arisen in successive psychoanalytic theories about creativity which, in turn, belonged to accounts of human development. Theories of creativity have moved from the single ego dynamics found in Freud and Melanie Klein to the more environmentalist and interactive accounts that followed. Accordingly, the idea of creativity as repair has been greatly modified, never more so than with the advent of attachment theory, an empirically based refinement of the object relations theories prevalent in inter-war Britain. Brief accounts of the contributions of such pioneers, following Freud, as Melanie Klein, Ronald Fairbairn, Adrian Stokes, Marion Milner, Donald Winnicott, and Donald Meltzer prepare for the shift to an interactive, developmental account of creativity which is made possible using attachment theory.

Freud himself had little explicit to say about artistic creativity as repair, but “The Relation of the Poet to Daydreaming” (1908) (in Benjamin Nelson, ed., *Sigmund Freud* On Creativity and the Unconscious, 1958) sets a course towards such a theory. Child’s play, day-dreaming, and wish-fulfillment need accounting for in the formation of “phantasies” which, typically, are made by unsatisfied “neurotic” persons. Adult phantasy, Freud says, harks back to memories of fulfilled early experiences, hoping to replicate them in the present. While he had not yet seen the stressful mother-son oedipal dynamics which were to bulk so large in his later psychobiographical studies of Renaissance and later artists and writers, he established the principle of connecting the artist’s life with his productions. The artist disguises wish-fulfilling phantasies with pleasurable form, helping to “release the tensions in our minds” (54). This rudimentary essay established the possibility of a psychology
of artistic creativity within the framework of psychoanalysis.

Melanie Klein (1882-1960), the pioneer child analyst who arrived in Britain in 1926, first proposed *restitution* as the key term in understanding creativity. In light of most subsequent infant-mother observation, Klein’s theory of development now looks misguided by her own subjectivity and difficult experiences of motherhood. Nonetheless, her ideas powerfully stimulated much of the best thinking in England about artistic creativity. Klein held that infants needed to make reparation to the mother’s phantasmic injured breast, having projected upon it primal envy and greed originating in the so-called “paranoid schizoid position” of development. To become responsively human and fully object relational in “the depressive position,” infants and children needed imaginative, reparative activity which could be elaborated in the adult creative arts. Klein’s case study “proof” of her theory consisted of mainly one reported incident in which a certain Ruth Kjar is said to have spontaneously painted a woman’s figure to replace a picture that had been taken from her wall. Her presentation of this story is quite powerful, but it was on hearsay evidence with no experimental follow-up to determine the likelihood of this vignette. Klein’s loyal follower Hanna Segal later provided more searching discussions of creativity, showing the artist’s wish to restore in the “depressive position” a “shattered world” with “a whole new world” (Segal, *Dream, Phantasy and Art*, 1991, 86). Yet even in Segal’s thoughtful work, Klein’s theory is not sufficiently altered to take into account variable mother-infant interactions.

Other analysts refined Klein’s ideas, looking more to environmental factors in the defective inter-personal development she had glossed over. The most important of such efforts were Ronald Fairbairn’s (1889-1968) two 1938 papers. Prompted by the presence in Edinburgh of the art critic Herbert Read, Fairbairn set out in “The Ultimate Basis of Aesthetic Experience” and “Prolegomena to a Psychology of Art” to discuss how the “work of art represents a tribute of restitution paid by the artist’s ego to his super-ego” (“Ultimate Basis,” *British Journal of Psychology*, 29(2), 1938, 169). But rather than following Klein, Fairbairn considers the meaning of “found objects,” using her idea of “restitution” in a broader sense than that of atoning for the infant’s assumed injury to
the envied breast. While accepting that artists have destructive impulses needing symbolization, Fairbairn does not assign them so specific an origin as had Klein. Obviously he was having doubts about her doctrine of infant development and settled, somewhat disappointingly, by saying that “A work of art is something that is made for fun” (“Prolegomena,” *British Journal of Psychology*, 28(3), 1938, 291). Yet, promisingly, he saw that art “provides the means of reducing psychical tension in the artist’s mind” (“Prolegomena,” 294). However, by the time Fairbairn had radically rethought Freud and Klein on the question of infant and child development, he wasn’t nearly so engaged with the meaning of art. Fairbairn’s bold reformulation of “An Object-Relations Theory of the Personality” (*International Journal of Psycho-analysis*, 44(2), 1963, 224), stating that “libido is fundamentally object-seeking,” opened possibilities for discussing artistic creativity that neither he, nor anyone else, ever explored. Furthermore, Fairbairn’s description of four main ego defenses—paranoid, phobic, hysterical, and obsessional—suggested what might be called “filtration systems” for the types of art persons create and which appeal, or not, to viewers. This analysis was never attempted.

With questions about the reliability of Klein’s theory of child development, the idea of “restitution,” or “reparation of the injured breast,” subsided, to be replaced with a more generalized notion of art as symbolic repair. This idea is at least implicit, and variably developed, in the writings of D.W. Winnicott, Marion Milner, Adrian Stokes, and Donald Meltzer, to mention the best known British analysts concerned with creativity during the interwar period. Bloomsbury, with its Hogarth Press run by Leonard and Virginia Woolf, kept psychoanalytic ideas in circulation, prompting the most gifted analysts to have their say about creativity. Only Adrian Stokes (1902-1972), long in analysis with Melanie Klein, attempted fidelity to her thought, while the others ranged freely, guided by self-exploration and clinical work. Even Stokes’ learned discussions of Renaissance art and architecture strained ideological bounds as he accounted for his aesthetic reactions amongst the Italian monuments and paintings that provided an “invitation,” indeed a craving, for ever richer visual experience. The gifted analyst Marion Milner (1900-1999) confronted her early
inhibitions about contacting inner distress in the influential book, *On Not Being Able to Paint* (1950), and in *The Hands of the Living God* (1969), she showed how in the case of “Susan,” spontaneously produced visual imagery moved the patient towards repair of the ego. Indeed, Milner adapted Klein’s use of therapeutic play with small toys into an enriched aesthetic endeavor that filled her life. She herself became an accomplished painter, as could be seen on the walls of her Hampstead house.

Spontaneous production of imagery revealing unconscious conflicts was brilliantly theorized by the London pediatrician turned child analyst Donald Winnicott (1896-1984). *Playing and Reality* (1971) presents the findings of decades of analytic experience, especially with child patients. It reacts against doctrinaire Klein; while acknowledging that babies do bite and injure the maternal breast, it is important to remember that such “attacks” are survived with a certain “joy.” Winnicott calls Klein’s mystique of “the breast” jargon (92) as he wrestles with the question of innate versus engendered aggression. As far as Klein’s idea of “reparation and restitution” was concerned, Winnicott thought “they do not reach to the subject of creativity itself” (70). In their place, Winnicott offered an environmental theory of the dependent baby and its mother, who together generate by interactive play a creative space in which the objects of art, and culture itself, have their origin. This insight opened a whole new vista on creative living, and it anticipated the more systematic findings of attachment research. Winnicott’s discussions are brilliantly glancing and allusive, with nothing binding about them. They were meant to pique the imagination as does the best art. While Winnicott originated the evocative “squiggle game” with young patients, he is not known to have attempted serious art as had Milner. Nor was he an accomplished art historian like Stokes. Winnicott was an inspired maverick whose analytic experience led to intuiting the meaning of art. Because he was a clinical realist, Winnicott left us with the following sobering thought about creativity as repair: “If the artist...is searching for the self, then it can be said that in all probability there is already some failure for that artist in the field of general creative living. The finished creation never heals the underlying lack of sense of self” (54-5). This insight has never been seriously followed up
Winnicott’s criticism of Melanie Klein’s reparation theory of creativity was reinforced by the work of Donald Meltzer (1922-2004), who began as a convinced follower of Klein and a member of the Imago Group founded by the Kleinian aesthete, Adrian Stokes. Marion Milner was also once a member as were other London notables. Stokes’ Painting and the Inner World (1963) contains a revealing dialogue on creativity between himself and Meltzer. Emphasis falls on the adult creative process, less on its supposed origin in a “paranoid schizoid position” which, elsewhere, Meltzer rejected. Contrary to Klein, Meltzer believed that infants possess a primal “apprehension of beauty,” which the creative act, and viewers’ aesthetic responses can recover. Experiencing anxiety, an artist (such as the poet Keats, closely studied by Meltzer) “finds his objects to be in a certain state of integration or fragmentation; he consequently experiences a relative state of integration or fragmentation within the infantile components of his ego in relation to his objects” (24-5). The harsh terms of Klein’s reparation to the injured breast are softened in favor of a natural integrative function, whereas Stokes seems readier in this interview to uphold Klein’s views. Meltzer, the seasoned analyst who had a command of theory, including the challenging texts of Wilfred Bion, and who, like Winnicott, had a fund of experience with infant observation and child therapy, was better prepared for new ground.

This new ground was staked out by the attachment theorists, beginning with John Bowlby’s Attachment and Loss (1969), but few psychoanalysts saw its implications for a renewed theory of creativity. Winnicott had little time for the scientist Bowlby’s ethologically based arguments, while the Kleinians altogether resisted intrusions from the biological sciences that might question Mrs. Klein’s account of human development as it affirmed the Freudian “death wish.” Bowlby himself, along with his followers, was not oriented to the arts, being caught up in the excitement of rapidly accumulating new evidence for attachment as instinctive survival strategy between infant and mother. Observing and describing its variants, with their implications for later adaptive and maladaptive child development, led to brilliant descriptive and theoretical work by Mary Ainsworth, Mary Main, and many others, but aesthetic
considerations were scarcely mentioned. Yet a moment’s thought would have linked Winnicott’s idea of the “transitional object,” occupying its intermediate space between infant and maternal breast, with instinctive attachment as basic to survival and, thence, to imaginative activity. Winnicott’s creative “play” with primary and substitute objects would have appeared vital to maintaining healthy attachment and, thus, to furthering life by activating imaginative responses to challenges. Separations and reunions of infants and their mothers are facilitated by the availability of substitute objects which replace the breast. The more readily and flexibly available they are, the better adaptation is likely to be.

The arts come readily to mind as optimal or sub-optimal attachment in the artist’s early life and direct later quests for objects to manipulate or, more quietly, contemplate, depending on levels of anxiety and acquired defenses which regulate how they are perceived. Facial expression and making and breaking eye contact are crucial to setting up life-long adaptive responses to the visual world. Therein lies the essence of aesthetic remaking of imperfect early attachment. Creative imagination becomes a natural extension in the healing of deficiencies in seeing and being seen by early caregivers. The experimental work of Edward Z. Tronick, who devised the “still-face paradigm” (Social Interchange in Infancy: Affect, Cognition, and Communication, 1982), and Allan N. Schore, who expanded attachment theory to include acquired skills in mood regulation (Affect Regulation & the Repair of the Self, 2003), presents a new paradigm for creativity as repair. Self-regulation of affect is basic to how life is lived, with defensive exclusion of adverse attachment experience being detrimental to managing excesses of pleasant or unpleasant mood, whether manic or depressive.

Not only does creativity assist in recovering for reprocessing lost but much needed unconscious affect, it provides a sort of “theater of repair” wherein found and created objects can be manipulated and realigned into the ideal aesthetic configurations unavailable in real life. Having configurations of ideally composed soothing aesthetic wholes, replacing conflicted and confusing products of mood states, is an achievement promoted by every creative art. According to Tronick and Schore, the point of departure for
acquiring such skills is the success, or lack of success, with “interactive repair,” that is the self-regulating visual skill of breaking and renewing affectionate communication between infant and mother learned at the start of life. Interactive repair begins mainly pre-verbally by looking, seeing and gesturing, with emotive words following on, so it is little wonder that the visual, literary, and musical arts bypass easy description, communicating by imagery directly with the unconscious. Critics stepping in with elaborate verbal paraphrases may actually impede the “reparative” experience of looking and seeing a painting or reading a poem which speaks to the unconscious. What ideally happens, in other words, is an intervention of composed “good attachment objects” in the maker’s anxious psyche which needs assistance, not having acquired sufficient means of self-regulation and self repair. Creativity is thus a natural adjunct to faulty or deficient human interaction, “reparative” in a much broader sense than Melanie Klein understood it and far more basically psycho-biological than she grasped. The creative and aesthetic impulses are built right into our existence as human beings, contributing to the kind of “creative living” of which Winnicott spoke. Creativity as integral with the adaptive psyche is yet to be fully understood, attachment theory being still in flux. It is a major challenge for the humanities, with untold rewards in re-describing the creative arts as not just culturally decorative but as inseparable from healthy living on intra-psychic and inter-personal levels. At first glance, the science of attachment theory may appear to have left the arena where the arts are valued and understood, but upon looking again it renews the prospect always promised by psychoanalysis.

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Freud and Leonardo: Clash of the Titans

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All agree that Leonardo was a creative genius, amply demonstrated by his body of work, but Freud as a creative genius is more contentious. He created a new vision of our inner life matched by a challenging body of theory and generated a movement in his name that far exceeded it. Freud’s major works have only gradually, and never totally, been disengaged from his life, and, despite claims to scientific objectivity buttressed by generations of analysts, the sense of his presence persists. In somewhat similar fashion, a computer analysis of the Mona Lisa has discovered Leonardo’s underlying features (Lillian Schwartz, “Leonardo’s ‘Mona Lisa,’” Art and Antiques, Jan. 1987, 50-4). So far, it is fair to say that for all their different modes of operation, both Leonardo and Freud to a degree were creating themselves through their cultural labors. Although centuries separate their lives, their creative energies intersect in revealing ways. After all, Leonardo’s notebooks on engineering, flight, and weaponry demonstrate an investment in science strong enough to compete with his artistic output. Freud’s masterful prose style won the Goethe Prize for Literature in 1930.

The more intriguing intersection stems from Freud’s fascination with creative geniuses and his responses that began appear-
ing in his 1908 paper, “Creative Writers and Daydreaming” (*Standard Edition*, 9, 141-56). Like his dream analysis (1900) which served as the foundation of his new theory, the daydream is bound by the wish fulfillment of the pleasure-principle and is narcissistic in the everyday sense of being self-centered. But the two studies pull in opposite directions: dreaming adds layers to our subjective ingenuity by striving to make the unconscious conscious, whereas day-dreaming severely circumscribes the creative scope and is reduced to “fore-pleasure.” With lip service to the artist’s technique as his/her innermost secret, his foregrounding of psychic process over aesthetic product has advantages; but it indiscriminately loops in pulp fiction, historical romance, soap opera, kitsch, and the whole James Bond corpus along with *Crime and Punishment* and other world masterpieces. Consider for a moment that *Madame Bovary* conducts a critique of romantic daydreaming, not an enactment, and yet the fact that Flaubert identified with his heroine and even became ill when she took poison points to the elusive depths and unpredictable reach of the creative enterprise.

In the visual arts, Freud’s day-dream-take would apply to the schmaltzy thatched-cottage, babbling-brook pastorals of Thomas Kincaid as well as to Munch’s *The Scream* and Picasso’s *Gernica*—not a promising prospect. Three years later, Freud instanced art as one means for reconciling the pleasure and the reality principles and more generously allowed that the artist, after turning in frustration from reality, remolds his/her fantasy into a new kind of reality (*Standard Edition*, 12). Granting that Freud had his agenda, he knew better, and he outgrew these rudimentary formulas without revising them. What he did, however, was far more interesting and revealing.

Freud’s own creative career was both multi-faceted and life-long. His self-analysis, for example, generated a technique that opened up an entirely new approach to treating emotional conflicts. His thinking evolved into three successive psychic models: 1) the earliest trauma model of repressed memories gave way to a subsistent psychic reality by 1900, to be widely applied and refined into 2) the topographic model of 1915, which expanded and grew more complex in 3) the structural hypothesis of 1923, which opened the way to ego-psychology.
It was in the middle period (1900-1915) that Freud embarked on an ambitious project to assimilate all mental processes as well as cultural forms to psychoanalytic theory. These included infantile sexuality, jokes, the omnipotence of thought (for example, magical thinking among preliterate peoples), slips of the tongue, therapeutic techniques, and creative processes as an elaboration of day-dreaming. Two themes from this period converge on the Leonardo study: infantile sexuality and creativity. The 1915 model has been disparagingly called by later analysts “the chassis model” of drives and defenses, being on the whole mechanistic—accelerating, swerving, braking. Thereafter, Freud grappled with narcissism, which opened up pre-oedipal phases; with war-neuroses, which took him beyond the pleasure/pain principle to repetition-compulsions and the death instinct; with anxiety, which meant bulking up ego-functions; with mourning and melancholia, which explored how lost love-objects are internalized and built into psychic structure; and, finally, with how guilt and repression are the building blocks of civilization.

The restructured psyche of 1923 expanded to a more complex system of internal operations and generally opened onto a much richer, more inclusive subjectivity factoring in guilt. For example, Freud revisited the comic (“Jokes,” 1905) in the more seasoned essay “Humor” (1928), but he did not apply his new understandings to creative processes as such. Seen from the vantage point of his more complex conceptions, the old mechanistic model of art as bound up with the fore-pleasure afforded by day-dreaming falls way short.

We do, however, have another source to help explain this hiatus. We can look at what transpired in Freud’s personal life when he encountered others’ creativity. With his gifted Viennese contemporary, Arthur Schnitzler, he corresponded but avoided “from a kind of awe of meeting my ‘double’” (Ernest Jones, The Life and Work of Sigmund Freud, 1957, 3, 443). It seems the great storyteller might put the kibosh on the great story-listener’s originality. The world’s vaunted originals do not take kindly to rivals (and for similar reasons Freud detoured around Nietzsche). His envy over Shakespeare’s genius was so intense that his only recourse was to deny the Bard’s authorship in total and to line up
with the loony anti-Stratfordian fringe (Harry Trosman, “Freud and the Controversy over Shakespeare Authorship,” *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, 1965, 13(3), 475-98). But whoever Freud fancied wrote the Shakespearean tragedies, he leaned more heavily on the Bard for the death instinct, according to K.R. Eissler, than on biological sciences (*Discourse on Hamlet and Hamlet*, 1971, 21; these issues are taken up in my *Creativity and Culture*, 1990, 240-2). Factoring in Sophocles’ tragedy to universalize the Oedipus complex, one concludes that Freud was up to his eyeballs in creative works, and his strategy of denigrating them to day-dreaming best factors into his emotional struggles.

He was in fact so obsessed with Michelangelo’s *Moses* that after he overcame his resistance to visiting Rome, he made repeated trips to the figure and drew on its supposed display of suppressed rage for strength and insight into his own struggle with heretics in his movement (Ruth Meyer, *Clio’s Circle*, 2007, 76-80). Art works continued to spur Freud’s self-analysis, and in his last years, *Moses and Monotheism* (1939) became the consummate act of his self-creation.

Most telling for our present subject is his problematic engaging of Leonardo da Vinci. The analysis of Leonardo was marred, owing not only to his mistaking a key word (*kite* for *vulture*, which he later acknowledged), but also to his having misconstrued Leonardo’s early childhood. Here is the key passage: “Among the first recollections of my infancy,” Leonardo wrote in his notebook, “it seemed to me that, as I was in my cradle, a kite came to me and opened my mouth with its tail, and struck me several times with its tail inside my lips” (quoted in Klaus Herding, “Freud’s Leonardo: A Discussion of Recent Psychoanalytic Theories,” *American Imago*, 2001, 57(4), 344). Freud took the memory as a fantasy but mistook *kite* for *vulture* and opened onto a line of associations with the Egyptian Vulture Mother Goddess Mut. The interpretation posited a homosexual fantasy of fellatio and an “attachment evoked or encouraged by too much tenderness” on the mother’s part, who, in the absence of the boy’s father, stimulated feminine identifications (Freud, “Leonardo Da Vinci and a Memory of His Childhood,” 1910, *Standard Edition*, 11:99).

Freud’s reconstruction of Leonardo’s early years is also
Clio’s Psyche

problematic if necessarily sketchy. A few facts are incontestable. Leonardo was conceived by the Florentine notary Ser Piero da Vinci and born out of wedlock to a peasant girl, Caterina. When Piero married Donna Albiera five years later, it is assumed he brought the boy into the household of his otherwise childless marriage. Caterina had meanwhile been married off to a local, dubbed “Trouble-maker.” Freud believed that Leonardo was raised during this five-year period by Caterina (Freud, “Memory,” 81). But this scenario is undermined on several counts. Caterina could well have been married off in the boy’s first months, and her husband seems an unlikely paternal presence. Moreover, a woman who had given birth to an illegitimate child was deemed unfit to nurse her baby due to beliefs that her fall from grace contaminated her milk such that her sin would be transmitted to the nursling (Christiane Klapische-Zuber, “Blood Parents and Milk Parents: Wet Nursing in Florence, 1300-1530,” in Women, Family, and Ritual in Renaissance Italy, 1985, 132-64).

A more likely scenario is that Leonardo was brought up at least until five by his doting paternal grandparents (Serge Bramly, Leonardo, 1991, 37-42; Bradley I. Collins, Leonardo, Psychoanalysis, and Art History, 1997, 20-3). It is probable that he was wet-nursed by one or more servants or farm girls in some rural cottage, according to prevailing custom of the day among the gentry.

Hence the ongoing presence of a stimulating natural mother who delayed the separation-individuation process and inadvertently aroused passive homosexual wishes is implausible. In reality, it was Sigmund Freud who had a stimulating natural mother: “mein goldener Sigi, Sigi, mein Gold” (quoted by Deborah P. Margolis, Freud and His Mother, 1996, 3). Lacking firm data, Freud filled the gap in psychobiography with ingenious speculations and abundant theory that he glued together with his own infantile emotions and tied to a highly-possessive mother whom he idealized throughout his life despite more conflicted feelings, according to Margolis. Freud may have been initially drawn to his subject by the age disparity in both sets of parents. Ser Piero would have been several years older than Caterina; Freud’s mother was 21 and his father 41 at his birth. In Freud’s imagination, rather than being reared by an obscure country girl, Leonardo is re-parented by a young Victorian
lady in Freiberg, much like Sigmund’s mother. Thus, Freud’s merger with Leonardo may have reduced feelings of envy sufficiently to incorporate a creative rival into the work of psychoanalysis (turning him, in Heinz Kohut’s term, into a “self-object” to be deployed for mastery of ambivalent feelings, *Restoration of the Self*, 1977). Yet for all this versatility, one wonders if stretching the original memory-fantasy to over-determine Leonardo’s notions of flight didn’t also entail a flight of ideas on Freud’s part. Thus the analyst would soar on the artist’s wings. Plausibly, Freud’s self-creativity, along with underlying conflicts over priority and originality, may have contributed to his misconstructions of Leonardo’s childhood—perhaps a misguided attempt at self-repair one can only speculate about.

We may at least agree that as Leonardo’s own features underlay his *Mona Lisa*, so Freud’s subjective experiences were sandwiched into his portrait of Leonardo. Hats off to creativity, which fortunately survives our own psychologizing.

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**A Paradox of Creativity: Freud’s Self-Understanding in the Oedipus Complex**

Ken Fuchsman—University of Connecticut

Creativity, while identified with the arts, is also recognized as permeating many fields, including psychoanalysis. The *Oxford English Dictionary (OED)* defines being creative as “involving imagination or original ideas as well as...intellect” (*OED*, 2010). Tolstoy said, “The chief purpose of art” is “to express the truth about man’s soul”; to show the “secrets” of the “soul... which are common to all” (*Tolstoy’s Diaries, Volume II*, 1985, 426-7). The “job of...art,” to philosophers Hubert Dreyfus and Sean Kelly, “is to
disclose a world, give meaning and reveal truth” (All Things Shin-
ing, 2011, 102). These standards mean that creative works should be evaluated, in part, by the extent to which they get to the heart and soul of being human.

Sigmund Freud was a fertile creator of a new field. His ex-
traordinary discoveries grew out of the interaction of his personal preoccupations, his diverse intellectual allegiances, and an imagina-
tive, discerning intelligence. Examining Freud’s conception of the Oedipus complex in the light of Tolstoy’s standards about revealing the soul’s truth can be illuminating for psychoanalysis and creativ-
ity. Though the inspiration for this paper is from Tolstoy, it is actu-
ally about where Freud’s discovery was creative and where it was incomplete.

Freud uncovered this phenomenon after his 1897 self-
analysis. He had earlier declared that hysteria was caused by an actual sexual “seduction” in early childhood, often by the father. On September 21, 1897, he wrote that he no longer believed this theory, yet afterwards continued to search for who seduced him and caused his “little hysteria.” He exonerated his father and main-
tained that the actual seducer was an older nanny. After analyzing a childhood memory involving the disappearance of this woman, his adult half-brother Philipp, and the temporary absence of his mother, Amalie, he announced on October 15, 1897: “I have found, in my own case too, [the phenomenon of] being in love with my mother and jealous of my father, and now I consider it a universal event in early childhood” (Complete Letters of Sigmund Freud to Wilhelm Fliess, 1985, 261, 272).

Patricia Kitcher writes: “Nothing was more central or more original in psychoanalysis than the postulation of the Oedipus com-
plex” (Freud’s Dream, 1992, 107). This concept highlights inti-
mate and dark primal family attachments, their lifelong ramifica-
tions, how discontent within civilization mirrors oedipal struggles, and how identity is forged out of desire, hostility, and identification with parents. It has generated much discussion in academia and the larger culture. In the WorldCat library catalog, there are 2,884 list-
ings for the Oedipus complex, compared to 2,214 for superego and 1,011 for the death instinct, but that is dwarfed by the 9,934 for narcissism (www.lib.uconn.edu).
The Oedipus complex meets standards of creativity, originality, and influence, but does it reveal the soul’s truth? Late in life, Freud became skeptical of self-analysis. He saw that “the danger of incompleteness is particularly great,” for “a part explanation” can be seen as “satisfactory,” while “resistance” keeps “back something that is more important” (“The Subtleties of A Faulty Action,” 1935, SE XXII, 234). This contrasts with a formal analysis where “conflicts” are “successfully resolved” and “resistances overcome” when the analysis can “tally with what is real” in the client. This process is not complete “until all the obscurities of the case are cleared up, the gaps in the patient’s memories filled in, the precipitating causes of the repressions discovered” (Introductory Lectures, 1916, SE XVI, 452-3). Freud’s account resembles Tolstoy’s idea of the purpose of art.

Freud is right that his extraordinarily creative self-analysis and the accompanying oedipal theory are incomplete conceptually and psychologically. Many years after first announcing the Oedipus complex, Freud fills in a gap in his earlier memory. In 1924, he revisited the account about his nanny, mother, and half-brother, and writes he suspected Philipp of being responsible for impregnating his mother. It was then his brother rather than his father who stood between Sigmund and Amalie. Freud, speaking about himself, confirms this: “His big brother...had taken his father’s place as the child’s rival” (Psychopathology of Everyday Life, 1901, SE VI, 51). This means the father can be overthrown as chief competitor by another person suspected of being intimate with the mother; the Oedipus complex then is not just a triangle, four people can be involved. As male oedipal conflicts are not restricted to parents and son, family structure and dynamics influence the form the child’s jealousy takes.

Freud has the son’s rage aimed at the father or father substitute but not at the mother. Later, Freud writes that the birth of a younger sibling gives “proof” of the mother’s “infidelity” and leaves the older child feeling “scorned” and with “a permanent injury to self-regard in the form of a narcissistic scar” (Group Psychology, 1920, SE XVIII, 20&21). If the mother is unfaithful, it is peculiar that Freud does not have the child’s murderous impulses cast in her direction. Peter Gay writes that Freud “dealt” with “his
complicated feelings towards his mother...by refusing to deal with them” (*Freud: A Life For Our Time*, 1988, 506). This left his description of the disappointment and anger in the positive Oedipus complex one-sided.

In the generation of oedipality, Freud both recognizes the part mother and father play and affirms its origins in the child’s mind. The “parents,” he writes, help awaken “a child’s Oedipus complex by themselves obeying the pull of sexual attraction” towards the opposite sex child. “But the spontaneous nature of the Oedipus complex in children cannot be seriously shaken even by this factor” (*Introductory Lectures*, 1916, *SE XVI*, 333). The interaction between the adults and child is kept at bay. The dynamics of an individual’s oedipal conflicts would likely differ when a parent acts seductively towards a child, or if a parent allies with a child over a spouse, or if a father sexually abuses his child. Shying away from his former belief that hysteria stems from fathers “seducing” their progeny, Freud underplays the impact of actual experiences of children and parents with each other.

If a universal childhood event is love of the mother and jealousy of the father, how does this apply to females? Freud’s earliest versions of oedipality are male-oriented; even his later accounts of female sexual development go through remarkable twists and turns, yet remain murky and unfair to women.

In the Oedipus complex, Freud has generalized to all of humanity what is primarily his own experience and that of one client. Robert Holt believes Freud was being “audacious to the point of foolhardiness to jump from self-observation to a general law” (*Freud Reappraised*, 1989, 53). In this regard, by universalizing his own experience, a guilt-ridden Freud initially does not give much place to human variation. Later, in his notion of the positive and negative Oedipus complex, where one alternates between loving the mother and hating the father, and hating the mother and loving the father, Freud does give room for the variety of reactions.

Still, he does not explain how particular people internalize these conflicts. What the mix of sensibility and temperament, endowment and experience, and cognition and culture is that produces a unique person with certain capacities and limitations is lacking. It
cannot be discerned from Freud’s work why one individual will seek to analyze his “little hysteria” and another, with comparable experience and ability, will thoughtlessly act out oedipal conflicts; nor can we comprehend from psychoanalysis why one person who is clinically depressed cannot get out of bed and another becomes Abraham Lincoln. Neither the founder nor his descendants have developed an adequate theory of what a full person is. Freud’s theories cannot explain how his own creative discoveries emerged. They can give the biographical prerequisites and the crisis that led to his self-analysis, but not why he made the specific breakthroughs he did. To comprehend how human creativity emerges in certain individuals more than others, a psychoanalytic theory of the individual’s whole personality is needed. As a start towards reaching this goal, psychoanalysis needs to understand how creative excellence within and beyond disorders and complexes is reached. Erikson and Greenacre come closer to this goal than other psychoanalysts.

So these are some ways that Freud’s highly original self-analysis and his oedipal theory are incomplete and leave substantial challenges for later analysts. As with many creative endeavors, his discoveries both reveal and conceal. Freud is not alone in this regard; a frequent paradox of creativity is that the imaginative individual uncovers certain secrets of the soul while covering up others. An artist’s vision is developed in dialectic, often in opposition to others’ visions. Partiality and partisanship permeate much of what we do. Yet, the longing for a revelation of all the secrets of the soul remains, though the danger of incompleteness is present even within the most profound human discoveries and creations.

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Psychobiographic Profiles: The Inner World of Three Giants of Literature

Alexander J. Nemeth—Independent Scholar

The true personalities of creative figures of world literature too often have gone unexplored. But in a post-Darwinian world of heightened interest in human nature and human behavior, there is increasing curiosity about the person behind the captivating literary product. It is the psychobiographer’s explicit task to uncover and explicate what drives these individuals in their extraordinary endeavors.

In the case of the exceptionally gifted, early-20th-century writer, Franz Kafka, we find a sterling example of how conflict with paternal authority can leave its indelible stamp on the author’s work. Kafka’s mature literary form, with its clear, concise, and pleasing style, is in striking contradiction to the anxiety-ridden, mystical, conflict-laden plots of his narratives. Imaginatively woven into a number of his stories, the protagonist is variably struggling to gain understanding of an inscrutable, faceless, unreachable authority (The Castle) or to clear his name in an impersonal court of justice that investigates one charged with an undefined and never proved crime (The Judgment). In a quite daring literary format, the same drama—that is, the son’s desperate effort to gain father’s loving attention—is played out in a symbolic representation of the son’s emotional pain, humiliation, isolation, and sense of hopelessness (The Metamorphosis). He lived for writing, Kafka used to say, but was far from being emotionally free for doing so. This became clear from his ruminative, 50-page analysis of the father-son relationship (Letter to His Father).

The other two authors here considered were noted by the literary historian, Gustave Lanson, as the two great parvenus of French literature: Michel Eyquem de Montaigne (1533-92) and Voltaire (1694-1778). The former took great pride in his social rank, while the latter, of unremarkable social background, tried all his life to be fully accepted in the circles of nobility. Important for us here is the markedly diverse intra-family dynamics, specifically, the father-son relationship and its effect on the author’s emotional
development. Young Montaigne’s upbringing was characterized by the uncommonly circumspect planning by his father for creating a favorable atmosphere for both intellectual and emotional growth. In order to experience how simple folks lived, the son was for the first three years of his life placed in a cottage with a peasant family. For the next three years, tutored by a known scholar of the classics, he was surrounded by people, including his mother and all servants, who were to speak to him in Latin only. Then, he was enrolled in a prestigious boarding school, with emphasis on the classics. During vacations, it was his father’s policy to put no pressure on the youngster so that he may fully enjoy his freedom, to play with friends, take a nap, and listen to music. After completing his studies in law and serving for a few years as a counselor to the parlement in Bordeaux, he was appointed courtier at the court of Charles IX.

After father’s death, Montaigne freed himself from the demands of public life, retired to his “citadel” in the tower of Chateau de Montaigne in the Dordogne and, surrounded by his library of about 1,500 volumes, devoted the rest of his life to reflections on the human condition. In what became his famous Essais (Essays), he leisurely free-associated in whatever struck him as noteworthy about how people went about their lives, considering everything with an eye for the minutiae. Protecting his precious independence and individuality, Montaigne practiced the philosophy of an amiable skeptic, believing that the only thing certain in the world is that nothing is certain. The human condition, he maintained, is neither good nor evil; it is the locus of good and evil, depending on what you make of it. His secularism enabled him to question the rigid ethics of orthodox Christianity and view bodily pleasures as natural as the pleasures of the soul. High up in the tower of the Chateau, he remained unbiased politically as well as theocratically, while a bloody sectarian conflict was raging around him in Europe.

Two centuries later, another free-spirited movement, the French Enlightenment, appeared on the scene. This was Voltaire’s era. A compilation of his voluminous writings is still an ongoing project, conducted by scholars of the prestigious Voltaire Foundation at Oxford. But the massive literary output is not what made his name an enduring feature in the archives of early-modern European
history. The crucial social and political changes that took place during that period could hardly be fathomed without the role played—on the scene and, most effectively, behind the scene—by the poet-*philosophe* through a flood of inflammatory anti-regime pamphlets, leaflets, and occasional pieces, distributed primarily via clandestine channels.

The poet’s struggle with oppressive authority had deep roots. Francois-Marie Arouet, alias Voltaire, growing up under senior Arouet’s determined maneuverings to block his son’s plans for a career in literature, became afflicted with a troubling father-complex that plagued him for the rest of his life. The nature and course of associated feelings became, then, a major stumbling block for biographers. As processing such feelings was not within the poet’s limited capacity for dealing with negative emotions, neither as a child nor later, they had to be sealed off and kept out of conscious awareness. Consequently, because none of his writings contained any mention of the discord with his father or of the chronic residual resentment, biographers had remained as unaware of these feelings as was Voltaire himself. So, they had no way of connecting the poet’s typically friction-prone relationship with authority, on the one hand, and the unprocessed, conflict-laden emotions seething in the cauldron of his unconsciousness on the other. As if the shrewd old fox had thrown a monkey wrench into his biographers’ research, the real Voltaire remained unknown for another two-and-a-half centuries.

Only post-Freudian clinical understanding of unconscious processes would offer insight into the complex not visible to the naked eye. Clinically speaking, a pathologically entangled father-son relationship, such as we have here in two of our cases, calls for a scholarly study by the proper methods of investigation. It was after my retirement from active clinical practice that I decided to undertake a thorough, in-depth clinical-psychological assessment of the poet-*philosophe*’s hitherto unexplored inner world (published as *Voltaire’s Tormented Soul: A Psychobiographic Inquiry*, 2008). The dominant, pernicious conflict between father and son in the families of the two creative figures, Kafka and Voltaire, finds dramatic emphasis when set against the story-book background of the uncommonly propitious paternal design for child-rearing, such as
can be seen in the young life of our third creative literary giant, the famed 16th-century essayist Michel de Montaigne. In Voltaire’s case, what had complicated matters was a psychological make-up that kept the unresolved conflict repressed, that is, out of conscious awareness and, thus, unavailable for being processed and eventually resolved. Indirect discharge of negative feelings toward sundry authority figures as substitute targets had complicated his social and political affairs.

In the life of Kafka, we have a variation on the same theme: a father-complex that is in his case not sealed off in the deep caverns of the unconscious as we have seen in Voltaire. Instead, resentful feelings against a callous and dictatorial father are channeled, in part, into masterful short stories and plays as referenced above. Then, in the open letter to father, written in a polite and obsessively ruminative style, he is eager to communicate his true feelings but never really succeeds. A number of Kafka’s writings have been received as innovative pieces of literature, paving the way for the movement of existentialism. Quite early in his career, when barely an adult, he was experimenting with a highly unusual, boldly symbolic literary format (The Metamorphosis).

The works of both of these remarkable literary personages, Voltaire and Kafka, are virtually saturated with emotions originating in the unresolved conflict that had plagued and drained both throughout their lives. One may wonder: was exceptional literary fecundity of assistance in their attempt to lighten their burden, or was the burden itself actually a critical impetus for their creative literary engagement? As an answer to these questions the typical reaction of our third author, Michel de Montaigne, a classical skeptic of his era, comes to mind: “Que sais-je?” (“What do I know?”)

In conclusion, the vast range of variation in personal motivation and source of energy for creative literary productivity would deserve more attention than what it has been receiving. This is especially true in an age when the educated reader’s mind is more open to consider that there is a layer to the self not clearly in our conscious awareness, and that may at times, at least fleetingly, assume control of our thoughts, decisions, and actions. Much of great literature has been, in an indirect fashion, dealing with this phenomenon. More vigorous collaboration between relevant academic
disciplines would facilitate insight into this subtle but vital aspect of human behavior.

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The Paradoxical Notion of Sexuality in Antonia White’s Frost in May

Marcia Anne Newton—University of Sheffield

At the cross-section of Freudian and religio-cultural ideas in the early decades of the 20th century, I will briefly examine the paradoxical notion of sexual expression in relation to the construction of the self-as-artist in British writer Antonia White’s (1899-1980) autobiographical novel, Frost in May (1933). As a Catholic modernist artist, White sought to create a rupture in the religio-cultural framework by reasserting the body in literature using sexually provocative language, thus questioning religious axioms and the privileged status of the intellect in a culture in which sexuality was under scrutiny.

Pertinent to my examination is the problematic representation of sexual trauma. What I perceive to be an unconscious representation of oedipal relations between White and her father, Cecil Botting, may mask a real experience of sexual trauma, which is complicated by White’s deliberate denouncement of the need to tame her sexuality. This complication exposes a paradox: White’s bold discourse is already inscribed within a religio-cultural framework that functions within the parameters of both Catholic and psychoanalytic patriarchal discourses through the mechanisms of confession. These mechanisms serve to simultaneously liberate and silence victims of sexual abuse in their writing.

In Frost in May, White depicts a young, romantic convert
called Nanda Grey, who resides and is educated at Lippington Convent between the ages nine and 14. While at Lippington, Nanda tries to behave in a way a good Catholic should, but she feels subjected to a series of seemingly hypocritical rules and futile punishments from both the nuns at the convent and her father, Mr. Grey. The combination of religious and paternal restraints imposed upon Nanda leads her to rebel by sexually revisualizing herself in the writing of a novel.

Nanda’s creation of the novel is of special interest. She describes a very provocative scene: besides a giddy and frivolous time spent at balls flirting with admirers, Nanda’s heroine has an ambivalent attraction to the hero; she is both repulsed by and attracted to an ugly character with “penetrating eyes,” who practices black magic, writes poetry, takes drugs, and wears elaborate silk dressing gowns (Frost, 202). The hero is destined to end up in a Trappist monastery, but the novel is discovered prior to Nanda’s writing in this momentous event, and Nanda is expelled. The subject matter in the novel prompts Mr. Grey’s disgust to the extent that he no longer wishes Nanda to call him “Daddy” (Frost, 215). In this one agonizing moment, Nanda is rejected by the person she both fears and idealizes more so than anyone else. The nuns add salt to the wound by informing Nanda that they have noticed “a hard little core of self-will and self-love ... that needs to be broken completely and reset before it can be at one with God’s will” (Frost, 219). One might argue that a heroine receiving “a kiss of burning passion on her scarlet mouth” (Frost, 202) in the arms of an admirer during a waltz is hardly wicked enough to warrant such responses from her father and the nuns, but this episode marks a turning point in Nanda’s life: her relationship with her father, with God, and also with her own sense of identity, was never to be the same again.

Nanda’s creation of the novel mirrors White’s own experiences at the Convent of the Sacred Heart, where White’s own partially-completed novel is discovered by the nuns and, unforgivably so, by her father as an act of spiritual treachery against the Catholic Church, which results in her dismissal from the convent and crippling bouts of writer’s block. Incidentally, although White does not reveal this in her novel, she later learns that the nuns were willing to take her back, but her father kept this hidden.
While the discovery of her novel is a traumatic event for White, I propose that it is no accident that it remains unfinished in *Frost in May* because it reflects upon White’s own assertion of the right to express herself sexually and autonomously in her writing in a culture in which sexual expression is suppressed. However, writing nearly 20 years after her time at the Convent of the Sacred Heart, White is then forced back into her feminine role as the scarlet woman. In writing *Frost in May*, White has, perhaps unconsciously, perpetuated the stereotypical vision of Eve’s daughters by those in the Catholic Church as the weaker sex: giddy, frivolous, and men’s seducers. This view is somewhat perpetuated in traditional psychoanalytic theory, although with subtlety.

From a Freudian perspective, the scene involving Nanda’s flirtations with her admirers in *Frost in May* might correspond to an unconscious representation of oedipal relations between White and her own father: White sexually pines after her father—a pining that is displaced onto God by a devout woman—in an unconscious effort to symbolically recover the lost penis that has been taken away by her mother (the nuns). This oedipal fantasy scene, moreover, is pushed through normalizing processes via punishment from the super-ego; after all, White is reprimanded for her treacherous act of writing such material. Interestingly, during White’s years spent in Freudian analysis, she acknowledges her own oedipal desires that may have become manifest in her novel and yet are unfulfilled. She states, “I couldn’t have had intercourse with [my father] … because presumably apart from morals … he didn’t want it” (*White, Diaries 1926-1957*, 1991, 140).

Furthermore, White is attracted to men who secure her oedipal attachment to her father:

[Carroll, White’s psychoanalyst] says the same characteristics appear in every man to whom I am attracted—the strong homosexual element, the fear of castration manifesting itself either in impotence or in over violent sexuality … sexual intercourse in which one or the other is frightened, frigid, or disappointed; a period during which I consciously or compulsively knot all the strings and try to provoke disaster; disaster which brings acute humiliation,
sadness, sense of excitement, almost triumph.  

(Diaries, 114)

At this juncture, I would like to raise an important question: how do we navigate our way through reading an autobiographical novel like *Frost in May* that seems to paradoxically testify to and yet testify against the suppression of female sexuality? On one hand, White aspires to a literary modernist attempt at female sexual liberation as a war waged on suppressed sexuality in a dominant Catholic culture. On the other hand, we may simultaneously be witness to a discourse derived from a real physical and emotional trauma that could easily be passed off as a Freudian oedipal confession. This trauma may also be the catalyst that leads to White’s debilitating episodes of writer’s block.

Consider the possibility that in *Frost in May*, White is unveiling Nanda’s hero as a sexual criminal who not only follows Christian ideals in the Catholic Church with absolute conviction but who is also able to utilize Freud’s Oedipus complex theory to cover her tracks and, thus, get away from his crime. Sexual abuse in White’s childhood has been discussed in literature on her life and work. For example, White’s biographer, Jane Dunn, suggests that White’s relationship with her father was “unhealthily close,” but she is also adamant that there was no hint of sexual impropriety on Botting’s part. Dunn further claims that White would have mentioned it; after all, White was very candid about her sexual sadomasochistic fantasies, whippings, and masturbatory habits (Dunn, *Antonia White: A Life*, 2000, 214-215).

I cannot deny that White does not openly make a direct claim of sexual abuse herself. Nonetheless, due to prevailing notions of Freud’s Oedipus complex in White’s era of writing, psychoanalysts’ frequent conclusions pertaining to the unreliability of their patients’ claims of sexual abuse effectively transformed their patients’ desires via mechanisms of confession. This should come as no surprise. These mechanisms of confession are not dissimilar to the methods employed by the Catholic Church for the purpose of moral improvement. Yet, what may have been driven back into White’s unconscious, as well as into the darkest recesses of a larger cultural consciousness, is that an immoral crime has been committed. White’s characters are incognizant players in an unconscious
performance by White to expose this immoral crime.

White’s feelings for her father remained ambivalent throughout her life, and it was not until 1940 that she began to have a less tenuous relationship with the Catholic Church. During 1940 and 1941, White engaged in a lengthy and intense correspondence with Peter Thorp, a previously lapsed Catholic himself. On February 7, 1941, White tells Thorp, “I understand now the words of St. Bonaventure which I repeated automatically for years: ‘Transfix me with the most joyous and healthful wound of Thy love’” (The Hound and the Falcon, 1983, 81).

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Evelyn Waugh and Brideshead Revisited

Joyce M. Rosenberg—Private Practice

Brideshead Revisited (1944) is considered by many to be Evelyn Waugh’s (1903-66) greatest work. The deeply passionate novel tells the story of Charles Ryder and his relationship with troubled Sebastian Flyte and his family, the Marchmains. Charles has suffered through an emotionally deprived early life and hungers for the intimacy that Sebastian offers.

Waugh’s story is autobiographical, drawn from his days at Oxford, friendships as a young man, and relationship with a cold, seemingly unloving father. By reading Brideshead and accounts of Waugh’s childhood and early adulthood, it is easy to feel the link between the author and his character. But not because of reportage—Waugh, perhaps unconsciously, channeled his pain and emotional hunger into a story filled with great emotion and beauty.

The relationship between Charles and his father is a small
but significant part of *Brideshead*. There are few details of Charles’ childhood, but we know his mother died when he was young. His aunt came to live with Charles and his father, but Mr. Ryder had her leave. “I got her out in the end,” he crows to his son—who senses that his father would like to do the same to him (*Brideshead*, 67-8). This dialogue shows a father who is enraged and hostile toward his son.

When Charles arrives home during a break from school, his father doesn’t greet him until hours later, at dinner. After a conversation in which Charles’ father talks at him rather than with him, his father begins to read at the table, ignoring his son. The rest of Charles’ stay follows a similar pattern. They have little contact each day until dinner, which Charles calls a battlefield. He uses words like “malice,” “menace,” and “strife” to describe their interactions. When they pass in the hallway or on the stairs, Charles says of his father, “He would look at me vacantly and say, ‘Ah-ha’ or ‘Very warm,’ or ‘Splendid, splendid,’” much as he might speak to an acquaintance (*Brideshead*, 62-66). Waugh’s grandson Alexander, who wrote *Fathers and Sons* (2004), a biography of five generations of Waughs, notes, “Like all fictional Evelyn Waugh fathers to this date, Mr. Ryder is distant, unhelpful, one might say uncaring, even a little malicious towards his son” (*Fathers*, 283).

Sebastian is a salve for Charles’ wounds. With him, Charles finds love, warmth, appreciation, a connection. He is drawn into Sebastian’s life of partying, road trips, fine food, and wine. Charles finds something he never had before: “That summer term with Sebastian, it seemed as though I was being given a brief spell of what I had never known, a happy childhood, and though its toys were silk shirts and liqueurs and cigars and its naughtiness high in the catalogue of grave sins, there was something of nursery freshness about us that fell little short of the joy of innocence” (*Brideshead*, 45).

Charles is eventually embraced by Sebastian’s family. He becomes privy to their darkest secrets. He is recruited by Sebastian’s manipulative mother to try to “fix” her troubled, alcoholic son. Charles feels needed, wanted—unlike the young Evelyn Waugh.
In Waugh’s autobiography, *A Little Learning* (1964), the few details he gives about his relationship with his father show that it was marked by anger and distance. “For my first seven years, my father was a figure of minor importance and interest… I think he paid a visit to the nursery every evening and often made brief efforts to entertain, but I never particularly welcomed him.” He calls his mother and nanny “the sole objects of love” until prep school. He ate his breakfast and dinner in the nursery “so as to be out of my father’s way” (*Learning*, 33, 43).

We have witnesses and reporters, including Alexander Waugh in *Fathers and Sons* (2004), to provide a fuller picture of Evelyn Waugh’s childhood and his relationship with his father. From them, we can understand the pain that inspired *Brideshead* and other writings as well as the need for intimacy that drew Charles Ryder to the Marchmains. Alexander Waugh’s family history begins with Evelyn’s grandfather, Alexander, known as the Brute because of his harsh treatment of his children, including Arthur Waugh, Evelyn’s father. Alexander goes into great detail about the mistreatment of Arthur—and Arthur’s mistreatment of his son Evelyn.

Evelyn was a disappointment from birth to his parents, who wanted a girl after their first son, Alec, was born. His mother gave Evelyn an effeminate name and dressed him in girl’s clothes (*Fathers*, 74). His father favored his older son. Alexander writes: “Arthur did little to disguise his preference for Alec. When Evelyn asked for a bicycle in April 1914… Arthur went off and bought a bigger and better one for Alec, and gave Evelyn a small box of theatrical facepaint instead.” Alec “always got the best presents. Everything Evelyn was given came to him ‘shop-soiled and second-hand’ and he knew it” (*Fathers*, 78-9).

The favoritism helped mold Evelyn’s acerbic wit—which in turn helped him to become a great writer. But that wit also fueled an animosity between father and son not unlike that between Charles Ryder and his father. Alexander writes, “Arthur knew that Evelyn was different, unlovable perhaps, not the sweet daughter he had always wanted, but a distant and brilliant boy. He did not like Evelyn’s manner; he detested his sharp tongue, his cynical wit and satirical humor” (*Fathers*, 153).
When Evelyn was 17, Arthur, a literary critic and publisher, published a second collection of his critical work and grudgingly dedicated it to Evelyn. The first collection had been dedicated to Alec. Evelyn’s dedication was “a million miles from the heartfelt gush of his brother’s dedication four years earlier,” Alexander writes (Fathers, 156).

Evelyn revealed his bitterness in a 1936 short story, “Winner Takes All,” in which a wealthy mother favors her older son and sabotages her younger son, Tom, at every turn. Tom was a disappointment; the mother had wanted a girl (Evelyn Waugh, The Complete Stories of Evelyn Waugh, 1998, 175-191).

But while Charles Ryder’s father is cold and appears unloving, Waugh also portrayed him as something of an eccentric. Why the more sympathetic father in Brideshead than the mother in “Winner Takes All”? Alexander, who describes the portrait as “semi-affectionate,” provides some clues. As a child, Evelyn yearned for his father’s approval. But his brother, Alec, being more capable simply because he was older, impressed their father, Arthur. Evelyn tried to keep up but couldn’t. “It may be true that in his first ten years he saw his father as a decrepit old bore, ‘a figure of minor importance and interest,’ but it is also the case that he tried hard to win his approval,” Alexander writes (Fathers, 83). Later, as a young man, “despite the embarrassment and ennui that Evelyn sometimes felt in his father’s company, he was not past wishing to please him.” Alexander describes how Evelyn applied to “a less illustrious” college, hoping to save his father money (Fathers, 158-9).

In Brideshead, Charles’ happiness with Sebastian is increased when he is welcomed into his friend’s family. According to Alexander, Evelyn railed at readers’ attempts to identify the models for his characters (Alexander Waugh, “Genius Loci,” Literary Review, August 2009). But it is widely believed that Evelyn got his inspiration for the Marchmains from the Lygon family, who he spent time with during his 20s. Their home, Madresfield, was the basis for the fictional estate Brideshead. “Fun and fantasy reigned, although always with an undertow of sorrow” at Madresfield, writes Paula Byrne in Mad World: Evelyn Waugh and the Secrets of Brideshead (2011), a book about Waugh and the Lygons.
(Byrne, 161). As readers of *Brideshead* know, Sebastian and his family were anguished people.

Suffering contributed to Evelyn Waugh’s creativity, but creativity did not cure. Waugh showed the same disdain for his children that he felt from his father and that Charles Ryder felt from his.

Evelyn’s son (and Alexander’s father) Auberon Waugh wrote an autobiography with a telling title, *Will This Do?* (1998). He describes his father, Evelyn, as cold, exasperated, and bored with his children. “There could be no mistaking the relief of his children when he was absent, the great brooding presence was removed” (44). Auberon’s version of his childhood was corroborated in letters his father, Evelyn, wrote to friends. One of them read, “My news are the great news that all my children have at last disappeared to their various places of education…I now dislike them all equally” (*Fathers*, 299).

Auberon’s book reveals how angry he was with his father, but also shows that he understood what was behind his father’s behavior. In 1955, Evelyn had what appeared to be a psychotic episode. His son writes, “What he never came to terms with was any suggestion that his habitual melancholia might have been a form of clinical depression” (*Will This Do?*, 54).

Auberon was a successful writer, best known for his satirical diaries in the British magazine *Private Eye*. Like his father, Evelyn, he channeled pain and anger into creativity. But he appears to have been a very different father from Evelyn. After Auberon’s death, his son Alexander wrote, “Our relationship was never perfect, but it was probably better than many” (*Fathers*, 17).

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Voyaging With an Art Journal
to the Creative Self

Jean Oggins—Consulting/Research/Evaluation Services

In the children’s book Harold and the Purple Crayon, Harold sets off on a trip, drawing things without knowing what they’ll turn out to be and enjoying the adventures they create. For example, having drawn pies, Harold draws something to eat them and finds he has drawn a porcupine and a moose. For 18 years, I have also been voyaging with an art journal and have unexpectedly discovered my creative self.

Working in My Art Journal

When I draw, paint or make a collage in my journal, it is without any preconceived ideas. I spontaneously generate marks or images until the piece feels complete, and then ask what has emerged. In turning the image around, I may also recognize another image and draw more.

Then, I write out associations to the drawings. Sometimes these suggest a song, book, or writing about a previous drawing and point to text that clarifies the new drawing’s meaning. In active imagination (C.G. Jung, Word and Image, 1979), I also imagine how images would act and converse, in much the same way Gestalt therapist Fritz Perls (Gestalt Therapy Verbatim, 1969) asked people to imagine dialogue between dream images to discover different aspects of themselves. Since drawings sometimes stimulate dreams, I also record dreams in my journal and reflect on the connections between drawings and dreams. Eventually the writing suggests a theme, often dealing with daily life or individuation. Words that evoke an “aha” feeling about a drawing can also suggest a name for it and its feeling-tone.

Although I try to draw or write exactly what comes to mind, I sometimes don’t want to draw ugly pictures about ugly feelings—a resistance that is both aesthetic and emotional. However, when the same images come up repeatedly, I understand that something needs to be addressed and try to represent it without censoring it. Recently I have begun to write dialogue not only for completed...
Discovering My Artist Self

I grew up in an academic family—my father a professor, my mother an editor. Although I often drew as a child and loved Impressionist paintings, I also became an academic: a social psychologist who studies healthcare. As a shy person, I could hide behind the conventions of scientific writing but still speak for marginalized groups, including minorities and the poor. However, the quantitative research I was hired to do sometimes seemed dry and remote from people’s lives. After learning that two employers were committing research fraud, I left the field for a while, took a job writing grants and initiated interview research. When an interviewee described using art for healing, I decided to embark on an art journal as a way to study the mind. At 35, perhaps I was also having a quiet mid-life crisis and searching for greater authenticity.

The journal soon took on a life of its own, first in inspiring dreams about moving beyond language. In the dream “More Than a Life of Words,” a man showed me his vitae. The first page listed academic publications chronologically but one could also see faint images of birds. The next page showed only a circle of flying birds—suggesting a nonverbal way to express identity.

In another dream, I saw an African tribal leader holding a spear; he was also a griot, or tribal storyteller, and sought direction. We were in Montmartre, Paris’ neighborhood for artists and dance halls, and he led me towards its church—the Sacré Coeur, or Sacred Heart. Recalling that Jung once said that Africans under the influence of Europeans no longer spoke about their dreams (C.G. Jung, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, 1963), I wondered if the griot missed his animals (symbolically, his connection to instinct) and if his spear might become a shepherd’s staff when he could lead them.

But first I needed to find my own sense of direction. In a later drawing, roses were growing on a semi-circular trellis, but a large daisy at the door blocked light the roses needed to grow. The daisy evoked appliqué daisies on a bath mat and suggested art should have a practical use, which felt discouraging. Yet the daisy
petals also resembled lit-up Christmas tree bulbs, and I recalled the General Electric motto: “We bring good things to life.” Light and color might in fact be good for my life.

A drawing made afterwards even suggested art was holy. Turned upside-down, the trellis was now the base of a tree and an ark, like Noah’s ark; a heart inside was sailing onto colorful Tibetan-mandala sands. The place for the shepherd’s animals had appeared. I wrote that art is sacred, offering sanctuary that protects wildness and nature, welcomes all creatures, and lets them encounter God. I imagined animals sailing together with heart towards beauty and holiness.

A subsequent drawing introduced line-dancing animals with creative interests: a writer beagle; a panda, representing my painter self and its Asian sensibility; a salsa-dancing turtle; and the leader—a mouse with eagle’s wings, from a Native American story. Yet, my animals had no mouths. Indeed, I wasn’t sure what vocabulary my artistic interests would use. I started a new journal about how yoga and t’ai-chi express the body’s energy language and began exploring ways art could express light. In a later drawing, the animals’ artistic interests appeared as charms on a bracelet, but a heart charm still needed to be attached. Free association also suggested names for each charm and specific creative work. Deciding to put my heart into pursuing art, I took art classes and joined a singing group. Yet several drawings showed the tree needed to deal with its blue heart so it could reclaim its youthful confidence and joy, come into the present, and freely move forward with art. In a later painting, a dove left a blue symbol of sadness and flew toward a tree embodying childlike whimsy and adult wisdom. It welcomed the bird and remarked that the weather of emotions was part of the tree’s substance and flowering.

After embarking on the art journal, I better understand and attend to my needs, and find life more fulfilling. An independent research consultant now, I work closely with psychology graduate students (including many minority students) to guide these modern-day griots as they collect and write up stories and data for theses so they can become professional clinicians. Increasingly, I have also written research articles in which the people studied speak for themselves, including one article (“Reversing Vandalism: Coping
Themes in a Library’s Community Art Exhibit,” *The Arts in Psychotherapy*, 34, 263-276, 2007) on ways artists said they used art to respond to a hate crime.

But my dreams also urge moving beyond scientific writing. Recently I dreamed a visual artist was making an advent calendar and wanted to incorporate interviews—but for spiritual essays or poems that express my own literary voice, I thought. Using metallic paper and iridescent paint, I have also made collages where the light changes as the day’s light changes, and have exhibited these and photos, of which light is also the subject. Increasingly my dreams offer images to paint. Like Harold with his purple crayon, I will paint and write and see where that leads.

**Paths for Transformation**

My art journal has taken me on an artist’s path: discovering values that encouraged making art, encountering artistic interests and projects, but also seeing that I needed to address sadness as part of whole-heartedly making art. I have also learned that images have their own voices and tasks (see James Hillman with Laura Pozzo, *Conversations*, 1983; Shaun McNiff, *Art as Medicine*, 1993) and can be read. What if the drawn thickness of tree rings suggests specific years of stress? What if a humorous sprout balances the sad tree? Reading images suggests interpretations but also paths for transformation.

Finally, the journal has revealed my own aesthetic and style. I delight in shimmer and color, whether on a Christmas tree or in my own art. Writing out associations to bold simple images, such as hearts or trees, has shown how evocative these are. Thus, delving into the unconscious has not only inspired my creative life but also shown how the perceptual world lights me up.

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Rainer Rilke’s Artistic Expression and Transformation

Heiderose Brandt Butscher—York University

Rainer Maria Rilke’s (1875-1926) artistic impulse came from three major influences: an inherited talent channeled by Rilke’s mother; Rilke’s quest for spirituality; and his unique love for Lou Andreas-Salomé (1861-1937), a seminal bourgeois feminist of the early part of the 20th century. Rilke’s life was charged with emotional tensions, and through Salomé’s care and guidance, he attained spiritual and emotional fulfillment. This paper will detail Rilke’s creative talent through close collaboration with Salomé and examine the creative process and the subsequent transformation of both personalities.

During a trip to Russia with Lou Andreas-Salomé in 1899, Rilke had “a breakthrough in his creative life” (J.F. Hendry, The Sacred Threshold: A Life of Rainer Maria Rilke, 1983, 40): Rilke translated the peasant poet Drozhzhin into German upon Salomé’s inspiration. Salomé had a catalyzing effect in Rilke’s transformation into a “poet laureate,” and she taught him the Russian language. Their dynamic relationship extended from 1897 until Rilke’s death in 1926, which enriched Salomé and Rilke reciprocally and was impetus to germinating Rilke’s creativity. Salomé’s guiding role in Rilke’s development supported his own notion of the symbolic “mother” she represented. Her insights shed light on the state of Rilke’s unconscious “fears” and profound loneliness rooted in his unusual childhood experiences.

From the moment of their first meeting, Salomé impressed Rilke as “mature, maternal, a woman of masculine intellect” (Threshold, 23). She “represented herself as the enactment of radical individualism” (Helene Stöcker, Neue Generation, 1931, 53), which included an intimate friendship with Rilke with the tacit consent of her husband, Friedrich Carl Andreas (Lou Andreas-Salomé, Looking Back: Memoirs, 1990, 129). Many intellectuals, such as Nietzsche and Freud, and in particular Rilke, sought Salomé’s counsel and her generous spirit. Indeed, Rilke was first moved by Salomé’s publication of “Jesus der Jude” (Neue Deutsche...
Rundschau (1896). Its impact prompted Rilke to explore his own individual “religiosity” with “Christus Visionen” (1897; published posthumously, Visions of Christ, 1967). This work embodies Rilke’s quest for a new spirituality. Rilke envisioned a philosophy of love that embodied possibilities for a cosmic union within a spiritual friendship and as a religious experience where love and spirituality are entwined (Rainer Maria Rilke, “Letters to a Young Poet,” New Poems, 1964). This parallels Salomé’s thoughts expressed in “Jesus der Jude.” She held that religious experience is individually manifested in “living” that she termed “Erlebnis” (Looking Back). Rilke echoed Salomé’s view on love as “reverence for [the] other in an equal partnership” as the principal component in the relationship between herself and her husband that openly included a companionship with Rilke, who frequented their household in Berlin-Schmargendorf, vacationed at their summer “peasant’s house” in Wolfratshausen, and accompanied the Andreeses on trips to Russia. This unconventional lifestyle afforded circumstances for Rilke’s creative stimulation. Under Salomé’s tutelage, moreover, Rilke’s intellectual growth encompassed the study of Russian poetry and literature as well as of Renaissance art (Threshold, 24). In 1899, both her husband and Rilke accompanied Salomé to St. Petersburg; in 1900, Rilke and Salomé undertook an expedition into the interior of Russia. There they absorbed culture, language, and customs, and recorded the changing social conditions. The Russian experience with Rilke is depicted in Salomé’s 1923 Rodinka (E. Pfeiffer, ed., 1985).

The psychodrama of Rilke’s early life begins at his birth in Prague in 1875. His first gift was a small golden cross; her son was thus, in Phia Rilke’s words, symbolically “consecrated to the gracious Madonna” (Threshold, 9). Rilke later complained that his mother frequently went to excess in her religious observances, as her love was projected onto the Saints whose pictures hung on walls in his home. The following cryptic words capture the effect Phia’s mania had on him: “Poor saints of wood to whom my mother brought her gifts…flowers my mother plucked, all of them, out of my life” (D. Prater, A Ringing Glass: The Life of Rainer Maria Rilke, 1986, 5).

Phia had “dreams of emancipation,” aspired to a life in high
society, and independently published *Ephemerides* (1900), a small volume of aphorisms (*Threshold*, 12). Phia also encouraged the “poet laureate” in Rilke. However, her treatment of him was ambivalent. Phia regarded him as “Sophie,” his older sister who had passed away the year before Rilke’s birth. She dressed Rilke like “Sophie,” and during play, “Sophie” (Rilke) had to pretend “her” villainous brother René was lurking outside and whose “misdeeds …she” must recount. His mother went so far in her “games” as to goad Rilke into denying “Sophie must be dead” (*Threshold*, 12).

This charade had a negative psychological impact on him. In Rilke’s accounts of “Malte” in *The Notebooks of Malte Laurids Brigge* (1910), Rilke came to terms psychologically with his alter ego “René.” This work was encouraged by Salomé during visits when Rilke lived in Paris. Through this novel, Rilke projects his alter ego’s characteristics into “Malte,” which helped to promote Rilke’s own transformation. Although the projection of “René” into “Malte” stimulated Rilke’s creative talent, his imagined multiple personalities haunted him for most of his life—he reported about his terrifying childhood experiences: his socialized image in front of adults, his idealized sister “Sophie,” his real “self” as the imaginary “naughty René,” and his “idealized self” as “courageous” soldier, the image his father held of him. His parents’ separation when Rilke was eight years old increased his felt isolation.

If Rilke’s mother treated him as a plaything, his father Joseph seemed to be incapable of expressing love for him. Joseph’s “most cherished ambition,” to have Rilke attend a military school, also had a negative psychological effect (*Threshold*, 17). Rilke was plagued with ill health during his five years at the *Kadettenschule*. He describes this “unmastered childhood” in the novel *Ewald Tragy* (1896). On their trip through Russia, Salomé encouraged Rilke to transform these acutely felt memories into poetic language: “instinctive things and the infinite circle of dark rich legend of his ominous early years” (*Looking Back*, 74). It was then that she hit upon the idea to name him “Rainer,” providing Rilke with a new autonomous awareness while observing his gradual transformation.

Salomé’s psychoanalytic approach to Rilke involved “self-becoming,” which is attainable through “psychic double-
directionality,” allowing him to sublimate his “narcissism,” which she terms “self-sufficiency,” into creative expression. The coexistence in woman of these doubly directional drives—femininity as self-assertion and feminine subjectivity toward erotic submission—grounded what she called woman’s self-sufficiency (Biddy Martin, *Woman and Modernity: The (Life)Styles of Lou Andreas Salomé*, 1991, 4). Accordingly, individual creative expression embodies the intuitive component of “double-directionality” and ultimately promotes self-becoming, offering creative possibilities of being (*Looking Back*, 69-84). Salomé contends that this quality is a fundamental element of artists, like Rilke—“[as] the unconscious roots of life” (*Woman and Modernity*, 6) accessible through the medium of creative expression. She believed Rilke was capable of presenting his “world of human emotions while transforming himself” via poetic language (*Ringing Glass*, 410). In other words, through this potential Rilke became himself, driven by his creative force as characterized by “Malte” in *The Notebooks of Malte Laurids Brigge*. Rilke “exemplified the artist’s capacity to heal himself” (*Woman and Modernity*, 42-43) while overcoming conflict through his work. The intuitive component reaches into the region of the unconscious (“[as] the artist has to reach into his innermost being”), which fosters creativity and ultimately culminates in “self-becoming.” Salomé embraced this liberating force for herself while encouraging the creative possibilities of Rilke. Her article in “Der Mensch als Weib” (*Neue Deutsche Rundschau*, 1899) argued that the possibility of “self-becoming” through artistic expression was indeed open to both male and female.

Rilke grasped the inference of “double-directionality” in his “Farewell” poem after their temporary break in 1901: “You were for me the most motherly, you were a friend like a man…” (*Lou Andreas-Salomé–Rainer Maria Rilke Briefwechsel: 1897-1926*, 1975). It speaks of Salomé’s nurturing qualities and of Rilke’s admiration of her “masculine” strength.

In her many publications, Salomé suggested possibilities of being for the “New Woman” of her era, which she extended to the “New Man.” Salomé was a catalyst to Rilke’s creative energy as a poet who attempted to express the ineffable from an intuitive “vision within himself,” exemplified by the *Duino Elegies* (Rainer
Maria Rilke, 1912-1923, J.B. Leishman and S. Spender, eds., 1963, 17), which he dedicated to her. Rilke’s “Viareggio diary” was a declaration of his devotion to Salomé—his “ever-new, ever young, cosmic goal” (“Arco, Florenz, Viarregio,” Briefwechsel: Early Diary, 37).

At the Sanatorium in Valmont when he was diagnosed with leukemia, Rilke requested correspondence “only from Lou,” who he believed could help him (Threshold, 147) as he endured a “hellish” existence. In an explanatory letter of the same date, December 13, 1926, Frau Wunderly-Volkart pleads with Salomé: “You know about Rilke’s limitless belief in you … he says, you know everything” (Briefwechsel, 483 and 618). Near life’s end, Rilke expressed to his friend Marie von Thurn und Taxis, “My whole development could not have taken the course it did … but for the influence of this extraordinary woman” (Threshold, 35).

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The Father, the Mother, and the Other: The Case of James Merrill

Carole Brooks Platt—Independent Scholar

James Merrill (1926-1995), author of the magisterial, Ouija board-inspired poem, *The Changing Light at Sandover* (1982, 1996), wrote in his memoir that between the ages of nine and 10, when his mother had little time for him, he transferred his love to his governess. At 11, he lost her as well; his parents had separated and his father felt he needed “masculine supervision” (James Merrill, *A Different Person*, 1993, 130-1). Neuropsychological studies show that early childhood trauma physically changes the brain, leading to mental disorders, especially dissociation, in those predisposed genetically. This paper discusses Merrill’s creative dissociation in light of the trauma of his parent’s divorce and the maternal overbearance related to his sexual preference.

Merrill had his own ideas about the role of parenting in the creative process. Considering his boarding school days, he noted that his closest friends had no father: they had either drifted off after divorce or committed suicide, and “the trauma seemed in every case to have quickened the child’s imagination” (*Different Person*, 9). Absent fathers can propel compensatory creativity.

Merrill’s own poetry writing had begun in prep school and continued through college. At Lawrenceville, he studied all of English poetry and read Baudelaire and Verlaine on his own. At Amherst, Merrill met Robert Frost, who kindly critiqued the budding poet’s work, both fully knowing Merrill’s indebtedness to his predecessors, Rilke and Yeats. But his best friend, Freddy, also strongly influenced him “in the vast chamber full of voices” (*Different Person*, 15), which included an English professor, Kimon Friar, who mentored Merrill and became both lover and “surrogate father” with an “enduring legacy” (Mark Bauer, *This Composite Voice*, 2003, 16, 19). Merrill makes clear that *Changing Light at Sandover* fulfilled Kimon’s dream of writing a great work based on Dante and Yeats. He inscribes his former lover’s copy of the heavy tome with a succinct message; “Dear Kimon, who’d have thought? You would!” (*Different Person*, 27).
Merrill considered his own father, Charles Merrill, a founding partner of Merrill-Lynch, a benign figure, excepting his bad behavior towards James’ mother. In fact, he would compare his father’s inconstancy in love to his own. At the time of his memoir, Merrill writes, “To this day he remains an almost perversely mild and undemanding presence in my thoughts” (Different Person, 42). Within the poem, learning that his father has died, Merrill expresses “16FOLD LACK OF EMOTION,” as an approving Zen “priest” informs Ephraim, his familiar spirit. When his father’s spirit “gets through” to Merrill, the spirit is “high-spirited, incredulous” that the Ouija board worked for his son, having failed him after his own mother had died (Changing Light, 36).

Pronouncing his love for all his wives and children, the paternal spirit scurries off looking forward to his next life. The irony of the head of Merrill-Lynch being reborn to a greengrocer in Kew cannot be accidental. When Merrill’s first poetry volume came out, his proud father ordered 100 copies of the 990-print run for his friends and business partners, leading Merrill to make another joke: “One tenth of the tiny edition doomed to oblivion, at a single stroke!” (Different Person, 63). He would have preferred a father who read Yeats like Kimon Friar. The father of James Merrill’s partner and Ouija board collaborator, David Jackson, while critical in life, in the poem comes around about his son’s sexual orientation after death, saying, “YOU 2 ARE OK” (Changing Light, 103). Merrill’s own father remains affably silent on the matter.

Merrill’s ongoing battle was with his mother over his sexual preference. After his affair with Kimon Friar, he followed her “earnest wish” to see a therapist, which helped overcome his writer’s block at the time. His father, less savvy about his son’s proclivity, had only once remarked to him, on induction into the army: “Never let another man put his hand on you” (Different Person, 90). Later, to his surprise, Merrill learned that his father had requested a joint interview with his Rome-based doctors about his homosexuality. Told there was nothing to be done about it, his father paid and left, never mentioning it to his son. Or so it seemed. Later, Merrill’s mother told him that it was she who informed his father, who had then wanted to have Kimon killed. Whether parental disapproval or outright admonitions, Merrill considered his
treatment mild and not particularly meaningful (or so he says), since “hundreds of thousands of parents—not just mine—must have spent the forties and fifties urging secrecy and repression upon their queer sons” (Different Person, 90).

Throughout his candid memoir, Merrill questions the origins of his problems—the lack of a secure sense of self, his inability to be alone, feelings of unworthiness—rightly attributing most to his early family situation. His homosexuality also plays a prominent role, especially his mother’s “horrified opposition” and efforts to “make him a different person,” or at least hide his lifestyle and troublesome emotions (Different Person, 19, 97). On one occasion, while ensconced in Rome, his mother destroys not only a boxful of letters at his direction, but, shockingly, all others, including those from friends and lovers, including Kimon, in his own apartment. This act appears to have been traumatic for him as the Burn the Box motif occurs repeatedly in his epic poem. Merrill bemoans his mother’s overbearance, saying, “It left me with little evidence of having been loved by anyone, except her” (Different Person, 97).

Yet, despite his mother’s absence from its 560 pages, a maternal presence looms large over Merrill’s trilogy. He says, “Because of course she’s here / Throughout, the breath drawn after every line, / Essential to its making as to mine” (Changing Light, 84). A cast of comforting and encouraging mother surrogates appear, including Maria Mitsotáki, whom he calls “Maman” to her “Enfant,” recalling the mother-deprived Rousseau’s endearing term for Mme. de Warens. Yearning for the perfect mom and uterine oneness, Merrill will transform Maria into a primeval Goddess, an enlightened Queen Mum who, in his cosmic scheme, saves all of humanity from destruction. She will later bathe happily in a new mother’s womb awaiting rebirth, this time as a male, implanted by divine design. The whole poem Merrill creates from the spirits’ chatter will be a great paean to the superiority of creative homosexuals, not the patter of little feet, a literary defiance to “Nature’s Law: Mate Propagate & Die” (Changing Light, 229). Childless-ness, curbing overpopulation, and accepting various forms of earthly conflagration as a necessary “Thinning Process” is his poetic answer to the parental desire that he marry and carry on the family name (Changing Light, passim).
Merrill relativizes the connection between trauma and creativity, saying that “something of the kind awaits every child on earth.” Without the parents’ “imprint of (imperfect) love, the self is featureless, a snarl of instincts, a puff of stellar dust” (*Different Person*, 155). Yet, “the Divorce,” his homosexuality, and maternal overbearance come up again and again in his memoir. He is led to ponder why his father appears in all the men he loves, and if his “life has been less a flight from the Broken Home than a cunning scale model of it” (*Different Person*, 154-5). He also studies an early photo showing “a sissy at six, posed, hands folded and ankles crossed, at the slide’s foot” (*Different Person*, 139). He associates the image with a famous Michelangelo statue, unfinished and abandoned because of an internal flaw. Perhaps his marble was *already* split before his parents’ divorce and, if it had not been so, “this inward, famished understudy for creative Love would never have come to light” (*Different Person*, 139).

The trauma of the Broken Home and his parents’ opposition to his homosexuality both destabilized Merrill’s sense of self, making him a Keatsian “chameleon” in need of bolstering by Others who happily complied for more than 20 years. The telling line, “Already I take up / Less emotional space than a snowdrop” (*Changing Light*, 89), is countered by the spirits’ overblown and capitalized praise for him. The traumatic toll of many loved ones dying throughout this period reinforced his psychological need for confirmation against self-dissolution. Loss turns into gain through poetic source material and the assurance of life’s renewal through reincarnation. In his memoir, Merrill concurred with Freddy’s long-ago remark that traumas are the constellation, the blessing, which give life meaning. Both prophetic and practical, it is Freddy who gave Merrill his first Ouija board, a prelude to creativity beyond his wildest dreams.

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Anxiety of Influence or Influence
Easing Anxiety?

Merle Molofsky—Private Practice

Growing up in a working-class household, with parents who were cultured, self-educated, and who valued the arts, I discovered poetry, which became a path toward self-knowledge. Early on, my ear became trained to the musical cadences and sense of deep meaning found in poetry. My father wrote and recited poetry, particularly Shakespeare’s monologues and sonnets. He also sang, primarily folk music, reinforcing the sense that sound conveys emotion and meaning. I early recognized that aspects of myself, particularly “negative” emotions, that I thought were unacceptable, were recognized and even valued by writers, who gave shape and expression to the full range of human experience.

Although it was clear to me that poets addressed a vast range of emotions, I believed that some emotions were “better” than others. Love, grief, sorrow, joy, and happiness were “noble” emotions that “good” people were allowed to feel. Hatred, jealousy, envy, resentment, and anger were “base” emotions that only “bad” people felt—”good” people weren’t allowed to feel those emotions. Fear was “neutral,” in that it felt unpleasant, but I didn’t experience fear as a reflection on my moral character.

Yet it was exhilarating to discover the full range of emotion reflected in poetry, whether dramatic poetry, narrative poetry, lyric poetry, imagistic poetry, formal verse, or free verse. Writing poetry in the voice of an “I” that was other than myself felt liberating. I didn’t yet realize that all voices in anything I wrote, whether poetry, fiction, or plays, were aspects of myself; that every “I” was indeed my own “I,” though disguised in a different persona.

In adulthood, I began psychoanalysis three times a week, which led me to decide to train as a psychoanalyst and facilitated the integration of the split-off parts of the self that I was expressing in poetry, fiction, and plays that I wrote but was still experiencing as alien, other, and forbidden.

When I write poetry, I am aware of the various traditions in
poetry that influence my work. Harold Bloom’s major opus, *The Anxiety of Influence* (1973), offers a theory of poetry, drawing on “intra-poetic influences” representing an anxiety of influence, in which strong poets “misread” each other in order to establish their own voice. Weaker poets, he claims, idealize established poets. I think of myself as a “strong” poet, perhaps because I am, perhaps because I need to think I am, perhaps both. I don’t think I idealize the “strong” poets I admire. Rather, I think I have found guides, kindred spirits, and playmates. Nor do I need to triumph over them to establish my strength. I need to find companionship.

Bloom also states that poets rebel against consciousness of death. I could conceptualize, following Bloom, that creativity in general may represent a rebellion against consciousness of death. Yet I see a generative urge in creativity, a great act of affirmation of existence, a Yes! to the creation of the universe, that indeed the Creator should have created the universe, and that one’s progenitors, one’s parents, should have created one. Thus, the “Poetic I” creates to join with all eternity and infinity in the creative impulse that caused the universe to exist and to affirm my own right to existence.

Recently I felt a great desire to answer Bloom’s *The Anxiety of Influence* with a poem, to acknowledge my poetic progenitors, the poets who shaped my poetic awareness, who influenced my poetic voice. Thus I also desired to acknowledge my genetic/environmental progenitors, my parents, who shaped my values, whose values I internalized, some of which caused inhibition that I had to address in my personal analysis, and who gave me access to the freedom I find in poetry. So I wrote a 10-part poem, “A Theory of Influence,” based on the terminology Bloom used to define the anxiety of influence. I’d like to end with a brief excerpt from what is a very long and complex poem, to convey the flavor of the process of valuing the gift of self-expression through poetry and my gratitude to the poets who have contributed so much to those who seek their reflection in the creative efforts of others. I offer Part II, Receiving the Gift, and Part III, Sharing the Gift.
RECEIVING THE GIFT
In order to understand the language of the birds
we lick honey off the page,
discover Aleph,
then Beit, in the beginning,
a world within a Book
was the Word,
within the Book a Garden,
and the Word was with….
and the Word was….

Within the Garden a fountain,
where water flowed like music,
where music flowed like words,
where words flowed language,
the language of the birds,
wild with poetry.

SHARING THE GIFT
Whoever is listening,
co-create.
Word-music lives in I-Thou.
Guide for the Perplexed:
Be here now – and how –

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A Psychodynamic Theory of Creativity: Greenacre and Shakespeare

Joel Markowitz—Private Practice

Consider three types of creativity: the creativity of geniuses; the normal creativity of preadolescence from the sublimation of repressed oedipal impulses; and neurotic creativity, for example, to reduce anxiety through “innocent” obsessional activity. Psycho-dynamic literature discusses the latter two. Dr. Phyllis Greenacre (1894-1989), a Freudian theorist, speculated on geniuses. She extended Freud’s Libido Theory and considered the artist as neuro-physiologically different from the non-artist. I will paraphrase and extend one of Greenacre’s theories.

Owen Meredith, the Earl of Lytton, wrote, “Genius does what it must, and talent does what it can.” Greenacre similarly believed that the artist, or creative genius, is primarily pulled toward creativity by artistic need, not pushed by other circumstances. Dr. Eugene Glynn commented that “...current psychoanalytic theories scarcely stress the artist’s joy in his creation.”

Non-artists are restricted to one developmental track—the “citizen’s” or “ordinary” world. The artist lives in two “worlds”—in what Greenacre labeled a “creative world” as well as in the ordinary world. He splits his libido (sexualized psychic energy), and he invests both worlds.

In our nursing experience as infants, we perceive warmth, smell, moisture, softness, the texture of the mother’s skin, the vision of roundness, and the pleasure of being held. As does the future artist as infant, but he/she may also focus on a beam of light coming through the blinds, on dust-motes dancing in the light, on sounds (especially if he will later be musically creative), on the color of drapes in the background and on the way they fall, and on smells that we ignore. Greenacre told us that he thereby begins “his obligatory love affair with the world”—using some libido that others would invest entirely according to the “citizen’s world” development.

The artist has richer perceptions and also has a special abil-
ity to transmit his experience to an audience. (His parents are often unaware of his artistic capabilities.)

Sometimes, however, the infant or young child is over-stimulated by the flood of experiences. He may then defend against and mute them—and may seem less reactive than is a typical infant.

He is freer in his creative “world” than in ours. There he is less guilty; he represses less, defends less; he is less in conflict. In my long experience, when non-artists achieve or succeed, they fear punishment for oedipally-driven excitement (as we have for two millennia). “Whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased, and he that humbles himself shall be exalted” (Matthew 23:12).

In his “creative world,” the artist is free to love the actual world. According to Greenacre, his most-invested loves involve pre-oedipal representations (fundamentally of his mother). He has less fear, therefore, of punishment for what we would fear as oedipally-driven achievements. He may love the representations he creates more than the objects themselves.

Let me try to apply some of those theories. Andrew Butterfield writes that, in his painting, *La petite Pelisse* (the small fur-lined coat), “... Rubens made a declaration of sexual love for his second wife ..., and he did so with a frankness and tenderness that was unprecedented in the history of art” (*New York Review of Books*, April 7, 2005). Compared with many artists, Rubens did seem to have a genetic advantage—a great deal of libido to invest in both “worlds.” But we might ask: how much did Rubens love his wife, and how much did he love his image of her in his painting?

If these theories are valid, Shakespeare invested an immense amount of libido in his “creative world.” Let’s consider his relationships. From his sonnets, some critics believe that he had romantic or sexual relationships with Earls of Southampton and Pembroke, and that the Dark Lady didn’t exist in reality (or that, if she did, his writings represented his fantasies about her). (For the presumptive evidence for my speculations, I am most indebted to *Shakespeare’s Sonnets*, edited by Louis B. Wright and Virginia A. LaMar, 1966.)
There is evidence that he did dedicate two poems, “Venus and Adonis” and “The Rape of Lucrece,” to Henry Wriothesley, 3rd Earl of Southampton. But Wright and LaMar suggest that Shakespeare tried, thereby, only to enlist him as a patron. It was said that Southampton did give Shakespeare £1000, but that Southampton was more interested in politics than in art.

Scholars increasingly implicate William Herbert, 3rd Earl of Pembroke, as having been the object of sonnets Shakespeare wrote to a man. Wright and LaMar write that Pembroke and his parents and brother were major patrons of the arts; Pembroke’s parents wanted him to marry; Shakespeare’s first 17 sonnets urge a young man to marry and to procreate; and Pembroke’s age is more appropriate to the young man in the sonnets. There is no evidence that their relationship went beyond Shakespeare’s flattery of that very important, high-born nobleman—whom Shakespeare was delighted to consider his friend and patron.

I believe that Wright and LaMar are correct in suggesting that Shakespeare had a sexual relationship with the “Dark Lady.” I would guess that he wrote sonnets to her (which authorities believe weren’t meant to be published) in part to court her and in part because of his pleasure in that work. I would speculate that, except for his wife, with whom he had a distant and very limited relationship, the “Dark Lady” was the only woman in his life, and that he deeply cared for her. The relationship seemed to have been difficult. The content and sequence of the sonnets may indicate that at first she kept some emotional distance between them—that she was initially ambivalent and/or rejecting, and that he continued his pursuit using flattery, but also expressed (albeit cautiously) unhappiness and complaints. This may have been responsible for their brief relationship lasting even as long as it did—and for it resulting in as many sonnets.

The relationship seemed to gradually improve. There is evidence of significant insecurity from sexual and emotional inexperience. But I sense the evolution of their relationship to a rewarding level (at least sexually), with adolescent-level enthusiasm and pride deriving from some good sexual experiences. Very soon after that brief good period, Shakespeare wrote no more sonnets.
In Sonnet 129, he wrote very negatively about the pain of desire and also, I believe, about the fear of loss of semen and vitality in sexual activity, and the pain of post-coital shame and guilt. (Those are common, primitive fears in men, along with guilt about masturbatory fantasies and impulses.)

The expense of spirit in a waste of shame [a shameful waste]
Is lust in action; and, til action, lust
Is perjured, murd'rous, bloody, full of blame,
Savage, extreme, cruel, rude, not to trust;
Enjoyed no sooner but despised straight;
Past reason hated as a swallowed bait,
On purpose laid to make the taker mad:
Mad in pursuit, and in possession so;
Had, having and in quest to have, extreme;
A bliss in proof and, proved, a very woe;
Before, a joy proposed; behind, a dream
All this the world knows well
To shun the heaven that leads men to this hell.

Does a later character come to mind? Hamlet might have written those words. He is 33 years old and chronically angry, which he might deny; but he would admit to pessimism, cynicism, and depression. He unconsciously knows that he could never be king or marry Ophelia—he’s been too close to his mother. His powerful father had always been away on military expeditions. Kingship and marriage are Father’s turf; and Hamlet has severe oedipal guilt. It had been almost immobilizing until his father’s ghost’s directive gave him an excuse for murderous action.

In addition to the reasons cited by Ernest Jones in his classic, _Hamlet and Oedipus_ (1949), there is another reason that Hamlet postpones killing his uncle. He knows that as soon as his uncle is dead, he must slip back to near-immobility. He kills him only when he, himself, is dying. The greatest rage he expresses is toward his innocent, passive mother, whom he unconsciously blames for his oedipal predicament. Standing over the body of Polonius, he can do nothing but berate her for sex with his uncle. He speaks with disgust of their sexual relationship. Despite all else that is happening, he begs only that she avoid sex. He seems more a frus-
trated lover than a son. His behavior destroys every major character except for Horatio, whose death he prevents. He tells Horatio: “... draw thy breath in pain, and tell my story.”

I believe Shakespeare suffered from the same conflict that shaped Hamlet’s life and death. Jones writes, “It probably expresses the core of Shakespeare’s philosophy and outlook on life as no other work of his does” (Hamlet and Oedipus, 20). The eminent authority, A.C. Bradley, said that, in Hamlet’s speeches, “Shakespeare wrote down his own heart” (Oxford Lectures on Poetry, 1909, 357).

Shakespeare was, of course, more fortunate than Hamlet in several ways. One reason for his greater success was that he lived to so large an extent in his “creative world” that he cathetaed it with so much libido, and that he enjoyed living there so much. Although he wrote many bitter plays, this reader is grateful for the serenity Prospero seems finally to have found in that great late play, The Tempest.

It has been said that we know little about Shakespeare’s life. In fact, so much of his libido “lived” in his creative life that his work tells us a great deal about him.

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Reflections on S. Ansky’s The Dybbuk: The “Queerness of Creativity”

Irene Javors—Yeshiva University

The first time that I saw the 1937 film version of The Dybbuk, directed by Michal Waszynski, I was completely overwhelmed by the brilliance of this masterpiece of Yiddish cinema. At the time, I knew little or nothing of the origins of this work. I later discovered that the movie was based on the 1920 play by S. Ansky (or An-sky) (1863-1920). My interest in this work has led
me to delve more deeply into the life of its author to gain an understanding of what drove Ansky’s creative engine. I speculate that by sifting through Ansky’s biographical material, we will discover psychological clues to the mystery of Ansky’s *The Dybbuk*—that Ansky’s psychosexual conflicts and attempts at resolution are enacted within the content of the play.

*The Dybbuk*, or *Between Two Worlds*, tells the tragic story of two fathers who are best friends and who contract to marry their future children to each other. The father of the bride, Leah, forgets this agreement and finds his daughter a wealthy suitor despite the fact that she is in love with a young, penniless rabbinical student, Khonen, who, unbeknownst to anyone, is the true, destined bridegroom. The *beshert* (fated/destined) groom dies and becomes a *dybbuk*—a restless soul—who lives between the living and the dead, and who takes possession of the bride, Leah, during the wedding ceremony. As the story progresses, there is staged the convening of a celestial court, a crisis of faith in the Chief Rabbi, an exorcism, and a “death will not part us” finale where Leah and Khonen are joined together for eternity.

The play is no ordinary variation on the Romeo and Juliet theme. Ansky has written a play that contains many radical ideas: the triumph of romantic love over traditional marital arrangements; criticism of bourgeois materialism; giving a public voice to a traditional, Orthodox woman—even though this voice takes the form of a male spirit speaking through a woman; and, lastly, a concern for the fate of those who “live on the border” with no home of their own.

Gabriella Safran in her biography, *Wandering Soul: The Dybbuk’s Creator, S. An-sky* (2010), depicts Ansky as a man of multiple identities and allegiances. He is portrayed as a man in constant motion who has described his life as follows: “I have neither a wife, nor children, nor a house, nor even an apartment, nor belongings, nor any settled habits” (in *Wandering*, 5).

Early in his career, he changed his very Jewish name from Shloyme Zanvl Rappoport to S. Ansky (or An-sky). He offered various explanations for the origins of this pseudonym: a printer’s error; a way to honor his mother’s name, Channa; or, finally, his
version of Mr. Anonymous. In so doing, he attempted to disguise his very obvious Jewish identity.

Ansky’s political and cultural allegiances were in constant flux. He supported Russian populists; proclaimed himself a Zionist; assumed the role of political propagandist for the Revolution; and became a well-known ethnographer who collected stories and folklore from the rapidly disappearing _shtetls_ (villages) of Russia.

As a Jew living in Russia in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Ansky lived a liminal, or borderline, life. His identity as a Jew made him “queer” or “odd man out” in a very anti-Semitic world. Ansky was the quintessential hyphenated being: Jew-Russian; Russian-Jew; Jew-who-lived-in-three-languages: Russian, Yiddish, and Hebrew. He wrote of himself: “a writer has a difficult fate, but a Jewish writer has an especially difficult fate. His soul is torn: he lives on two streets, with three languages. It is a misfortune to live on this sort of ‘border.’ And that is what I have experienced” (in _Wandering_, 3).

Not much has been written about Ansky’s personal life. His relational history consisted of several short-lived affairs with women and two failed marriages. Safran, in her biography, suggests that Ansky “wrestled with his sexuality” (_Wandering_, 4). Safran intimates that Ansky’s constant need to keep moving might have stemmed from his flight from his sexuality as well as his commitment to radical ideas that were critical of bourgeois domesticity.

Safran tells us that the one connection that Ansky sustained throughout his life was with his childhood friend, Chaim Zhitlowsky, who came to be known as an early advocate of secular Yiddish culture. In a letter to Chaim, Ansky wrote, “How could I not love you, how could I not want to meld with you into a single soul? For a long time you were everything to me. You replaced my family, God, like a woman, and now you are and will remain for [me] the closest person on earth” (in _Wandering_, 50). A female friend of Ansky’s described him thusly: “that feminine softness of his own nature makes him unconsciously, by the law of contrasts, choose some strong male figure to wind all his passionate thoughts and feelings around, as ivy winds around a strong oak tree” (in _Wandering_, 92-3).
Ansky’s queerness or non-conformity is rooted not just in his Jewishness or his political and social radicalism but also in his sexuality. We do not know if he was homosexual, but we do have a window into his inner world in terms of his homo-social bonding with his male friend Chaim and the description offered by his friend Anastasia Sletova, who said, “He loved women and was loved by many of them, but saved his strongest feelings for other men” (in Wandering, 92).

The play The Dybbuk is the cultural product wherein Ansky attempted to work out many of his sexual and gender identity issues. In this play, he co-joined the two lovers within the physical body of Leah, suggesting a realization of Ansky’s earlier comments to his beloved Chaim of his desire to “meld with you into a single soul.” Khonen was the representative “strong male figure” who fulfilled Ansky’s “need to cling to someone with all the force of his being.”

In our desire to understand the creative process, psycho-biographers search through our subjects’ biographical and autobiographical material for clues to solve the mystery of our subjects’ works and projects. In the case of The Dybbuk, I put forward that Ansky’s unconscious struggles with his sexuality were at the core of this work. Ansky lived a “queer,” or liminal, life. He was a radical revolutionary who wanted to go forward while holding onto the past, a modernist who longed for anonymity while assuming multiple identities, a romantic who dreamed of love and marriage while at the same time seeing these institutions as bourgeois and decadent, and a lover of men who could find no acceptable place within himself or the world to express such a love.

After years of political activism and ethnographic research, Ansky spent the remainder of his life editing and revising The Dybbuk. Though ill and exhausted, he drove himself to perfect his work. The alternate title of the play, Between Two Worlds, is itself a window into the unconscious struggles of the author. I posit that this work provided the setting for the working-through of Ansky’s psychosexual conflicts as well as provided him with some sort of resolution—the lovers, liminal figures themselves, are united as one soul for eternity. Leah and Khonen represent aspects of Ansky: the feminine and the masculine. By uniting them in the play, Ansky
found resolution within himself.

Ansky died in 1920 and did not live to see the production of his play. The play was translated from Russian to Yiddish and then into Hebrew. The play has also been made into a film and a dance, *Dybbuk Variations* (1974; music by Leonard Bernstein and choreography by Jerome Robbins), as well as other operas and dance performances. S. Ansky’s haunting play has captured the imaginations of all who “live between two worlds.”

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“What’ll It Be?”: Stanley Kubrick and History

**Geoffrey Cocks—Albion College**

In 2003, historian Thomas Kohut observed that psychoanalysis must take account of history. Kohut begins his essay with an anecdote involving a family friend who survived the Holocaust. One day, on a walk with Kohut and his family, the woman reacted with panic to a small construction site on the sidewalk consisting of a small hole covered by a walkway and a railing: “In reality the construction site was not dangerous, even for our children. But her reaction...was so familiar to me. My father could have—would have—reacted in the same way. He too survived the Holocaust, fleeing Austria as a young man in 1939” (“Psychoanalysis as Psychohistory,” *The Annual of Psychoanalysis*, 2003, 225). In considering the relationship of psychoanalysis to history in this way, Kohut was following the lead of Peter Loewenberg, who had made much the same case in 1977 (“Why Psychoanalysis Needs the Social Scientist and the Historian,” *International Review of Psycho-Analysis*, 1977, 305-15).

The insights of Kohut and Loewenberg on the effects of his-
tory on the psyche are of special relevance for understanding the creative life of filmmaker Stanley Kubrick. While there is little evidence of childhood trauma or exceptional degree of neurosis in Kubrick’s character, the impact of history on his psyche and thus on his art is unmistakable (Geoffrey Cocks, “Stanley Kubrick’s Dream Machine,” *The Annual of Psychoanalysis*, 2003, 35-46): a process of dynamic conscious and unconscious response to his historical environment.

Kubrick was born in New York City in 1928, and his childhood and early adolescence were “undershadowed” by Hitler and the Holocaust. As the eldest child and only son of Jewish parents, Kubrick could not help but be affected by the looming atmosphere of threat to Jews represented by Nazism and fascism in Europe during the 1930s. Kubrick’s Polish ancestors had come to America around the turn of the century. Many Kubriks who had remained in Poland were murdered at Belzec and other Nazi death and labor camps during the Second World War.

Even though he was fascinated by history in general and the history of Nazi Germany in particular, Kubrick never made a film about the Holocaust. He never filmed “Aryan Papers,” the single screenplay he wrote concerning the subject. But the very failure to bring this vision of the central horror that dominated the world during his early years represents the powerfully problematic centrality of the subject to Kubrick’s life and art. Kubrick expressed deep reservations about the ability or appropriateness of film to address the subject of the Holocaust. These objections, however, were not simply philosophical or aesthetic but also deeply personal. The horrors of Hitler and the Holocaust above all had convinced Kubrick that the world was a dangerous place, which is why a major motif in his films is the child’s discovery of this peril.

In another film Kubrick never made—but which friend and colleague Steven Spielberg did—*A.I. Artificial Intelligence* (2001), the central character, a robot boy, is abandoned by his human mother with the words, “I’m sorry I didn’t tell you about the world.” This scenario recapitulates the story of *Wartime Lies* (1991), Louis Begley’s novelized memoir of his years as a hidden Jewish child in Nazi-occupied Poland that served as the basis for
“Aryan Papers.” Begley’s book is about loss of childhood innocence and persistence of this loss into adulthood. The struggle against evil is not heroic, ennobling, or transcendent, but deeply damaging to character and psyche, a point of view in line with Kubrick’s own mordant sense of the world into which he was born and grew to maturity.

The title of Kubrick’s screenplay captures this dynamic perfectly since it embodies not only the preservative lie of a protective “Aryan” identity but also the corrupting identification with the aggressor that Begley recalls as his childhood admiration for the hardness and power of the SS and the German army. It also mirrors Kubrick’s own conflicted fascination with the history of the Third Reich reinforced as well by its cultural representations after 1945 (Margaret Burton, “Performances of Jewish Identity: Spartacus,” Shofar, 2008, 1-15; Thomas Caldwell, “Shutter Island,” Cinema Autopsy, 2010, online). Such ambivalence—fascination with and fear of evil—as reflective of internal as well as external demons was another reason why Kubrick could not confront this history directly in his films.

The trope of children discovering a dangerous world dominates Kubrick’s films of the 1970s, when popular interest in Hitler and the Nazis reached a new high. In A Clockwork Orange (1971), Barry Lyndon (1975), and The Shining (1980), an adolescent, a young adult, and a child, respectively, confront revelation of horror both internal and external to themselves. Kubrick’s adaptations of these three novels were part of a longer arc in his cinema beginning with Dr. Strangelove (1964) and 2001: A Space Odyssey (1968). Dr. Strangelove, whose screenplay Kubrick co-wrote, has two endings: the nuclear destruction of the world and the post-Holocaust emergence of a new young “Master Race” promised by the Nazi Strangelove. 2001, also co-written by Kubrick, ends with the “Star Child” regarding the earth he will inherit. When Mephistophelean bartender Lloyd in The Shining asks Jack Torrance (played by Jack Nicholson) “What’ll it be?”, Jack chooses his old poison, Jack Daniel’s. The name includes the name of Jack’s son Danny (played by Danny Lloyd), who is the child who “shines” the past and future horrors of the Overlook Hotel.

There are authorial oedipal dynamics at postmodern play
here, but also historical ones. The Holocaust serves as the most deeply buried touchstone of historical evil in *The Shining* and so it too shows up in the name Jack. When “writer” Jack, slumped over his German Adler typewriter, dreams of murdering his wife and son, the music on the soundtrack is Polish composer Krzysztof Penderecki’s *The Dream of Jacob* (1974). Kubrick’s father was named Jacob but he went by the name Jack, and Kubrick had recently read Raul Hilberg’s *The Destruction of the European Jews* (1961), which details the Nazi bureaucracy of extermination.

Danny Lloyd’s discovery of the murders committed in the Overlook Hotel’s past—a vision of blood pouring from an opening elevator door—is visually bracketed by small details of the physical environment. Before and after the gaining of this knowledge about the world, a tracking shot shows cartoon figures on the door to Danny’s room. Following Danny’s vision, one figure is missing from the door: one of Disney’s Seven Dwarfs, Dopey. This new status for Danny of knowledge gained is reinforced by the depiction deep in the background of a subsequent shot of a poster of iconic 1970s “big-eyed” children.

Similarly, German and Nazi references are to be found in *A Clockwork Orange* and in *Barry Lyndon* (as well as the same question posed to the protagonist regarding choice or, rather, the lack of it, “What’s it going to be then, eh?” and “Now, what shall it be?”, respectively). Teenager Alex in *A Clockwork Orange* graduates from individual crime to serving a criminal state. Kubrick’s film was based on the American edition of the novel that leaves out the last chapter in which a maturing Alex reflects critically on his violent adolescence. Irishman Barry goes to war (for the British and then the Prussians), to a loveless marriage, and finally into exile. Jack fails to kill his family but remains frozen in time and space as servant to one of Kubrick’s “high spaces” of cold authority. Moreover, Kubrick’s habit of referencing his previous film finds expression in the blue of Prussian uniforms that are picked up in the cornflowers (associated culturally with Prussia and Germany) on the wallpaper of the hall in the Overlook, where the Grady girls are murdered. All these details are evidence of the workings of the historical world on the psyche of the artist.
“Defiant” Creativity: Rafael Schächter and Verdi’s Requiem in Terezin

Karen Uslin—Catholic University of America

In June 1944, soon after the D-Day invasion, members of the Nazi Party and the International Red Cross watched a performance of Giuseppe Verdi’s Requiem Mass (1874). However, this was no ordinary performance. Instead of in a grand concert hall with a large orchestra and chorus, they sat in the front row of an auditorium in Terezin, a concentration camp about 40 miles outside Prague. The performers and their conductor, Rafael Schächter, were prisoners in this place that was rife with overcrowding, sickness, starvation, and fear of transports to the east. Yet somehow, these men and women, under the direction of their determined conductor, sang to the Nazis. Despite being hungry, weak, and in some cases barely alive, they still sang. They sang what they could not say: Germany’s day of wrath would come, and God’s judgment would at last reign down on the Nazis. Jewish prisoners used a Catholic Requiem Mass in one of the most musically creative ways possible: as a form of resistance, an act of defiance, against those who were working to destroy them. The choir took their inspiration from their beloved conductor, Rafael Schächter, a rising star in Prague before his deportation to Terezin. This article will tell the story of Rafael Schächter and his Verdi choir, and of how, even in the most abysmal conditions, musical creativity became a weapon in the face of death and anxiety.

It is tempting to speculate on some of the general sources of defiance among these musical inmates. For small children, as during the “terrible twos,” a separate identity is established by going against the parent. Extreme dependency leads to an indirect expres-
sion of defiance, such as in early childhood (where the parents are the source of all that is needed for survival), or being incarcerated in a camp (where one is killed directly for open disobedience). More than anything else, the opportunity to participate in the chorus or orchestra represented a chance to reestablish an individual and collective sense of artistry for these prisoners, in opposition to the daily routine of dehumanization they faced.

Not much is known about Schächter’s early life. He was born in Romania in 1905, eventually moving to Brno in 1933. He studied piano, composition, and conducting at the Brno Conservatory. He made his way to Prague and began working in E.F. Burian’s theater in 1937. Four years later, Schächter was forcibly taken from Prague to Terezin. This town (northwest of Prague) was originally built as a fortress town in 1780 by Emperor Joseph II in honor of his mother, Maria Theresa. In November 1941, the Nazis sent a transport of Jewish men to Terezin with the task of preparing it for incoming prisoners. Rafael Schächter was on this original transport, labeled AK1. According to Edgar Krasa, Schächter’s roommate in a tiny attic in Terezin after their arrival on the first transport and a member of the Verdi choir, the prisoners felt that “with the way we were living a prison mentality may overcome us. He [Schächter] assembled the men after they performed their work, in the barracks’ basement, and encouraged us to sing Czech songs, which allowed us for that period of time to forget the reality of our actual circumstances, and reminded us of some of the cultural life we led at home” (interview by Karen Uslin with Edgar Krasa, 2005).

This drive to retain some humanity in the midst of Terezin’s deplorable conditions resulted in an unexpectedly rich cultural life in the heart of Europe. The prison population at Terezin consisted of academics, musicians, actors, directors, and painters. The arts in Terezin worked as a two-way street: the Nazis saw this as a way to try to prove to the rest of the world that they were treating the Jewish people well by allowing them to have cultural activities and the prisoners nurtured their minds and spirits. The cultural life at Terezin allowed these artists to figuratively step out of the concentration camp and into a world they knew and wished to return to after the war. Terezin inmates gave academic lectures, plays, caba-
rets, operas, chamber music, choral music, and solo recitals. The *Freizeitgestaltung* (Free Time Activities Council made up of inmates at the camp) scheduled all cultural activities; the Nazi officials at Terezin would then approve the schedule. Anything they deemed inappropriate was immediately banned; the Nazis also punished the camp inmates by denying them cultural activities.

In the spring of 1943, Rafael Schächter began rehearsals for a performance of Verdi’s *Requiem*. The idea of Jewish concentration camp prisoners singing a Catholic Requiem upset some on the Jewish Council of Elders and the *Freizeitgestaltung*; they felt that this would be viewed as the Jews apologizing for being Jewish. “Schächter wanted to tell the Nazis that the day of reckoning will come, and they will not escape punishment. He couldn’t tell them in German, but thought singing it in Latin he could get it off his chest” (interview by Karen Uslin with Edgar Krasa, 2006). The Council feared that if this message became public, the Nazis would hang Schächter and deport the chorus.

Yet Schächter persisted. He offered to let anyone who feared the wrath of the Nazis to leave rehearsal and not sing, but every choir member stayed. It was a long, arduous process; the only score of the *Requiem* in Terezin was the one Schächter had brought with him from Prague, so he had to teach the choir their parts by rote with a legless piano in a concrete basement of one of the barracks. Three times his choir was decimated by transports to the east; yet Schächter continued to rehearse and teach the piece. Finally, after seven months of rehearsals, the premiere took place in January 1944. Viktor Ullmann, one of Terezin’s premier composers and music critics, wrote, “In this case however, it may seem right once again to emphasize that Rafael Schächter, to whom Terezin musical life owes so much, whose natural ability to motivate others and artistic actions have managed a performance of metropolitan level…” (Ingo Schultz, *Viktor Ullmann: 26 Kritiken über musikalische Veranstaltungen in Theresienstadt*, 1993, 74).

Schächter and his choir had performed the Verdi 15 times in Terezin when an order came from camp commandant Karl Rahm to perform the *Requiem* for members of the International Red Cross (IRC) and Nazi officials from Berlin. The Nazis had decided to use Terezin as a show camp for the IRC. Schächter originally did not
want to perform; transports had reduced his choir from 150 members down to 60, and he felt the choir did not have the size or strength to sing for the officials. Yet here was the chance he had waited for, the chance to literally sing to the Nazis what could not be said to their faces. So in June 1944, Schächter conducted the Requiem for the members of the IRC and the officials from Berlin, in what would be their last performance. On October 17, 1944, Schächter and the majority of the Freizeitgestaltung were put on transports to Auschwitz. Transports had begun in earnest to the east in September; this particular October transport was one of the last to leave Terezin. Most of the musicians were sent directly to the gas chambers and an entire generation of Czech composers and musicians were lost to the Nazi genocide.

“Without Rafi, it wouldn’t have happened, and we showed the world, we didn’t know whether the world cared, but we proved beyond the shadow of any doubt that yes, they have our bodies, yes, we have no more names, we have numbers, but they don’t have our soul, our mind, our being, our what we are cannot be taken away, also, it will not be taken away at the moment we are shot” (interview by Murry Sidlin with Terezin survivor and Verdi chorus member Marianka, May 2011). This, more than anything, was the heart of Schächter’s message in performing the Verdi Requiem, a work he later referred to as a “requiem of defiance.” Rafael Schächter, through music, determination, and creativity, allowed the inmates of Terezin to transcend the limitations and oppression of their reality.

Karen Uslin is currently a sixth-year PhD musicology student at the Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C., and an adjunct professor at Marymount University. Her dissertation focuses on analyzing the musical life of Terezin through the use of primary sources such as diaries/journals, poems, and music critiques. She is also the Research and Communications Assistant for the Rafael Schächter Institute of Arts and Humanities. Her most recent concerts include singing in the chorus of Murry Sidlin’s Defiant Requiem at both Terezin and the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C. Further information on the Defiant Requiem project is available at www.murrysidlin.com, and the author may be contacted at 33uslin@cardinalmail.cua.edu.
Encouragement and Perseverance: Lives of Some Working-Class Artists

Susan Gregory—Singer/Teacher/Therapist

Harold sits on the couch in his living room, his gnarled fingers holding a glass of scotch. He gestures to a wall hung with musical instruments, telling me about his years as a classical guitarist. Harold is 102 years old. Lily, his wife, was a sculptor. After she died, he continued living in their condo, driving to the diner every afternoon. At 100 he gave up driving; he takes Meals on Wheels now. These two working-class artists mentored me throughout my childhood. They told me it would be good for me to pursue a musical career, if that’s what I wanted.

My father, Robert, worked with Harold in the post office. While Harold and Lily were professional artists, earning money from their art (although not enough to live on), Robert, it turns out, also was an artist, a writer, and art photographer, most of whose production came to light after his death. Robert grew up on New York’s Lower East Side, with parents who spoke only Yiddish. His written essays in high school were so good that the teacher failed him for purported plagiarism. I remember his leaning over my homework at the kitchen table and saying, “Suzie girl, when you write a story, if a character bites an apple, make sure your readers taste it.” This passing comment was not only craft advice but was also a message that creativity was worth our attention, and that creative activities were worth undertaking.

I interviewed six other artists for this brief essay—sculptor, painter, playwright, essayist, poet, dancer/choreographer—and include myself, a classical singer. Most spoke about the influence of one or more mentors in childhood, who encouraged creativity. Most, though, were also advised to practice their art as a sideline, since their working-class parents could not see how they would support themselves otherwise.

Nick (artists’ names have been changed), a playwright, talked about the uncle who lived with his family. “Uncle Paul kept beautiful books of Renaissance art in the room he rented from my
father. He often showed me the pictures and talked with me about the beauty of art. I wanted to draw pictures like that, but as a street brawler in my Bronx neighborhood, I only felt safe drawing cartoons. I began to make comic books, which were, as it turns out, plays!"

Sharon, a sculptor, spoke of the encouragement that painter Ruben Tam gave her at the Brooklyn Museum Art School. Although she was being groomed by the family to be a violin prodigy, her mother accepted her change of art form. That was because Sharon’s uncle, a gifted artist, had died in the flu epidemic of 1918. Now, it seemed to her mother, Sharon was bringing art back to the home. Ruben Tam’s mentoring was thus accepted by the family.

Felicia, a dancer/choreographer, first found a mentor at the Puerto Rican Traveling Theater. Felicia’s older sister took her to free movement classes there after the two had accidentally come across Alvin Ailey’s “Revelations” on television. Felicia remembered asking, “What’s that? It’s beautiful.”

Ron, a painter, took his first art lessons at a settlement house in Philadelphia. The teachers there encouraged him; while his parents did not. “Pop was an immigrant from Italy. He learned his trade as an apprentice to a master tailor. He understood craft, and in his own way was an artist. But in America, he had to do piecework in a factory; he lost his art. My father didn’t understand the possibility of making a living with fine arts and so didn’t encourage me. I bought books on how to draw and how to paint, and learned everything that was in them. I prepared my portfolio unassisted. The Philadelphia College of Art gave me a scholarship.”

By contrast, Karen, a poet, spoke of her mother as her first mentor. “She called me a poet from an early age. My mother read poetry to me at bed time, in a warm, expressive voice. She put her arm around my shoulders and drew me close. These were the only times she touched me.”

Lenny, an essayist, preferred not to name any mentors. “Great authors were my mentors,” he said.
Six of us are products of urban, working-class homes where public institutions were important in nurturing our artistic development. Three of us studied arts at settlement houses; three of us went to public high schools for the gifted; and four of us were educated through college scholarships, one through the GI bill. All of these were public benefits which existed in our country from 1945-2008 and which are diminishing now.

At one time or another, each of us lived in railroad flat tenements in New York City, where, in those days, rent was cheap, artistic work space was affordable, groups of like-minded artists were close by, and part-time “survival” jobs were plentiful. This was in the mid- and late-20th century, a time when booming prosperity made it possible for children of the working class to pursue and expect to achieve artistic dreams. It was a rare time in human history.

In conducting the interviews, I learned that six of us were from liberal or radical homes, and that the seventh was the baby of her family. We were all treated with relative kindness and, to varying degrees, encouraged to fulfill ourselves as people, if not always as artists. The way we had been treated at home gave each one of us a sympathetic view of humanity, which also, unfortunately, amplified our “hidden injuries of class.” In his book, *The Hidden Injury of Class* (1972), sociologist Richard Sennett writes about the behavioral training of working-class children who are taught to be deferential to authority and not to put self above any other members of their class. These inculcated behaviors make it almost impossible to move oneself toward fame and/or financial success in adulthood. In her interview with me, Karen referred to this unacknowledged holding back as “getting off the track [to success].”

As Karen saw it, she got off the track the summer she refused to take off her clothes and sit on the famous poet’s lap. For Nick, it was the trip to India where he encountered millions of starving people. For Lenny, it was the constant, difficult-for-him-to tolerate round of New York networking parties and book signings, with what to him was “meaningless small talk.”

For me, it was the time a renowned opera patron, known for
her financial generosity to individual artists, sent word backstage that she would be “very happy” if I were to sing the Strauss aria in the Metropolitan Opera competition. I was uncomfortable with her suggestion and sang an Italian work instead. Later, I realized I had offended her.

I understood what was being hinted at, but it was not spelled out enough for me; I grew up in a home where we were taught to understand things literally. In addition, I believed that my voice sounded best and my acting was strongest in the Italian repertoire. The Strauss was what I least wanted to sing, in part because the character was a virginal, dreamy teenager, a role that I had trouble identifying with. I wanted to show myself to full advantage, to “live” the role and deliver the material in the strongest way I could (that’s an artist speaking). In addition, somewhat unconsciously, as a child of a family in which some members perished in the Holocaust, I was hesitant to sing Strauss in that public forum. Further, I felt offended to be told by a rich and powerful person what to sing.

I see now that I had a class reaction, a family history reaction, and a reaction that comes from my very independent personality style. I wanted to be the artist who decided what was her best suit and who would be rewarded for her artistic skill and power. Now I see that was a fantasy. I didn’t grasp the fact that the competition was a set of business transactions, not a creative, “express oneself” moment. Needless to say, I did not win the competition. For me, being an artist was a form of strong independence—a hope for a break from my social class—and I could not see how I could be an artist if I did not assert myself.

Among the seven of us, we have a cornucopia of achievements, including a couple of dozen very fine reviews, published and televised interviews, medals and prizes, museum exhibitions, books published, plays produced, and movies optioned. Yet we have all spent our adult lives having to do other work in order to do art work. Even when I sang at the New York City Opera, I had to teach English to immigrants in order to pay the rent; even when Nick had a well-reviewed play running off-Broadway, he had to drive a cab.
As I see it, there is some way in which the values in the homes we grew up in did not teach us to network in the same ways that those whose parents were in business—even a little candy store—were exposed to. It seems to me that each of us seven was trained to be, in some way, relationally modest. We were encouraged always to work hard, to push a project forward, but never to push ourselves forward. Whether this can be considered a personality weakness or strength is something I will look into for another essay.

All seven of us are still practicing artists. This year Karen had her 79th poem published; Lenny had his 64th essay published; Felicia danced in the St. Mark’s Dance Series; Sharon was included in a museum retrospective; Nick won a prize for his film on the similarities between Holocaust survivors and Latin American torture victims; Ron built his 10th classic guitar; and I had my third book chapter published. Yet six of us, at ages 50-83, are still working for a living while working at our art. As Karen said to me, “If you’re an artist, you can’t not do art.” Nick said for all of us, including Harold, “Perseverance is my high card.”

Susan Gregory, MA, is a Gestalt therapist in private practice in New York City where she also teaches singing. Susan is a concert singer, a former principal artist with the New York City Opera, and former president of the New York Institute for Gestalt Therapy. She has been visiting faculty at Gestalt institutes in England, Ireland, Australia, and New Zealand and has published 17 articles and three book chapters. Susan Gregory’s Web site is at www.GestaltSing.com and she may be contacted at GestaltSing@aol.com.

We Wish to Thank Our Prompt, Hardworking, Anonymous Referees and Diligent Editors
Art and Neurosis: A Myth

Norman Simms—Waikato University

Consideration of art and artists needs the depth of centuries and millennia. I also rely on personal experience. Until very recently one might accept a sort of Platonic-Christian-Romantic view as in Keats in clumpy paraphrase—"Truth is beauty, beauty is truth. That’s all you ever need to know,” or “A thing of beauty is a joy forever.” In other words, the object of art—architecture, sculpture, dance, painting, music, poetry and oratory (the choice comes from Félicité Robert de Lammenais’ 1844 essay “On Beauty”)—already always exists and the artist, the maker, is a classical Aeolian harp, through which the winds of inspiration blow, and all that is required is “the negative capability,” the cancellation of the intelligence, the reason, and the social sense, to let the beauty come through, shaped by some skill. Each individual work, of course, is only a more or less competent imitation of the pure idea, the perfect idea of the truth.

By the 19th century, the Renaissance notion of the creative genius—the modernized version of prophetic enthusiasm and classical divine rage or madness—came into its own. The artist was a man (rarely a woman) unlike and apart from the ordinary who expressed in his own works, as in his own life, the truth of beauty and the beauty of truth, no matter how ugly it might seem to the patrons who only cared about its monetary value, social prestige, or functional use as decoration. Then today anyone who calls himself an "artist" can produce anything or not produce anything and call it “art,” the more eccentric and immoral his (or her) behavior may be. As long as you express the self it is true (or sincere), and if it is true, then it is art, and the more it insults bourgeois morality the better it is. That’s why little cards explaining the artist’s “story,” “journey,” or “rejection of parents, community, and culture’s values” are more important than the pile of rubbish on the floor or the flashing lights on the wall.

Not so long ago, one could distinguish good from bad art on the basis of skill, importance of topic, and place in the order of things, or see that Sunday painters were amateurs, sometimes with
talent and sometimes without, while others devoted their lives to art and were willing to starve in a garret and suffer for the sake of the higher spiritual values of Art. Academies and histories of art could teach the rules and models of great art or at the very least how to mix colors and prepare a canvas, how to mold clay and fire a kiln, or how to advance through scales to more and more difficult finger exercises. To a large degree, the value, meaning, and importance of the art depended not on the artist’s private opinions but on those who commissioned the work, bought the objects, and held them up as models of excellence to be copied and learned from. Private eccentricities were just that: private and eccentric.

Most art was the production of artisans working in ateliers, on commission, with topics assigned by ecclesiastical, state, and aristocratic patrons. The master craftsman, on behalf of a guild, monitored the progress of apprentices, gave them tasks to be done, and waited for a few to emerge with masterpieces, so they could take over or form their own workshops. The artist, in this sense, worked for a cathedral, a palace, or a civic enterprise, making what was needed, and what was needed was determined by historical, religious, and political traditions. (The master might indeed express personal beliefs and preferences in his work, but these were subordinated to the requirements set out in contracts, and anything produced that offended or was inadequate would be painted over, broken, and thrown out, if not immediately then over the next generation or two.)

Historical circumstances and cultural traditions make artists and their work part of a dynamic continuum with the institutions of society that support the arts—by commissions, ownership, display, and instruction. Individual eccentricities tend, in the long term, to be subsumed by style, and style means both what distinguishes one tradition from another and what differentiates one artist’s work from another.

Was the artist or the great artist insane, and was that insanity a defining quality in his or her character? In the first case, sometimes; in the second, not at all. Not all artists were or are neurotic or psychotic (though some, of course, were—Correggio, van Gogh, and Picasso) because some people are mentally ill. Narcissism, paranoia, and deep depression are not necessary states of
mind for the artist. Art itself may be—as a form of self-expression and disciplined activity—useful in therapy, but making lamp stands from driftwood or modeling ashtrays or copying scenes from *National Geographic* in watercolors are only extremely rarely valuable works of art. Many artists, resentful of time-wasters and curiosity-seekers, are moody, but wanting to concentrate and develop one’s *oeuvre* is not a form of madness. In my experience, the more selfish and oafish the person, the less worthy is what they “create” and call “art.” Most of the successful painters, sculptors, actors, and novelists I know are quite happily married, good parents, and responsible citizens. Those who are not are not necessarily more skillful or insightful.

To emphasize, the artist is probably psychologically no different from any other person. If you look at groups of painters, musicians, novelists, or architects, you find in their early careers either support from their families or resistance and hostility: among the young men and women who grew up in mid-19th-century France and became known as Impressionists, a few were cranky, difficult, or egotistical, but most were generous, happily married with normal children, and lived reasonably comfortably through periods of non-recognition, seasons of success, and the frailties or illnesses of old age. Few were suicidal; fewer were violent towards others or demonstrated signs of neurosis or psychosis. Some musicians in the last few centuries grew up in families that encouraged their talent, if they had it in superabundance or not; others became alienated from bourgeois fathers unwilling to fund their tuition or underwrite their expenses. In brief, I don’t see anything to distinguish the artist who is a genius from the artist who is either only mildly successful or unsuccessful other than some innate talent, a favorable home environment, a sense of determination to bear with the normal stresses and strains of growing up, and a large degree of luck to be born in the right place and at the right time to fit in with the tastes of the times.

The artist as *genius* is a romantic cliché, which is only partly true about some creators. The genius used to be a spirit that guided or guarded places; then it began to designate individuals with charisma who did the same thing, or at least claimed they did and convinced many of that truth. In the 18th century, the term for
an outstanding performer or author was *virtuoso*. Then, in the Romantic period, the virtuoso became what we would call a “celebrity,” and so it was non-artistic deportment that made audiences believe the object of art or the exhibition of talent was an expression of an artistic, creative spirit—and was therefore above the law or outside of conventional decorum. This opened the door for all sorts of bizarre characters to slide into public view by outrageous acts. One out of ten thousand of these persons perhaps will produce something to be remembered in future generations.

Madness, or the classical concept of *furor poeticus*, enthusiasm and inspiration—and now the antics of Madonna and Lady Gaga, entertainers who are known as *artistes*, the “e” ambiguously crediting them with genius and charisma (not to mention near nudity and grotesque make up)—are they really crazy?

Madness or neurosis is not the defining marker of the artist, and art is not necessarily the expression of an inspired (“enthusiastic”) genius. Until the Renaissance in Italy and in most cultures of the world before that and even long after, art was the making of craftsmen and women, highly talented, known by name to their contemporaries, and commissioned by officials and wealthy patrons who valued their work. I find the categorizations currently in use rather disingenuous, at most relevant for measuring contemporary popularity but not for assessing the long-lasting (“eternal”) qualities once deemed essential: beauty, truth, and justice. Once people adopt as absolute the idea that art must be valued for its sincerity in expressing the artistic self, then the definitions become self-serving redundancies, allowing craziness to become a positive characteristic. If we see art as part of a continuing dialogue among artists, patrons, and audiences, we can find grounds for discussion on what constitutes excellence, perception, and morality.

*Norman Simms, PhD*, has been teaching literature in New Zealand since 1970, with brief stints in Canada, France, and Israel. He has edited several journals, including *Mentalities/Mentalités*, and has written scores of scholarly articles and books. Lately he has started to publish short story collections, including *Snapshots from Eternity* (2009) and *Half-Sour Pickles* (2010). Dr. Simms may be contacted at nsimms@waikato.ac.nz.
Featured Young Scholar of Creativity Interview

Molly Castelloe: Scholar of Psychoanalysis and Theater Arts

Bob Lentz—Clio’s Psyche

Molly Castelloe was born in 1964 in Raleigh, North Carolina, and now lives in Brooklyn, New York. She received her PhD in Performance Studies with a focus on theater and psychology from New York University in 2005. Dr. Castelloe is the author of articles published in *Psychoanalysis, Culture and Society; Grolier’s Encyclopedia of Modern Drama*; and Clio’s Psyche, as well as of several plays and numerous conference presentations. She acted in *Clean, Shaven*, an award-winning film about schizophrenia, and has taught various courses at New York University’s Department of Film and Television. Dr. Castelloe blogs “The Me in We” for www.psychologytoday.com/blog/the-me-in-we and moderates the Clio’s Psyche Online Forum. She is also writing, producing, and directing the film *Second Skins* on the work of Vamik Volkan. A busy mother of two boys, she may be contacted at msc214@nyu.edu. This interview was conducted by e-mail in summer 2011.

Bob Lentz (BL): You were born and grew up in the South. Was there anything distinctive about your childhood cultural environment that affected your research interests?

Molly Castelloe (MC): Growing up in the South is to learn many contradictions. There is lingering cultural nostalgia about blacks and whites working the land together, girls in gowns at debutant balls, black women as second mothers. I experienced a strange in-
terdependence and love that goes along with the historical oppression of blacks by whites, of women by men. There’s also a special weight of history when you come from the South. Change is hard won. You’re what editor and writer Shirley Abbott calls “a daughter of time.”

My youngest brother is a musician, and one of the songs he gets most requested at weddings is Loudon Wainwright III’s “Daughter”:

_That’s my daughter in the water, everything she knows I taught her..._  
_Every time she blinks she strikes somebody blind._  
_Everything she thinks blows her tiny mind._

Southern women are taught to dumb down and to look for themselves in others. But this pandering of reflections can also be keen attunement toward another and a desire to respect and assist another’s needs. My mother and sister have an extraordinary sensitivity to this. Despite the historical warfare of the South, there is an emotional warmth I’m reminded of whenever I go back home.

**Bob Lentz (BL):** What is the importance of childhood and family dynamics for creativity?

**MC:** I can speak to my own childhood. When you come from an emotionally difficult place, you have to do something with your feelings. I have my beloved parents to thank for my interest in theater. They fought each other for 30 years and taught me a lot about making a spectacle!

I am one of five children, my mother’s second offspring and my father’s much anticipated first. My older brother is a half brother, but we were emotionally very close growing up. There was conflict between my parents about his patrimony, the ghost of a dead father. I wanted to defend and protect my brother as an outsider, as someone different in my family. He became sick when I was an adolescent, and I wrote him letters every day for a while during his stay at the hospital. Putting words on paper channeled overwhelming emotional forces within me and helped me regain some balance. I think the question of how we understand differences of the human body, whether ancestral, sexual, or racial,
has a lot to do with striving to be creative, with wanting to make something.

**BL:** Can childhood trauma sometimes be turned to a positive purpose (though that does not condone or excuse the cause of the trauma)?

**MC:** Yes, with training and practice, the experiences can be remade. To feel intensely and be made to get in touch with those feelings gives you access to other worlds. I'll give you a specific example from acting. Konstantin Stanislavski wrote about the “ability to feel the truth,” a verisimilitude in acting. This begins with sense memory technique and the “coffee cup exercise” where you recreate the experience of holding a cup of coffee. What does it smell like? How does the coffee taste? What is the weight of the cup in your hand? This learning provides the basis for reactivating emotional memory, reproducing a past experience through the sensory perceptions of an interpersonal scene. Such living memories come from internal places that acting teacher Lee Strasberg called the actor’s “golden keys”: approximately two or three experiences that an actor needs to draw on throughout his or her career. Stanislavski said that living memories guide us; they awaken us to creative work.

**BL:** What is your primary professional identification?

**MC:** Psychoanalytic author and teacher. Psychohistorian-in-becoming.

**BL:** What has been your psychoanalytic/psychotherapeutic experience and its influence on you and your work?

**MC:** I was in Freudian psychoanalysis four times a week for 14 years beginning in my early 20s. It was a profound experience of being heard. It helped me think deeply, feel deeply, navigate a treacherous internal world and change it. Being in analysis also gave me a survivor mentality: if I can get through this, I can get through anything.

My analyst, the late Charles C. Hogan, was a wonderful mentor, muse, and role model. He wore a suit and tie everyday. He was gentle and funny, and could make me laugh at the things that frightened me. We discovered strength of character neither of
us knew I had. My analyst was surprised at how much he was able to help me. So, on a fundamental level, it was a very mutually-gratifying relationship. Being in analysis gave me confidence in life. I learned to be scrappy. I got to be good at auditioning for parts and was cast in a project that became my first trip to Asia, to Sri Lanka, in the early 1990s. It’s amazing what you can discover through an audition at a ramshackle storefront in the East Village of Manhattan!

There’s almost nothing more wonderful than going to another culture so different from your own and being part of it from the inside. I remember the Sinhala phrase, “Ko ho ma da, machan?” (How are you, my friend?) and the first time I said it to Lankan people. It was a moment of connection. I was talking to the director and the crew, who were filming something in the woods. When I spoke their colloquial phrase, they heard my authenticity and responded in kind. There is something about an outsider speaking someone else’s mother tongue that gives an intentional and genuine feeling.

The film story was about a theater company whose rehearsal is interrupted when a member dies from a bomb exploded by ethnic separatist terrorists. Before going to Colombo, I read about the ethnic conflict between the Sinhalese and Tamils, in the north, and the history of Ceylon as a British colony. I talked to a few journalists who had been there and written about the country. It was my first psychohistorical case study.

**BL:** What role models have been important to your development?

**MC:** The late Elisabeth Young-Bruehl, who I saw for psychotherapy after my first analysis with Charles Hogan, was an emotional and intellectual force that embraced me intimately.

During my graduate studies “something clicked” when I read Vamik Volkan’s *Bloodlines: From Ethnic Pride to Ethnic Terrorism* (1997). I’ve been interested in his work ever since.

Anna Deavere Smith’s unique brand of theater has been indelible. She combines journalism and social commentary to investigate cultural conflict. I’m thinking particularly of her *Fires in the Mirror: Crown Heights, Brooklyn and Other Identities*
(1992). Smith created a one-woman show based on conflict between African Americans and Lubavitchers in Crown Heights, Brooklyn. She conducted taped interviews with residents of the neighborhood, memorized them, and then reconstructed the crisis for the community in which the events occurred. Mimicking their accents and speech patterns, she incorporated the experience of her informants—enacting the various roles of victim and victimizer. Theater director Richard Schechner described her as a ritual shaman attempting to cure a possessed patient. This solo performance was part of a project Smith did in which she explored how the language of an individual reflects the character of a group.

Félix González-Torres, a Cuban immigrant whose work was the center of museum exhibitions during the 1980-90s, also inspires me. He used commonplace objects and an economical vocabulary to address themes of fear and love, mourning and play. Among his minimalist designs were arrangements of stacks of paper he made on the floor of the gallery: reams of industrial paper printed with photos, figures, or text. Visitors were invited to take one of the sheets with them, and this act was crucial to the meaning of his work. The first stack was done as a memorial designed to be roughly the size and shape of a tombstone. When installing the stack, González-Torres spoke to the gallery guards about his work. Later, the attendants would talk to viewers, inviting them to take a sheet of paper, entering into conversation about HIV and the search for a cure. According to the artist, the letting go of the material, of the sheets of paper, was a way of externalizing affect, of grieving the death of his lover. González-Torres used art to activate the spectator, to intervene in the crisis of AIDS.

BL: Please share with us about your writing, producing, and directing Second Skins on the work of political scientist Vamik Volkan.

MC: A few years ago, I asked Vamik for videos of his lectures from the Austen Riggs Center to make a movie, and he was kind enough to give them to me. When I had time away from my children, I watched the DVDs and then began to intercut material off the web. In the back of my mind, I was thinking about Anna Deavere Smith’s work. Also relevant to my thinking was Gayle Austin, who created her “Feminist Theory Plays” (1993) by editing scenes from classical dramatic texts with feminist theory and then
reading these plays aloud at academic conferences.

Vamik was coming to town for the American Psychoanalytic Association Conference in New York in January 2011, and a co-producer suggested we take the opportunity to film him. We planned a day’s shoot, and I interviewed him in a cab going to Ground Zero. He spoke about his work in international relations. His ideas about hot spots, group identity, time collapse, and inter-generational transmission are all very interesting and have contributed a lot to psychohistory. He told us a story while sitting on a bench in the graveyard at Trinity Church, right across from the World Trade Center site:

I was born in Cyprus. Then Cyprus was a British colony. But as I grew up, I realized that before I was born, my parents were Ottoman citizens. In fact, my father was an Ottoman citizen, then he became a British citizen, then he became a Cypriot Republic citizen. Then he became a Northern Turkish Republic citizen, and then he died. All without moving from same house. So history gets in your blood.

I feel emotionally akin to Vamik. Perhaps the Green Line that divides Cyprus is similar to the demarcation of the Mason-Dixon Line. There is also the common issue of bloodlines that was prevalent in my Scottish-English family of origin.

Hopefully the film will be completed in two to three years. I am applying for grants now. Once Second Skins is completed, I’ll submit it to film festivals, PBS, and the History Channel.

BL: What are the sources of creativity in the artist?

MC: Feelings and fragmentation are the source, the afflictions of inner life. Holly Hughes wrote the play World Without End (1989) as a way of navigating grief following the death of her mother. For Hughes, an audience is a form of protection. I’ve felt like that at times. Creative work is a kind of “resting place,” as Winnicott put it, a reprieve from the divisions of life—from mediating loss and desire.
Exposure to art objects and the creative process encourages creativity. My parents were not artists, but they have an appreciation for books, myths, museums, and education. Formal training helps as well as critical theory. Reading Aristotle, Brecht, Foucault, Artaud, and Virginia Woolf gave me the freedom to “see” creatively. It gave me pleasure through knowledge and abstract thinking, a better understanding of how reality is constructed, of how social forces and history shape our experiences of power. It is important to move back and forth between theory and practice.

Creativity is a breakthrough, but it can also be painful. I had a scriptwriting teacher who once said that sometimes writing a play is like Vietnam; after trying to rework the material from the emotional trenches for years ad nauseam, sometimes the writer finally has to give up and pull out. Then s/he starts another play, set some other place and that ends up trying to complete the last one anyway.

**BL:** How does psychoanalysis encourage, enlarge, or inhibit creativity?

**MC:** It fosters creativity in that it draws from an internal place, encourages one to think associatively and symbolically, and enlarges one’s capacity for self-reflection. It also helps you figure out when your superego is strangling your creative impulse, when it is blocking pleasure in free-feeling. My analyst wanted to write a paper about how judgment was like a form of murder, how it fixes or catches something like a fly in amber. There are also, of course, times when conscience is called for. In my experience, psychoanalysis sheds light on when judgment should be applied and when it should be suspended. In this way, it cultivates creativity.

**BL:** How did you come to combining an interest in theater with psychoanalysis?

**MC:** Performance Studies. Previous to this, psychology, then psychoanalysis, came from my desire to understand how I love the people of my childhood. As a young adult, theater attracted me because I had a lot of emotion on the surface and wanted to do something with it that was not destructive. I was lucky to discover a few great characters, but most of them committed suicide by the last scene: Hedda Gabler, Miss Julie, Ophelia. These are wonderful
parts, but I felt existentially cramped. I became sensitive about dying onstage. One attribute of feminist drama is that the heroine survives the end of the play!

My curiosity about psychohistory sprang from studying representations of women in classical plays. I was in *The Oresteia* once, in a small theater on the Upper West Side of Manhattan. We had a rotating cast. I played Helen who is trafficked between Paris and Menelaus; Iphigenia, daughter of Agamemnon, whom he sacrifices to the Gods for favorable winds for sailing his fleet to Troy; Clytemnestra, the femme fatale, who butchers her husband, Agamemnon; and Cassandra, Agamemnon’s war prize. What kind of life is this? It’s a fantasy life of women created by men, who wrote the plays and played the parts. In Western culture, the activity of acting is psychohistorically gendered.

**BL:** What is performance art to you? To some, it may seem offensive.

**MC:** Performance art is various things, and, yes, it sometimes involves representing something that people think is a “freak show” or that makes them uncomfortable. The actions onstage may go beyond the viewer’s ability to withstand turning away.

Performance art invites the viewer to emotionally invest in the piece through explicit use of the body. The body is a canvas or collage. Art historian Amelia Jones calls performance art an aesthetics of narcissism, since the artist and art object are one. Frequently the function of performance is to mirror and critique collective narcissisms, such as sexism, white supremacy, heterosexuality, and capitalism.

Karen Finley was defunded by the National Endowment for the Arts in 1990 for “obscenity.” In her performance monologue *The Constant State of Desire*, she put chocolate and sprouts on her nude body and then brushed on raw egg with a stuffed Easter Bunny. She used food remnants to create a bulimic wasteland across the surface of her flesh. This was a way of explicitly displaying something that is not usually acknowledged, of publically parading certain private humiliations—those related to child abuse, rape, wife-beating, and familial dysfunction. Many accused Finley of inserting things into her orifices, specifically her anus. I think
such actions were projected onto her stage persona as she became a hornet’s nest of libido. This was a time of widespread homophobia and denial of AIDS even within gay and lesbian communities. Much of the controversy surrounding Finley’s monologues from the 1980s comes from how she inverted the boundary between internal and external, how she disrupted historical assumptions about what is private and what is public. This artist’s work also reclaimed women’s anger, aggression and humor as a creative force and source of political power.

Finley began performing in 1979 after the watershed event of her father’s suicide over the Christmas holidays. Her father’s death gave her an interest in what she calls “real time” and the instantaneous experiences of the body, which became central to her aesthetic. Performance intentionally blurs the boundaries of life and art. It involves the use of autobiography and the death of character. Well, not exactly the death of, but it minimizes the aesthetic distance of character, creating new intimacy between audience and performer. It reorganizes the triangular relationship between artist, art object, and spectator. It is cheap to produce: the setting a street, café, or black box stage. It uses found objects, things dug out of the trash and costumes from the thrift store or your neighbor’s wardrobe.

BL: Where do theater, particularly performance art, and psychoanalysis intersect?

MC: There are a few important places of convergence. For both performance art and psychoanalysis, the human body is a primary point of reference. In his early work, Freud had the hysterics with their strange symptoms of aphasia and paralysis. Performance artists use the body as the primary aesthetic instrument, often revealing a cultural symptom.

Performance art, too, is structured through the relationship of transference and counter-transference. Transference takes place from performer to audience; counter-transference is the audience’s emotional investment in the performance.

For both psychoanalysis and performance art, there’s a concern with free expression and subaltern experience. Freud lived during the height of anti-Semitism in Europe, within a discourse of
national identity in which Jews represented the antithesis of the Aryan ideal. A main source of cultural trepidation over the Jewish male was the practice of circumcision, which Freud and Jacques Derrida write about as a symbolic substitute for castration. Jewish male identity was in this way feminized. The male Jew’s distinction from the Aryan was articulated as sexual difference and, Ann Pellegrini argues, reflected deeply-ingrained unease about the growing visibility of women in Austrian and European public life. Various levels of Otherness underpin psychoanalytic discourse, relate to categories of race as well as gender, distinctions between the public and private, and anxiety about new social mores. Performance art also engages many of these topics.

**BL:** What role can theater play in societal evolution?

**MC:** Theater is a relief valve for cultural anxieties. It moves libido around. For instance, Sue-Ellen Case says representations of women in Greek plays of the 5th century BCE reflect apprehension about new social organizations and economic practices, namely the rise of the family unit. Family changed the role of women in Greek public life. They disappeared from the stage and were relegated to the private space of the home. Men played women’s parts. This was around the same time as the invention of the Satyrs Play, a hybrid genre of “tragi-comedy” based on the amoral mythic creature who loved women and wine. The male actor wore a mask and the skin of a deer or goat over his naked body. He danced around with an (erect) phallic prop in worship of Dionysus, emphasizing maleness.

When the Puritans rose to power in England’s Parliament in the mid-17th century, they closed all the theaters, made them illegal, and then tore them down. They removed the value of artifice. Since men and boys were no longer able to play the parts of women, thus giving theatrical expression to libidinal fears, real destruction was inflicted during the witch hunts and actual women were tortured and killed.

There are also times when public protest, as a form of theater, can be a way of renegotiating cultural values. In the Occupy Wall Street demonstrations in Zuccotti Park in Lower Manhattan, the struggle over public space between protestors and the city—the
repositioning of metal barriers and threats to close down the port—represents rivalries of power over the rearticulating of law.

BL: What observations do you have on the role of celebrity in our culture—what Paul Elovitz calls “celebrity culture”?

MC: There is a French performance artist, Orlan, who makes self-portraits with her body through cosmetic surgery. She approaches surgeons with computer-generated composites of women drawn from representations of the history of Western art. Orlan remains fully conscious during the operations, reading from psychoanalytical and philosophical texts. These events are broadcast live through satellite and Orlan answers questions from spectators at galleries in multiple countries, gazing directly into the camera when the procedure permits. As with many performance artists, she makes a private act public, which is a way of engaging the cultural unconscious. In a series of “performances” in the 1990s that she calls The Reincarnation of Saint-Orlan, she did multiple elective surgeries to morph her facial features in reproduction of the chin of Botticelli’s Venus, the nose of Jean-Leon Gerome’s Psyche, and the forehead of Leonardo da Vinci’s Mona Lisa. Needless to say, there is an unnatural look to her appearance. But this is one of her main points: the ideals of female beauty that we have naturalized are not natural at all.

Art or freak show? Gruesome satire? I once saw Orlan in New York presenting a video of one of her “surgical performances” and had to leave the auditorium. But what does her work say beyond the visceral, repulsive spectacle of it? My analyst called it “masochistic exhibitionism,” which it may well be, but her choice of becoming the first artist to use plastic surgery as a medium points beyond individual pathology. What does her work say about the culture she is made from?

Orlan calls what she does “woman-to-woman transexualism,” from the normal to the ideal, a form of self-portraiture she calls “Carnal Art.” She brings to attention external pressures on the body, anxieties about aging, our obsessions with weight and youth, and the medicalization of the female body. Celebrity culture places the root of desire outside ourselves and induces women to hack themselves up in the perpetual illusion of gratifying an imagined
external gaze. Nowhere is this more evident than in the Oscars ceremony every spring, second only to the Super Bowl in garnering spectators. My analyst was quick to note that the award is a phallic-shaped, shiny object, one that keeps the most famous people in the world busy buffing their bodies to keep up with their popular image. Celebrity culture makes us long for an impossible return to something that never existed, that has always been a fantasy. It sells a lot of things, too, in addition to plastic surgery.

**BL:** As a relatively young scholar in psychohistory, have you observed generational differences in outlook, approaches, and interests with your colleagues?

**MC:** I identify strongly with an older psychoanalytic tradition and yet am invested in how psychoanalysis adapts beyond the medical profession. Considering the anti-Semitic context in which Freud lived and worked, why don’t psychohistorians engage more contemporary issues of sexism and racism? In addition, it seems there is a heterosexual bias and defensiveness about homosexuality. Is this something like what Freud felt as a circumcised Jew?

**BL:** You’re one of a limited number of women practicing psychohistory. Even this publication, after almost 20 years, just appointed the first woman to its Editorial Board. Have you encountered any gender issues in your psychohistorical work?

**MC:** I wish there was more analysis of the representations of women in art and history. For example, despite the craftsmanship and personal insights of Arthur Miller, *The Crucible* reproduces a narrative we have heard many times before from a male protagonist’s point of view. The play expresses Proctor’s desirous conflict between Elizabeth and Abigail: the steadfast wife versus the deceitful “whore,” as Proctor calls the teenage girl servant in Act III. Miller’s play reiterates certain cultural misogynies. This kind of split-female portraits has a long tradition in the West and thrives commercially. Remember Adrian Lyne’s movie box office hit, *Fatal Attraction* (1988)? What do women do with these images?

I agree with Jim Anderson that politics stem from personal concerns, but sometimes these are also nodal points of social injustice. The Salem Witch Trials scapegoated nonconformist women. Have you ever seen a painting of a witch’s “possession?” It’s all
about the female body: the supposedly bewitched subject in a state of fitfulness, out of control, devoid of intelligible speech—the locus of satanic evil. Abigail Williams was only 11 years old at the time of the witch hunt in 1692. Miller changed her age to 17 in order to give her sexuality, credibility as the main antagonist, and to shape her as a psychic container of blame. While history is naturally a conservative discipline, psychohistory has potential to illuminate social wrongs and the historical repression of various groups.

**BL:** How can psychohistorians strengthen our work to earn more attention and influence in academia and society in general?

**MC:** Make more interpretations outside the clinical setting about public figures when details from their lives are already part of cultural discourse. Make repressed content available to the thinking public, especially when it also gives insight into cultural and historical context. They need to know who and what to vote for.

Write op-eds to expand debate in print, to influence policy and leadership. Get on the web and engage social media.

Freud created cultural hysteria by suggesting there was infantile sexuality in Victorian Europe. He was torn between being a revolutionary and wanting psychoanalysis to be accepted by the medical community. Psychohistorians tread this delicate balance. Use your passion. Don’t be afraid to create a revolution.

**BL:** Thank you for sharing with us about your life and career… so far.

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**Call for Papers**

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Creativity Book Reviews

Agon: A “Muse” for Sontag

Irene Javors—Yeshiva University


In Sempre Susan: A Memoir of Susan Sontag, Sigrid Nunez offers a window into the psyche of one of the most prolific intellectuals of the 20th century. Nunez gives us a heartfelt portrait of Sontag’s struggles as a writer, activist, celebrity, mother, role model, lover, and vulnerable woman.

In 1976, at the age of 25, Nunez became Sontag’s secretary. Simultaneously, Nunez became lovers with David Rieff, Sontag’s son by sociologist and cultural critic, Philip Rieff. She moved in with Susan and David, but within two years she moved out. Nunez’s connection with Sontag continued long after the ending of her relationship with David. Her memoir tells the story of her ongoing relationship with Susan over the next three decades. (For additional biographical and autobiographical information on Sontag, see Rollyson and Paddock, Susan Sontag: The Making of an Icon, 2000; Poague, ed., Conversations with Susan Sontag, 1995; and David Rieff, ed., Reborn: Journals and Notebooks 1947-1963, 2008.)

Nunez depicts Susan in all her neediness: failed love affairs, three bouts of cancer (ultimately dying from the third, leukemia), loneliness, restlessness, and dashed hopes and dreams. Nunez offers us a window into Sontag’s inner world. Sontag’s internal conflicts included her desperate need “to feel exceptional” (22). Out of this came her rejection of the quotidian and her horror of conventionality. She had absolutely no curiosity about the natural world and felt that childhood was a complete waste of time. Sontag “equated teaching with failure” (67) and that having to take a job was humiliating.

Nunez tells us that Sontag saw herself as self-created (67) and that she seemed in continual conflict with herself. An under-
standing of what might have driven Sontag’s creative engine can be found in a conversation that she had with Nunez, wherein Sontag told Nunez that in order to write, “You need an agon” (62). For Sontag an “agon,” or struggle, constituted the necessary ingredient for one’s creative output. From Nunez’s observations, Sontag’s conflicts included her feelings of “never doing the right thing” (124) and never feeling satisfied. She reports that Sontag felt that she had not lived right. Sontag wanted to be “more artist and less critic, more author and less activist: that was the way [she felt] she ‘should’ have lived” (124).

Nunez offers a sympathetic portrait of Sontag. The reader is left with feelings of amazement that Sontag was able to accomplish creatively as much as she did given all her psychological baggage. On the other hand, these internal struggles may have provided the fuel for Sontag’s creativity. The paradox of Sontag is that she held a “belief in her exceptionalism and in the power of her will, in self-creation, and in the possibility of being reborn, the possibility of endless new chances, and of having it all” (133). Yet, Nunez also reports that Sontag “was not happy with her life’s work...she had failed to reach the goals she had set for herself in her youth” (124).

Nunez tells us that one of Sontag’s favorite movies was the Japanese film by Ozu, Tokyo Story (1953). In the last frames of the movie, the characters Kyoko and Noriko have the following dialogue: Kyoko states, “Isn’t life disappointing?” and Kyoko responds, “Yes, it is.” For this reader, Nunez’s memoir does not disappoint. Nor do Sontag’s cultural contributions.

*Irene Javors’ biography may be found on page 429.*
Kendall’s Noah Webster and the Creation of American Culture

Andrew W. Brink—Psychohistory Forum Associate


Joshua Kendall’s well-written biography of Noah Webster (1758-1843) has received high praise, including a laudatory review in The New York Times (May 29, 2011). There is no need to expand upon the skill, broad historical awareness and shrewd character analysis that makes Kendall’s book an outstanding contribution to understanding Webster’s manifold influence on American culture, including its first dictionary, which insisted upon the distinctiveness of American word usage in contrast to British.

Instead, I should like to offer a few remarks on how Kendall handled Webster’s difficult obsessive character, its possible origin and the consequences of his extraordinary achievements. But Kendall’s study wisely does not set out to be a formal psycho-biographical analysis of Webster’s apparent obsessive-compulsive character disorder. To have done so, in the manner of Freud’s classic Leonardo da Vinci and a Memory of his Childhood (1910), in which evidence is selected, and sometimes twisted to support the Oedipal theory, would have been a mistake. Kendall is too psychologically savvy to speculate about developmental causes of obsessive-compulsive disorder in a subject so distant in history, let alone use “the cantankerous, driven and indomitable New Englander” to substantiate some pet aetiological theory of his own (328). Rather, we are given a series of psychological interpolations, which might have seemed intrusive if they had not been supported by observations by contemporary sources and by the biographical context itself. Kendall hardly strains credulity when he writes, “The thirty-year quest to complete the dictionary was inextricably linked to the fight to maintain his own sanity,” adding that “Webster’s pathology was instrumental to his success” (8). Here are seeds of a theory of creativity but, wisely, they are allowed to remain dormant as the
biographical task is pursued.

Not long ago Kendall’s repeated returns to Webster’s psychological difficulties might have led to resistance from readers. Biographers now have tacit permission to offer their readers psychological interpretations of character as long as they aren’t laden with jargon. There is no need for Freudian zeal to prove a theoretical point, and more relaxed psychobiographical techniques have replaced his. An admirable example of this is Blake Bailey’s 

*Cheever: A Life* (New York: Knopf, 2009), where John Cheever’s Oedipal plight is deftly worked in early to the narrative which would hardly make sense without it, but having been said, theory need not be labored further. Summarized, Cheever’s predicament was that a “Freudian shrink” had told him that he’d married his mother, the Oedipal feature of his malign family. The origin of Cheever’s creativity as a storyteller, as he put it, was “to give some fitness and shape to the unhappiness that overtook [his] family and to contain [his] own acuteness of feeling” (44). Of course, no such insight could have been expected from Webster in his time, so inferences must be drawn in place of outright declarations such as Cheever’s. In the Cheever example, assembling evidence for sexual ambivalence and alcoholism is no special challenge for the biographer. Further, in an age familiar with the tragic lives of artists such as Robert Lowell, Sylvia Plath, Anne Sexton and Diane Arbus, it is no insurmountable challenge to win credibility for a more remote creative figure such as Noah Webster.

The problem is that little evidence for Webster’s early history of attachments to parents can be recovered. All that can be said for certain is that his parents were “distant,” often inattentive, while being morally exacting with their offspring. But this could have been said of many such families in the American 18th century, and ways of differentiating Webster are wanting. As Kendall tells us that “no family letters or diaries [survive] from his childhood,” there is little to account for the origins of Webster’s arrogance, obsequiousness and “hypersensitivity to perceived slights” (18). This lack of documentation opens a temptation for the biographer to step in with theory-based guess work as to what style of early maternal attachment is likely to have produced in Webster obsessive-compulsive defensiveness. Further, Kendall wisely resists the
temptation to invent “plaster bones,” as William McKinley Runyan warned in *Life Histories and Psychobiography* (1984); that is, the sort of misinterpreted facts that Freud introduced into his misreading of Leonardo’s childhood, the most notorious being the so-called “vulture fantasy” in which the bird stands for the seductive mother.

In other words, Kendall’s psychological interpolations of Webster’s obsessive creativity are well enough supported by the evidence at hand, without importing theory or resorting to “facts” which do not withstand close scrutiny. Furthermore, Kendall writes in an era inured to finding psychological disorders in creative persons, so why should Noah Webster be an exception? Having honed his skills in credibly reconstructing the obscure historical figure Peter Mark Roget, another obsessive-compulsive character who felt constrained to “make lists” for his thesaurus, Kendall was well prepared for the all-but-forgotten Noah Webster. He deftly places Webster in the midst of the most “creative” formative period of American politics, society and culture. This does much to compensate for the lack of means more fully to explain the thrusting genius of Webster, exemplar of rugged American individualism, working at the cultural level. Such a judicious formulation as Kendall’s was bound to win praise as the best biography so far on Noah Webster. Unless a trove of unknown documents comes to light, Kendall’s book is destined long to remain so.

*Andrew Brink’s biography is on page 381.*

**Election 2012 Free Associations and Psychohistorical Questions**

**Paul H. Elovitz**—Psychohistory Forum

**King of the Mountain**

The party primary election system reminds me of the King of the Mountain game we would play as children. One of the kids standing atop a large stone or mound of grass would shout, “I am King of the Mountain,” while the others would seek to knock him off. The one who was most successful or cunning (allowing others to do most of the pushing, pulling, and shoving until they became tired and discouraged) would then make the monarchical claim. In
the Republican nominating process, the media and/or candidates declared, based upon public opinion polls, the ascendency of Donald Trump (he only threatened to run), Michele Bachmann, Rick Perry, Herman Cain, Newt Gingrich, and Mitt Romney. The caucuses in Iowa, Nevada, Colorado, Minnesota, etc., and the primaries in New Hampshire, South Carolina, Florida, and so forth are the meaningful determinants of who would gain the 1,144 delegate votes necessary to win the nomination. Thus far, Mitt Romney has been both most skillful and well-prepared in the adult version of this children’s game.

The Republican tradition has been “winner takes all” in the primary selection process, but because considerable interest was generated as the 2008 Obama-Clinton Democratic primary contest was prolonged, in some states for 2012 the Republicans have allowed proportional allotment of votes for the leading primary candidates. Because the Republican vote is so fragmented among Romney’s competitors, it remains to be seen if this will prolong the process that is usually shortened by the strong tendency of politicians and candidates without adequate votes and money to compete effectively to join the frontrunner and then perhaps collect political favors should this nominee indeed be elected president. The mechanisms of defense the Republicans use in the political struggle, which are certainly not unique to them, center on projecting all that is bad onto Obama and the Democrats, and all that is good onto themselves. The domestic world, according to them, is split into good Republicans and bad Democrats, and the international world into good America and evil Europe and China, as well as good Israel and evil Iran.

**Psychohistorical Ruminations and Questions**

What exactly distinguishes psychohistorical explanations of presidential candidates from the best sort of political journalism that you can find in the media and in the more thoughtful journals? In psychoanalytically informed political psychology, we are much more concerned with issues of ambivalence, coping mechanisms, creativity, empathy, fantasy, idealization, intergenerational messages, interpersonal relations, life traumas, and unconscious motivations of the candidates. Plus, an added burden for those of us devoted to doing psychohistory with a minimum of technical psycho-
logical terminology is how to get the reader to take the results of our research seriously without readily providing materials for pathologizing the candidates. The 20-plus Republican nominating debates and innumerable interviews I have watched in an effort to glean knowledge of Gingrich, Paul, Romney, Santorum, et al. have not revealed a great deal about how they would actually govern, since candidates’ promises often have a vague relationship with presidential political reality. However, I have learned a great deal about their emotions, knowledge, personalities, style, and public values.

In building a picture of people who happen to be candidates, it is good to first get a sense of their childhood experiences, though this is not something you’ll find a lot about in the earlier stages of the nomination process. Newton Leroy Gingrich (born June 17, 1943) is an only son who has three younger half-sisters, while Willard Mitt Romney (born March 12, 1947) is the second son and youngest of four children. The former Speaker of the House was born to a struggling 16-year-old mother in modest circumstances in Pennsylvania, while the former Massachusetts Governor is the child of prominent Michigan parents. “Newtie” was named for his biological father, Newton Searles McPherson, whose wife would soon divorce him for lack of support. He would agree, in exchange for four months of child support payments, that the mother’s new husband, Robert Gingrich, could formally adopt young Newt. Bob Gingrich was a strict taskmaster who moved around the world and reported that he once “smashed Newt against the wall for breaking curfew.” He was disappointed in the son who embarrassed him by being “too soft,” having “no guts,” a son with thick glasses and flat feet, who was therefore unsuitable to follow him into the military. Because of Newt’s mother’s bipolar disease and his estranged relationship with his stepfather, as well as because the family was always moving, he focused more on his imagination while growing up as what he called a “50-year-old at [age] 9.” He reports that he “had imprinted John Wayne...as my model of behavior,” and in high school he read Isaac Asimov’s *Foundation Trilogy* and Arnold Toynbee’s history. (Of course, Asimov’s fantasy psychohistory has nothing to do with the psychohistory we practice.)
By comparison with Gingrich, Mitt Romney had a very stable childhood. He was named Willard after his father’s highly successful, wealthy business friend Willard Marriott (of the hotel chain) and Mitt after a cousin who was a star football quarterback, leading me to wonder if some of the early messages from his parents were for their son to become highly successful, rich, and very much in control of the game. Their mothers faced different levels of stress. Unlike Kathleen (“Kit”) Gingrich, Lenore Romney did not have to clean houses to make ends meet.

The evidence points to the aspiring nominees having quite different relationships with women. Romney has been married to the same woman for 42 years. In contrast, Gingrich married his first of three wives when he was 19 years old (she was his 26-year-old high school mathematics teacher who supported him right through his doctoral degree in history), has a reputation as a womanizer, and always appears to need a woman or two in his life. He has ready, but unconvincing, denials for those who say that he brought the divorce papers to his first wife when she was undergoing medical treatments in the hospital and the claims of his second wife (who has recently given interviews helpful to the “stop Gingrich” movement) that he requested an “open marriage” so he could carry on an affair with his staffer, who is now his third wife. The pattern of his life leads me to wonder if he can be faithful to a wife over a long period of time, or if he will repeat his prior pattern of infidelity.

Wives often serve as humanizing stage props when candidates present themselves to the public. Callista Louise Bisek Gingrich (born 1966) stands on the stage looking up adoringly at her campaigning husband as he speaks. Ann Lois Davies Romney (born 1949) speaks more readily than Callista and exudes considerable warmth. Her 1998 diagnosis of multiple sclerosis and 2008 treatment for breast cancer have not seemed to deter her public appearances. Romney’s adult sons and some grandchildren are a commonplace before the campaign cameras, but I have not seen Gingrich’s two daughters or Candace Gingrich-Jones, Newt’s much younger lesbian-gay advocate sister, or either of his other half-siblings in his campaign.
There is a paucity of material readily available on Romney’s childhood, which appears to have been much closer to the mainstream American ideal and much less challenging than that of either Barack Obama or Newt Gingrich. In this childhood, I am finding the roots of his considerable accomplishments as a businessman, civic leader, and politician, but there are few hints to his being very introspective and self-revealing. It is hard to imagine Romney saying, as Gingrich did to Gail Sheehy in 1995, “I think you can write a psychological profile of me that says I found a way to immerse my insecurities in a cause large enough to justify whatever I wanted it to.”

At the moment I write this, Romney has what many political pundits consider to be a commanding lead for the nomination, with Gingrich appearing to them to be his only viable challenger. The Georgian states his determination to take the fight right up to the Republican convention beginning on August 27th in Tampa. They are two very different types of men. The former Massachusetts governor is a planner with an extremely well-organized strategy for success and a determination not to reveal too much about himself or repeat the mistakes his distinguished father George, a former Michigan governor and later U.S. Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, made during his abortive 1968 presidential bid. The elder Romney released 12 years of his tax returns to prove his openness and became a subject of ridicule for having spontaneously declared that he had been “brainwashed” by the generals regarding Vietnam. Conversely, Romney’s campaign is suffering from his lack of spontaneity; for example, it took enormous political pressure for him to release his tax returns for one year.

Although at times Gingrich has been an organized and effective planner, as when he orchestrated the Republican takeover of Congress in 1994, no one is likely to accuse him of a lack of spontaneity. The former Georgian Congressman has great confidence in his ability to adjust to changing circumstances and so seemed unfazed when his top campaign aides quit because he was not doing things their way, and, as of the end of January, has twice survived being declared politically dead. He has contempt for those who would mock his imagination and call him grandiose, hailing American grandiosity as the basis of its greatness. During the Florida pri-
mary he proudly declared that as president, he would establish a permanent base on the moon and talked of it becoming our 51st state.

**Mitt Romney: The Front-Runner Called Inauthentic by Many**

Thus far, while Willard Mitt Romney is ahead of his competitors, most Republican primary voters have been slow to warm up to him. This is despite the fact that he is a much-improved candidate from 2008. He has established an impressive, very well-financed campaign organization, has a large number of endorsements, and has worked hard to keep the focus on the need to replace President Obama. Some of the voter reluctance is clearly based on the distrust of a presidential candidate who is a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Protestants, especially fundamentalists, do not consider Mormons to be Christian and they compete with them for converts. Mormons are still associated with polygamy (Romney’s great-grandfather Miles moved the family to Mexico to avoid U.S. anti-polygamy laws). Romney has been a Mormon bishop (a leader of his congregation) who tithes. A great deal of the discomfort with him has to do with the combination of Romney’s personality and his strategy. He manifestly does not have the common touch; he is too “Ivy League” and “Wall Street” for many Americans. Some of his business associates labeled him the “Tin Man” because he appeared to be all head and no heart. His early strategy was to avoid exposure as the frontrunner—“King of the Mountain”—in an attempt to protect himself from being severely attacked until he had a commanding lead and could rely on his superior campaign organization and funding to repulse challengers.

The extent to which others harbor a drive to discredit him is apparent in the “anyone-but-Romney” movement. However, Bachmann, Perry, Cain, Gingrich, Santorum, Huntsman, and Paul have all filled this role without displacing him from the status of being the leader and perhaps the inevitable victor. Yet, the issue of Romney being an ineffective chameleon-type opportunist is central to the doubts plaguing the conservative faithful who come out and vote in the Republican primaries. Romney, who is now running as a conservative, has been on both sides of many issues—healthcare reform, a woman’s right to choose, gun control, stem cell research,
taxes, and so forth—so much so that conservatives simply don’t trust him, although many are drawn to his appeal to independent voters. He sometimes speaks in a hesitant manner, and there is also an inauthentic quality with which he says “my friend” to Newt Gingrich and others who are manifestly his competitors rather than his friends. His opportunistic tendencies are simply too evident for conservatives to be comfortable with him, even if their calculations tell them that he is their best bet to beat Barack Obama on November 6.

The divided Republican conservatives have made it possible for Romney to be the leading candidate despite a desperate attempt beginning in New Hampshire to discredit him. Gingrich called him a “crony capitalist” and his supporters put together a film on Bain Capital presenting the case that it did not create the 100,000 jobs Romney claimed and that it engaged in predatory capitalism. Perry referred to Romney as a “vulture capitalist” because his firm made money even when the companies they bought went bankrupt. Romney denounced these attacks by Gingrich and Perry, calling them “desperate Republican candidates” who were “putting capitalism on trial,” which he associates with Obama’s “politics of envy.” He has wrapped himself in both capitalism and American exceptionalism (see the June 2011 Clio’s Psyche special issue on the latter subject). He does not want readily to accept the distinction between those who create new businesses, and therefore jobs, and private equity firms that make money for their investors and themselves, sometimes cutting or adding jobs in the process. If he is nominated, the election will be between two Harvard-trained lawyers, each raised to idealize his father, and each lacking great emotional contact with his followers.

Gingrich’s Faltering Attempt to be the Anti-Romney Champion

After Herman Cain’s candidacy imploded at the end of November, Newt Leroy Gingrich became the prime beneficiary of the “anyone-but-Romney” movement. He had been written off as an untenable candidate for various reasons. One, he had too much negative baggage and a very bad reputation among conservative Republicans who had worked with him in Congress. Two, he appeared to be so disconnected from his campaign that his top staffers resigned in June when he seemed far more interested in going on
vacation to Greece with his wife Callista and selling his books, than doing the hard work of campaigning. Three, his apocalyptic language and tendency to brinksmanship makes some uncomfortable. Four, his temperament leads many to declare him to be untrustworthy, unreliable, and therefore un-presidential. Five, he has demonstrated a tendency to self-destruct as a leader, doing it in a manner that is especially obnoxious to his associates. For example, when he was being forced out of the leadership of the Congressional Republicans in 1997, he declared them to be a bunch of “cannibals.” He shows an inclination to take his party into dangerous power struggles as in the case of his engineering governmental shutdowns in 1995 and 1996 and the Clinton impeachment. In a 1996 article, “Taking Conservatives Seriously,” I argued that he, in fact, was twinning with Bill Clinton with both being Southern Baptist, cigar smoking, prevaricating, smooth talking, womanizing, Southern politicians, with Gingrich being the Scrooge-like twin who wanted to throw mothers off welfare and Clinton being the more generous one. In the current campaign, Gingrich advocated putting children to work in schools, displacing costly unionized janitors. With ideas like these, it continues to be likely that based on his past history and inclination to grandiosity, he will eventually self-destruct as a viable candidate, if he has not done so already.

Ron Paul and Anarchistic Rhetoric vs. the Reality of Governing

Ronald Ernest Paul (born August 20, 1935) is the most consistent of all the Republican contenders, as he generally says the same thing regardless of the audience. He is a dedicated anti-government conservative libertarian who, for some reason, has stayed within the Republican Party, which often relies on libertarians for their ideas, energy, and ability to inspire voters. However, once in power Republicans overwhelmingly discard libertarian policies. His clarion call of “get government off our backs and out of our wallets” has enormous appeal, as does the fact that Paul is a true believer. His enthusiastic supporters come out in any weather, bringing Ron Paul signs. Adam Smith’s 18th-century dream of a laissez faire society resonated among the most conservative primary Republican voters, especially in the early stages of the campaign.
In fact, laissez faire never existed anywhere, so it is mythic to believe in it. Further, a weakness of the emphasis on states’ rights is that telecommunications and rapid transportation takes what were once local, state, and regional problems and makes them national/international problems. Thus, the reality of governing America and the rhetoric of Paul and other Republican contenders for the presidency are incredibly divergent. Consider the voting record of the anti-federal government Tea Party candidates in 2010 and the fact that only a small minority of Republican members of Congress have not signed the Grover Norquist Americans for Tax Reform Pledge to promise never to vote for a tax increase. Consequently, conservative politicians have put themselves in an ideological strait-jacket, caused by advocating only tax reductions and never increases. People want services, and the government costs a great deal of money. Therefore, many of these debates and campaign promises have been about the fantasies rather than the realities of governance. This contributes to the problem of Washington gridlock that is so detrimental to our country.

Nevertheless, it can be refreshing to hear Congressman Paul, nicknamed “Dr. No” by his colleagues for his congressional voting record, defying conservative interest groups. He is alone among Republican contenders in denouncing the failed “War on Drugs” as well the “Warfare/Welfare State,” including the cost of well over 100 American bases around the world. It is noteworthy that the anti-government rhetoric in conservative Republican circles is focused on the federal government, since states’ rights is a central tenet of conservatives. Both their hearts and their rhetoric are inclined to favor a weak central government that does not intrude in local affairs until conservatives actually hold the responsibilities and opportunities afforded by government. It is interesting that after a series of electoral candidate debates, in which the main focus has been the minimization of government by reducing taxes and government regulation, the leading candidate is the historically big government man Romney.

In sharp contrast to the politics of Ron Paul, former Senator Richard John (Rick) Santorum (born May 10, 1958), a mostly big government social conservative, has emerged in early February as the anyone-but-Romney candidate. In June 2011, he vowed to
“fight very strongly against libertarian influence with the Republican Party and the conservative movement.” Unlike the Texas Congressman, he is a consistent hawk in foreign affairs and more of a party insider, as when he became the third-ranking Republican senator from 2001-2007. When in Congress he fought hard for expensive federal education and transportation programs and especially for earmarked funds for his constituents. His school nickname of “Rooster” reflects Santorum’s loud, assertive style as well as a cowlick strand of his hair. As the father of seven surviving home-schooled children, he is emphatic about living his Catholic social values. He had fought for “intelligent design,” which he considers to be “a legitimate scientific theory” to be taught in science classes” alongside of the “theory” of evolution. On issues such as the partial privatization of social security and the complete privatization of some other governmental functions, he does share some political positions with Paul. At this point, I have little psychohistorical sense of him, but I do have questions including the following. Why does Santorum so idealize his father while being so confrontational in dealing with his political fathers? Why did he bring his stillborn child home from the hospital to be viewed and grieved over by their siblings, some of whom were quite young?

Materials for the Explorations of the Dominant Candidates

This is a good year for those wanting to gather materials for a psychological comparison of the President and his likely competitor. Besides Obama’s writings, speeches, and public appearances, there are a host of recent books deepening our knowledge of him and his family background. Four quite useful ones are Janny Scott, _A Singular Woman: The Untold Story of Barack Obama’s Mother_ (2011); Sally Jacobs, _The Other Barack: The Bold and Reckless Life of President Obama’s Father_ (2011); Jodi Kantor, _The Obamas_ (2012); and Dinesh Sharma, _Barack Obama in Hawai’i and Indonesia: The Making of a Global President_ (2011). Two recent psychological studies are Stanley Renshon, _Barack Obama and the Politics of Redemption_ (2011) and Justin Frank, _Obama on the Couch: Inside the Mind of the President_ (2011). Renshon is a solid political psychoanalyst/psychologist, even if his book on George W. Bush was much more favorable than I thought appropriate. Frank is a Washington psychoanalyst who began his book on
Bush appearing quite reasonable and ended up writing a psychoanalytic hatchet job (which I deplore on the principle that psychohistory should not simply be a tool of pathologizing) on Bush. Despite my reservations about the authors’ earlier work, I am eager to read both books on Obama, as well as a lengthy forthcoming one by David Maraniss, who did an excellent early study of Clinton. There are also a growing number of volumes by those who have worked closely with the Obamas, which can add to our knowledge of him.

Most serious contenders for the presidency today think they should write books or get others to ghostwrite. If by some unlikely chance (as of this moment) Gingrich should become the GOP nominee, a speed reading course would be appropriate since he, as a verbose history professor turned politician, has written about 25 books. The more likely Republican nominee, Mitt Romney, has in turn written two books, *Turnaround: Crisis, Leadership, and the Olympic Games* and *No Apology: The Case for American Greatness*, and I have seen three books about him. His father George wrote books and had books written about him. Lenore, his mother, had a career as an actress and was also in the public eye before she unsuccessfully ran for senator. Although their son Mitt is not especially self-revealing, given his long career in business, the Salt Lake City Olympics, public affairs, and politics, there is much material to be mined for information on him. Rick Santorum published *It Takes a Family: Conservatism and the Common Good* and *Rick Santorum*. I plan to write a long psychobiographical comparison of the Democratic and Republican contenders to lead our nation from 2013-2017.

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**Call for Papers**

**The Psychology of Violence**

Due October 1 for the December 2012 Issue

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Theater and Film Reviews

A Dangerous Method

Ken Fuchsman—University of Connecticut

The film *A Dangerous Method* is an imaginative re-creation of the relationship of the Swiss doctor Carl Jung and his Russian patient Sabina Spielrein. Christopher Hampton wrote the screenplay, which closely follows his 2002 stage play, *The Talking Cure*. Since the screenplay to the film is unavailable, the published text to the same author’s play is used, as the same language is used in both.) The film is about the transformative power of sexual relationships, although no actual record of the character of Carl and Sabina’s sexual relationship actually exists.

A hysterical Spielrein benefits from Jung’s employment of the psychoanalytic method. As she starts to improve, Jung helps her get into medical school, and an alliance develops between them. The connection with Spielrein dovetails with other advances in Jung’s life. At his wife’s encouragement, Jung contacts and then forms a strong bond with Freud, who asks Jung to take on the disturbed but brilliant psychoanalyst Otto Gross as a patient.

Gross may be the first analyst to embody what Paul Robinson called the Freudian left, a combination of psychoanalysis and radical politics. In the film, the political side of Gross’s thought is omitted in favor of sexual radicalism. In what seems less like therapy than college bull sessions, Gross preaches sexual liberation to Jung, who responds that “sexual repression” is necessary “in any rational society.” Gross then says, “if there’s one thing I’ve learned...it’s this: never repress anything!” (Christopher Hampton, *The Talking Cure*, 2002, 38-39) Otto asserts, “The story of our life is essentially the story of our sexuality...To repress yourself must be to condemn yourself to realize no more than a fragment of your full psychic potential.” Jung immediately replies, “Not to repress yourself is to unleash all kinds of dangerous and destructive forces” (44-45).
Soon after, Jung starts a sadomasochistic sexual relationship with Spielrein. She tells Jung that her father’s threats to beat her led her to masturbate. Spielrein asks Jung to be “ferocious,” and “to punish me,” which he does. Afterwards, she says as a doctor she wants “to give people back their freedom by curing them, the way you gave me mine.” Sounding like Otto Gross, Jung responds, “This is what freedom is: no constraints, no chains, where love isn’t a means to an end, it’s an end in itself.” Gone are Jung’s assertions that destruction and danger accompany abandoning repression.

Emma Jung is aware of her husband’s affair and writes anonymously to Spielrein’s mother. This activates exchanges that lead to Jung trying to break off his sexual relationship with Sabina. Word gets back to Freud, and initially Jung deceives Freud. Eventually, Spielrein convinces Jung to confess to Freud what he has done, and then Jung retreats. He acknowledges that although he wants to leave his wealthy wife, home, and children for Sabina, he is ultimately a “complacent coward” and a “philistine Swiss bourgeois” (75). Jung embraces constraints and chains; unlike Spielrein, he does not have the courage of his experience. She turns acting out her sexual fantasies with Jung into psychoanalytic theory, and becomes the first to formulate the notion of the death instinct.

She also tells Jung that if “we think of sexuality as fusion, losing oneself...in the other, destroying one’s individuality” then “the ego in self-defense” will “automatically resist and repress that impulse...true sexuality demands the destruction of the ego” (73). Yet Spielrein acknowledges she gained her freedom through Jung; her ego was restored, not destroyed.

Jung remains stuck, repeats his relationship with Sabina in other affairs, and courts emotional and professional disaster by defying Freud. When Freud retaliates by cutting off their relationship, Carl has a breakdown.

It is when Jung is despondent that a married and pregnant Spielrein visits Jung and his wife. The two former lovers talk. Jung says, “My love for you was the most important thing in my life. It made me understand who I am, for better or worse.” Touching Sabina’s stomach, he adds, “This should be mine.” She
agrees. A rueful Jung says, “Sometimes you have to do something unforgivable just to be able to go on living” (86-87). These are the film’s last words.

As powerful as this line is, it raises questions. Except for the philistine scene, the viewer has not witnessed enough despair in Jung to drive him to cross certain lines. It is not that Jung did not have a traumatic past—his father died young, his mother was erratic, he was raped by a revered male adult—but that Hampton does not include these troubled aspects of Jung’s biography. What internal forces drew him to the volatile sexual expressions with Spielrein are not disclosed. The film’s flaw, then, is in Jung’s character development—the line about crossing moral boundaries is not given the proper dramatic foundation.

The Jung of A Dangerous Method clearly is destructive and self-destructive. It is Spielrein, through unleashing Jung’s violence, who discovered the psychoanalytic doctrine of the death instinct, not the man who enacted the violence with her. He continued his unconscious path. His illicit sexual life threatened his marriage and career, and how he dealt with Freud also shows how he risked himself. On one hand, Jung had real disagreements with Freud; on the other, an Oedipal Jung wished to knock his self-appointed father figure off the throne. When Freud perceived these death wishes from Jung toward him, he twice fainted, then later struck back and effectively excommunicated the wayward rebel.

This brings us back to the closing line of the play and film. The line itself is self-centered; Jung is less concerned about its effect on treasured relationships than how it can liberate the self. Doing the unforgivable to live does not occur in a vacuum. The power dynamics of the various relationships will determine if such overstepping helps one keep living or presents other obstacles. With his wife, Jung continued to do the unforgivable and she deferred to him. His death instinct towards the founder of psychoanalysis led to a counterattack that paralyzed Jung for years.

The closing line is an affirmation of Gross’s self-centered sexual radicalism. As a psychoanalytic doctrine it is too narcissistic, too removed from power dynamics and the benefits of
Awaiting Death at the Theatre

Tom Ferraro—Private Psychoanalytic Practice

For those of you who may have lingering questions about life or death, New York City was the place to be this December. Two plays, one about Freud and one about Samuel Beckett, were running off Broadway to sold-out houses. They function as sister pieces grappling with the same theme. Both brought a younger man at the beginning of his career face to face with an older man at the end of his career to discuss how best to find joy in life.

Krapp’s Last Tape by Samuel Beckett

Starring John Hurt at the BAM Harvey Theater, Krapp’s Last Tape centers on a man’s 70th birthday. His annual birthday ritual is to be alone, listen to tapes he previously made, and then add to them his angry comments. Krapp seeks one tape in particular to listen to on this day: Box 5, Spool 3. This tape contains his description of a beautiful summer day on a lake with his girlfriend at the time. He listens intently as he hears himself, at age 39, describing her beauty, looking into her eyes and gazing at her breasts in awe. The play juxtaposes this bliss of young love with the man’s current tragedy of aging. Here, Beckett is grappling with the tragedy that is life and presenting himself and the audience with some compensation. This play was written about nine years after Waiting for Godot, and one can see that Beckett has now given up waiting in hope and faces the more troubling question of death itself.

Freud’s Last Session by Mark St. Germain

Freud’s Last Session, starring Martin Raynor as Freud, premiered at the New Life Stages in New York City. This play also takes place in a single room, Freud’s study in London, which was meticulously duplicated for the stage based upon photos. Here we see Freud at age 83, dying of mouth cancer and living in constant pain. As he awaits the arrival of his physician, he is visited by a
young Irish literature professor, C.S. Lewis (played by Mark Dold). The young Lewis is all hope and enthusiasm, as he is at the beginning of his career. His optimism starkly contrasts Freud, who suffers silently in pain. Their conversation focuses on the meaning or purpose of a God and is set in the historical context of Hitler’s conquests in Europe. The playwright and the author, Dr. Armand M. Nicholi, are struggling with the very issue that Beckett tries to face in *Krapp’s Last Tape*: how does one find comfort and solace in a world that will inevitably bring tragedy, pain and death?

**Conclusions on the Questions of Sex and God**

Both plays suggest that man’s joy lies in his sexuality. Beckett has his sexual memories while Freud finds solace in sexual sublimations such as tea and cigars. Further, the fact that it was the cigar that kills him shows just how important man’s sublimated pleasures are.

St. Germain and Nicholi suggest that God is a good enough belief system that can provide people with comfort. In the play, however, Freud will have none of it. Instead, he suggests that in youth, we all have our sexual conquests to keep us warm, and in later life, we are all forced into sublimations (that might include cigars and some classical music) to keep sexuality alive. Those who have seen Beckett’s *Waiting for Godot* understand that for Beckett, waiting for God is a long and futile affair, as the title suggests. Whether in the lives of Samuel Beckett, C.S. Lewis, or Sigmund Freud, there is plenty of loss and suffering, and it is therefore a worthwhile quest to find compensations all along the way. Both plays depict great luminaries of mankind, Freud and Beckett, in order to reflect on how to find hope in the face of despair. They both conclude that life is tolerable if one has love’s embrace to keep warm and safe, and neither of these two thinkers include God in their formula.

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Memorials

Remembering Andrew Brink’s Search for Knowledge

Paul H. Elovitz—Clio’s Psyche

Andrew Brink (January 1, 1932-November 25, 2011)—an outstanding student of creativity, advocate for peace, Research Associate of the Psychohistory Forum, and founding member of the editorial board of this journal—died at Juravinski Hospital in Hamilton near his home in Ontario of bile duct carcinoma after some months of poor health and an emergency operation, which left him without the strength to recover.

Professor Brink taught literature at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario, from 1961 to 1988, prior to heading the Humanities and Psychoanalytic Thought Program at the University of Toronto from 1988 to 1993. Brink had an abiding interest in the British “object relations” theorists and the durability of their ideas about personality formation and psychopathology. He cared profoundly about his own family history, wrote about it, and served as a trustee of the Holland Society of New York.

Brink was such a passionate advocate of peace that he left the U.S., where he was born to Canadian parents and raised in Wisconsin, for Canada during the Korean War. He wrote a book about the 17th century genocidal behavior of the Dutch part of his Colonial family’s treatment of the Native Americans, seeking to understand the roots of the violence that he so detested. As revealed in personal communications and his Featured Scholar Interview in this journal (September, 1999), Andrew was extraordinarily self-revealing: this was part of a life-long search for self-discovery.

On January 1, 1932, his life began with dual citizenship in Madison, Wisconsin, as the only natural child of Royal Alexander (R.A.) and Edith Margaret Whitelaw Brink. He reported that his birth, by Caesarean section, almost took the life of his mother, who remained debilitated for the first year of his life, leaving her too weak to nurse him, except for a brief initial period, and to give him the type of maternal care she wished. She appears to have felt guilty about her inability to give her very best, and he reported that upon discovering John Bowlby’s “anxious attachment” type, his reaction was, “Aha! This is it!” His parents, who came from a Calvinistic-Protestant background, had become free-thinking agnostics. He grew up with progressive ideas in Wisconsin reading Darwin, Huxley, and H.G. Wells and being attracted to the Society of Friends because of their “peace testimony.” When Andrew was six, a sister was adopted. He was profoundly impacted by his mother’s breast cancer, discovered when he was about 15. As a child from ages six to twelve he “had some searching and helpful, though intermittent, analytic treatment with a woman” child analyst, following constant complaints of sore feet. As an adult he deeply regretted that he had never gone into a full analysis.

Andrew Brink earned his bachelor’s and master’s degrees at the University of Toronto and his doctorate at the University College of London. He never stopped learning and crossing disciplinary lines, finding friends and mentors in other fields including John Bowlby, the psychoanalyst Anthony Storr, and the British literary critic David Holbrook. Fortunately, some
colleagues in different departments were open to working closely with this insightful intellectual. A highpoint of his career was his decade-long cross-appointment to the Department of Psychiatry at McMaster, where his primary appointment was in the Department of English. Under the guidance of Paul Grof he did some psychotherapy with lithium patients, about which he felt ambivalent, since he felt inadequately trained and credentialed. Such self-doubt was typical of this enormously compassionate and erudite man.

Professor Brink’s quest for knowledge led him to delve into the origins of creativity, English literature, psychoanalysis, Dutch and English colonial history, 17th-19th century landscape prints, attachment theory, and much, much more. His search for the origins of creativity can be traced, in part, to unanswered questions he had about his father. His father came off the farm to make a major mark in academia, editing the journal *Genetics*, heading the Genetics Department at the University of Wisconsin where he was twice nominated for the Nobel Prize. Two of his faculty won this coveted award. Andrew W. Brink followed his father into academia but remained somewhat in awe of his achievements. The son was thin and the father robust, the father outgoing and driven to achieve and the son somewhat diffident and shy about lecturing, his voice often becoming weak in public situations when he felt threatened (the younger Brink did his best teaching one-on-one and in seminar). Both father and son, though, were truth seekers relentlessly following lines of investigation to their conclusion. The son’s work on the origins of creativity was inspired in part by a desire to understand the roots of his father’s creativity that led to so much academic acclaim. (In writing of creativity as repair, Andrew Brink sometimes had in mind his father’s often harsh, emotion-denying childhood on the farm.) I wonder if the son’s tendency to idealize some authorities lessened his own considerable creativity.

In his quest for knowledge, Professor Brink would do in-depth research and painstakingly write a book, but he was not good at marketing it when anonymous academic readers had difficulties with it, as they often did because of his overt psychoanalytic approach. His thought was that he had learned from the project and so he would move on to his next book. He did fight, at a
considerable cost, when working on the Bertrand Russell Editorial Project at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario. His “interest in Russell’s depression and Don Juanism” led “to conflict with other editors and the university.” Brink’s “section contained some of Russell’s most confessional essays written early in the century, grouped around his famous ‘Mysticism and Logic,’ a cry of pain at an indifferent cosmos,” leading him to write of Russell’s “existential anxiety” and “divided self” and the existence of psychobiographical questions. “This departure from portraying Russell as ‘the Lord of Reason’ brought a near psychotic reaction from his historian co-editor,” who had a postdoctoral assistant surreptitiously rewrite it while Brink was away. Professor Brink exposed this intellectual dishonesty and his original version was mostly reinstated. But for a sensitive human being, this was an extremely painful process and he would take early retirement from McMaster, following which he had an opportunity to work in the humanities and psychoanalysis program in Toronto. The Russell Papers incident and other experiences left him feeling pessimistic: psychohistory was not simply a wonderful tool of understanding, but a methodology that came at a high cost.

Andrew Brink’s generosity is noteworthy. He donated his 16th and 17th centuries books to McMaster University and both his Brink and Whitelaw family documents and photograph collections to Guelph University in Ontario. He had two art shows of his 17th century landscape prints, which are being donated to the University of Guelph, McDonald Stewart Gallery. The Brinks never sold, but instead always donated, extremely valuable materials from the 17th through the 19th centuries. Donations in Andrew’s memory are being made to Project Ploughshares or the Canadian Coalition for Gun Control.

We wish to express our condolences to Helen, Andrew’s widow and life companion of 57 years, his sister Margaret Ingraham, his children Nicholas and Sandy, grandson Michael, and great-granddaughter Carmen. We are thankful to have had pleasure of Andrew’s thirst for knowledge and wonderful boyish smile. Our special thanks to Helen, who has been a great help with this memorial and may be contacted at abrink@cogeco.ca.

Paul H. Elovitz’ biography may be found on page 473.
Reflections on Andrew Brink’s Creativity Studies

Rachel Youdelman—Harvard University (ABD)

Andrew Brink’s study of psychodynamics and creativity, *Loss and Symbolic Repair: A Psychological Study of Some English Poets* (1977), along with its companion volumes, *Creativity as Repair: Bipolarity and Its Closure* (1982) and *The Creative Matrix: Anxiety and the Origin of Creativity* (2000), have changed the way I regard works of art, both visual and literary. Brink’s exciting and richly illuminating studies on creativity urge not only a reappraisal of a rather parched academic field, but offer an important new paradigm for this subject by connecting relational anxiety with the creative drive.

At the heart of Brink’s thesis is a much-needed expansion of John Bowlby’s theories of early infant-maternal attachment, the ideal of which is described as consistent and free of conflict. Attachment theory, based upon a relational model of human development, replaces the Freudian drive model, and therefore reflects the implications of human interpersonal relationship, early attachment, and the effects of integration—or non-integration—of the disruption of interpersonal connections. Brink posits that the purpose of the creative drive is to facilitate the movement of an individual’s psyche toward repair of damage that can result from ruptures in interpersonal relationships, such as early parental loss or compromised parental care, highlighting the creative person’s impulse to integrate interpersonal anxiety. Brink speaks of the process of creating a work of art as an attempt at the ordering of chaotic intrapsychic emotions; ultimately, as a result of this complex process, an aesthetic object—such as a painting, poem, or novel—is yielded, which is a metaphorical reflection of the artist’s inner condition.

In areas of creativity with which I am familiar—art history, visual studies, and aesthetic theory—criticism tends to focus on formalism in general: forms of art and individual works, decontextualizing the artwork from its creator. Why is so little attention paid to the process of creativity, to the function of the very
process itself within the human psyche? Indeed, a number of previous studies of creativity have been made, and many of them entail some level of value. However, earlier studies tend to be limited in scope and short on empirical reality; furthermore, none treat the process in the context of human development in the way that Andrew Brink pioneered. What distinguishes Brink’s thesis is that it does not separate art from life. Via this methodology, a work of art is seen in the context of the artist’s personal history. Brink is no genetic determinist, but he recognizes that the creative drive is an impulse toward psychobiological homeostasis, in that its purpose is reparative. To be sure, as Brink puts it in his *Creativity as Repair*, “In the humanities the healing proclivities of body and mind are scarcely ever mentioned, yet growth and change of the person are basic assumptions of the educational process” (7).

Brink’s *The Creative Matrix: Anxiety and the Origin of Creativity*, published as Volume 10 of *The Reshaping of Psychoanalysis: From Sigmund Freud to Ernest Becker* series by Peter Lang in 2000, makes the case for a new conception of creativity, which shows that created objects are “richly encoded” with their creators’ developmental and relational anxieties, impelling the very creation of such objects themselves. To use a psychohistorical term, Brink writes, aesthetic objects can be thought of as “anxiety containers” (179). However, he cautions that it is perhaps risky to assume with certainty that “all art is a self-healing adaptive response to dangerously stressed attachments” and offers his thesis as a “project to be studied” (190), given the rarity of reliable corroborating data and the still-developing nature of adult attachment behavior. He nevertheless advises that when the question arises regarding “how it can be said that creativity in the arts is always an emergency response to anxiety” when evidence of anxiety is not directly observable—for example, in a peaceful Pieter de Hooch depiction of a domestic interior—that the rule is to “look deeper” (189). To be sure, when we look beyond the “peaceful” surface, we find that according to de Hooch’s 1684 burial records in Amsterdam, his body was delivered to the burial grounds from an insane asylum; there is no extant record of reasons for his admission. Further, “peacefulness” notwithstanding, de Hooch’s repeated motif of open doors, sometimes with solitary
figures standing in them facing away from the viewer, is very haunting, as is his treatment of light and tonality, often bifurcating a canvas into light and dark. Again, such question-raising elements, both biographical and pictorial, comprise a “deeper look” below the surface, and together they present a picture of an externalized complex emotional state, if not literal anxiety. The “deeper look,” the probing for personal meaning contained in iconography in the context of a life history, yields much richness of understanding regarding “how anxiety enters psycho-physical systems and creativity arises to reduce its stressfulness” (196).

I first learned of Andrew Brink’s work from the *Journal of Psychohistory*. I have since my adolescence had a serious interest in psychology, but my interest in art and art history dominated, and my undergraduate studies culminated in what was the exciting onset of feminist art-historical studies. Since then, I have been interested in sociological aspects of the production of visual art and have continued to pursue my interest in psychodynamics by reading psychohistorical studies revealing the link between a mass group-process and psychodynamic meaning, principles of which can be applied to trends in visual art. When I first read *Obsession and Culture* in 1997, I was excited about the connections to be made between psychopathology and creativity in a way which so richly and meaningfully surpassed the “mad artist” paradigm. Brink posits that individual obsessions revealed in popular works of art resonate with others on a mass scale, and that such resonance in turn reveals the depth and strength of such obsession on a cultural level. This notion was very critical to me for understanding the purpose that works of art serve within culture. More recently, I have developed a strong interest in psychobiographies of individual artists and the role of biography in art history and creativity; a review of his book on the subject, *Desire and Avoidance in Art*, which I wrote for the *Journal of Psychohistory*, frames this perspective. As a graduate student in Visual Studies at Harvard’s Division of Continuing Education, in my coursework as well as in the thesis I am currently writing, I rely on Brink’s books, theories, and case studies as guides; they enrich my understanding of the study of visual arts as no other scholarship does.
From Andrew Brink I have learned that the feelings and concepts expressed metaphorically by an artist in an aesthetic object resonate with the consumers of that object and are, in a sense, expressed by the creative person on their behalf. If, for example, a painting, its formal shape supporting its psychic message, expresses something with which many people can identify, it takes its place as a “good object,” to use Bowlby’s well-known term, collectively among the viewing public. Therefore, an art object, created by a single artist and based on his or her own life, can be intuitively enjoyed and understood by many. It was my hope that Brink would write a beginner’s guide to writing psychobiography to aid academics and others in understanding the developmental and psychodynamic concepts necessary to make sense of creative visual artists and writers and their work. Regrettably, the ill treatment he received in the Bertrand Russell project led to his becoming disillusioned with academia and less willing to devote his energies in this direction.

I am ever hopeful that Brink’s work on creativity will become more widely known and understood. Even he conceded that the Humanities and Psychoanalytic Thought Program, which he coordinated at the University of Toronto, constituted “a partial exception to the ban on study of emotion” within the humanities, though he felt it was surrounded by an intractable status quo. Indeed, his brilliance was matched by his courage as he persisted in seeking to uphold and promote the teaching of psychohistory. The paradigm offered in Andrew Brink’s creativity studies—that relational anxieties are at the core of creative motivation—will continue to guide my approach to research in visual studies, facilitating a deeper understanding of the visual power and richness of meaning in works of art, and for that I am indebted. Informed by psychohistorical methodology, Andrew’s approach to psychobiography was layered and holistic; and, as he noted in a Clio’s Psyche interview, he believed that “there is no advance towards an understanding of what promotes a more peaceful world other than by psychohistory and psychobiography.” By promoting Andrew’s writing through the universities and institutions with which we are affiliated, we can build upon his legacy—as he himself wrote regarding Bertrand Russell—”so that his most
fervent hopes for humanity may be forwarded” (Bertrand Russell: A Psychobiography of a Moralist, 162).

Rachel Youdelman works as a photo editor specializing in researching and licensing fine art and historical images for publication. She studied post-war Polish poetry (in English translation) and art history at UC Berkeley and is a graduate of the Feminist Art Program at California Institute of the Arts. She is currently writing a thesis on Victorian taxidermy for a graduate Visual Studies program at Harvard University and may be contacted at ryoudelman@gmail.com.

Andrew Brink: Attachment, Mentorship, and Loss

George M. Johnson—Thompson Rivers University

An image that comes to mind from my many memories of Andrew Brink is of him striding across Central Park, his nervous energy driving him forward, with his wife Helen and me trotting behind him just to keep up. His goal: to give a psychobiographical paper on eminent philosopher Bertrand Russell at the International Psychohistorical Associations’ annual conference. Andrew typically forged a few steps ahead of others, for example, in his prescient applications of British object relations and Bowlby’s attachment theory to Russell, along with an astonishing array of culture shapers, from 17th-century and Romantic poets to 20th-century novelists, poets, painters and psychoanalysts. He began this courageous work in the 1970s with Loss and Symbolic Repair, long before I joined his trek, and he continued right up until this year, with a study of Claude Lorrain.

I well remember my first meeting with him, in an impersonal concrete-block office at McMaster University in 1984. I was just entering graduate school there, young and very shy for my age. When I sat down facing him, I soon realized that he was more nervous than I, which somehow put me at ease. I had completed a double degree with honors at the University of Western Ontario in English and psychology—in those days a rare combination—and had chosen to come to McMaster because I had heard there was a
professor there named Brink who was actually doing psychological work in English studies! After one exuberant discussion with Andrew, I realized I had made the right choice, and I also sensed that I was exactly the sort of student that he was looking to mentor.

His graduate course, “From Puritanism to Psychotherapy: Confessionalism in English Literature,” challenged all our presuppositions. Andrew took writers off the pedestals constructed for them and explored them with compassion, as human beings. He was intensely committed and brimming with enthusiasm, and he created a rare, pioneering spirit of cooperation among his students. I was too shy to say much in class but came out of it spinning. It was unlike any other graduate class I took and had a lasting impact. I still refer to my class notes.

Professor Brink was working on the Bertrand Russell papers housed at McMaster, and I was swept up by his excitement at probing this rich archive, to the extent that I wound up writing as my master’s thesis, a psychobiographical portrait focusing on Russell’s need for power. By this time there was no question that I would remain at McMaster and work with Andrew on my PhD.

He was not a typical supervisor in that he really let me explore whatever avenues I chose, which led me to some byways, such as the unjustly neglected psychological novelists May Sinclair and J.D. Beresford, on whom I’ve continued to work, as well as into the esoteric realms of psychical research and the paranormal, which I connected with early psychoanalysis. He didn’t even mind when, five years later, I turned in a 727 page dissertation (though I heard the Graduate Studies Department set an upper page limit in its wake!). During these years I got to know Andrew and Helen on a personal level, particularly after I decided to rent one of their cottages right next door to their lovely 19th-century stone home in the hamlet of Greensville—surely an unusual set-up for supervisor and student, although there was an evergreen stand between the two houses. For some students this could have spelled disaster, but for me it was an ideal, peaceful, idyllic place to write away from the city (and to indulge my hobby for repairing cars, especially British sports cars, of which I had a few—magnanimously tolerated by Andrew).
Andrew and Helen introduced me to group meditation with local health professionals, environmental activism, and organic gardening, which I’ve kept doing. He involved me in a fantasy analysis project in which subjects read randomly selected pages from Nabokov’s *Lolita* and Fowles’s *The Collector*. I drew on my background in statistics to design the experiment and, though it was time consuming, I knew it was groundbreaking and was proud to contribute to it. Andrew later incorporated the findings in *Obsession and Culture*.

Then there were the wide-ranging, tea-drenched conversations in Andrew and Helen’s parlor, over dinner in the austere candle-lit dining room, down at the brook, or beside some piece of rescued statuary in their rolling, lush gardens. No, he was not a typical supervisor. Would there were more like him in the current “client-driven” academy.

It was a sad day when I left that idyll and headed out into a very uncertain job market, eventually landing a position on the other side of the country. For Andrew, too, that phase in his career soon came to an end, when he took early retirement and a new position as Co-ordinator of the Humanities and Psychoanalytic Thought Programme at the University of Toronto, his alma mater. Luckily, we both came to enjoy our new positions, despite the challenges.

I kept in touch with Andrew through yearly visits and by e-mail. His writing about the roles played by obsession, anxiety, and avoidance in creativity only increased in frequency and incisiveness. I know he was proud of my efforts, too, as when I won a prize in Twentieth Century Literature for a reworked chapter of my dissertation on Virginia Woolf, judged by John Fowles, who was sympathetic to Andrew’s theories of creativity, and to whom Andrew introduced me in Toronto several years later.

In the past dozen years, Andrew came to know my wife, Nina, and our children. He was just as encouraging of Nina’s work on the educational and therapeutic uses of labyrinths as he had always been of my work. The children scampering about their home and grounds brought out that boyish grin of his on more than a few occasions.
What a humane, conscientious, visionary man. Andrew sensed a source of our cultural malaise in the disturbed fantasies of men and how powerfully these fantasies were purveyed by male creators, who were then idolized. He was not afraid to probe the sources in disturbances around attachments and particularly in traumatic loss. His many-dimensional, loving bond with Helen showed that he surmounted these endemic male struggles himself; with her intense social conscience she kept him grounded and aware of threats to our physical and social environments (and she literally kept him walking through that environment).

For me he is one of those rare friends whose loss cannot be replaced but must be borne with the hope that I can strive toward the ideals of justice, equality, and truth that he held so high.

George M. Johnson, PhD, was Andrew Brink’s last graduate student and is currently Professor of English at Thompson Rivers University in British Columbia. Johnson’s revised (and condensed) dissertation was published as Dynamic Psychology in Modernist British Fiction (Palgrave, 2006). His current project, “Grappling with Ghosts: Mourning and Mysticism in First World War Britain,” will be dedicated to Andrew. He may be reached at gjohnson@tru.ca.

The Psychoanalytic Life of Elisabeth Young-Bruehl

Paul H. Elovitz—Clio’s Psyche

While walking home from a concert in Toronto this past December, Elisabeth Young-Bruehl (March 3, 1946–December 1, 2011) suddenly died as a result of a pulmonary embolism. She was a psychoanalyst, philosopher, and well-known author and lecturer who first gained recognition for her prize-winning biographies of Hannah Arendt and Anna Freud. The American Association of Publishers named her The Anatomy of Prejudices “Best Book in Psychology” for 1996. Young-Bruehl was a featured scholar in the December 2005 edition of Clio’s Psyche (Vol. 12, No. 3).
Elisabeth Young-Bruehl’s maternal ancestors came to America on the Mayflower and paternal ones were part of the Jamestown Settlement. She was born, raised, and educated in Maryland prior to attending Sarah Lawrence College and the New School for Social Research. She completed her MA and PhD in philosophy under her mentor, Hannah Arendt, and later trained at the Philadelphia Association for Psychoanalysis. Young-Bruehl taught at Wesleyan University, Haverford College, Bryn Mawr University, and the Western New England Institute for Psychoanalysis. She also lectured and offered seminars internationally on feminism, philosophy, the history of psychoanalysis, and psychoanalysis. Among her publications are Hannah Arendt: For Love of the World (1982); Anna Freud: A Biography (1988); Freedom and Karl Jaspers’s Philosophy (1981); Mind and the Body Politic (1989); Freud on Women (1990, an anthology); Creative Characters (1991); The Anatomy of Prejudices (1996); Subject to Biography: Psychoanalysis, Feminism, and Writing Women’s Lives (1998); Cherishment: A Psychology of the Heart (2000); Where Do We Fall When We Fall In Love? (2003), Why Arendt Matters (2006); and posthumously Childism: Confronting Prejudice Against Children (2012). Young-Bruehl moved to Toronto in 2007, where she was active in psychoanalytic circles, blogged extensively, and conducted analytic treatment. Editorial boards on which she served include American Psychoanalytic Association, The International Journal of Psycho-Analysis, American Imago, Psychoanalysis and Psychotherapy, and the new journals Studies in Gender and Sexuality and Psychoanalysis, Culture and Society.

Elisabeth Young-Bruehl is survived by her partner, Christine Dunbar; her brother and sister; several nieces and nephews, and two step grandchildren.

In Light of Elisabeth Young-Bruehl

Molly Castelloe—Psychohistory Forum Research Assoc.

I heard Elisabeth give a paper at a conference once called “Where Do We Fall When We Fall in Love?” I was struck by her wit and eloquence, by the poetry she crafted from the follies of hu-
man attachment. Afterwards, I asked her to be my analyst. For nearly a decade, Elisabeth saw me through major transitions: my dissertation defense, the choice of a husband, and the birth of my two spirited sons. She often repeated the phrase “take a pause” to me during the psychic upheaval that was new motherhood. Her voice was warm and well-articulated, with a slight lilt of her Maryland home soil. But what did she mean?

She was speaking to me about how parents bring their own narcissistic loves into childrearing. It concerned her that people sometimes imagine children as possessions, animals, or slaves that need to be controlled and dominated. I was to “take a pause” when I felt my children consuming the last of my day’s energies, when I was afraid they would suck the marrow from my bones as breastfeeding infants, when my children were not listening and I had asked them several times already.

Some parents act unwittingly, as if their authority over children is absolute and discipline their main responsibility. Obedience results through heated contest of wills. The purpose of children, from this perspective, is the same as any social group seen as “naturally” subservient—that of serving the needs of others. “Childism” was the word Elisabeth gave to this prejudice in her final book. When children are made into targets of prejudice, we deny their developmental needs and rights (Childism: Confronting Prejudice Against Children, 2012).

The same is true of the denigration of women as another form of what Elisabeth called “obedience training,” a kind of authoritarian rule that inhibits the evolution of selfhood. She well understood the sexual biases in which women have been psychoanalytically entangled. For Elisabeth, psychoanalysis was a form of vocalized biography, two people working together to recover a life story. Of importance was situating this life narrative within a larger historical setting. Penis envy, a girl’s second wave of repression, her turn away from her mother during puberty and the shift of her primary erotic zone—Elisabeth encouraged me to think beyond the effects of patriarchy. She knew that society evolves as the feminist movement grows from infancy, as the nuclear family changes, as habits of coupling and the means and forms of reproduction become more pluralistic.
Where does prejudice come from? Elisabeth systematically detailed these origins in *The Anatomy of Prejudices* (1996), where she argues that these habits of thinking are not one, but many. Drawing on Freud’s essay “Libidinal Types” (1931), she outlined how prejudice in America is organized around “ideologies of desire” that correspond to the tripartite structure of the psyche: id, ego, and superego. Unconscious fantasies play out in prejudice according to three character types: the hysterical, the narcissistic, and the obsessional. Hysterical prejudice is epitomized by racist sentiment: it represents genital power and involves projecting forbidden sexual drives onto another. Sexism (usually male, but not always) has a narcissistic foundation and is the most universal of all prejudices. It comes from an offense to the ego: the intolerable notion that there are people who are anatomically different from oneself. Finally, obsessional attitudes are governed by the superego, by fantasies of contamination and desires for purification—by wanting to eliminate something felt to be secretly depleting one from within, anti-Semitism is an obsessional prejudice.

Acknowledging different kinds of prejudice allows for social diagnoses and treatment. This method of classification Elisabeth learned from her professor Hannah Arendt, whose *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (1951) she considered the exemplary analysis of a modern prejudice. Reading this field manual on fascism was for her like facing a vast mural, a “historian’s Guernica” that the spectator can never fully absorb.

Before becoming a psychoanalyst, Elisabeth trained as a philosopher and political thinker with Arendt, a Jewish émigré who barely escaped the Nazis prior to coming to the U.S. From her, Elisabeth learned about the viewpoint of the pariah. She brought feminist knowledge of women, children, and minorities into philosophical and psychoanalytic inquiry. She was a great synthesizer.

Elisabeth suggested that masculine biases stem partly from male fantasies about reproduction that date back to Aristotle. Ancient Greeks shared belief in the biological theory that conception was a male act: reproduction resulting from a man implanting a sperm into the womb of a woman, ignoring the function of the ovum. Although this theory and its anatomical distortions were scientifically abandoned in the West, the wish still remains. It is
manifest today, writes Elisabeth, in abortion debates and homophobia. These wishes express the desire to view men as responsible for the fertilization and cultivation of “their” seed. Thus, children, along with women, are wild and irrational beings who require men’s civilized restraints and domestication (Childism, 2012).

Questions about female sexuality, and its multiple lines of development, impressed Elisabeth as she apprehensively sifted through six steamer trunks of Anna Freud’s papers. Following critical acclaim for Hannah Arendt: For Love of the World (1982), the executor of Anna Freud’s literary estate asked her to write a biography of the daughter of psychoanalysis. Later in the day, Elisabeth rambled to Hans Loewald, her analyst in New Haven, about how exhausted she felt facing all those German papers and years of work that lay within them. There was also the elaboration of Anna Freud’s partnership with Dorothy Burlingham with whom she directed the Hampstead War Nurseries and Clinic during WWII. Would it be her task, Elisabeth wondered aloud to Loewald, “to brave the homophobia of psychoanalysis with a lesbian life story?” Loewald replied mischievously in his Texas drawl, “Sweetheart, those two ladies lived together harmoniously, really harmoniously, for fifty years—now, I ask you, could that be a sexual relationship?” (Subject to Biography: Psychoanalysis, Feminism, and Writing Women’s Lives, 1998).

Elisabeth had a gentle and deeply feeling heart. She rearticulated Freud’s first theory of the instincts, arguing that libido in all of us vacillates throughout our lives between active and passive aims, between our mental images of male and female loved ones. She came away from Anna’s biography thinking that Freud’s youngest child was a woman who could never fully capture her father’s attention so she ceaselessly worked for her father’s cause. Even Freud called his lifework his child, sometimes his problem child. He gave it the solicitous parental attention he could not give his biological children (Anna Freud: A Biography, 1988).

Drawing on the work of Japanese psychoanalyst Takeo Doi and his use of the everyday word “amae,” Elisabeth elaborated an ego instinct for affection. She theorized how a crucial part of ego instinctual life is the expectation of being loved by another and loving that someone. What she described was an empathetic attune-
ment. Freud recognized this type of relatedness but it resided in what she called “theoretical half light” due to the climactic tumult between Freud and Jung and Freud’s subsequent re-emphasis on sexual energy as a motivating psychological force. This desire for affection is rooted in the infant-caregiver relationship, originally in maternal nourishment and the feeding of a child. It is not just milk received by the baby, but also sweetness. Elisabeth thought Doi himself neglected the sexual instincts, which were not to be overlooked. But she highlighted the interweaving of these instinctual aspects. People oscillate in their instinctual drives, their sexual and affectional needs, as well as their object choices. Languages without a word for the ego instinct of affection are typical of cultures where this dependency is not valued and where children are urged to be independent. Yet Elisabeth gave it a word, “cherishment,” and wrote about the “growth principle” (Cherishment: A Psychology of the Heart, co-author, Faith Bethelard, 2000).

What happens to the heart and mind when prejudiced thinking occurs? The denial of human plurality marks an absence of judgment. In Elisabeth’s view, judgment occurs in dialogue more than any other mental faculty, in relation to others, and it does not adhere to rules. If judgment is not rule-bound, then how do we judge? Elisabeth believed Immanuel Kant’s ideas about aesthetic judgment translated into the moral realm and the actions of political life. She cited his pupil, Arendt: “The more people’s perspective I can make present in my thought and hence take into account in my judgments, the more representative [my judgment] will be. The validity of such judgments would be neither objective and universal nor subjective, depending on personal whim, but intersubjective and representative” (Why Arendt Matters, 2006, 167). This is how one arrives at common sense.

Elisabeth had a gift for hearing plurality, for holding steady within her mind many particularities at once. Late in her career, she wrote of Urteilskraft or “judgment power.” She disagreed with Freud’s theory of the death instinct and his idea of primary masochism. In the conversations with her that continue in my mind, she desires judgment rather than death. She talks to me of the developmental thrust to judge well and adaptively.

To “take a pause” is to cultivate a passionate mindfulness.
It means affirming the feelings and needs of children and also realizing that one need not use or dominate them. Discovery is the mode rather than force. Rules cannot define reflective judgment because it relies on a commitment to being creatively open, on the ability to review one’s perspective in light of novel encounters, and on identifying what is unprecedented in the conversation. This is a cherishment exchange. Such self-questioning is key to good judgment and to what Elisabeth described as a revolution of faith and hope.

*Molly Castelloe’s biographical narrative is on page 446.*

**Letter to the Editor**

**Obama: A Wolf in Sheep’s Clothing?**

Dear Editor,

On January 28, 2012, the Psychohistory Forum meeting focused on the psychology of presidential leadership with Ted Goertzel, Ken Fuchsman (in absentia) and Paul Elovitz presenting. Goertzel reviewed 25 years of presidential leadership in Brazil while Elovitz and Fuchsman focused on Barack Obama, and then Elovitz presented on the 2012 Republican contenders for president.

In Ken Fuchsman’s paper, Michelle Obama was quoted as telling journalist Jonathan Alter that “Barack spent so much time alone it was almost like he was raised by wolves.” This off-handed remark requires more attention if we are to understand the foundational dynamics of our President. Goertzel sought to connect the achievements of the Lula da Silva and Barack Obama to their mothers. However, Michelle Obama’s remark brings to mind the well-known myth of the twin brother founders of Rome, Romulus and Remus. In this mythic story their mother is killed, and they are then suckled by a she-wolf, raised by shepherds, and grew up to be natural leaders and creators of Rome. It sheds much wisdom regarding to the background of both Obama and Lula de Silva. The fact that Obama knew little of his father and lived apart from his mother for long periods suggests that he raised himself. The loneliness of his past made him a lone wolf, far more like a feral child than a mother’s boy.

The image of the feral child appears in literature and myth, with two of the more famous examples being Peter Pan and Tarzan. It also should be noted that the first piece of abstract expressionism purchased by the Museum of Modern Art was Jackson Pollock’s 1944 “She-Wolf.” The piece was based once again upon the myth of Romulus and Remus. Contrary to Professor Goertzel’s suggestion that Obama and Lula were both mothers’ boys, it is more likely they both led feral childhoods, alone in the world and consequently toughened up by it. The classic text *Cradles of Eminence*, written by Ted Goertzel’s parents, fo-
cuses on how suffering can make one stronger, if it does not terribly scar or kill them. Goertzel suggested that Lula was gentle, accommodating, empathetic, and a feminist. Both Elovitz and Fuchsman’s paper rejected his interpretation.

It is my sense that Lula and Obama grew up in a feral manner, but with their mothers’ loving touch from time to time. What this produced was a wolf in sheep’s clothing: they may look gentle and accommodating on the outside, but I have no doubt that they both have the eye of the wolf. They are the mythic twins Romulus and Remus, sweet and accommodating but as clever and as hungry as a wolf. Many thanks to the Forum’s presenters for providing such an amazingly stimulating panel.

Sincerely yours,

Tom Ferraro

Tom Ferraro’s biography is on page 478.

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**Call for Papers**

**The Psychology of Human-Animal Relationships**

**The June 2012 Special Issue**

*Psychological Insights on the Anthropomorphizing of Animals:*

- The way humans treat pets and love them enough to spend an enormous amount of money on them and to pick up their feces
- Changes in psycho-cultural perspective from “wild animal” to “pet” to “companion animal”: cause and effect
- Our responsiveness to, or unawareness of, our pets’ emotions
- Childhood relationships to animals
- A psychological examination of pets and childless couples
- The healing power of pets
- Freud and his dogs, animals in the therapeutic setting
- Power in human-animal interactions
- Why different owners choose the pets they do
- Companion animal loss and bereavement
- Pet end-of-life issues and euthanasia; issues of mourning
- Comparative religions’ views on animals and evidence of psychology in these perspectives
- Appeal and role of books and films about people and animals
- Review essays on relevant books, exhibits, films, plays, shows, etc.

**Due April 1, 2012**

Articles of 500-1,500 words are welcome
Contact Bob Lentz at lentz@telusplanet.net
BULLETIN BOARD

CONFERENCES: Invitations to Psychohistory Forum Work-In-Progress Seminars will be sent by email to members as plans are finalized. The Forum is planning to jointly sponsor a Toronto meeting of the Toronto Psychoanalytic Society devoted to the work of Eli Sagan. The Forum’s Psychology, Childhood, and Personalities of Presidents Research Group is planning presentations by Herbert Barry, Paul Elovitz, and Ken Fuchsman at the International Psychohistorical Association’s (IPA) June 8-10, 2012 conference at New York University. Forum members David Beisel, Molly Castelloe, Juhani Ihanus, Joseph Kramp, David Lotto, Joel Markowitz, Jamshid Marvasti, Allan Mohl, Denis O’Keefe, Howard Stein, and Jacques Szaluta are among the presenters.

On July 6-9, 2012, the International Society of Political Psychology (ISPP) is holding its annual conference in Chicago. This year’s Association for the Psychoanalysis of Culture and Society’s (APCS) Rutgers conference will be held on October 19-20, 2012. Last year, on November 4-5, 2011, Marilyn Charles, Alice Maher, and Howard Stein presented APCS papers.

NOTES ON MEMBERS: Congratulations to Norman Simms whose book, Invisible Insanity: The Rise and Fall of Institutional Psychiatry in Canada (co-authored by John Deadman and Sam Sussman) will soon be published in California. Cambridge University has agreed to publish the edited book, Psychology and History, which will include chapters by Philip Pomper and Paul Elovitz.

OUR THANKS: To our members and subscribers for the support that makes Clio’s Psyche possible. To Benefactors Herbert Barry, David Beisel, David Lotto, and Peter Petschauer; Patrons Andrew Brink, Peter Loewenberg, Alice Maher, Jamshid Marvasti, and Jacques Szaluta; Sustaining Member Eva Fogelman; Supporting Members Sander Breiner, Paul Elovitz, Tom Ferraro, Susan Gregory, John Hartman, David Hoddeson, Marcie Lachman, Allan Mohl, Marcie Newman, and Lee Solomon; and Members Hanna Cohen, Michael Isaacs, and Roberta Rubin. Our special thanks for thought-provoking materials to Andrew Brink, Heiderose Brandt Butscher, Molly Castelloe, Geoffrey Cocks, Dan Dervin, Paul H. Elovitz, Tom Ferraro, Ken Fuchsman, Susan Gregory, Irene Javors, George Johnson, Bob Lentz, Joel Markowitz, Merle Molofsky, Alexander Nemeth, Marcie Anne Newton, Jean Oggins, Carole Brooks Platt, Joyce Rosenberg, Karen Uslin, and Rachel Youdelman. Thanks to Bob Lentz for Guest Editing the creative lives special issues. To Nicole Alliegro for editing, proofing, and Publisher 2007 software application, Caitie Adams for editing and proofing, and Cara Daniello and Professor Paul Salstrom for proofing. Our special thanks to our editors and to our numerous, overworked referees, who must remain anonymous.
Call for Papers
The Psychology and Psychobiography of Election 2012
The September 2012 Special Issue

Psychological Insights on:

- Psychobiographical explorations of Romney, Santorum, Gingrich, Obama, and other contenders
- The basis and course of the anyone-but-Romney movement
- How populist movements (the Tea Party & the anti-Wall Street movements) affect the election
- Voter ambivalence about candidates with experience in Washington
- Ron Paul and the libertarian anti-government impulse
- The role of women in the political matrix—Bachmann, Clinton, Palin
- Emotions and ideas behind the electoral rhetoric
- Ideological purity versus the desire to win
- The relationship between the leader and the led in the 2012 election
- Obama’s governing in the era of the permanent campaign
- The sub-current of racism in the anti-Obama movement
- Disillusionment with Obama by left-wing intellectuals and non-affiliated voters
- Literal and figurative dreams of the candidates and the electorate
- Spouses and children of the candidates
- Emotional and psychological reactions to the increased role of money
- Psychological aspects of the presentation of politics in the media
- The psychology of independent voters
- Perils of verbal (and non-verbal) slips along the campaign trail
- Cycles in American politics
- The mood of the energized voters and the stay-at-home non-voters
- The psychology of independent voters and the likelihood of a third party surge
- Psychobiographical insights from the candidates’ own books
- The political influence of blogs
- The role of foreign policy in the election
- How the world views America’s electoral politics

Due July 1, 2012
Articles of 500-1,500 words are welcome. An article of up to 3,500 words for a possible symposium would need to be submitted by April 15, 2012.

Paul Elovitz at pelovitz@aol.com
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