

Clio's Psyche

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

Special Issue
The Psychology of Superstorm Sandy

**Psychohistorians on the Newtown
Shooting**

Young Psychohistorian Interview

Volume 19 Number 4
March 2013

Clio's Psyche

Vol. 19 No. 4

March 2013

ISSN 1080-2622

Published Quarterly by the Psychohistory Forum

627 Dakota Trail, Franklin Lakes, NJ 07417

Telephone: (201) 891-7486

E-mail: pelovitz@aol.com

**Guest Co-Editors: Paul Salstrom (Sandy) &
Peter Petschauer (Newtown Shootings)**

Editor: Paul H. Elovitz

Editorial Board

C. Fred Alford, PhD University of Maryland • **James W. Anderson, PhD** Northwestern University • **David Beisel, PhD** RCC-SUNY • **Ken Fuchsman, EdD** University of Connecticut • **Glen Jeansonne, PhD** University of Wisconsin • **Bob Lentz** • **Peter Loewenberg, PhD** UCLA • **Peter Petschauer, PhD** Appalachian State University • **Nancy Unger, PhD** Santa Clara University

Subscription Rate:

Free to members of the Psychohistory Forum

\$70 two-year subscription to non-members

\$60 yearly to institutions

(Add \$35 per year outside U.S.A. & Canada)

Single issue price: \$21

\$55 two-year overseas online subscription

We welcome articles of psychohistorical interest of
500 - 1,500 words and a few longer ones.

Copyright © 2013 The Psychohistory Forum

Special Issue
The Psychology of Superstorm Sandy

**Psychohistorians on the Newtown
Shooting**

Young Psychohistorian Interview

Volume 19 Number 4
March 2013

Clio's Psyche

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

Volume 19 Number 4

March 2013

Special Issue: The Psychology of Superstorm Sandy

The Impact of Anxiety and Trauma

- Acute Trauma and the Previous Traumatized 371
David Reiss
- We All Are Hit by Something 375
Moe Armstrong
- Annihilation Anxiety 378
Victor Meladze

In the Eye of the Storm

- Working for FEMA in the Wake of Sandy 382
Anonymous
- When Hit by a Hurricane 385
Aviva Gitlin
- My View of the Jersey Shore with Pleasure, Fear, and Guilt 388
Leslie Rieches Gumbert
- Hurricane Sandy as a Window into the Middles Ages 392
Rosalie Maloney

Rescuers & the Search for Safe Haven

- Repairing Childhood Losses Through FEMA Work 395
Paul Salstrom
- A Journalist's Struggle with Natural Disaster and Her Emotions 397
Nicole Alliegro
- Home 400
Elizabeth Danze

Perspectives on Natural Disasters

- Searching for Extreme Weather and the Ambiguities of Diagnosis 403
Joseph M. Kramp
- The Evolution of Attitudes Toward Nature 407
Nancy C. Unger
- Hurricanes and Massacres 409
Howard F. Stein

**Special Feature: Psychohistorians on the
Newtown Shooting**

A Collage of Impressions of the Newtown Massacre	411
<i>Paul H. Elovitz and the Clio's Psyche Listserv Members</i>	
Some Thoughts on Our Online Discussion	457
<i>Paul Elovitz and Peter Petschauer</i>	
How a Dream Helps a Psychohistorian Learn About His Unconscious	460
<i>Paul Elovitz</i>	
Concluding Thoughts of a European Historian	464
<i>Peter Petschauer</i>	
Speculations on the Whole Boy in Newtown	467
<i>Elizabeth Berkshire</i>	

Featured Young Scholar and Clinician Interview

Denis J. O'Keefe: Social Worker and Psychohistorian	471
---	-----

Book Review

"Storying": Black History in Black Culture	480
<i>Merle Molofsky</i>	

Letters to the Editor

Thoughts on the Burns-Elovitz Exchange on Conservatism	484
<i>James Allen</i>	
<i>Walter Dull</i>	
Anderson Discussion Paper	486
<i>Arnold Richards</i>	

Bulletin Board	489
Call for Papers on Empathy: Its Development, Virtues, and Limits	491
Call for Papers: The Psychological Uses and Meaning of Humor	491

Special Issue on the Psychology of Reactions to Superstorm Sandy and Other Disasters

The Impact of Anxiety and Trauma

Acute Trauma and the Previously Traumatized

David Reiss—DMR Dynamics

Grieving is a universal human experience, but the response to loss and trauma differs from person to person. Individual reactions depend to some extent upon impersonal factors, such as the severity of the trauma; whether the precipitating event was sudden, unexpected, or to some extent predictable; whether preparation was practically and/or emotionally possible; and whether any preparation was ameliorative or futile. Cultural, religious, and social traditions can provide a template for responses to trauma. Reactions to trauma are also influenced by personal issues: concurrent life circumstances, basic temperament, acquired personality traits, the matrix of psychological defenses employed by the individual, and, very significantly, the extent to which the person has been subjected to trauma, loss, or grief in the remote or recent past.

Leaving theory aside, over recent months, under very dissimilar circumstances, my 23-year-old son Sam and I personally witnessed very different responses among individuals subjected to life-altering trauma and horrifying grief. Sam is employed in the fashion video industry and lives on the Lower East Side of Manhattan. Although he had to evacuate during Superstorm Sandy, thankfully he was uninjured and damage to his apartment was minor. His experience was unnerving, leading him to confront vulnerability and resilience, but it was not “traumatic.”

Soon after the storm, Sam and several co-workers volunteered to help repair and clean homes in a severely affected area of

Staten Island. Sam recounted to me his interaction with a couple who appeared to be in their 60s, whose home was devastated. While the volunteers worked on the ground floor, the woman could only pace anxiously, fretting and obsessively repeating her worries about her husband—a cancer patient whose medications had been washed away. Although restricted to keeping warm in his car, her husband seemed unreasonably calm and unaffected—perhaps in deep denial; perhaps he had already reached a point of existential acceptance.

A younger couple, recent immigrants to New York City from Sweden, owned another damaged home. They worked with the volunteers in a polite, business-like, highly organized manner. Only as the volunteers were leaving did the gentleman appear emotionally affected, intensely thanking the strangers who had provided assistance, while his wife broke down, tearfully overwhelmed.

Not long afterwards, I was consulting in Massachusetts two days after the Newtown school tragedy occurred. I drove into Newtown to contribute psychiatric input to a panel providing information to local therapists and members of the community regarding coping with the horrific trauma and loss. Perhaps it was my projection, but even while walking to the meeting hall, it was clear that something was very wrong. I was acutely aware of an absence of normal sounds. People were walking by, many coming out of houses of worship that Sunday, some obviously in shock, some trying to contain tears, and some simply holding tightly to each other. Voices sounded different; glances and eye contact felt different.

During the meeting, reactions to the massacre ranged from numbness to intense grief. The sadness was so palpable that there was not yet room for anger—vocal tones were subdued, serious, needy, and compassionate, but not yet enraged.

It was disturbing and revealing when several persons arrived from a church service during which they reported that their church received a bomb threat requiring immediate evacuation. Some were overwhelmed with distraught emotion, but most attempted to remain in control and put words to the sense of a world that was suddenly out of control, terrifying, and unpredictable.

Neither Sam nor I knew the details or the personal back-

grounds of the people we met, beyond their immediate situation and pain. Sam's task was practical, but even untrained in mental health, he was able to appreciate the unique manner in which each person he met perceived and reacted to being traumatized.

In Newtown, I had been told that I would speak to a group of persons already involved in a community support system for families of children with substance abuse problems, including many who had already dealt with tragic and senseless loss. These people were not just traumatized, but re-traumatized.

Clinically, we often view grief and PTSD as neatly-defined "syndromes" that occur in direct response to an event, rather than as the *experience* of a person with a unique and often complicated history. In actuality, it is not uncommon for acute trauma to befall a previously traumatized individual. These people can develop a complex devastation of the psyche during which the acute trauma becomes immediately interwoven with past experiences. At times, recent and past events become conflated into an almost inextricable mesh of emotions and psychological defenses.

Accepted psychiatric theory calls for the evaluation of any condition to include consideration of all relevant biological, psychological, and social factors. However, in current clinical practice, it is rare to document comprehensive personal histories. Even when biological, psychological, and psychosocial factors are identified, they are seen as independent variables (often addressed by separate practitioners), rather than being recognized as interdependent aspects of a human experience. Frequently, evaluations only focus upon acute symptomatology—often in the service of "plugging" a person into a "standard" protocol of counseling and/or psychopharmacological intervention (as opposed to implementation of comprehensive and individualized intervention).

Whether or not a person previously developed "diagnosable" post-traumatic pathology, case formulations regarding acute trauma must be informed by an appreciation of the relationship of acute symptoms to personality traits and psychological defenses that developed in response to previous traumas.

Prior trauma may have occurred due to life-threatening illness or injury, personal losses, military/combat-related experiences,

having witnessed disturbing accidents or injuries, and/or (perhaps most commonly) having been the victim of child abuse. Most often, such prior trauma was not fully resolved. Continuing coping mechanisms may involve the use of both adaptive and dysfunctional behavioral patterns, such as highly rationalized repression, unquestioning reliance upon religious or philosophical systems of belief, dissociation, social avoidance, involvement in dependent relationships (benign or malignant), and/or through licit or illicit biochemical manipulation of affect.

Defenses previously employed may have allowed adequate functioning over time. Yet only rarely has a previously traumatized person fully integrated feelings of vulnerability, fear, anxiety, grief, anger, and/or distrust. Additional trauma can then trigger a powerful comingling of issues arising from the acute situation with emotions that have been chronically repressed.

In some complicated and at times disastrous situations, a "Pandora's Box" scenario occurs. Severely disrupted defenses allow intensely painful and confusing emotions to flood into consciousness. Prior "reasonably" adaptive functioning may not be able to be restored. Profound depression accompanied by dangerous behavioral acting out often follows. The emerging pathology will not spontaneously remit and may not be responsive to any short-term psychotherapeutic or psychopharmacological intervention. Infrequently, a person has the insight, motivation, courage and time to make use of comprehensive therapy to address the totality of traumatic experiences. However, practically, the level of treatment necessary is rarely available.

To our detriment, our culture tends to reinforce denial and suppression as opposed to safe and open expression of grief. Social forces encourage unhealthy and counter-productive acting out of anger and vengeance—as if revenge can provide comfort or resolve pain. Open grieving and mourning occurs only briefly and as a group-process, such as in response to a national tragedy or the loss of a celebrity. Meanwhile, individuals who suffer significant, even repetitive, losses or trauma are expected to return to full functioning very quickly—or they are promptly "diagnosed" and "treated," often primarily through psychopharmacological intervention, with little appreciation of the human experience that is occurring.

The experience of mourning after trauma and loss is intense, painful, difficult, complex, and unique to every individual. The attention of others (including, at appropriate times, formal mental health treatment) can be very helpful. However, just as with a physical wound, no person (therapist, doctor, or surgeon) can truly bring about “healing.” Assistance may be useful, necessary, and even life-saving: to cleanse the wound; to prevent or treat infection; to apply bandages or sutures; to provide practical support.

Especially with repetitive trauma, the pathway from emotional pain so severe that it is incomprehensible to foresee healing, to reach a point of renewed comfort and acceptance is, in reality, a mysterious natural process that is only partially understood—and which is not always successful, even with the most well-constructed intervention. To lose respect for the power of that process is to deny the nature of our humanity.

David M. Reiss, MD, has been a practicing psychiatrist for over 25 years, performing over 10,000 psychiatric evaluations, evaluating and treating patients from diverse cultural, occupational, and social backgrounds. From November 2011 to February 2012 in Holyoke, Massachusetts, Dr. Reiss served as Interim Medical Director of Providence Hospital. He has been recognized internationally for his expertise on issues related to character and personality dynamics, trauma, and violence. Dr. Reiss may be contacted at dmreiss@gmail.com. □

We All Are Hit by Something

Moe Armstrong—Vet to Vet

We are all hit by something. I was hit by the war in Vietnam. During Hurricane Irene, I met a homeless veteran who lived by camping in the woods. When he came in from the storm, his eyes were filled with an unforgettable look of stark terror. Similarly, Stella Levy, who in 1966 found me with no place to live and heading toward Northern California, said about me, “...he never blinked.” Some people who were hit by Hurricane Sandy probably had similar reactions.

After my experiences in Vietnam, my eyes were wide open all the time. I was probably filled with terror in the first days of my breakdown. Later on, that look just became a stare. Some people seem to just stare forever. The impact of trauma seems to have more variance than we thought. It can be the impact, the vulnerability of the moment, or the repetition of the impact of trauma. No matter how trauma happens to us, we all seem to end up with a numb body and a 1,000-mile stare.

Over the past 25 years, my job has been to try to bring people back to levels of stability, safety, sanity, and sobriety. Trauma's effects seem to lead most of us in exactly the opposite direction. We become unstable, unsafe, insane, drunk and/or high, and possibly abusive. Some people experience trauma in their life or family, others experience trauma from war, and still others experience trauma in accidents or natural disasters. Everyone seems to be in need of processing this new state of mind—this new being.

How do family and people around us react? It turns out, not very well. Our associates, friends, and family are also traumatized. Everyone thinks they could have done better and they could have prevented this traumatization.

I was prepared to never break down. My mother prepared me to have the strength to fight communism with a childhood consisting of 50-mile bicycle rides and religious studies. The Marine Corps prepared me with endless Special Operations training, including climbing mountains, jumping off submarines, swimming endless nights in dangerous surf, and walking without food or water for days on numerous patrols, both in peace time and war time. Still, I broke down.

A person can be sitting in an office and an earthquake happens or someone is relaxing at home when a storm hits. We all experience denial, shock, and acceptance. We have to plan our lives around our trauma reactions. We are left changed—more easily startled and jumpy, more easily tired, careful and more cautious. We need to learn from others who have been traumatized and from professional staff.

It is difficult to understand the requirement or real length of time needed for care. A tree falling on someone's car can leave

him or her in shock. A hurricane with the force of Sandy can be remembered forever, as can the single tree's psychic impact. Those suffering in natural disasters lose something, a part of themselves, that is remembered.

Often, trauma is ranked or put in levels. Such as, trauma in war is worse than trauma in natural disaster. Or, my trauma is worse than yours. There is no real hierarchy of suffering. All people hurt; each person's pain is real. I was affected by the Vietnam War. You were affected by the storm. They were affected by the earthquake. I meet people who look and act just as traumatized as myself. Many people end up with this shocked sensation. Were they vulnerable at the time? Probably. I have looked more toward moments of vulnerability than preparedness. Still, there is no character weakness that causes traumatic reactions.

Being traumatized or having trauma is more common than society has realized. We can acknowledge trauma by processing it with others and having them learn new levels of sanity, stability, safety, and sobriety. First, we have to collectively take trauma seriously and treat the people who have trauma compassionately.

As I reflect on my life, I realize that I made a number of mistakes, including not realizing how powerful and long-lasting trauma would impact my life. I did not realize that others around me were also impacted by my trauma or that I was going to have to learn a life of new coping skills including continual self-maintenance and self-monitoring. Nor did I realize how much my trauma was like others' trauma. I was not exceptional—I was just one more person trying to come to terms with traumatization and trauma. I am one of many facing the aftermath of trauma prompted by individual acts of violence, nature's violence, and war.

Moe Armstrong, a co-founder of Vet to Vet, was psychiatrically wounded in Vietnam in 1966 and has established a peer support network of some 30 sites across America which was recently the subject of a special study by a VA research team in conjunction with Yale University. A consultant for the Defense Department's manual on Mental Health Peer Support, he is a strong advocate of Art Therapy in psychiatric rehabilitation and holds Master's degrees in Human Resources and Business Administration. In 2010,

in a ceremony at Paramount Pictures, he received a Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMSHA) Choice Award for Lifetime Achievement. He may be contacted at moeal@verizon.net. □

Psychological Impact of Superstorm Sandy on America: Annihilation Anxiety

Victor Meladze—*Journal of Psychohistory*

Natural and man-made disasters have played out cyclically upon the U.S. national stage over the course of its rise as a global empire. The 2012 Superstorm Sandy that devastated large segments of Long Island, New York, and New Jersey, however, differed from all other regional and national emergencies. Unlike past large-scale crises, this hurricane struck the nation at a most vulnerable historical period, namely during its economic and sociopolitical decline. Viewed within the context of macrohistorical currents, Superstorm Sandy can be readily classified as one of the most psychologically traumatizing natural disasters experienced by the U.S. population in the 21st century.

The severity of shared psychic trauma, like somatic injury that is sustained at the individual level, cannot be accurately assessed without considering pre-existing conditions (e.g., prior injuries to a group's sense of cohesion/group-illusion) and survival mechanisms of the subjects in question. This paper theorizes that, given the magnitudes of economic problems, loss of identity, series of man-made and natural disasters, armed conflicts and changing global dynamics, Superstorm Sandy and its aftermath are among the cumulative stressors that have undermined the U.S. group's defense systems against annihilation anxieties. Superstorm Sandy, when considered within the constellation of macro-level crises that have confronted the U.S. population for more than a decade, has augmented the collapse of the nation's immortality ideologies.

Impact of Superstorm Sandy at Micro Group Level

In assessing the U.S. population's emotional disturbances and intrapsychic conflicts that were activated by Superstorm Sandy, the work of Robert Jay Lifton and Lloyd deMause are of indispen-

sable value. First, the psychological impact of Superstorm Sandy on the directly affected populations—ground zero—of Long Island, New York, and New Jersey has to be examined. Among the core psychological effects of all man-made and natural disasters on survivors are the sense of time collapse and loss of connection with larger life regenerative forces/defense systems against fears of mortality. For example, Lifton, in his interviews and observations of Hiroshima bombing victims, discovered a pervasive phenomenon of what he terms as “psychic numbing.” The sudden confrontation with death and destruction on a massive scale triggers a “psychic closing off” by survivors that is concomitantly experienced with a loss of collective narrative.

The damage that Superstorm Sandy brought is estimated to be in the tens of billions of dollars. The damage to infrastructure was extensive: residents of Long Island, New York, and sections of the New Jersey coast not only lost homes, electricity, employment, access to roads, food, and fuel, but were also profoundly dislocated from their geographical place of existence.

At an unconscious level, land that human beings inhabit is experienced as a maternal being—a good mother (“object” in psychoanalytic terminology)—that is internalized during infancy and childhood. In fact, according to Lloyd deMause, emotional attachments to land, nations, and micro and macro communities/groups also are experienced as womb surroundings. Group members project early attachment anxieties, fears, and needs onto modern urban communities. The love we have for our land, for example, like the love of our parental figures in childhood, involves repressing hostilities and death wishes for it. Hence, physical displacement and emotional dislocation of populations from geographical locations are experienced as the loss of the protective womb-mother.

The loss of connection with land and community has far-reaching repercussions within the shared psyche. One of the shared intrapsychic processes that profound loss of cities of residence, vital infrastructures, significant others, or group leaders (and other idealized attachments) triggers is the mobilization of memories organized around fetal, birth, and childhood traumas. For example, as the group experiences the total loss of its community—protective mother—deeply repressed memories of the punitive, demonized

maternal figures of childhood are activated within the collective unconscious. DeMause has termed this negative internalized entity as the “killer-mother” or “killer-caretaker.” Psychoanalytically, adults experience maternal engulfment anxieties during times of stress that compromise defense systems against the punitive/“bad” parental alter. According to his psychohistorical theory, this shared psychodynamic is activated during periods of socioeconomic growth, as well as crisis situations when the external-environmental changes correspond with perinatal and postnatal psychic shocks imprinted during the fetal and childhood phases of life.

In the aftermath of Superstorm Sandy, mental health professionals have reported that rates of anxiety, depression, and panic attacks are on the rise among the directly affected populations. Published news articles on survivors’ ordeals support key data on Acute Traumatic Stress and Post Traumatic Stress Disorders that prominent social scientists have documented over the last century on the neuropsychological injuries that violent events inflict on human beings. Psychic numbing and perceptions of time collapse/detachment of symbolizations of continuity that survivors of the Hiroshima bombing experienced also are being observed in survivors of Superstorm Sandy. There are numerous news accounts of individuals who “can’t move on” beyond the memories of the storm, have frequent flashbacks, experience emotional numbness and detachment/disassociation from the social environment.

Impact of Superstorm Sandy at the Macro Group Level

The emotional impact of Superstorm Sandy on the U.S. population cannot be assessed in isolation from larger historical processes and collective crises. The Information Age and the Internet Age have made all regional, national, continental, and global events accessible to ever-increasing numbers of people, including the audio-visual transmitted imagery of conflict and violence. Twelve years into the 21st century, the U.S. group has experienced massive immersion in death and destruction imagery. Psychiatrically, the U.S. population is afflicted with ongoing PTSD and ASD stemming from a series of macro-level traumas and unresolved conflicts. Beginning with the 9/11 terrorist attacks, followed by failed wars, economic recession, loss of civil liberties, and social safety nets, through a host of natural and man-made disasters (including

Hurricane Katrina, 2005; BP oil spill, 2010; Alabama tornados, 2011; and Fukushima nuclear accident, 2011), the U.S. population is experiencing high levels of annihilation anxieties. Superstorm Sandy has significantly compounded the shared anxieties relating to loss of potency, fragmentation, and mortality.

The U.S. news media's reporting choices during Superstorm Sandy's activity, for example, reflected shared annihilation anxieties, emotional regression, and intrapsychic disturbances of the macro group. As Superstorm Sandy cut a swath of damage to the Northeast coast's infrastructure, placing lives in jeopardy, major TV news channels such as Fox News and CNN abruptly stopped reportage on the historic storm and ran an exposé on CIA Director David Petraeus' marital infidelities. Group psychoanalytically, the coverage of the sex scandal in the midst of national and international emergencies was symptomatic of the collective stress-induced dissociative state and regression to pre-Oedipal and Oedipal conflicts.

The U.S. group, in addition to being exposed to a natural disaster and violence in the Middle East, also was in the eye of an emotionally charged presidential election. Petraeus' sex scandal, viewed through the lenses of deMause's psychohistorical theory, served as a group purification strategy. Leaders are delegated parental figures—"poison containers," to use deMause's term—onto whom group members project their shared psychic toxins/death and annihilation anxieties. The presidential election momentarily undermined the U.S. group's intense attachment to its leadership. The nation was overwhelmed by castration anxieties/fears of maternal engulfment. As deMause has extensively documented throughout his work, groups experience feelings of poisoning and have perceptions of undermined masculine potency during times of stress. Petraeus, a decorated former U.S. general who political pundits credited with handling the Afghanistan theatre of war with professionalism, was a needed sacrificial victim to assuage the collective feelings of guilt, helplessness, abandonment and impotence that Superstorm Sandy, the presidential election and a multiplicity of stressful events triggered. The staged fall of Petraeus via public exposure and termination of his post as the director of the CIA, at an unconscious level, was a castration/killing of a power elite figure from

the U.S. military-industrial complex (i.e., a delegate of masculine potency and defense against maternal engulfment anxieties). His downfall (symbolic castration or death of the Oedipal father) communicated the U.S. group's unconscious need to restore its sense of potency and purity and ward off fears of psychotic breakdown.

Conclusion

Superstorm Sandy played out at a vulnerable time in U.S. history. The nation is in the advanced stages of decline at multiple levels and is experiencing unrelenting domestic and international conflicts. Superstorm Sandy's emotional and psychological impact on the U.S. population can most accurately be gauged within the context of macro historical matrix. For more than two decades, the U.S. population has experienced a steady deterioration of its collective identity—"group illusion"—and core immortality ideologies. Starting from the loss of the Soviet Union, a "Godless" and well-defined external enemy in 1991, America has become a country in deep crisis. Superstorm Sandy is among the ghastly faces of climate change and within the currents of larger historical developments, natural and man-made disasters that are heightening the U.S. population's death and annihilation anxieties.

Victor Meladze is an independent scholar and an Assistant Editor of The Journal of Psychohistory. He can be reached at victormeladze@sbcglobal.net. □

In the Eye of the Storm

Working for FEMA in the Wake of Sandy

Anonymous

November 4, 2012: I'm in New York now working the Hurricane Sandy disaster for FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency). The first month I was there felt like a lifetime of experience. Driving through lower Manhattan at night with no electricity means no street or traffic lights, so the only illumination comes from the fires lit to keep people warm on the street. The scene was chaotic, like you might find in an apocalyptic video game—only

this is real, and some of the scariest experiences of my life!

Early on, Janet Napolitano, Secretary of Homeland Security, came to our FEMA Joint Field Office along with Senator Charles Schumer, U.S. Representatives Steven Israel and Peter King, and other state and county dignitaries. Afterwards, I was eating lunch and a couple asked to join me. The man turned out to be an important county official on Long Island who was there to greet the governmental entourage. I was curious to know what a fellow like him really does, so I asked where he's going from the meeting. He had sort of a blank look, glanced at his wife, and then said he didn't know. His home was flooded, and they've been staying with friends for weeks. That's getting old, he told me, and they don't want to continue there. So, homeless themselves, they were going to visit other homeless people in shelters for the rest of the day.

I've somehow managed to really get myself in the thick of it now: seeking out people who still have no heat or power a month after the storm and with cold weather approaching. We carry water, ready-to-eat food boxes, and blankets, and people really do need these essential supplies. I'm hearing stories and try to remain very professional, but when I turn my back to walk away, I lose it. I am moved by all sorts of people: old, confused, sick, young caring for sick. Although I truly feel that FEMA work is what I am meant to do, it's still hard for me to experience human suffering.

I was in the home of a sweet 87-year-old lady who had leukemia; her ruined belongings were piled in her living room. She's had no heat for the last month, and it's been getting down to the high 30s now at night. She has a space heater in her bedroom, but she's afraid to use it at night for fear of fire. What's more, she doesn't want to take anything from FEMA because there are other people who "really need" the aid. I at least got her to take water.

Another woman, about 55 years old, told us that she's been living in her house in Freeport her entire life. It's a community of fingers that stretch into the water. It has never flooded, even after Hurricane Irene, so she felt confident staying home during Sandy. After the fact, though, she said it was the dumbest decision of her life. As the storm intensified, she saw the water rising on the street. Her first floor is up about eight stairs, so she wasn't really con-

cerned—until a wave smashed through the air conditioner and rolled through her house. It nearly knocked her off her feet. She heard the pop, pop, pop of blown electrical circuits and slogged to the electric panel. She heard more popping and just threw the main switch and it was suddenly dark. She had never experienced such darkness. Moving around in waist deep water in her own home, she was lost. She eventually found her way to the attic where she kept warm and dry until daybreak using whatever clothes were being stored there. Yet with no flood insurance, this was only the beginning of her troubles. Like so many others, she is now homeless and without enough resources for recovery.

For the first two weeks after the storm, there was very little gasoline to go around. I'm not sure if the problem was due to a lack of electricity or because the tankers weren't able to dock, but either way, there was no gas. Vehicles formed lines miles long at the few stations that were pumping, and the police had to keep order there so everything ran smoothly. FEMA had a truck that filled us up so we could work, but it only came on some days.

Perhaps the most powerful lesson I have learned during my work was one of accepting help. We shared space with folks who had collected clothing for survivors, and with cold weather approaching, more people came in for warm clothes. I met a middle-aged couple here, we talked about FEMA benefits they may be eligible for as they began to rummage through the clothing. The woman commented that when something like this happens, pride goes out the window. How true.

The anonymous author of this article works for FEMA. □

Psychohistory Forum Work-In-Progress
Presentation Paper Proposals Are Welcome

As Are Articles for Clio's Psyche

Contact Paul Elovitz at pelovitz@aol.com

When Hit by a Hurricane

Aviva Gitlin—Psychoanalyst in Private Practice

About midway through the first day of the storm when my next door neighbors moved in, lyrics from Bob Dylan's 1975 song, "Shelter from the Storm," started repeating themselves in my mind: "Come in, she said; I'll give you shelter from the storm." That phrase of the song repeated itself for days, maybe even a week. At first I did not notice, but as days passed, I started to pay attention to what was happening inside my mind. I became fascinated by the thinking that helped me cope with the significant disruptions all around. As I began to see clients, I paid close attention to what was happening in their minds too, and to the thinking that helped them cope.

"Did you see what Bloomberg did with the marathon? As usual, the very people who are supposed to help are off somewhere else," said my client who is always alert to the hypocrisy of the powerful.

"I was embarrassed that two nights after the storm, benefit concerts were already starting up. This isn't nearly as bad as the Tsunami in Japan," said my client who tolerates terrible living situations by convincing herself that others have it worse.

"It's amazing how calm I was during the storm! I am always so anxious and anticipating disaster that I felt I was prepared. Once the storm came, I felt totally calm. I knew it was really beyond my control," said one patient who treats the world as though there is always an impending catastrophe on a daily basis.

Seeing people in the very middle of Sandy felt like receiving the gift of a window into how each person really does experience reality in a very idiosyncratic way. The stories they told and the tunes that played in their heads said more about the individual than they did about the storm. The opening sentences as each patient stepped through my door in that first week after the storm (the week when many people were still without electricity, and the coastal areas were just beginning to be assessed) was a clear articulation of how one reacts when reality intrudes. Reality had intruded

but, real as it was, everyone experienced it as a dreamscape.

Watching myself react to Sandy was as familiar as it was inevitable. I was one of the lucky people whose house did not lose electricity at all. As I learned a week or two later at a conference on biology and emotions, I probably fall in the category of people whose oxytocin levels increase, rather than deplete, in stressful situations. When stressed, I open myself up to take care of others. I took in my neighbors, I took in good friends, I cooked for others, and I even put my name on a list to take in “an old person who had nowhere to go.” This is a perfect dream-like rendition of my family role as the one who had to grow up sharing a bedroom with my grandmother. Even as I did it, I was very aware that I was soothing myself as well as being “generous” or “hospitable.”

It was comforting to turn on my automatic coping and re-establish the predictability of the real. It was also a privilege to be present as others became aware of the stories they create to feel safe. I did some of the best work I have done in a long time during the week Sandy displaced many in my area. As my clients and I checked in with each other, we reestablished the safety of our space. In many sessions, we were able to examine the storm experience as a metaphor for how one sees the world, especially when stressed. There are few therapeutic moments more satisfying than sitting with clients as they vividly experience how they filter the world. We all find the one detail that confirms what we have always “known.” Like young children, we tell ourselves the same story over and over again because it helps calm us down. The storm was horrible, but if we could somehow transform it into familiar horror, then it became less of a shock to us and more of an experience we had already survived.

The lens through which we see the world is a direct outcome of how we are currently experiencing ourselves. We all have many parts of ourselves. When afraid and in need of defense, each one of us goes to a predictable part of ourselves. This is an attempt to control the outside intrusive world. Our first response when stressed—our automatic response—is often to return to the ways in which we coped as a child. During the storm and its immediate aftermath, many of us went to the self-protecting child inside us. We retell the story in a way that first made sense to us as children.

For example, a client told me during Sandy that “I was speaking to someone who went to help in the shelter in Midtown Manhattan. It sounded like people were living in the most horrible conditions, suffering terribly without proper medication or clothes or even a bed to sleep on. Just a block away no one even knew there was a shelter there! No one knew what was going on, they kept going on with their lives as normal.” This description told to me by a child of a Holocaust survivor, closely mirrors the situations of so many Jews during the Holocaust.

We reestablish “normal” by attending to the one facet of the real that retells our stories. As we relax and recover, we are able to be more flexible and open in response to our reality. We begin to take in other points of view and this, too, is comforting.

Antonino Ferro, an Italian psychoanalyst, advocates that we look at every story our clients tell us as though it were a dream. He suggests that as they begin to talk, we organize our listening by prefacing what we hear with the words “I dreamt that...” (“Transformations in Dreaming and Characters in the Psychoanalytic Field,” *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, 2009, 90:209-230). This approach is often very useful in guiding a discussion to examine the unconscious structuring of experience, especially in the middle of a crisis.

I had a “dream” that I was in a hurricane that tore down trees and homes. It caused massive damage and reminded us of how powerless we can be. The world felt like something apocalyptic had occurred. But in that dream, I was surrounded by people I love and we all took care of each other. We leaned closer to each other, reaffirmed that we could count on each other. We became more deeply connected.

My “dream” tells the story of a childhood in which I felt pretty safe, but I was surrounded by images and stories of more painful lives. I always felt like I should do what I can to help. The dream also tells the story of how grateful I am, and how lucky I feel to have come through the storm ultimately feeling enriched by the experience. I know that many suffered destruction and loss. I hope that they too get to experience the support of community and a sense of regaining power after a storm.

Aviva Gitlin, PsyD, is a clinical psychologist and psychoanalyst in private practice in White Plains, a suburb of New York City, where she teaches a class titled Engaging Dreams: Advanced Clinical Seminar on Dreams at the Westchester Center for the Study of Psychoanalysis and Psychotherapy (WCSPP). Dr. Gitlin is also the current president of the Psychoanalytic Association of WCSPP and may be contacted at avivagitlin@aol.com. □

My View of the Jersey Shore with Pleasure, Fear, and Guilt

Leslie Rieches Gumbert—Freelance Writer

After devastating natural disasters such as Hurricane Sandy, a critically important question arises: Why do people repeatedly choose to live in risky areas such as the coastline? One answer lies in an individual's seeking to recapture the joys of childhood pleasures at the beach while disavowing or denying information discordant to that choice. For instance, 2011's Hurricane Irene, mythologized as a "100 year storm," escaped serious evaluation until it was closely followed in 2012 by another "100 year storm" called Sandy. Group identification may also provide an explanation. The Jersey Shore and its residents share numerous collective memories tightly binding the community; residents self-identify as resilient, straight-forward, and strong. Can this group identity, blinding them to obvious danger, also ultimately serve in the end to help with the healing? This is my shore journey.

They say timing is everything. Becoming a New Jerseyian has been a protracted process: my husband commuted to New Jersey each week for five years while I stayed behind and worked as a teacher in the Midwest. Although this arrangement was often a strain, we regenerated and reconnected on the Jersey Shore during the summer months. Each June, I packed up various belongings, my cat, and—as an avid cook—most of my kitchen, to make the nine-hour drive to the Shore and my husband.

For three years, we rented a third floor, two-bedroom condominium in Long Branch and took pleasure in the rejuvenated beach and boardwalk less than 200 yards from our front door. The

unhurried pace of a beach lifestyle made it easy to relax and bond, not only with each other but also with our children and visiting family members. Although our view consisted of the parking lot and a dilapidated home awaiting demolition, we were drawn to the rehabilitative sanctuary offered by sand and sunshine. The beach cart, laden with umbrella, chairs, towels, cooler, and books, became an essential part of everyday existence—even if for one stolen hour.

Later, we moved to a tenth-floor apartment directly on the Shore with a gorgeous, expansive view of the Atlantic. Upon waking there the first morning, I was greeted by an intense pink and orange glow, the rising sun bathing the rooms in brilliance. Formerly white walls radiated warmth and peace; soothing colors, the rhythmic lapping of the ocean, and the warm breeze united to uncoil every cell of my taut being. The Shore as therapist offered a healing embrace, the water offered a feeling of rebirth. Finally, it was time to really move, to consolidate our lives and plot our future together as empty nesters. My Wordsworthian love for nature, formed largely by an outdoor childhood in rural Illinois, led me to seek a home that would continue to satiate my need for nature, water, and the peace it provided. No longer restricted to summers, I sought a permanent haven from the outside world on the Shore. Finding a budget-pleasing house with enough room for visiting family, however, proved elusive on the Atlantic side. The search left me heavy-hearted at the thought of giving up the Shore, especially when I was mourning the absence of now grown children, friends and colleagues, and my former home. My quest spanned most of the summer, but then I found it.

Positioned on Sandy Hook Bay and south of New York City, our four-story townhome perches on a 14-foot dune no more than 50 yards off the sand and small boardwalk. In between, an estuary houses a variety of birds and wildlife, including a fat groundhog. A two-story bank of windows frames a spectacular view of the bay, the Verrazano Bridge, Brooklyn, and lower Manhattan's skyline punctuated by the Freedom Towers. Light streams in, caressing every corner. Pink and purple sunrises open the day and the setting sun bathes everything in golden light. The nearby fishermen's co-op and a small fish market also doubling as a restaurant offer abundant fresh catch and delicious local food and more

importantly, local friendship. I relax. I feel *home*.

Back to the timing thing. Less than two months after moving in, Hurricane Sandy barreled up the East Coast. At first this seemed a great adventure, our experience with Hurricane Irene being but mildly annoying. As the days wore on, however, I began to have misgivings. Scheduled to be at a conference in Florida, my husband was leaving on Monday, October 29, the day Sandy was to arrive. It seemed prudent to change his departure to Sunday so that he would make his flight. Later, a mandatory evacuation order meant that I would join him.

On Saturday night, we visited the small fish market and restaurant to eat a quick dinner. We pulled up chairs in the cozy dining room wedged behind the now empty display cases in front of the shop and the thousand-gallon lobster holding tanks in back, making small talk with the proprietors. Over the past several months we had dined there often, enjoying their hospitality, conversation, and lobsters. This was genuine Jersey, not that of television infamy. Firemen, police officers, people from all walks of life enjoyed each other, a good story, and a cold beer. That night we spoke about what they had done to prepare for the storm and what had happened during Irene. Looking back, it seems surreal that as we talked, I hardly suspected we could be their last customers.

Before leaving for the airport the next morning, I looked out the fourth-floor window toward the bay and skyline. The formerly soothing water now seemed in torment as increasingly ominous waves battered the shore. The sky no longer illuminated; it menaced. Nature was poised to unleash its fury, my restorative balm now dangerously destructive and, possibly, obliterating.

In our Florida hotel, we led a Dali-like existence. It all seemed bizarre and out of place. Tethered to the television, Twitter, and Facebook, we were desperate for information. As we listened and read, despondency set in: the Raritan Bay was expected to take on massive flooding. Three excruciating days passed as we waited for word. Luckily, a friend drove his four-wheeler to Port Monmouth, reporting back that our complex stood mostly unscathed. Our townhome is 14 feet above sea level, and he was told the surge crested in our area at 13.9 feet, the water miraculously

breaking around the dune. We had been spared, but the surrounding area was devastated. Exiled in luxury compared to those who retreated to shelters at home, we were mocked by the sunshine and filled with guilt. We worried for our restaurant friends and all of my husband's co-workers.

Finally, we returned home. We were met by mounds of sand, boats, and houses where they shouldn't be, so much out of kilter. National Guard members lined the streets, blocking traffic to Union Beach and Keansburg. The lower part of Main Street in Port Monmouth lay in soggy ruins. It looked as if all of the stuffing had been pulled out of the houses, contents piled by the road, huge heaps of sodden possessions and broken dreams. The sight was heartbreaking, especially the toys.

After checking our home, we quickly headed down to the restaurant to help, if we could. We found the usual group gathered at the back of the building, a few pushing around brooms in a determined effort to scrub the thick mud and brackish water off the floor and into the drain. Seven feet of water had coursed through the building, and they were in the process of cleaning up and salvaging whatever possible. In the remaining daylight, we did what little we could to help extricate their equipment from the muck. We went three more days to help, but in the end, it would not be enough.

Mother Nature exhibited her awesome power through Sandy, no longer bringing comfort, instead illustrating that life is random, indiscriminate in outcomes. I'm not sure who first coined the term *survivor's guilt*, but writing about the experience of a natural disaster when I evacuated to a Gaylord hotel seems incredibly indulgent, more so because my house is still standing. It is difficult to witness others suffering when I am not. Driving down Main Street is a daily testament to our good fortune, engendering feelings of gratitude and guilt. I struggle with feelings of inadequacy: not giving enough, helping enough, or being able to right the damage caused by Sandy.

My view has changed. Now, when I look out on the Jersey Shore, I don't see the beach or the ocean. I see people. Friends bringing food and beer to the local restaurant, only later revealing that their own homes have been flooded. Firemen and other first

responders working tirelessly in service to the community, without regard to their own personal losses. An elderly woman who lives alone valiantly raking her yard, removing small pieces of trash confetti; a neighbor stopping to help. Hoards of volunteers streaming into damaged neighborhoods to do what they can to help fight against the inevitable mold. A neighbor, on his home that's now see-through and condemned, hanging out not only an American flag, but also a patriotic 1st Navy Jack flag declaring "Don't Tread on Me," signifying strength and courage. In December he hung a wreath, too.

I finally understand the meaning of *Jersey Strong*. Oh, what a view.

Leslie Rieches Gumbert is a freelance writer recently relocated to New Jersey. A former teacher at Oakstone Academy in Columbus, Ohio, she studied English at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign and St. Mary-of-the-Woods College, Indiana. She may be contacted at lesliegumbert@gmail.com. □

Hurricane Sandy as a Window into the Middle Ages

Rosalie Maloney—Ramapo College of New Jersey

Life in the Early Middle Ages was remarkably different from our existence today. The harnessing of electricity has vastly changed the way society functions, and our reliance on electrical power controls much of what we do at home, work, for recreation, and even to survive. One major difference between modern and medieval society was how far a person would travel from their home in their lifetime. Many people would never even venture outside the village of their birth, and one medieval historian has estimated that in the year 1000, an average person would see only about 500 people in a lifetime. While today it is possible for a person to live in the same town for a lifetime, there is a high probability that they will travel from it at some point.

Even if a person does not go to faraway places, there is still the opportunity to research and find pictures of others via books,

television, and the Internet. The commoners of the Early Middle Ages did not have these opportunities to broaden their worldview, nor did they have any fast means of communication to the outside world. Their primary focus was working to survive, mostly by tending to crops. Children and adults would work together to provide a meager sustenance for the family. Work was done by daylight, and the cold night would be spent in the family dwelling, such as a thatched-roof cottage, sometimes huddling with animals for warmth. Most peasants also wore loose clothing and hoods to keep warm. Life expectancy was short: disease was a major issue due to a poor diet and poor housing as well as little medical attention. Infant mortality was so high that a woman might have a dozen pregnancies and no living children. Day-to-day life for early medieval commoners often meant wondering if they would survive to see the next sunrise. Religion was one of their few consolations.

This is all a stark contrast to the modern day, when work continues long after sunset and access to heat makes cold nights far more bearable. However, with the recent destruction of Hurricane Sandy, some of us were given a taste of what it was like to live without power. Living standards remained far above those of the Early Middle Ages, although the power outage did prove just how dependent our society is on electricity. My own home was left without power for about a week. Simply maneuvering around the house became a chore due to lack of lighting, even with flashlights at our disposal. As a result, we ended up taking care of chores in the daylight hours. Like those in the Middle Ages, we wore layers upon layers of clothing—jackets on top of sweaters, socks on top of socks, sweatpants over pajama pants—both around the house and in bed. Although we at least had working cell phones, we used them very sparingly to conserve their batteries, which meant being disconnected from others and much of the news. The lack of electronic entertainment and the difficulty of seeing written entertainment made days feel very slow. Battery-powered radios were one of the only sources of recreation we had. Luckily, we were able to light our gas stove in order to cook warm meals, although they did not stay warm for long in a cold house. After the experience of Sandy, I can barely imagine existing in early medieval living standards every day. I give each and every person credit for doing so.

There were moments during the power outage when I felt quite miserable.

I had restricted access to the outside world, and at times the isolation stung. My creative outlets, as both a designer and artist, felt suffocated. As an aspiring graphic designer, for work and fun I normally spend much of my time glued to a computer screen. My computer is my instrument of creativity, so it is an integral part of my life. Being without power, even for a short time, proved to me just how reliant I've become on technology.

Heat turned out to be the amenity I craved the most. I discovered that I can be without a phone, Internet, and computer if I really need to, even the lack of electrical lights was tolerable, but sleeping in a cold house felt intolerable. I craved a warm bed. Despite all of this, I kept reminding myself that there were so many people who had it much worse due to the storm. I'm thankful there is still a roof over my head, and I hope all the victims of Sandy are able to rebuild their homes and their lives. There is still hope for them, but I imagine there were times when people of the early Middle Ages felt hopeless. Although they had no sense of what central heat, electric lights, and long-distance communication would be like, they must often have had an overbearing fear that they and their families would not live to see the next day. Yet, surviving in those harsh times meant you had to continue living in very uncomfortable conditions. It must have taken enormous resilience to survive in early medieval times. In comparison, my week without heat was inconsequential, although I certainly did not experience it as such.

Rosalie Maloney is a 22-year-old student at Ramapo College of New Jersey studying interactive media as a communications major with plans to pursue a career in graphic design. She lives in Rochelle Park, New Jersey with her parents and cat and may be contacted at rmalone1@ramapo.edu. □

Back issues of volumes 1-18 of
Clio's Psyche are now available
at cliospsyche.org

Rescuers & the Search for Safe Haven

Repairing Childhood Losses through FEMA Work

Paul Salstrom—St. Mary-of-the-Woods College

When my daughter started working with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), I had no psychological thoughts about it. She was one of the volunteer firefighters FEMA recruited in 2005 during Hurricane Katrina and was sent to coastal Mississippi to do individual assistance work—particularly providing trailers for temporary housing. She immediately liked FEMA recovery work. Since the first day of her deployment to the Katrina havoc zone, her commitment to FEMA's work has been ardent and driven. In retrospect, I realize that FEMA resembled her earlier jobs in mental health, hospital intensive care, paramedics, and her volunteer firefighting and crisis center work. Perhaps she was acting out a disposition to repair childhood loss and trauma.

I have been cataloging her childhood losses for many years. They make a long list, starting with losing her home at age three, and then at five losing her identity to some extent when her first name was changed (because in French, it is a male name rather than female), and losing her language because no one at her new school in Tunisia spoke or understood a word of English. Her mother, who had gone to Tunisia to act in films, still spoke English with her at home. But our daughter even lost her hair color, which went from blonde to black, for a film role. The black dye would not wash out and new blonde hair took a long time to grow out. As best I can determine, all of this she endured stoically, even her parents' separation, but further losses continued on through her childhood and within a few years she became extremely insular, spending most of her home time alone in her room even when she was visiting me back in the States. She even may have felt a partial loss of her little sister in Tunisia when I regrettably said her little sister was actually her *half*-sister. She was about 10 at the time, and a pained look appeared on her face when I told her that.

But losing her home at just three years old was perhaps the hardest for our daughter to handle. I've come to realize this while reading Elizabeth Danze's article about the psychological importance of one's home—the article appears on pages 400-403 of this issue. When she was three, she and I went for a long visit with relatives far away. One night at bedtime, she tearfully told me that little girls like their homes and don't like to leave them. She wasn't being dramatic, just inconsolable.

FEMA has become many things to many people, not least a political football. But perhaps it's also therapeutic—helping some of its most ardent employees repair losses, whether those occurred during childhood or later. I see great changes in my daughter these past seven years since her first FEMA deployments to Mississippi and Louisiana. Disaster recovery seems to be one of those occupations certain people love, for psychological reasons, since the pay, perks, benefits and predictability of employment are all low.

In another example, Moe Armstrong, whose article is on pages 375-378, suffered in 1966 from what he calls a PTSD “breakdown” after several months of almost continuous combat in Vietnam while he was in his early 20s. He spent nearly 20 years at loose ends, until going back to school, getting involved in veterans' peer-support work, and helping start Vet to Vet—a nationwide peer-support network focused on helping Iraq and Afghanistan veterans get to know Vietnam veterans. Armstrong is at least as ardent and driven about Vet to Vet as my daughter is about FEMA. Surely his work is assuaging, if not healing, what he calls the “psychiatric wound” he suffered in Vietnam.

My daughter remains stoic about things she can't change, but now she's passionately active about things she *can* change, like whether or not desperate people receive necessities, whether or not their homes get restored, and whether or not their daunting paperwork is done right. Her shifts can run over 100 hours per week, but she doesn't seem to mind, or even slacken her pace while there's still work to be done. I can recall a few phases like that in my own youth, but in her case, it looks to be more than a phase; it looks like major self-repair.

Paul Salstrom, PhD, teaches history at St. Mary-of-the-

Woods College near Terre Haute, Indiana and is Guest Co-editor of this Psychology of Superstorm Sandy Special Issue of Clio's Psyche. He may be contacted at PSalstrom@smwc.edu. □

A Journalist's Struggle with Natural Disaster and Her Emotions

Nicole Alliegro—Ramapo College of New Jersey

My first semester as editor-in-chief of the campus newspaper, *The Ramapo News*, was a busy one—we launched a website, we covered a presidential election, and we were forced to deal with Hurricane Sandy.

The superstorm hit the tri-state area on Sunday, October 28, and although we weren't set to produce a paper until Thursday, one day after Halloween, I already had a bad feeling about making our deadline. Sandy downed trees, flooded streets, ruined beaches, and left millions without power. Although it made a relatively quick retreat, the hurricane left our area the massive job of literally picking up the pieces.

Thankfully, compared to places like the Jersey coast or New York City, Ramapo College residents who faced the storm on campus had it made. Students were quick to joke about Hurricane Sandy cancelling classes and giving us all another week to study for exams, finish papers, and sleep in past noon, but we were lucky to have electricity, Internet access, phone service, running water, and heat. Our dorms were dry and our paths were clear. We had dining options readily available and a place to purchase essentials. In short, we were much better off than most of our parents, professors, and commuting peers, some of whom were without electricity for up to two weeks.

As a student, I felt comfortable and safe, even as I watched the storm wreak havoc outside my dorm window and called home often to check on my family, who were clearly miserable being cold and in the dark. But as a student journalist, in the wake of Sandy's disaster, I felt inadequate and worried about my place as a member of the news media. I wanted to do something to service

our readership and combat the powerlessness and vulnerability I was feeling following such a tragedy, but I didn't know what to do or how to do it. How should our small, weekly newspaper handle the storm? What responsibilities did we have to our readership to report on the campus, local, and national news?

I wrestled internally with these questions, all the while facing opposition from my parents (worrying it would be dangerous to be out late at night after a major hurricane) and from my close friends (complaining I worked too hard even in the middle of a raging storm). However, none of these "naysayers" really understood my perspective, probably because they are not journalists themselves and therefore did not understand my sense of duty to get the story to our readers. Nor did they focus on the fact that disaster represents an opportunity for journalists to prove their mettle.

I took inspiration from the industry professionals I have looked up to since first delving into the world of journalism back in high school. During the storm, and for several weeks after, it was nearly impossible not to notice the truly heroic Hurricane Sandy coverage that all of the network and local news outlets produced. On television, reporters, anchors, and meteorologists were on the air almost around the clock, bringing those who could tune in the latest storm news, all the while getting pelted with heavy winds and rains and shouting into their microphones to be heard over the storm's roar. Of course, there was everybody behind the scenes to think about, too, those individuals whom you may not see but who have a hand in relaying the news—print journalists, web producers, radio personalities. Many of these people were working non-stop to put out the newest information, often under strained conditions. While government officials advised everyone else to stay inside, to skip work until the storm receded and normalcy was restored, these journalists were out on the front lines doing their jobs.

I decided that *The Ramapo News* had to do its job, too, with our storm coverage. After all, how could a staff of ten student journalists who actually had the means of producing a newspaper from start to finish—who had electricity, phone communication, strong wireless connections, and a space to meet and work—ignore how fortunate we were to be able to do so at Ramapo College? So we set out to put our Hurricane Sandy experiences into perspective.

Being a weekly paper, we had the luxury of working several days after the storm to properly prepare our issue.

We had the time to do our best reporting, compile the strongest photos, and most importantly, adopt the right angle in our coverage. This caused me to drive myself even more to lead my staff to produce a meaningful “storm issue” of *The Ramapo News*. Inspired by the professionals, I wanted to play an important role in the storm coverage. Our newsroom that night was unusually quiet, probably because all of us were feeling the weight of our jobs. It was the only way we could think of to process and move forward after Sandy, and in doing so reduce feelings of vulnerability after a tragic disaster. Nurses and doctors cared for the sick and displaced, construction laborers repaired houses and rebuilt businesses, and as journalists we produced and delivered the news.

We chose a positive perspective in covering the storm. Yes, we printed a full-page spread of uprooted trees and damaged dorm siding, powerful images of the strong winds and heavy rains that battered our picturesque campus, but on the opposite page, an article on the superstorm’s path quoted students who recognized the College’s dedication to the safety of its students and staff. As a group, we even pooled our thoughts of appreciation and thanks to our administration for keeping us safe, and above all, allowing us journalists to keep doing what we love and feel meant to do (and thereby helping us cope with such a tragic natural disaster).

Looking back, the period when Hurricane Sandy blew through the northeast brings to mind, for many, terrible memories of days that were literally dark and cold. For some severely unfortunate others, forced to rebuild their homes, clean up their communities, and fight for better emergency response plans, this period is still not yet in the past. Yet for me, reflecting on my first true experience of a natural disaster, I feel a sense of accomplishment. As a student journalist, I was responsible for leading our staff in providing the paper’s community with the pertinent news of the week. *The Ramapo News* did so objectively and in a timely fashion. Furthermore, through our journalism, I was able to suppress my personal feelings of fear and vulnerability in the face of tragedy.

Nicole Alliegro is a 20-year-old junior at Ramapo College

studying communication arts with a concentration in journalism. She is an editorial assistant for Clio's Psyche and most recently completed an internship for WABC-TV. Nicole can be reached at nalliegr@ramapo.edu. □

Home

Elizabeth Danze—The University of Texas at Austin

Describing Superstorm Sandy, Queens, New York resident Joann said, “When the wind was blowing and the sound of the storm was like a sledge hammer beating at the house, I felt that the roof was going to cave in, to crumble. In a panic I asked myself, ‘Where am I? I am *in* this house. And what happens to the house will happen to me.’”

She was without power for 11 days after Hurricane Sandy swept through. While her house sustained only minor damage (only a small part of the roof had to be replaced), her best friend’s fared much worse. Joann described the seven feet of water flooding her friend’s house with deep and sorrowful pain. Paint dripped from a watercolor drawing done by her now-grown daughter when she was just a few years old. There was nothing she could do to stop her daughter’s art from disappearing before her eyes. She was unnerved to learn that everything inside the house—and the house itself—would need to be stripped and replaced. The walls, along with the doors, moldings, and ceilings—everything—had either been destroyed or would have to be removed because of the toxicity of the floodwater. Joann explained that she saw her own home as a safe haven and that she and her husband “existed within (and were emotionally attached to) the house itself.” When she saw photographs and treasured objects floating down her street, she empathized deeply with those who were losing their “selves” in the floodwaters.

Joann talked about her house as a structure, or a building type, at a distance, as if seeing and feeling its resonance from outside herself (perhaps as a defense), while simultaneously experiencing the house as part of her. The house as a structure held a potential that was realized only when filled with domestic comfort, fa-

miliar ties and emotional attachment. Joann had transformed the architectural type—the *house*—into a *home*, by investing it with herself and imbuing it with her family’s life.

Our idea of home and our understanding of our “selves” are so intertwined as to be almost inseparable. The *home* is witness to drama and joy: in it, children grow, families change and people die. Our homes “have sheltered myriad indelible memories and formative moments... and bear the traces of events... that existed within them” (Edwin Heathcote, *The Meaning of Home*, 2012, 182-83). As we strive toward a state of wholeness or of being wholly ourselves, where better to find it than in the reciprocal relationship we share with home? “Our home is our base, a place that roots us to the earth, to the city or to a landscape; it gives us permanence and stability and allows us to build a life around it and within it” (Heathcote, 7). We so closely identify with our home that when it is at risk, we are too. We fear homelessness, as it means a life on the streets, without a place to sleep, to eat, *to be*. Alain de Botton describes how architecture is related to our wellbeing and contentment and how we are affected by it every day, although most people are not consciously aware of its power. “We need a home in the psychological sense as much as we need one in the physical: to compensate for a vulnerability....We need our rooms to align us to desirable versions of ourselves and to keep alive the important, evanescent sides of us” (*The Architecture of Happiness*, 2006, 107). This resonates strongly when we think of ourselves, our lives, playing out in our home, and even when we recall the homes of our childhood and past. We find comfort in reliving memories of the protection afforded at home. To contrast, our memories of the outside world are often very different, sometimes evoking uncertainty or even fear.

Ideas of house and home have long been the subject of psychological inquiry. Carl Jung stressed the intimate connection between home and self—that one’s home is a symbolic mirror of one’s inner self, of unconscious wishes and emotions. Alternatively, the architectural structure and organization of the house can be understood as a model of the mind. Sigmund Freud’s topographic model divides the mind into three parts: unconscious, pre-conscious, and conscious, and compares them to a complement of

rooms. Gaston Bachelard writes that the house contains the most potent images and elements that serve as sources for powerful experiences. He attributes mental tasks to even the most ordinary and mundane elements in a home: the drawers, chests and cupboards. “In the wardrobe there exists a center of order that protects the entire house against uncurbed disorder” (*The Poetics of Space*, 1994, 79), while Juhani Pallasmaa analyzes the complexity of our many relationships to home, most particularly our self-identity.

The analysis of the human dwelling—the house—reveals the complexity of the many dimensions: practical and symbolic, visible and invisible, physical and mental, that intertwine in buildings and in our experience of them. The dwelling is, naturally, a shelter against unfavorable climate and weather, a protection against hostile forces, and a utilitarian device to enable the practical acts of daily life. But the house also supports the dweller’s self-identity and serves as the organizing center of his/her life. Home is the *axis mundi*, or the Omega Point—to use the notion of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, for the imaginary ideal point from which the world can be experienced correctly and as an entity (Robert McCarter and Juhani Pallasmaa, *Understanding Architecture*, 2012, 217).

An essential task of the home is to provide stability and continuity. The domestic world is ordered, safe and secure, and keeps at bay the often inhuman and unstructured outside world. Bachelard, referring to Henri Bosco’s short but poignant phrase, “When the shelter is sure, the storm is good,” captures this reality (39). For Joann, her friends and many others, the storm instead identified and made home a place of suffering, isolation, loneliness, and loss. Although this is a psychological burden to be endured long after their *houses* have been restored or replaced, Bachelard reminds us that the idea and memory of *home* will endure: “The houses that were lost forever continue to live on in us” (56).

Elizabeth Danze, FAIA, is a Fellow of the American Institute of Architects and an Associate Professor at The University of Texas at Austin’s School of Architecture, where she holds the Paul Philippe Cret Centennial Teaching Fellowship in Architecture. She is coeditor of The Annual of Psychoanalysis, Volume 33: Psychoanalysis and Architecture with James W. Anderson and Jerome

Winer, and coeditor of CENTER 17: Space and Psyche with Stephen Sonnenberg, MD (in press). Danze is a member of the American Psychoanalytic Association's Committee on Psychoanalysis and the Academy and the Academy of Distinguished Teachers. She may be contacted at edanze@utexas.edu. □

Perspectives on Natural Disasters

Searching for Extreme Weather and the Ambiguities of Diagnosis

Joseph M. Kramp—Ronin Institute

Any time a natural disaster is approaching or extreme weather is looming, the media likes to find and film individuals who are out surfing amidst the high waves, riding their bikes below falling trees, or just generally flaunting all of the safety warnings made by public officials to evacuate the area or seek shelter. Individuals actively seeking to participate in extreme weather conditions are labeled as irresponsible, which they certainly are, because emergency personnel will quite likely be forced to risk their lives in heroic rescue efforts. Given the risky behavior of adventure seekers, one might argue that these individuals have very limited ability to govern their own impulses and are, thus, mentally ill.

Media commentators do make this argument on a regular basis, even if they are meteorologists or anchorpersons who have no psychological training. The commentators never, to my knowledge, seek to obtain or are able to obtain interviews with the individuals who are out braving Mother Nature. Nevertheless, this does not stop the commentators from offering their own armchair diagnosis. During Hurricanes Sandy, Katrina, and several other major natural disasters, I watched meteorologists and anchorpersons show film of individuals flaunting Mother Nature and the first thing these media professionals said was: "This person is clearly mentally ill and also has no respect for government warnings." On other occasions, the meteorologist or anchorperson used the example of the storm chaser as a kind of joke to kick off the broadcast,

first by showing a clip and then saying: “Well folks, I know most of you sane individuals have already left this area, but look at this de-ranged individual flaunting government warnings and hang gliding into the hurricane!”

In this essay, I do not argue with the position that in certain cases these individuals might be suffering from mental illness. However, while those actively searching for perilous, life-threatening, extreme weather conditions may be diagnosable, I propose that these individuals are actively investing themselves in what they perceive to be a real, non-cyber experience that is difficult to find in our contemporary society. Their active craving to participate in a natural disaster plausibly expresses a desire to be a part of reality, which is also one of the goals of psychotherapy. This article calls into question the vague diagnostic comments made by media commentators on MSNBC and The Weather Channel during Hurricane Sandy that such risk seekers are all, unquestionably, mentally ill. During these live broadcasts, viewers were subject to the government's warnings to seek shelter and then were shown footage of individuals riding jet skis through the waves as an example of what not to do, and commentators took this opportunity to engage in making armchair diagnoses by attributing this behavior to mental illness. I argue that while these individuals are absolutely making socially irresponsible choices that may be indicative of a mental illness, the choice may also fulfill their desire to participate in a major reality.

Such risk-seeking behavior has undoubtedly existed in the past, but its popularity today is noteworthy for the fact that we can predict future weather patterns with near precision. This makes the risk-seeking behavior appear as a suicide mission, but my essay will show that there may be a great deal more at work in this behavior—namely, that these risk seekers may be engaged in a dramatic attempt to feel more alive. In order to marshal this argument, I will use the psychoanalytic concept of resistance as well as describe this behavior as a form of social protest.

Resistance

With respect to most important matters in human life, there is a tension involved between competing personal motives. This is noteworthy because when and where we see one strong tendency

(such as a seemingly suicidal tendency), we may suppose a competing tendency (such as an attempt to restore one's life or to change society's perception) to be present as well, though perhaps not immediately apparent. Resistance to society's norms of mental health, as portrayed by the media, may in fact signal resources within the resister that are strongly allied with the purposes of improved mental health. This is an argument made by many scholars regarding famous rebels such as Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Jr., and others advocating non-violent resistance or civil disobedience. In the setting of psychotherapy, resistance is similarly viewed as a moment of important arousal and encounter. The resistance in psychotherapy must make some skillful use of some fragment of reality.

Risk seekers hunting down tornadoes and other storms may be engaged in an act of such resistance and ambivalence. Even as they are risking their lives, they are engaged in resisting the tendency of our modern societies to create artificial environments. We seek these disembodying experiences, such as surfing the Internet and perusing at a shopping mall, as part of an elaborate attempt to deny our physical location and our embodied experience.

Extreme weather is especially seductive for individuals who recognize this on some conscious or unconscious level. A storm provides a sense of reality, location, and a sense of the limitations of human will and human power. In this experience of direct and extreme weather, the individual can find a sense of finitude and selfhood. While this is often socially costly for rescuers and taxpayers, it is judged to be worth the risks by individuals seeking an intense experience of self-affirmation.

Social Protest

Since these individuals are engaged in protesting society's inability to provide them with enough experience of selfhood, and because this risky behavior is so costly, I view this behavior as a kind of social protest. Also, because the poor are already provided with ample opportunities for the experience of reality, economically comfortable, even wealthy individuals may take part in much of this risk seeking behavior. These are individuals with a lot of spare time, or perhaps they work at a computer all day. They seek a thrilling experience and are also largely unaware of the social costs, so they are in all likelihood lonely and isolated individuals with suf-

ficient, possibly exceptional, financial wealth. This is also consistent with the images we see in the media of individuals riding motorboats into Hurricane Sandy or hang gliding into a tornado—it takes a lot of money to defy the force of Mother Nature in such a dramatic fashion. As mentioned previously, on the broadcasts of Hurricane Sandy on major networks such as MSNBC and The Weather Channel, viewers were shown such images of lavish boats, yachts, and jet skis being used off the coast of New Jersey in order to ride into the heart of the storm. While there were certainly poorer individuals who also disobeyed the government's warnings and never evacuated, the news networks were fascinated by the way some wealthier individuals were flaunting their disobedience.

Conclusion

I do not argue with media spokespersons or other experts who label these risk seekers as potentially mentally ill; however, such a diagnosis should be contrasted with the most basic insights of the psychotherapeutic process that indicate these individuals may be acting out a life-affirming impulse in the face of feeling deadened in our modern society. Their behavior is socially irresponsible, even as it may also be a dramatic attempt to recover a sense of selfhood. For these reasons and those mentioned above, I have labeled the behavior of these risk seekers as a form of resistance and social protest against disembodied experiences.

The fascination or ambivalence the media commentators have for these storm chasers functions to confirm my argument. By using footage of the storm chaser as an anecdote, punch line or joke to open up their broadcast time and time again, these commentators reveal some degree of envy or jealousy for the storm chaser's ability to experience Mother Nature in such a firsthand way, though also to show their disdain for such socially irresponsible behavior. Like the storm chaser, the media commentator may long for the embodied experience that is so hard to find in contemporary life, yet at the same time revels in the casual armchair diagnosis they are allowed to make because it kicks off their broadcast by contrasting the supposedly insane (the storm chaser) with the sane (the media commentator issuing the warnings, weather predictions, societal consequences, etc). In fact, scholars of psychology and culture ought to question such comments not only because they come from

an unqualified source but also because such language can reveal the way power is constructed in our society.

Joseph M. Kramp, PhD, is a Research Scholar at the Ronin Institute and a Research Associate of the Psychohistory Forum. He lives in Ft. Myers, Florida and may be reached at josephkramp@gmail.com. □

The Evolution of Attitudes toward Nature

Nancy C. Unger—Santa Clara University

The anthropomorphization of nature is hardly new. Many pre-Columbian Native Americans viewed certain animal spirits as their spirit guides, a belief that was incorporated into legends and folklore. This animism, however, did not place animals above humans, but emphasized the spiritual essence of all natural entities, including plants, rocks, and storms as well as people. Each entity was equally deserving of respect.

American ideas about the relationship between people and nature continue to evolve. European colonists saw their desire to exploit natural resources for profit as justified by Scripture, such as Genesis 1:28, “God blessed them, saying, ‘Be fertile and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it. Have dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, and all the living things that move on the earth.’”

This celebration of human dominion over the earth wasn’t significantly challenged until the Progressive Era at the turn of the last century, when even as renowned a hunter as president Theodore Roosevelt publicly proclaimed conservation of natural resources to be a national duty.

Most middle class men, the sole breadwinners for their families, found Roosevelt’s idea that resources should be conserved or preserved rather than exploited to be not just wasteful but unpatriotic, even dangerous. They were more aligned with philosopher William James’s 1906 treatise, “The Moral Equivalent of War.” James urged that young American men exploit natural resources as a way to do “their own part in the immemorial human warfare

against nature” (William James, “The Moral Equivalent of War,” *McClure's Magazine* 35 [August 1910]: 467). During the modern environmental protection movement that began in the 1960s and 1970s, the notion of environmental stewardship became widely celebrated. Many were motivated to activism not by the declarations in Genesis about dominating the earth, but by biblical passages such as Isaiah 24:5 (“The earth is polluted because of its inhabitants”), Proverbs 29:18 (“Where there is no vision, the people perish”), and Numbers 35:34 (“Do not defile the land on which you live”).

Many religious leaders and followers believed that people were designated by God to be the stewards of the earth, and that it was their obligation to remedy environmental problems as well as serve people in need. Nature was frequently characterized in human terms, almost always female. One minister involved in the Love Canal crisis described the abuse of nature as a violation of “our loving mother [earth] who gave us birth and faithfully sustains us [and who] as a vulnerable woman...is ravaged and raped by brutal exploiters...then discarded as worthless.” “It is my duty,” he proclaimed, “to stoop to her weakness, bind her wounds, and heal her hurt” (Elizabeth Blum, *Love Canal Revisited: Race, Class, and Gender in Environmental Activism*, 2008, 95).

Notions of environmental stewardship and the anthropomorphism of nature are today popular in secular as well as religious communities and organizations. Hurricanes, for example, are still given human names, although the insistence that they be designated exclusively female ended in 1979. Significantly, even major earthquakes (like major fires, mudslides, and other nature-related calamities) are not assigned human names, but designated by their geographic location and/or year, such as the great San Francisco Quake of 1906, and the Loma Prieta Quake of 1989. Why assigning human names to major earthquakes did not catch on is unclear—perhaps because they are rare, can't be predicted with any specificity, happen violently, and are of short duration. These are all qualities that contribute to a sense of “otherness” beyond the reach of anthropomorphizing.

Certainly, viewing nature as worthy of stewardship is preferable to perceiving it as an enemy or something to conquer. But

the feminization of nature through terms like “Mother Nature,” “Mother Earth,” and the “rape” of nature, devalues women and works against respecting nature as an agent in its own right: a co-participant, rather than a ward. Stewardship suggests a sense of human superiority and control over nature that is, as demonstrated by the recent superstorm, clearly false.

Humans undeniably contribute to global warming, and their insistence upon building and living along shorelines exacerbates the damage caused by many storms, but the fact remains that humans cannot “steward” a volcano, or an earthquake, or a superstorm. Such events are not the result of “Mother Nature getting angry.” Perceiving them as such encourages anthropomorphic perceptions of nature (in this case as vengeful and vindictive), and denies nature its own part in the vast web of life, as a separate set of strands, but intrinsically linked to human nature.

Seeing people as stewards of nature, and anthropomorphizing nature, can get in the way of appreciating the true intricacies in the powerful relationship between human beings and the environment.

Nancy C. Unger is Associate Professor of History at Santa Clara University. She is the author of Beyond Nature's Housekeepers: American Women in Environmental History (Oxford University Press, 2012) as well as Fighting Bob La Follette: The Righteous Reformer (paperback edition Wisconsin Historical Society Press, 2008). She writes for the History News Service and the History News Network, and is on the board of editors of Clio's Psyche. She can be reached at nunger@scu.edu. □

Hurricanes and Massacres

Howard Stein—University of Oklahoma

Katrina, Rita, Ike, Irene, Sandy;
Columbine, Blacksburg, Fort Hood,
Aurora, Oak Creek, Newtown—
Hurricanes and massacres;
lists and numbers,

so many dead and so many distraught.
Each time, horror, outrage,
disbelief and questions;
standardized stories, neatly
updated from the last calamity.

What inner worlds do Nature's storms portray?
Does satisfaction lurk behind loud
protest and dumbfoundedness?
Are problems solutions in disguise?
Do we wish for what we condemn,
secretly hoping for a repeat of the same?
Are we both Jekyll and Hyde?
In preparing for the next disaster,
do we rehearse the past in the future?

After destruction and murder,
spasms of rescue and relief.
Then silence and neglect,
as we rush into the next
excitement and distraction, overlooking the hundreds of
deaths that follow every major "event."

(Who gives a face
to languishing steelworkers
whose slow deaths are not
sensational enough
to merit our compassion?)

We fling ourselves into another "normal,"
forgetful of what had kept us so rapt.
Forgetfulness is a kind of preparation—
for the next hurricane,
for the next massacre,
for the next past in the future,
for the next surge of wakefulness and
renewed slumber.

Howard F. Stein, PhD, is an organizational consultant, poet, psychohistorian, and an anthropologist with the specialties of applied, medical, and psychoanalytic. He is Professor Emeritus in the Department of Family and Preventive Medicine at the Univer-

sity of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center. Prof. Stein's most recent book is In the Shadow of Asclepius: Poems from American Medicine (www.asclepiusbook.com) and in 2011 he was named Poet Laureate of the High Plains Society for Applied Anthropology. He can be contacted at howard-stein@ouhsc.edu. □

Shooting Children in Newtown, Connecticut

A Collage of Impressions of the Newtown Massacre

Paul H. Elovitz and the Clio's Psyche Listserv

The December 14, 2012 massacre in Newtown, Connecticut, of 20 children and six adults came as a terrible emotional shock, yet intellectually it was *not* a shock, given the frequency of recent massacres. With my psychohistorical colleagues, students, and family members, I've been struggling to understand the different elements of these recurring mass murders that would grab our attention only to be soon forgotten by all but those who were directly affected. David Beisel's methodology in helping his students deal with these events immediately came to mind. Amidst the surge of powerful emotions evoked by sudden unanticipated violence, he has his students focus on the following five areas: the facts, the causes, the consequences, issues of judgment (the right and wrong), and finally, what to do or not do. It struck me that it would be useful for our understanding, especially in the early stages of learning what happened, to focus on that which we could know most about—our own emotions. Consequently, I wrote to my colleagues on the Psychohistory Forum's Clio's Psyche Google Listserv, describing most of my initial feelings and thoughts on these horrible events and requesting that others respond in a similar manner. My hope was that colleagues would confront their own initial responses before focusing their thoughts and anger on the issues of guns in our society and other related concerns.

My motivation for discouraging the group from directly turning to the issue of guns was twofold. First, the other thoughts and feelings, especially the initial ones, would quickly be overwhelmed by anger at the proliferation of guns, the National Rifle Association (NRA), the perpetrator, and the political defenders of citizens' right to own assault rifles and large capacity ammunition clips. Second, the political obstacles to effective long-term reduction of murderous weapons in our society are so great that I'm not optimistic about major breakthroughs in this regard. I have witnessed the assassinations of President John Kennedy, Martin Luther King, Jr., Robert F. Kennedy, and the shooting of President Ronald Reagan, and since then, many still argue our society does not need more effective gun control.

Additionally, I feared that the mentally ill would be scapegoated for what is a societal problem, even if "disturbed" citizens are the ones who sometimes carry out murderous feelings in our society. An example of this relationship can be found on the covers of the March 1981 *Time* and *Newsweek*, with each showing a gun pointed at the reader; both were published just prior to the Reagan assassination attempt. Intellectually and consciously, there's no evidence that the people who chose the covers for these extremely popular magazines meant to direct any murderous thoughts towards the recently elected president, but unconsciously they may have expressed the widespread anger and frustration at him.

The response to my call on the listserv, which was also sent out to the members of the Association for the Psychoanalysis of Culture and Society (APCS), brought immediate and powerful responses. Our discussion over the first two days was primarily focused on shock, sorrow, empathy for the children and bereaved and speculation about the shooter; then the attention turned to the issue of guns and "gunism" in our society. As we continued to debate, we also incorporated larger psychohistorical ideas into our narrative, such as American exceptionalism, rage and hatred, militarism, and the psychodynamics of psychopathology. In the period between December 15 and January 22, I counted 224 posts by 25 authors on subjects relevant to the shooting and its aftermath. The partial listing of the topics included emotions in the face of violence, gun control, controlling violence, and societal responses with

less focus on emotions other than anger.

This exchange illustrates how psychohistorians, psychoanalysts, and others think on the important subject of violence. It reveals different elements of our thought processes. While there's an enormous amount in this exchange, there is surprisingly little emphasis on the shooter himself, and an inclination to go to general issues. Indeed, the psychobiographical methodology of examining people who are not directly known was brought into question from two different perspectives. One from a psychiatrist who was barred by the Goldwater Rule against writing about living subjects—but Adam Lanza and his mother are no longer living—and another from a psychoanalyst who is dubious about the exercise and does not appear to read psychobiographies of living people, such as appear in *Clio's Psyche* and other journals.

It seems that we became a Wilfred Bion type of work group on our listserv. Amidst strong emotions and powerful intellects, there were probing questions and useful insights. Guns quickly became the topic of discussion since they are easier to speak about than feelings, beyond the feelings of anger at their use. Yet, there was respect for the rights of gun owners. After six days there were signs that that this was becoming a "fight or flight group." Someone who just joined, after reporting being severely criticized on another listserv, chided a psychoanalyst for only using 15 minutes of his class to speculate on the Newtown murders. There were three attempts to use the listserv to get people to sign petitions. There were serious doubts about the effectiveness of doing psychohistories of Lanza and others who were not in the treatment room. There was questioning of the credentials of a new member who was the most critical of the participants. Then the group came back to doing its work, although its most prolific participant continued to have some doubts about the efficacy of psychohistory of people who are not present.

Despite the rocky middle period, within the exchange there was much gratitude expressed, but for reasons of space most salutations such as "Dear Everyone on the *Clio's Psyche* listserv" (Howard Stein), "Dear friends and colleagues" (Henry Lawton), "Dear Clifolk" (Ted Goertzel), and fare-well/leave-taking word(s) were removed. Some names were removed either

because we did not want to overwhelm the reader with so many different commenters or because we did not have explicit permission to use them, although all can be viewed on our Google listserv site.

On the second day Howard Stein, a distinguished student of mass murders and much else, wrote from Oklahoma suggesting "selecting some of the e-mails and reprinting them in a chronological sequence in Clio. I'm just thinking that many of them are eloquently written and deserve to be preserved beyond e-mail archives." The idea was implemented, with the selection of e-mails being based upon their insights, capture of the emotions of the moment, being representative of different viewpoints, and value to psychohistory. What follows is a quite selective group of e-mails that are only lightly edited to avoid confusion by readers who were not part of the discussion.

Below, you will find my initial call to our talented colleagues and some of their responses. The complete discussion is also on our Google listserv. Responsibility here for any unfortunate omissions or errors is mine; I do very much regret that I had to eliminate such a large volume of invaluable insights.

Paul H. Elovitz, PhD, is editor of this journal, Peter Petschauer, PhD, is an emeritus professor at Appalachian State University and a member of the Editorial Board of Clio's Psyche, and Molly Castelloe, PhD, is the founder/administrator of our online listserv. They may be contacted at pelovitz@aol.com, petschauerpw@appstate.edu, and msc214@nyu.edu. □

Our Emotions Provoked by the Newtown CT School Massacre

12/15/2012 12:13:01 A.M. Eastern Standard Time

After the horrible murders in Newtown, Connecticut, I want to get your thoughts and feelings on the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting and perhaps solicit some articles on the subject for the next issue of Clio's Psyche. My own initial thoughts and feelings are as follows:

- *Shock
- *Sympathy and empathy for the children and their families
- *Disgust together with a sinking feeling

*Anger at the perpetrator, leading me to think, “I hate these grandiose, cowardly suicides who have to kill others to get the courage to commit suicide and I don’t want to think about them right now!” (But I still have some random thoughts on what his family dynamics and fantasies were.)

*Anger that he has made us part of his audience—that many programs are replaced by coverage of the event

*Sadness about our voyeuristic intrusion into the lives of those suffering terrible loss and trauma

*How do we in society process the shock of such a horrible act, heightened by being directed at young children?

—Some thoughts this brings to mind included:

*We need to feel connected. So I think of being born and raised in the same Fairfield County as Newtown

*I listen on the radio to reporters and watch them on TV get as close as possible to the scene of the shooting and people who were there, partly to process the experience

*Many people literally get as close as possible to the scene of the horrible event

*Police (who so often flock like geese!) in New Jersey have gone into major mobilization based on what is false information involving the brother of the shooter who lives in Hoboken.

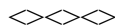
*All sorts of experts are interviewed, providing an intellectual framework. It probably helps us intellectualize it, and gain some feeling of mastery

*Not only do we want to feel close to the horror, we also have a need to limit the danger by establishing where it is, what its limits are.

*Concern for the impact on young children. Thinking of how to limit their exposure. Thus also a concern for the child within

Good night, **Paul**

Paul H. Elovitz, PhD, Historian, Psychoanalytic Psychotherapist, Professor, and Editor, *Clio’s Psyche*



12/15/12

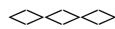
Thanks, Paul, for your openness. I feel the same as much of

what you write. Horrified, fearful, enraged.

Striking to me [is] that "Sandy Hook" follows so closely on "Sandy" Hurricane. There's something in American's perverse "celebrity culture" that calls creeps to hook into the press and kill in order to feel human.

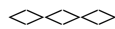
What about gender? Why always child-men doing this...? Howard, what do you think?

Molly Castelloe—New York student of theater and psychoanalysis, Psychohistory Forum Research Associate, creator and moderator of this online forum



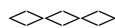
I agree that we have a "perverse celebrity culture," but I am not sure that such press coverage makes mass killers feel more human. In what sense do they feel human in killing others and themselves directly after a horrendous slaughter or induced death by police action? I often think that the sadistic pleasure of killing is overlooked in our politically correct society. But after spending too many years trying to figure out the psychodynamics of mass killers, I am much more concerned in how we process our emotions in the face of these recurring massacres.

Paul



I notice that one fact stands out provocatively for me: The two guns he used were registered to his mother, whom he killed!

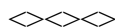
Susan Gregory—Gestalt therapist, life coach, and singing teacher



Two guns or three guns, and whose guns? There is so much misinformation as we hunger for information amidst our overwhelming emotions.

The killing of the mother is quite important and psychodynamically inclined biographers will work it out long after idealization of the murdered mother is put aside. Our feelings about this deed are what most interests me at the moment.

Paul



Dear Paul, and all Clio's Psyche Participants,

Minutes after hearing the news, I wrote the poem below.

Right now I am listening to an Irish song on the radio, “We’ll walk the road together—All the way through wind and rain I’ll never to see my heart again, hand in hand across the land we’ll walk the road together.”

I’ve felt a chill in my heart yesterday and today, heightened whenever I hear Christmas carols. The words of a most beautiful carol, “The Coventry Carol,” keep haunting me: “Herod the King, in his raging, Chargeth he hath this day, His men of might, in his own sight, All children young to slay.”

Paul, you ask questions that in the aftermath of such an event must be asked, and I think that initially they have to seem unanswerable. The thought that arises, and feels like an attack of my own mind on my own mind, is that there is something in the human psyche that seems to hate children. The two most sacred Christian holidays are parentheses around a life, Christmas and Easter. A star appears in the East, a child is born—and he is crucified. We celebrate his birth, and his death. Of course we acknowledge and revere his life. But somehow Baby Jesus and Crucified Man are the frame, and are connected. In the image of the Pietà, we see a grieving mother, Mater Dolorosa, cradling her child, the crucified man. Cradling a dead man in her arms, on her lap, as once she cradled her baby.

The same day as this American atrocity, a man in China invaded a school and slashed 22 children. In recent years, China has seen multiple attacks on schoolchildren. In 2010, 22 schoolchildren were killed in a total of four separate attacks. In 2008, 860 children in China were poisoned when melamine, a toxic substance, was added to milk and baby formula. Atrocities against children have happened for millennia. The victims in the My Lai massacre in Vietnam were children, women, and the elderly.

Murdering children is all too familiar an act of murdering the future of the hated enemy in warfare. Rape in warfare murders the child of the “enemy” and replaces the “enemy’s” child in the womb of the “enemy” woman. All children born of those rapes are a representation of genocide. Such rapes often accompany the murder of the children. The helpless child is a powerful child, in that the helpless child is powerful in that the child is the future....

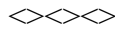
Why violence against children? What part of the human

psyche hates children? A child has potential, and a violent act against the potential is a rage that one's own potential has been thwarted. How dare a child represent a future when the killer feels his/her future has died. Also, murdering a child murders a hated mother and a hated father. But, more so, a hated mother—and is an act that reflects a hatred of women.

SAFE HAVEN

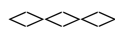
We long to draw a circle in the sand,
a magic circle, delicate, yet strong,
where children gather safely, hand in hand,
a place of peace, where children all belong.
Each mother's arms reach out, to guard
each child, to limn a sacred charm
around each blessed head, to ward
off every pain, and any harm
that might befall the precious jewel born
within the sacred circle of our shield.
Michelangelo uncovered in pale marble
the grief of the Madonna, a grief unhealed
by time that washes past the only years
a mother has to hold her memory of bliss.
La Pietà, in that stark white stone,
all mothers weep for the broken child they miss.

Merle Molofsky—New York psychoanalyst and poet



We love and hate children. They are our future. The love is usually conscious and often exaggerated. The hatred is so often unconscious, denied, dissociated from, etc. Christmas is partly about a child being worshipped. Thanks for the poem.

Paul



Dear folks on the Clio's Psyche listserv,

Many volcanic eruptions in me of emotion, fantasy, and thought, over the elementary school massacre yesterday, and echoes of others recent and not-so-remote. I offer some emotion-drenched associations, not "answers," all of which would be premature, and probably defensive to ward off the horrible feeling of utter vulnerability:

(1) Intense, inconsolable vulnerability. Nowhere to hide, no way to completely prepare (for the past, for the next). To terrorize is to take utterly by surprise (as one was once terrorized as a child, or felt terrorized?). Does the killer master his terror by visiting it on others? Can our terror begin to help us to understand the terrorist?

(2) Coming together, coming close: the people in Newtown, people all across the USA (and the world?), and us on the Clio's Psyche listserv. To share the sorrow, the horror, the renewed dread—and vulnerability—and to try to begin to make sense of it all, together. To feel less alone. We huddle together electronically, give each other lingering e-hugs.

(3) Symbolism, symbolism, symbolism: killing vulnerable children, Christmas/(and the inevitable Easter), Christ-child/Christ-sacrifice-and-redemption, matricide and the murder of other mothers' children and adults, the male killer, Gothic, guns and more guns, military dress...

(4) So many "why" questions: why men-killers (Do men have a special rage, a special need for revenge?), why American culture (which American culture[s]?), why NOW (e.g., timing, Christmas season), why in a particular place, why Adam Lanza, why suicide-after-homicide (homicide in order to suicide?), why the naive public/media reaction after each massacre ("How could this happen in such an ideal, close-knit community?," almost a ritualistic response, repetition?)...?

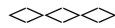
(5) How to live, at least for a while, with not-knowing, with having to sit with our emotions and fantasies, and slowly gather more information and sort things out? How to prevent a premature formulation, "closure," the goal of which would be to prevent us from knowing what we need to know?

(6) Can poetry, music, visual art, stories, etc. help us know our feelings, help each other feel more deeply, and maybe even help us understand some part of what happened? I'm thinking of Merle's poem. Surely others could write and share poems, songs (lyrics and music).

(7) What else?

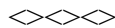
A story: Long ago I had a therapist who usually was able to distill the essence of a session toward the end, and I could leave with some tiny resolution, some sense of having been contained and understood, and able to “contain myself” until the next session. One time this did not happen, and I expressed to him my distress (anxiety, terror). He simply replied, in a soft, reassuring voice, something like: “We’ll take a look at what you bring next time. Things will start to make sense.” I felt quiet, a little calmed down, that, through him, and his presence in me, I could make it through until the next time.

Howard Stein—psychoanalytic anthropologist, veteran psychohistorian, and poet



Yes Howard, we will make it through until the next time in our electronic huddle

Paul



Fantastic, expressive poem, Merle. Guns. I was just writing to an English acquaintance and commented on how ludicrous it must seem to her that we in the U.S. are flooded with guns. Greater control of guns would be valuable, of course, but gun control laws wouldn’t have helped with the tragic massacre in Connecticut. It is so obvious that there should be a near-total ban on firearms as there is in other countries, such as the United Kingdom.

One recent table on Wikipedia shows murders by firearms in a year: U.S. 9369, UK 14, the suicide numbers are significant because many people wouldn’t complete a suicide if they did not have a gun available: U.S. 17,342, UK 109.

Also, guns are intrinsic to mass killings like the one in Connecticut. There is simply no way a person could kill all those people so quickly without firearms.

It seems almost hopeless to imagine how we could ever bring about a ban on firearms, with our history of the Second Amendment and the power of the NRA. As a start, we would need to have an organization that would be more powerful than the NRA—certainly far more people oppose widespread firearms than support them—and then a constitutional amendment repealing the Second Amendment. Now politicians are frozen because of the

NRA, which is effective at targeting candidates who favor gun control.

Jim Anderson—college professor, psychologist, psychoanalyst, psychoanalytic editor, and a member of *Clio's Psyche's* Editorial Board



Thanks Jim for the data on guns. I was so proud when my lawyer son won a case against gun transport from the South to New York. The effects were never realized because of the American love affair with guns and the power of the NRA.

It would be easy for us to turn our pain into anger at the NRA, its defenders, and the gun culture, rather than experiencing it. For me our listserv is not the best venue for arguing for greater gun control, which I suspect almost all our colleagues favor.

Paul



Guns. The killer used semi-automatic assault rifles. All guns kill. Semi-automatic assault rifles kill more victims, faster. We need to ban them totally. In 1994 we did, endorsed by Ronald Reagan, as a result of the assassination attempt on his life, and the shooting of Press Secretary James Brady—we had a Federal Ban on Assault Weapons. In 2004, an election year, it was not renewed—it was ended, thanks to the efforts of the then House majority leader, Tom Delay. He subsequently was invited to serve as an NRA speaker in 2005, while facing ethics charges. He was convicted of money laundering in 2011, and sentenced to a three-year sentence. Conclusion: criminals favor assault weapons?

Remember the James Brady activism against unlicensed hand-guns? What happened to that? Are there really more NRA supporters than people who, horrified by mass killings, support gun control? Now what?

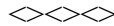
Merle



Thanks to all of you for a difficult and important discussion. Since I'm in the process of co-creating a documentary on mental health stigma, my question is this: How can we possibly destigmatize mental illness, and stop using our prisons to contain people with psychiatric problems, if what people see on an all-too-

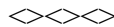
regular basis are “nut jobs” on reality TV and “psychos” shooting our children? Improvement in mental health care is one direction, but as a psychiatrist I don't think that's good enough. In fact, our over-emphasis on the medical model may be making things worse. People who are given a life sentence of mental illness, drug treatment, side effects, disability, cognitive impairment, and social isolation will sometimes prefer to go out in a state of paranoid delusion and psychotic excitement and empowerment. What, if anything, can we do?

Alice Maher—New York psychiatrist, psychoanalyst, and educational reformer



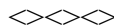
Alice, it is good you are working so hard to fight the mental health stigma. I agree that we rely too much on the medical model. One of my concerns is the tendency to stigmatize those who do unspeakable acts as mentally ill—so we can separate them from us “healthy people.”

Paul



Regarding Molly's query as to “Why are always child-men doing this.” Alas, Molly—there are female mass murderers: Priscilla Joyce Ford, Thanksgiving Day 1980; Sylvia Seecrest, a day before Halloween, 1985; Aileen Wuornos, who killed truck drivers; Beverley Alitt, pediatric nurse who maimed and murdered babies in hospital setting; Susan Atkins and Leslie Van Houten, who were the women with Charles Manson. Maybe there are fewer female mass murderers wielding guns on a shooting spree than male mass murderers—women also tend to kill “closer to home”—their own children as did Medea in Euripides' play.

Merle



Merle, I do know there are female mass murderers. But homicide offenders are overwhelmingly male. According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics: 88.8% male vs. 11.2% female from 1976-2005 in the U.S.

In any case, I thought the subject was the CT school massacre. I don't recall a school massacre perpetrated by a child-woman since Columbine or previously—do you?

Molly



Thanks Molly for focusing my attention on the intention of your post. No, I do not know of any school massacre perpetrated by females of any age—children, or child-women. ... I hope we never encounter anything like this ever. We all hope....

Such a dark time, at a time when we all celebrate in one way or another, with religious faith or with secular faith, the bringing light back to a darkening world. After the winter solstice, as we plunge into the ferocity of winter, the sun returns, minute by minute, each day. I guess we continue to hope. I am inspired by the passion and commitment of Elie Wiesel, who, having seen the worst of human nature, never gave up his hope....

Merle



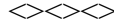
I want to try to address Molly's questions from an earlier letter today: "What about gender? Why always child-men doing this...? Howard, what do you think?"

In a very recent essay in *Clio's Psyche* ["Psychohistorical Reflections on the 2012 Aurora Massacre," Vol. 19, No. 3, December 2012, pp. 249-54], I attempted to address these questions. I'm already dissatisfied with my answer. At best it is a partial account. I hope that recourse to the psychoanalytic notion of "overdetermined" causality is not an explanatory cop-out!

Several questions come to mind: (1) Are there universal, developmental gender-specific vulnerabilities that a historical era or culture can prey upon and mobilize into committing acts of mass terror? I am thinking especially of the work of Erik Erikson and Peter Blos. (2) Do particular historical eras and cultures (or types of culture, family structure) foster or induce gender-specific vulnerabilities that they, in the form of large groups, prey upon and mobilize into committing acts of mass terror? (3) Do universal and particularistic gender developmental processes and vulnerabilities interact somehow to lead to acts of mass terror? What other questions do we need to be asking? ...

This all sounds terribly abstract in light of the raw emotions we all are feeling.

Howard

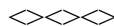


That there have been a large number of mass killings in the last few months says to me that there is a lot of free-floating rage in our country. What happened the other day to little kids is appalling. That the shooter would be able to murder says that he was driven by psychotic rage where normal restraints no longer held. Might we feel sorry for the shooter in addition to the kids? He killed his mother who turned out to have no connection with the school. Why? A more powerful role came from the shooter. What sort of issues can we hypothesize? Rage is the most obvious. Who is he trying to punish by his suicide? I could spend more time on this.

All of this said, what are my feelings? A mix of sadness and rage. Sorrow that the victims are little kids who deserve it least. What did they ever do to deserve this? I wonder if the shooter was killing some part of himself. He is punishing some part of himself that could only be excised by death. Rage. Why did he have to punish himself by killing little kids? Should we feel rage? Yes. It will be hard to accept that the shooter is human. Does he wish people will see him as less than human? Yes. Why? We wonder if he deserves humanity in the eyes of others. Does the shooter care if we can accept him as human? Does he think of his humanity? The shooter may see himself as a monster? Does he feel that being a monster is the only way that people will notice him? But I feel that I may be making excuses for him. There can be no excuse for this man. Giving into such abstractions is all too easy.

Where do I get off making all these ideas? For 31 years I worked with emotionally disturbed teenagers. But that is another story.

Henry Lawton—author of *The Psychohistorian's Handbook* (1988), veteran psychohistorian and longtime secretary of the International Psychohistorical Association (IPA)



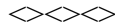
12/16/12

[In response to Henry Lawton, a colored picture by Giotto was posted under the caption “The Slaughter of The Innocents (Matthew 2:13-23)”]

18 “A voice is heard in Ramah, weeping and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children and refusing to be comforted,

because they are no more.”

Don Carveth—A York University (Toronto) sociology professor and psychoanalyst

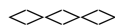


How do we keep fire arms out of the hands of nut cases? As we all know, there is no foolproof way, since nothing is foolproof.

But we can help make “Fire Arms: How to Use Them Wisely and Well” a mandatory course in public and private schools before the middle school grades.

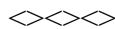
It would be interesting if someone did a paper comparing a number of these mass killers. Gun-control advocates never mention the one in Norway where even more innocents were slaughtered. A country where not even the policeman carry guns. There are probably psychological studies of him but maybe only published in Norwegian.

Ted Goertzel—Rutgers University sociologist and prolific author



A Norwegian psychoanalyst considered writing on the subject for our December issue but his article was not forthcoming.

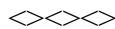
Paul



Self-hatred in politics makes me presume that one motivation of these shooters is to give a public manifest for their preference for shootings and self-annihilation—and doing so—try to intimidate our reasonable personalities.

Zones of taboo in which no violent-free discourse is possible, and those same myths, as the one that privately owned guns are crucial for individual security, are shielding practice of public shootings from being abolished. The mythologized benefit of privately owned arms is not reflected by reports from daily life whereas evidence of public shootings is abundant.

Florian Galler—A Swiss economist and group psychohistorian



Paul, when I said killing makes them feel more “human” I did not mean in a healthy, evolved, moral sense. I meant human as

perpetuated by our media culture, which does not judge but only magnifies. It blurs fantasy and reality, and, as you say, gives us a theater for sadistic emotions that bleed over into real life and consume it.

One of the clichéd headlines that ran across my screen yesterday was “Infamous in Death.” For someone that feels like an outsider and disconnected from people, in their psychotic fantasy they may anticipate that murder brings connection with others because they will be active participants in the “reality show,” finally known by others and recognized for their deeds.

Although much different, it reminds me of the suicide bomber with a western, gun-toting, press-worshipping twist.

Molly



What hasn't been mentioned is Adam Lanza's hatred of “normal” children. Being as troubled and tortured as he was, he could have had no real understanding of “a normal life.” He must have romanticized normality. It was mentioned that he must have hated them because of their potential futures. That might be a factor, though I doubt that it was primary—that he thought that far ahead.

We should consider how much he envied them throughout his entire formative years. Their ability to attend a normal school; to have normal relationships with each other; to be accepted and loved by teachers and parents for their normality ... How much he suffered because of that continuous envy. He realized that he had the means to end their great advantages.

One (of probably several) primitive reasons he hated his mother was that her continuous trying to help him was constant evidence to him of the extent of his abnormalities. One reason he killed her might have been that she would have (and might have) tried to prevent him from carrying out his plan.

Was the age group he killed primarily the age group he most envied? We'll never know. That some students were shot many times is some indication of the extent of his hatred.

He may have killed himself to solve three problems: to avoid retribution; because of his continuous self-hatred for being abnormal; and to end his suffering.

Joel Markowitz—New York psychiatrist & psychoanalyst



I suspect that most of us are feeling grief and horror and shock—and yes, rage.

Rage. Here are the first words in the introduction to *Rage*, (Wesleyan University Press, Middletown, Connecticut, 2002), by Michael Eigen: “Rage is aimed at children, lovers, parents, authorities, subordinates, strangers, and ideological, religious, and political causes. If you study rage in your life, you will make your own list” (1). I was going to quote several more passages, an isolated sentence or two, and realized they would be too shocking without being contextualized. But I will offer one more passage: “This book is a meditation on rage and pain and self. It works indirectly, informally, turning variations of rage over and over, considering them now from this angle, now from that. It is episodic, fragmentary, with inherent emotional rigor. The aim is gradual increment of experiencing. To experience rage rather than enact it opens places one could not have gotten to by blowing (oneself) up” (5).

This weekend I have been working on an article—actually a chapter I was invited to write for a book—and I was using Michael Eigen’s *Rage* for the chapter. The synchronicity of the atrocity in Newtown and the topic I was writing about was startling. I found reading passages in *Rage* oddly comforting. Comforting in knowing that we must address these feelings.

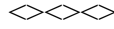
I think perhaps we draw comfort from these e-mail exchanges. I am moved by the efforts of people using the Clio forum to struggle to understand what happened, from a socio-psychological-historical perspective. Psychohistorians and psychoanalysts certainly tend to think in this way—and people without such training do too! We “tend to think”—more importantly, we “tend to feel” that response by thinking, feeling, wondering, speculating, and caring—will perhaps make a difference in the future.

Merle

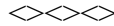


Gun ownership reduces fear levels significantly—especially in some rural areas. So those people are less frightened, feel better and function better.

Joel



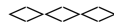
[Merle posted to our site, "I am Adam Lanza's mother," a blog written by a mother of a seriously disturbed, sometimes violent son which prompted considerable discussion about mental illness.]



Merle, I think this beautiful and devastating blog post hits the mental health nail on the head. These people are among us; I've seen or heard about many in the course of my career as a psychiatrist. It's one thing to offer good mental health treatment, and another thing to know the limits of what mental health treatment can do. There are many people who harbor psychotic fantasies and psychotic rage. Most of them don't act on those fantasies, but they often can't take advantage of mental health treatment even if it's available, and often medications don't work for these conditions even when they're tried.

What, if anything, can we do other than keep them away from guns?

Alice



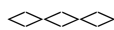
Adam Lanza treated those in the Sandy Hook Elementary School as if they were in a free fire zone. He wantonly massacred women and children, as if he were some berserk infantryman in combat.

Since the time of the Oklahoma City bombing, the U.S. has seen too many military type assaults on unprotected civilians by other civilians.

The godfather of my 21-year-old son and his family live in Newtown. I have driven by the 100 foot flagpole in the center of town countless times. Years ago, I met the father of one of the victims. Someone with whom I work lives in Newtown and has a six-year old daughter. At the last minute this fall, she sent her daughter to a private school in the town where she works. Her daughter likely knows some of the slain children.

It is hard not to cry. This is a time of grief and mourning, and a time to deal with that we have more non-military firearms in this country than we have adults and children.

Ken Fuchsman—University of Connecticut historian, interdisciplinary teacher, member of Clio's Psyche's Editorial Board

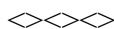


It seems we are witnessing a perfect storm. Molly addressed the grandiosity fantasies, blown up even more by fantasies of media coverage. We have spoken about our American “gun culture,” the preoccupation with guns, what Molly referred to somewhat obliquely in talking about “child-men,” a grandiose super-phallus phantasy. (Yes, women share similar fantasies. But, as Molly pointed out, many fewer women enact it. Gun play, pow! Pow! Pow! Is much more a little boy’s phallic phantasy than a little girl’s, much more a man’s than a woman’s. Not exclusively. But more.) We have talked about the ease of obtaining guns, the machismo of guns. And we have talked about the rage and resentment and envy and sadism focused on children—the children who in the killer’s fantasy get more than the killers ever got, the hated parents who the killer believes give more to every child ever born than the killer ever got.

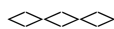
We intuit, we know, the psychological factors. We intuit, we know, the sociological and cultural factors. We say we don’t understand, but we also say we do understand. We don’t want to understand, we don’t want to know, we want to repress and deny and project and what-all to defend ourselves from the trauma of the truth.... Now what? We know. What do we do? We have ideas, but do we know? Do we know what to do? How do we do it?

Some of us are doing a lot—professionally, politically. We work. We sign petitions. We give donations. We communicate our ideas. We pray. We hope. We despair. We hope and pray again.

Merle



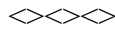
[A Canadian sociology professor approvingly mentioned our psychohistorical exchange and brought up the current James Bond movie and the fanaticism of the Scottish Protestant Reformation.]



Let me offer some comments, Merle, on the story of Michael. When I was in child welfare I often worked with kids like Michael. There is no clear answer for kids of this sort. It is always a family problem. The child acts out the problems that no one wants to know. The helper must earn the trust of the child and the parent.

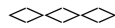
The helper must try and discern that which is hidden. Care must be taken because Michael is violent and there is danger that he will hurt himself and/or others.

Henry



Henry, you are so right that there are family problems behind the acts of the violent and the situations are complex. Our families have become weaker and more fragmented. Behind our nice suburban houses there is so often explosive rage.

Paul



12/17/12

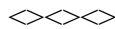
When we are young, we readily walk into a hail of bullets, or unleash one; often alone.

When we are old/er, we must deal with our frailties and death, also often alone. I am very glad Henry is not alone.

Were it that we feared frailty and death more when we are younger.

Or put differently, were that we recognized already then that life itself can and is often painful enough without inflicting additional pain. Forgive me for not saying this more elegantly.

Peter Petschauer—historian of Europe, playwright, and member of Clio's Psyche's Editorial Board

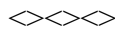


12/18/12

Has anyone else noticed that there's a forbidden quality to the subject of guns in public hands? There also seems to be a fear that the inevitable NRA backlash might prompt them to come gunning for us, and that, moreover, once the ire of reasonable, law abiding gun owners is raised they will be joined by the gun toting crazies and then, whose fault would subsequent bloodshed be?

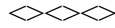
I think there are some basic psychological issues involving identification with the aggressor, personal rage, castration fears ... lots of unresolved primal stuff that makes us, as a society, avert our attention from the clear core issue: the guns themselves.

Lew Schwartz—public education, technology, views himself as a Renaissance humanist



I love doing psychohistory but sometimes it is hard to do.

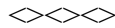
Florian



12/1912

The idea of [American] exceptionalism seems real enough and compounds our second amendment issues.

Lew



I'm from South Africa, a country soaked in violence. What we experience is that those who want guns, get guns—despite regulations. But then I think the U.S. will be more successful than our mainly corrupt and incompetent police in implementing the rules. Gun ownership should be controlled—yet the more people fear, the more some would demand guns; with us it's so bad—that many of us rather prefer NOT to have a gun, because it may just be used against you.

I went to see the new James Bond movie yesterday. Which of course is a popular package of the topic at hand. But the worst was the four movies trailers ... of forthcoming movies; ALL had guns and violence at their core. The violence is SO overwhelming, one's senses get blown out of the water.

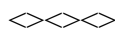
So my question is: What about the daily violence (meaning TV and film) American children grow up with in their homes—in their LOUNGES? Isn't violence the great American (Hollywood) entertainment exported to the globe?

Secondly, apparently America is the only country where middle-class families only get one or two weeks leave a year? Why? Surely it means parents have too little time with their children?

I agree gun control is crucial—it's a start. But I certainly hope it will be taken further—and the 'symbol of what the gun' presents as David presents below—properly explored.

Parents need time with their children. With respect.

Hélène Lewis—South African psychologist and scholar of humiliation



12/20/12

I would add video games to the violent “entertainment”

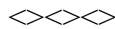
children are exposed to. The point of so many video games, particularly the most popular ones, is to destroy other “entities.” Survive, kill, exult. I won I won I won—you’re dead.

The “gunism” examined in a previous excellent post, the prevalent infatuation with guns in America, seems to stem from a romanticization of the American past, the open possibilities of conquering the American West, a celebration of the attempted genocide of the First People ... of “rugged individualism” in which a fast draw is as important, or more important, than the arduous labor of agriculture or cattle herding; an American West where gold may be discovered—and fought over—where Cain and Abel, agriculturalists and herders, are deadly enemies, where the oldest sibling rivalries and oedipal fantasies can be re-enacted. “Gunism” is phallic celebration—and phallic anxiety, castration anxiety. Phallic celebration could result in fertility rituals—or, when combined with phallic anxiety, rape.

Old military chant: “This is my rifle, this is my gun, this is for shooting, this is for fun.” The military recognized the symbolic equalizing of murder weapon and phallus in the minds of young recruits.

Why are so many men so fundamentally insecure? Is that level of insecurity basic to the human condition? What socio-historical, psychological, or inherent biological factors enhance and emphasize insecurity? And I am not buying into the fatuous and blaming notion that the women’s liberation movement made men insecure. Men were insecure way before women began to make inroads into gaining equality with men. The “gunism” of the American West, let alone the vicious excesses of colonialism and other forms of military conquest, predates the women’s liberation movement.

Merle



Let’s accept the fact that guns exist; that guns are exciting, valuable, and often necessary; that violent, competitive athletic and computer games are cathartic for many boys (albeit harmful to some).

Regulation of all dangerous machines and circumstances is necessary; no one argues with that. Criminalization clouds judg-

ment.

There should be—and will be—more objective studies on such individual and collective problems.

Joel



Women sacrificed themselves in recent shootings for the sake of their classroom children. American Exceptionalism is based in the sacrifice of women, their bodies, work, histories. I agree with Lew that we are reluctant to speak directly about guns in America. Is this also a reticence to speak of male exceptionalism and privilege?

Molly



12/20/12

Male exceptionalism and privilege are the heart of the cowboy myth, the prototype of the violent saviors on TV and cinema. All good, strong and sexy until some crisis, then normal rules don't apply.

Lew

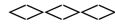


The countries in today's world that have the most acting out of male violence, and the most oppression of women, are countries untouched by the women's liberation movement. Rape is used as a weapon in war. The underlying male sexual insecurity is that the enemy's seed, the enemy's potency, is greater than the invader's, and must be conquered. Rape is a way of proving sexual competency against an enemy. There certainly is enough psychoanalytic literature, beginning with Freud's *Totem and Taboo*, that would point out that the enemy is the father.

I think there are millennia of male behaviors that exemplify male sexual insecurity being compensated for by acts of violence. That syndrome is portrayed symbolically in the movie *Dr. Strange-love*, which is a modern artifact that pre-dates the women's liberation movement. Any "destabilizing" effects of the women's liberation movement in contemporary history, contemporary events, are minimal, barely visible in the big picture of attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors that are recognizably violent responses to a sense of sexual inadequacy that dangerous men have. Men with a pronounced

sense of sexual inadequacy position themselves in relation to other men, not to women.

Merle



Rich, rich discussion. Thank you for this feast. I have a number of associations to recent letters/mini-essays. Phallic American Male Exceptionalism = identified with the gun as symbol of protest masculinity = central organizing perversion of a culture.

Two phrases of Molly caught my eye, one from Saturday, December 15th, “child-men,” and the other from today, “pumped like Viagra.”

I think it no coincidence that ours in America is the age of Viagra, Levitra, and Cialis, as treatments for the widespread and euphemized “erectile dysfunction.” It is prescribed and sells wildly for men whose phallic exceptionalism fails to achieve its aim more naturally. If I may be permitted to see these medications symbolically, they are remedies for men who fear losing or having lost their masculinity, and for whom it must be artificially, if temporarily, restored. I think there is some symbolic equation between the long history of guns and the contemporary history of medicalized pumping up of failing male potency.

This brings me to “child-men,” who must repeatedly prove the masculinity they lack and long for. I think of the wonderful pioneering work of Erik Erikson in *Childhood and Society* and *Identity: Youth and Crisis*, on the perpetual adolescent quality of mainstream American historical maleness, the unsettledness, the drifter quality of identity who must always be on the move—and woe be he or she who gets in the way. These, I think, are in part the adolescent, and lifelong adolescent, quality of the “child-men” who must flaunt what they lack. Growing up, in the sense of maturity, is a threat rather than an ideal/goal.

This, I think, brings us full circle to “gunism” (and “nuclearism”; remember the book *Missile Envy*?) and Viagra-pumping in an era in which many frontiers—including employment, long a bastion of male identity—have closed. The perversion becomes the glorified identity.

Does any of this make sense?

Howard



Regrettably, Howard, you make absolute sense. “Nuclearism” ups the ante of “gunism.” If you read my post again, you’ll see I referred to *Dr. Strangelove*, which was released in 1964. The full title is, *Dr. Strangelove: Or How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb*.

Perhaps those who saw the movie remember the final image, of Major Kong astride the bomb as it plunges through the air He is going to blow up with the bomb as the bomb hits its target and detonates. Quite a symbol, quite a metaphor, and, regrettably, we see it fulfilled again and again, in suicide bombers and in assault rifle attacks like the one on Sandy Hook. What was the “worry” in *How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb*. Male sexual anxiety? Phallic power represented as a nuclear device?

And, back to the Wild West and gun-ism, a cowboy riding a bomb, riding a bull, riding a bucking bronco, riding an idealized super-phallus? Phallus as super-destroyer? As you put it, Howard, using Molly’s evocative phrase, “quality of the ‘child-men’ who must flaunt what they lack.” Perhaps the “lack”—Lacanian or just plain lack—means that the phallus has to explode and self-destruct, before anyone discovers it is an inflated idealized phallus, the dream-phallus of a child-man who does not have the real thing, whose phallus will never be as potent or just as plain big as his father’s.

Merle



Merle, you actually support my case: viz., that Women’s Liberation has multiplied male sexual insecurities (as I’ve seen in my practice since the early 1950s).

In countries that haven’t yet seen even the significant beginnings of women’s rights, men don’t worry a fraction as much about a woman’s reaction to their sexual performance as do men in Western nations. Women’s Liberation was an inevitable, powerful, and transforming circumstance (about which I don’t have to educate American women). As I wrote, men never previously had to deal with sophisticated, self-aware, sexually experienced women—who were often, in addition, high-functioning in all other areas. Male

sexual insecurities burgeoned.

In those less-evolved nations, women live in fear of beatings and even murder by husbands, dishonored family members, and community patriarchs.

Let's set aside the rare exceptions—the handful of brave women who have dared to go to court or to go public about their plight. Let's consider the billions of compliant women, especially in the rural areas of those countries.

They marry as virgins. Most are sexually “unawakened.” To rape your wife carries no penalty. To rape (and even then kill) a neighbor's daughter can often be paid for with livestock and money by the perpetrator's family and women know about those circumstances, and dare not oppose patriarchal domination... Men had sex if, when, and how they wanted to. They had as many wives as they could afford. No reason for sexual anxiety; no person of significance judges their performance. Their deeper insecurities remain hidden—(under control, Merle). Their women's fear of violence keeps male sexual insecurities under control.

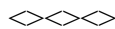
I disagree with you, Howard, about the uses of Viagra, Cialis, Levitra, testosterone supplementation and other assists to potency. You are probably unaware of the extent of male sexual insecurity in Western nations since the late 1960s. I've been exposed to a great deal of evidence for it, not only in my practice, but anecdotally in the New York City community—which is more sophisticated and higher functioning than any of which I am aware.

Many men have given up sex—or, at least, satisfying sex. Many of the men who have returned to sex—and to sexually supported relationships most effectively—are those who use those assists. Psychotherapy and those medications have also extended the age-range of people who are having sexually supported relationships. (The oldest man I know about who has done so is 88 years old; but I'd guess that some are older.)

Some men who use them can function sexually without them. They use them because, they say, those aids make sex better.

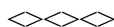
Some of those men have the most-romantic, most-rewarding relationships I know about.

Joel



12/21/12

[A long article by Robert Jay Lifton had been introduced by David Lotto and then quoted by Florian Galler. It focused on America's "inability to come to terms with the gun" (Richard Hofstadter), the "sacralization" of the gun and those who are "running amok."]



12/21/12

I think that Viagra/Levitra/Cialis can be both medical substance and cultural symbol. In a number of papers I have argued the same for alcohol in American culture. If alcohol has an "effect" as a chemical substance, it also has an "effect" as a potent symbol. I think that the same holds for chemicals that treat "erectile dysfunction." Viagra has become a part of our culture's table conversation as well as a clinical treatment for men who are otherwise unable to attain/sustain erection.

In a similar vein, I think that the nuclear bombs and missiles of the Dr. Strangelove (and present) era can, as symbols, condense both phallic and anal symbolism and violence. You are certainly perceptive to point out that atomic bombs and missiles could represent thermonuclear defecation. I think that both you and Merle are right. Warm regards,

Howard



John [Farion], Merle, Howard, and Molly, you are all undoubtedly correct in pointing out the phallic and phallic anxiety components of the current American gun fetish. That there are many more and more enthusiastic male than female devotees to the cult. However, there are many female members of the NRA and many who are very much on board with gunism, nuclearism, and American cowboy frontier exceptionalism. The majority (although slim) of white women voted for Romney in the last election.

Although there are gender differences, I think the mythos of gunism and its relatives have a deep and powerful hold on this country and it is shared by many.

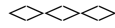
David Lotto—psychoanalyst and psychologist



Simplistic answer: male-identified women? Women who envy phallic power—note, not penis envy!—envy of sociopolitical

phallic power?

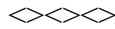
Merle



Male-identified women are women working within existing social structures—who leads, who has voice, who has money, who writes history. The experience of being a woman (and voting, too) is always part of a larger web of power relations. You can work within it or overhaul it. But we have to see it.

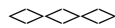
I'm reminded of a conversation I had with Brian D'Agostino about group fantasies vs. realities. Congratulations to Brian on the publication of his new book *The Middle Class Fights Back: How Progressive Movements Can Restore Democracy in America* (Praeger, 2012).

Molly



The distinction between personal and societal is simple and it makes the question more complex than it has to be. Basically the idea of a group mind is a myth—where would it be located? Rather if you look at it as a shared phenomenon that is correct—the philosophical term is methodological individualism. If the majority of members share an idea and/or fantasy that lends itself to confusion. I hope this helps.

Henry



There exists a broad social support among the dissociated parts of our personalities in favor of the preservation of good conditions for amok runners and second that the motives of the individual amok runners converge with the collective ones...

Doomsday-preppers as the mother of the Newtown-Shooter or other believers of an upcoming apocalypse share the conviction that our societies, particularly their reasonable parts, are something rotten, doomed like Babylon. The unconscious reason behind is that in times of reasonability and growth in societies, when the acting out of self-hatred in politics is pushed back, the defense of our traumatic feelings is endangered. Therefore we feel weak, anxious, ashamed, guilty and dirty. Therefore these traumatic feelings are projected on the reasonable aspects of state. The more our societies are growing, the more our dissociated personality parts are longing

for punishment of a rotten world. Our dissociated personality parts long for destruction of the meaningful structures of the societies. So they keep watching for signs that the apocalypse is near.

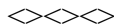
Now to the question of the social dimension in the motives of individual amok runners. Whatever the individual starting situation of an amok runner may be, finally it will end in his compulsive need to act out feelings of self-hatred towards reasonable institutions of the state and produce a situation of “chaos and disbelief” among the population. The German media-historian Heiko Christians who wrote a book on amok (*Amok. Geschichte einer Ausbreitung*, Aisthesis Verlag, 2008) said in an interview in the Swiss daily *Tages-Anzeiger* on Dec 17, 2012 that shootings like in Newtown do not happen “in secret but in public, highly symbolically charged institutions like a school, a department, a cinema or a job location. The perpetrator intends with the killing a perverse message.” This perverse message is what the end-timers are longing for, signs of apocalypse by the production of a situation of “chaos and disbelief.” Therefore, his individual motivations are largely corresponding with the pervasive apocalyptic wishes of the dissociated personality parts among the population or at least among large parts of the population.

Florian



Yes, Florian, you give an excellent synopsis of collective group-fantasy particularly how Adam Lanza, the perpetrator as his mother’s delegate, acting out of self-hatred imbued by home and community, does indeed run amok.

Geraldine Merrill Pauling—family therapist and Psychohistory Forum Research Associate



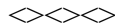
We spent some 15 minutes at a psychoanalytic class on Freud discussing the possible dynamics that led to the horrible shootings. We realized this was pure conjecture since so little was factually known. We also realized that this was an attempt to calm our own anxieties. His barber was interviewed and said he was brought in by his mother every so often for a haircut. Usually 20 year-olds go alone. He walked in and was told to sit in the barber chair. Only when his mother told him did he listen. He never spoke

a word and got up when his mom told him to.

So, he was merged with his mom and showed little of himself. It is reported that she informed him of her decision to send him to a home for the disabled. This apparently was the main cause of his unleashing his violence. This was a suicide preceded by many murders. Killing mother was psychotically like killing himself? Killing six year olds? What happened to him at age six?

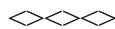
Again, this is conjecture. Does anyone have something to add? A final thought. If we must be allowed to have guns at home, there should be a provision in the law precluding lethal weapons in a home with a mentally ill member.

Neil Wilson—psychoanalyst and psychologist



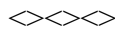
I hope you understand this constructively, your class failed. I don't understand how a responsible, psychoanalytically oriented class, or its professor, can accept the idea that "we must be allowed to have guns at home." Surely such passivity on the part of responsible people contributes to rather than ameliorates this problem. A topic which must be considered, and even more important than the Connecticut tragedy itself, would be the history of this very idea and why we delegate its solution to our leaders rather than adopting the responsibility ourselves. Fifteen minutes? Really?

Lew



Brian, I liked your interesting review of Myriam Miedzian's *Boys Will Be Boys: Breaking the Link Between Masculinity and Violence*. Peaceful holidays to all.

Molly



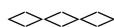
12/23/12

In *The Turner Diaries* (1978), the bible of the racist right depicting the overthrow of the U.S. government, a race war, the victory of the gun-movement leads to an paroxysm of nuclear violence, and the successful wiping out of Asia and Russia then is the ultimate redemption. Charles Strozier draws the conclusion: "One proximate consequence of this larger context is the false security we gain in the belief that if we can only possess enough guns, we can ward off danger to ourselves, our families, our communities,

our nation, humanity itself.”

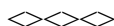
I think the true message of Turner for our dissociated personality parts is: cleansing by unlimited acting out of self-hatred/destruction. Our alter egos easily get that the success of “the paroxysm of nuclear violence” in reality means Armageddon. This ultimate Armageddon-/cleansing-message cannot be expressed explicitly because of an unresolvable conflict with the explicit value system of our reasonable personality parts and because the true message was not always known by both of Turner’s personality parts themselves.

Florian



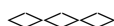
Can our nation survive without a military?

Geraldine



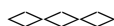
Colleagues, I have drafted and am recommending to the IPA board that we adopt the attached statement “How to End Violence in America”; please comment ASAP as I hope this can be released to the press on January 1. The statement also contains a brief analysis of the causes of violence. Please note that this is directed at the general public; more technical discussions of the issues raised herein can and should occupy us for the future.

Brian D’Agostino—psychological political scientist



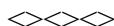
There is already an abundance of authoritative “answers” to the problems, and adding another one will probably not attract the attention your organization seeks. Furthermore, using this platform to publish your analysis of types of violence is probably not a good idea. The public will not appreciate being taken to school or being held accountable due to their ignorance (however true)....

Lew



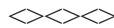
This sounds dismissive to me, Lew, and fatalistic. I’m a political scientist and have published peer-reviewed research in political psychology. I know something about this. What is your professional background?

Brian



We can't please everyone. We may not reach everyone. All we can do is express our ideas, and hope that they are appreciated. When dandelion seeds blow in the wind, some will take root, and flower. Some rot. The mechanism of seed release has filled uncounted lawns and meadows with dandelions over uncounted years. Disseminating ideas works similarly. Of course, each of us hopes that the ideas that take root are "our" ideas, not "their" ideas.

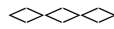
Merle



12/24/12

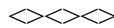
A reply to Lew Schwartz is called for. He misread my brief post and responded contemptuously. I clearly stated I was for powerful gun control! Also, discussing this issue in a class that has a different purpose was a painful luxury. Not too hard to comprehend.

Neil



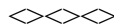
It wasn't contempt, Neil. It was regret that a class on psychoanalysis which is the foremost tool we have for understanding this tragedy—was it just one class or is it a course?—could find only 15 minutes to discuss this issue when so much more time is clearly necessary. I believe that re-ordering priorities to discuss this issue thoroughly is important. My statements went on to question the idea that "we must have guns..." is an acceptable starting point for such discussions. I don't see where I attributed this belief to you, but if I did, I apologize.

Lew



Thank you for your reconsideration and apology. Let's all try to have a decent holiday. No one commented on the possible dynamics that set Lanza off. Some sort of understanding can possibly set the stage for some sort of approach to a solution. Another mass murder today of firemen by a killer who killed previously, somehow obtained a gun, and stated he enjoyed killing others! We hope this doesn't become even more of a trend.

Neil



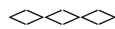
12/25/12

As a psychoanalyst, I am not comfortable speculating about the psychodynamics of someone we have little information about. Of course, in the consulting room psychoanalysis is indeed “armchair” psychoanalysis—that’s a joke, folks—but “armchair” psychoanalysis, speculating about someone we haven’t had contact with and have little information about, borders on hubris.

Perhaps what we need is a review of what we already know about the psychodynamics of mass killers. Are the psychodynamics of dictators, terrorists, and people who set out for a shopping mall or a university tower in Austin (1966) very different from one another? Should we be looking for similarities? Environmental destroyers and impoverishing and starving people? Yes, they stand indicted. Seven hundred dead in the Bangladesh garment factory fire? Echoes of the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire in 1911, 46 dead? Coal mine disasters? Oil workers killed in explosions, fires? Industrial and nuclear disasters, like Bhopal, Three Mile Island, Chernobyl, Fukushima, Minamata, Exxon Valdez, Sandoz in Switzerland, the 2008 melamine milk scandal in China, so many others, in India, Nigeria. Yes, if they are greedy, negligent, they are mass murderers. Same psychodynamics as an assault rifle killer? Or different?

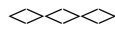
What are the psychodynamics of psychopathy? Do we actually know? Or do we just say the word and pretend we know something about something?

Merle



I am puzzled by Merle M.’s comment regarding an attempt by me to tentatively figure out possible dynamics related to the 20-year-old psychotic killer. She says I have hubris. Psychohistorians attempt to attribute dynamics to those they study. Almost never have they met the person they write about! What gives?

Neil



Neil, if I offended you, that was not my intention, and I apologize.

Actually, I did not say that you have hubris. I said that “as a psychoanalyst, I am not comfortable speculating about the psycho-

dynamics of someone we have little information about. Of course, in the consulting room psychoanalysis is indeed 'armchair' psychoanalysis—that's a joke, folks—but 'armchair' psychoanalysis, speculating about someone we haven't had contact with and have little information about, borders on hubris."

First, I am clear about the fact that I am not comfortable speculating in this fashion. Anyone else of course is free to do whatever each person is comfortable doing. Second, I used the phrase "borders on hubris." Perhaps it is a delicate difference, but it is different. "Bordering on" is not the same as "having" something.

For me, discussing the psychodynamics of someone I don't know is not a comfortable thing to do. I would feel hubristic if I did that. My understanding of psychoanalytic exploration is that it involves encounter with the person being analyzed. I think there is a difference between applying psychoanalytic concepts to historical events, movements, sociocultural manifestations, group values, group behaviors, and trying to explore the psychodynamics of a particular individual.

Perhaps the difference, Neil, is that I am not a psychohistorian. I am a psychoanalyst with an interest in psychohistory. My sense of what I actually do as a psychoanalyst is such that I would feel that I was making too much of a claim as to what I might understand of an individual with whom I am not working, or an individual whose treatment I am not supervising.

I need a lot of "information" to have a sense of someone's emotional experience, symbolic process, or lack of symbolic process, unconscious fantasy. Psychoanalytic theory is rich and complex. Also, because of my sense of "confidentiality," I respect people's "privacy," even people who have become public figures, even people who have committed horrendous crimes. Nonetheless, I think applying psychoanalytic concepts to major historical events and sociopolitical and sociocultural processes is viable.

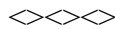
So—since I am not a psychohistorian, perhaps I am unfamiliar with the psychoanalytic writings about historical figures and contemporary public figures. Do psychohistorians speculate about specific individuals? If so, I will abide by my original statement—I think it does "border on hubris" in that I don't think we can know

enough about someone without having spent time with that person, or heard a great deal about that person from someone working with that person, to make statements about that person's psychodynamics.

Although I think trying to understand the psychodynamics of a fictional character in a novel, a play, a movie, is an excellent training exercise for people who are studying to become psychoanalysts! We are not violating the "privacy" of people who are depicted in depth in a creative work, but who do not literally exist.

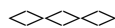
But I don't think I could say that any specific individual undertaking to understand the psychodynamics of someone essentially unknown "has hubris." I would need to know more about that person before I said that person had hubris!

Merle



I've been very frustrated by the Goldwater rule these days. It's part of the code of ethics of the American Psychiatric Association that forbids psychiatrists from commenting on the mental health of people they never personally interviewed. When I listen to people in the media who are not mental health professionals, along with the professional media "shrinks," pontificate about mental health dynamics in clumsy and uneducated ways while people who might have much to say are rendered mute, it is troubling. I don't know what to do about it, just thought I'd mention it as an association to the discussion between Neil and Merle.

Alice



I understand and respect Merle's discomfort. I don't entirely agree with it.

Whether we're aware of it or not, we speculate all the time—about virtually everything. The speculations of specialists tend to be more useful to us than those of non-specialists.

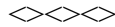
As some of you remember, the APA response related to a poll in which psychiatrists were asked to evaluate Barry Goldwater prior to that election. A number of psychiatrists responded—very unimpressively. It seemed evident to me that they were politically motivated. I was among those who did not respond, and who were embarrassed by the responses of those who did. I believe that the

main problem was the quality of their responses. We knew a lot about Goldwater—more than we do about patients early in therapy. Yet we speculate continuously throughout therapy—and continuously revise our speculations.

I believe that specialists very often do—and should—speculate on what information they have; acknowledging, of course, that they are speculating; and that they lack much information. We did have considerable information, for example, on Hitler's early career. Unfortunately, therapists were then afraid to publicize their speculations concerning his pathology.

We've done the same with other fictional and actual people. Biographies (and autobiographies) often include psychobiography. It's enriching to know not only what people did, but also to speculate on why they did it.

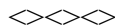
Joel



I agree with Alice and psychobiographers who interpret the psychodynamic motivations of public figures such as Nixon, Ataturk, Milosevic, Obama. Agreed also that it is always more precise and enlightening as an in-person encounter. But when that person's life is already part of public discourse, why not use our interpretations for general awareness?

Freud did with Schreber and others. Hubris? It seems he contributed a lot.

Molly



Many roads to understanding. Not just for psychohistorians. An analysis of Adam Lanza does not have 'curing' him of his pathology as its objective. The purpose is to help his community understand what happened and motivate future compassionate, non-recriminatory interventions. You might say we have to cure our own indifference, and, as such, we are investigating people we know well—ourselves.

Lew



I need some clarification, what does psychodynamic speculation about particular personalities contribute to our understanding of events in the world? What do we look for, what do we benefit

from? If indeed we are going to find such speculations useful, then who do we speculate about, and, based on what?

When we speculate about a public figure, we have all sorts of information We see the person in action, we see body language and gesture and facial expressions, we hear vocal intonation, we hear prepared ... and extemporaneous speeches and conversation on talk shows, we learn about their current family dynamics.... We know if someone hasn't visited a spouse with cancer in the hospital, or has sued for divorce in those same circumstances, for instance. We know their policies and their ideas and attitudes. We know whether they are for or against the death penalty, whether their political "enterprises" include genocide, mass oppression, torture, oppression of women, or formulating and enacting civil rights legislation, signing an emancipation proclamation, or having quite public affairs while married. We know whether they have pets, treat their pets well, support labor unions, oppose labor unions.

If we speculate about horrific isolated acts of mass murder, committed by someone that we know very little else about, what are we using to formulate our sense of that person's psychodynamics? My concern is that even gifted psychiatrists, psychologists, psychoanalysts, and psychohistorians can be as glib as other public pontificators and media stars, if they don't have sufficient information.

As a poet I certainly think I bare my soul—anyone who wants to speculate about my psychodynamics certainly is free to do so privately—and anyone who dares to speculate about my psychodynamics publicly is just plain rude, egregiously intrusive, and probably dead wrong.

Merle

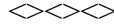


01/05/13

Yes, Freud wrote a ... brilliant essay on Schreber, whom he never met. He also wrote about others he never met. This includes Little Hans, Leonardo di Vinci, Goethe, Anna O., and Oedipus. I'm not so sure that he didn't meet Oedipus, though. As others have pointed out, we all attribute dynamics and motivations to others. It helps keep us relatively sane. Psychohistorians do it all the time. When we are with patients we are constantly seeking un-

derlying dynamics.

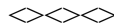
Neil



01/08/13

Alice, regarding your frustration with the Goldwater rule, as a presidential psychobiographer who is not a psychiatrist, I greatly regret the professional handicap imposed on you as a psychiatrist by this rule which was a response to the American Psychiatric Association's embarrassment by the political character assassination of some of its members. Of course you can privately do serious psychological explorations of people you don't know or privately simply speculate, but that is less satisfying. Does the APA actually enforce this rule?

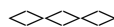
Paul



Thanks Paul for underlining the problem and empathizing with our dilemma. The Goldwater Rule is not enforced in a literal, legal way, but you know that your colleagues are questioning your ethics and your judgment if you make a statement, even if it's presented as an educated guess, in the public arena.

Part of me can understand the reason for it, but another part is very frustrated by it. I get a little bit crazy when I hear lay people hypothesize about dynamics that don't make a lot of sense to me, or seem like partial truths or too simplistic. I wish I could argue or add to the model, but I can't unless I say something like, "I can't say anything about Adam Lanza because I never met him, but I can say that some people with psychotic disorders feel and behave like this, and some people with early trauma feel and behave like that, and some people with developmental disorders feel and behave like this." But those imaginary models are so far from hitting the specific, individual target that they're pretty much useless when we try to imagine the dynamics of a unique and relatively rare individual.

Alice

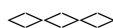


Yes, Alice, the rules of our professions are internalized and often in conflict with our other impulses. I feel badly for you since I understand your struggle.

Pop psychology permeates our society and much of it is a defense against the horror that confronts us on the news and our

own sense of helplessness. True, much of it is wrong, misleading, and useless, but not all. Yet, even without meeting our subjects in person we can piece together psychological pictures of them and provide some insight. Even as professionals, partial truths are probably all we can hope to establish. But they are better than nothing. In doing psychobiographical studies of a highly defended group—politicians—I immerse myself in the data and listen for the emotions and look for patterns in the data. My countertransference is a vital tool. The less empathy I have for a subject, the harder my task Of course, it is hardest to have empathy for a murderer of little children. But eventually, I gain insight into any subject I work on, if I give it lots of time. This is not something I anticipate doing with Adam Lanza.

Paul

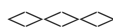


01/09/13

For your interest, this is how I reconcile the problem within myself—how I talk about these dynamics without referencing individual people’s histories. This is the post I just made on my Facebook page, the “Depth Perception Party”:

“I don’t know if this analogy will make sense to you, but I’m gonna give it a try... I just saw *Zero Dark Thirty*—the remarkable film about the killing of bin Laden. While I was watching it, I couldn’t stop thinking of Adam Lanza, James Holmes, and Jared Loughner. If you want to know what psychosis is, think about the experience of being attacked by some combination of ... voices in your head and the people in your life, then erecting odd and powerful security measures that increase your feeling of grandiosity, terror, rage and paranoia. As your identity is continually threatened by these forces from within and without, fear and rage increase exponentially until there is no other choice than to torture and explode the world. Does that make any sense at all?”

Alice

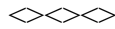


01/12/13

I hope, Howard, that nothing in my post indicated any idealization of any particular culture, be it tribal, preliterate, nation-state, eastern, western. I wanted to alert people to the book review, because I thought it might have been of interest.

What may be of interest may be precisely what you are concerned about, that is, how contemporary scholars and pundits are thinking about tribal and preliterate cultures. And of course the backgrounds of both Jared Diamond, the author of the book, and David Brooks, the reviewer, need to be taken into account when we evaluate what is being said. What is important is that it is being said.

Merle



As a psychoanalytic anthropologist, I caution any generalization about how well life was and is in preliterate societies. There has long been an idealization and romanticization of supposedly communal small-scale society (bands, tribes) among many anthropologists, who tend to follow Rousseau's lead. This adulation extends far beyond anthropology. Writers filled with the ennui of urbanism and modernism find ideological salve in the supposed goodness of tribal life. Warm regards,

Howard



01/16/13

Here is a great post by a friend of mine, from *Huffington Post*, on guns and suicide, an issue that is getting lost in the gun debate. I made a brief reference to this topic in an earlier post here, when I noticed that more gun deaths are suicides than are homicides. One could argue that guns and suicide is a greater concern than guns and homicide.

Jim



I have been reflecting upon the lack of response to a previous letter regarding the possible underlying dynamics of mass murderers. The more we understand the more likely we can aid in prevention. It should be noted that, I believe, they almost all were under the care of a doctor who prescribed medication. None were in intensive psychotherapy! This follows the awful trend in America to medicate and do little else. Can psychohistorians better publicize this dangerous trend?

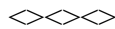
Neil



01/21/13

This, if it is true, should have a profound effect on the current debate about the 2nd amendment. So, contrary to the popular belief, the 2nd wasn't about protecting the individual from an overly intrusive central government it was about keeping the slaves subjugated. One would hope that this knowledge would dampen some of the enthusiasm of the Second Amendment fanatics. Particularly since the intentions of the "founders" is so often used as a justification for not limiting "gun rights."

David

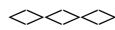


1/24/13

James wrote about the alarming rate of suicides as compared to homicides. Seeing as it's Dr. King's Day, I've been thinking about the high rate of suicides among Black men, in particular, and the stigma attached to mental health therapies among the African-America community. I've learned a lot from your book, Eddie. The Black Panthers came up in some recent media as a historical turning point in our country's promotion of gun ownership. There's some connection between guns and our racial past that seems to be playing out.

Maybe prescribed medications are the white "manic defense" that keeps us from feeling the feelings. Thanks Neil.

Molly

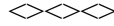


Molly calls our attention to a pivotal psychohistorical moment when the Black Panther movement called for a confrontation of white people's violence, with guns turned against whites. Both the symbolism and the mechanical reality of the turning of tables are obvious.

This might be an example of what George Devereux and Edwin Loeb called—in a 1943 article in the *American Sociological Review* 8 (143-147)—“antagonistic acculturation,” whereby an adversary, often an oppressed group, adopts items of enemy-culture as a means to react against, attack, or defend themselves against the adversary. That is, an enemy's means are adopted to one's own group end. Perhaps also, this represents an effort, via repetition, to turn a passive, victim position into an active, assertive position.

Just a guess...There is also a wonderful book (whose title escapes me, I think from the 1970s) co-authored by Huey Newton of the Black Panthers and Erik Erikson on changes in Black identity. Warm regards,

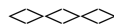
Howard



The book Howard is referring to is *In Search of Common Ground: Conversations with Erik H. Erikson and Huey P. Newton*, 1973. The Black Panther Party (1966-1982), originally was called the Black Panther Party for Self Defense. Their original purpose was to protect people in African American communities from police brutality. We still see the need that gave rise to the Black Panthers in the reprehensible police practice of racial profiling and stop and search tactics.

The feminist revolution in the United States in the early 1970s was not “phallic,” nor was it “masculine protest.” Women claiming full human rights are not identifying with masculinity, nor did the feminist revolution use “male culture” to “advance.”

Merle



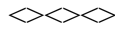
Much time and effort—endless perhaps—is spent in asserting one’s autonomy and purifying or purging oneself (and one’s group) of contaminants from the now-vilified Other. I AM is dynamically tied to the assertion of who I AM NOT (who I AM NO LONGER). Woe be to the member of one’s own group who retains aspects of the old identity, and who favorably interacts with the new Enemy. Boundaries become impermeable. One is either/or (“for us or against us”). In Erik Erikson’s terms, the new “positive identity” is inseparable from, and retains its autonomy by continuously repudiating, the erstwhile “negative identity.”

I believe that this can be shown not only for aspects (certainly not the entirety) of the Black Power Movement, the White Ethnic Movement (of which I have written elsewhere, in *The Ethnic Imperative*, 1977), and the Feminist Movement(s) in the recent history of the United States. This can also, I believe, be argued cross-culturally and historically for well-known nationalist, fascist, socialist, and other totalistic movements (Erikson’s term) such as German, Russian/Soviet, Jewish, Hungarian, and many

more. The *ideological assertion* that “We have nothing in common with them” is not the same as now-largely repressed (?) unconscious experience of *possessing* something in common with them.

I think that this dynamic is at least part of the story of revolutions. I look forward to continued conversation. Warm regards,

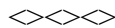
Howard



I’m wondering about a chicken or the egg situation. If we consider groups that have been downtrodden and oppressed, did they begin as autonomous, self-defining groups that later became oppressed, persecuted, enslaved, traumatized? If so, when they seek freedom and justice and begin to forge a “positive identity” all over again, if they return to their “roots,” to their original sense of themselves, where do they stand in relation to the “other,” to the oppressor, in terms of their own sense of self, either individual or group self?

When we as psychoanalysts work, analysands have the opportunity to discover and reconnect with their core self, their authentic self, their true self. They discover the personae that they have learned to be, the various incarnations of self for others, self in relation to other’s expectation, and once they recognize the internal conflicts, the self and object representations, the visions of self and other, they integrate, and discover they can just be. The journey is from true self to a multiplicity of false selves to true self with an acknowledgment of the usefulness of alternative selves. Is it possible that peoples—ethnic groups, nations, minorities—have a similar journey?

Merle

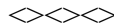


Beautiful writing Merle. Thank you for your compliments. You take the conversation to the heart of the matter, true vs. false self, authenticity, and the role of group-identity in these experiences of oneself. For me, the question(s) now becomes: what are the inner representations, linked to internal object relations, that can be symbolized by gender, sexual orientation, tribal, ethnic, racial, national, religious, regional, and many more? Put differently, what is the conscious and unconscious significance of any or all of these group-identities? Both in cognition and affect. What role(s) does

the group play in affirming and supporting these identities?

Further, during time of radical identity change, such as in the various social movements we have been discussing, what is the psychodynamic and group dynamic significance of these revolutionary changes in identity and ideology? Can they be understood in the frameworks of true/false self, authenticity, etc.? Does any of this make sense?

Howard



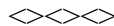
1/27/13

Henry, you're correct, we do not have enough primary material to describe these familial processes in detail. But Neil helpfully lends the phrase "paranoid schizophrenic" to these male, Caucasian mass killers who appear as boys-trying-to-become-men.

My thoughts return to David Lotto's post which did provide more data regarding our country's founding men deliberation over word "State" vs. "Country" in the Second Amendment, and the historical conflict between the federal government and southern state militias (slavery patrols). Today's gun control debates resonate with the past worry on the part of Southerners (my ancestors) that the North would free slaves. This comes up—historical anxiety over manumission—during the reelection of our first Black president and his recent gun control proposals.

What kind of man-u-mission(s) are going on in the home of these mass killers? Howard, and others, do you have thoughts to share?

Molly



I have a few thoughts on this current discussion of gun control. I admit that my *speculations* ("analysis") might well be wild analysis. My point of departure is that guns, and the freedom to have and use guns, are part of the identity of many white American men, in this case White Southern men.

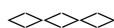
This contemporary culture of guns does not exist in a historical vacuum. Could it be connected, not only to the slave patrols of a century and a half ago, but also to the current identity of their descendants? Specifically, the loss of the War Between the States, or Civil War, surely became a "chosen trauma" (Vamik Volkan)

that has been passed down over the generations, less mourned than a source of unfulfilled grievance.

I think that the “intergenerational transmission of trauma” is inseparable from what might be called the “intergenerational transmission of entitlement.” This latter is part of what John Mack called the “egoism of victimization” and what I have called the “narcissism of victimization.” Part of the freedom to possess and use guns would be an exercise of this entitlement. Except that behind the ideology of “freedom” is in fact “compulsion” and “obligation” (to one’s family, to one’s regional culture) to complete what is historically unfinished.

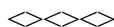
In this case many Southern white men wielding guns would in the present be perpetuating the “slave patrols” but without consciously knowing it. Haunted by the past which they are obligated to perpetuate, they would be enacting old scenarios and roles of vigilance in new forms, all in the name of freedom. They would be carrying out what Maurice Apprey called family and cultural “errands.” This would, I think, in turn be an example of what Heinz Hartmann long ago called a “change of function” from the original instinctual/defensive/value/purpose to new ones.

Howard



I hate to state the obvious, but no one else has. GUNS are phallic symbols. Many men need guns to offer them a greater sense of power. Yes, some women also have guns, but they are few and far between. I have never had a lady patient with a gun!

Neil



Hi, Neil, I think it is quite useful to state the obvious, and to keep re-visiting the obvious.

Never had a “lady patient with a gun”? Well, maybe not a patient, but Nancy Lanza, mother of Adam Lanza, the identified Newtown killer, had guns.

Yes indeed, Neil, “GUNS are phallic symbols.” We can look at every aspect of anxiety and aggression attached to the gun as symbol. Yes, we probably all have seen little boys running amok, waving their toy guns and water pistols, and often enough clutching their genitals in their enthusiasm. We can keep looking,

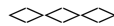
and “seek and ye shall find.” Guns give men a sense of phallic power. Then again, guns give people a sense of power, not only phallic power, just power. Then again, there are women who seek power—phallic power. Regrettably not every man or woman seeking power and finding it in guns comes to therapy.

The military knows full well that guns symbolize phallic power. Reminder: there is a bit of doggerel that American military ... learn early: “This is my rifle, this is my gun, this is for shooting, this is for fun.” You may have come across it in “Full Metal Jacket,” but it is much older than that. I first heard it in the 1950s.

Then again, the United States Marine Corps offers “The Rifleman’s Creed,” also known as “The Creed of the United States Marine.” A portion of it says, “My rifle, without me, is useless. Without my rifle, I am useless.” And a bit later, it says, “My rifle is human, even as I, because it is my life.”

So, what anxieties are we talking about? Castration anxiety? Annihilation anxiety? What fantasies are we talking about? What fantasies aren’t we talking about? Freud asked, “What do women want?” Now we are asking, “What do males with guns want?”

Merle



Merle, I agree. The ideas about American history seem significant, but a lot of Canadians also opposed our long-gun registry that, after millions spent to set it up, our current Conservative government dismantled. I notice among my psychoanalytic colleagues a distinct reluctance to cite fairly obvious psycho-sexual symbolism. A colleague recently gave a paper on the psychoanalysis of hockey and no one made any reference to the significance of men competing to bang in a puck between someone’s legs.

Don

◇◇◇*This concludes our listserv discussion*◇◇◇

Some Thoughts on Our Online Discussion

Paul Elovitz and Peter Petschauer—The Forum

The value of this exchange will ultimately be determined by the reader. Our judgment is that it is a worthwhile endeavor to capture the feelings, thoughts, and assessments of psychohistorical colleagues who are in the process of dealing with the emotional shock of the slaughter of 20 six- and seven-year-olds and six of their teachers. We welcome your thoughts about the value of this endeavor as well as your considered well-researched essays on Adam Lanza and other mass murderers, how individuals and society process this emotional shock, the role of guns in American society, the efficacy of instant psychohistory, and related subjects. It was our hope that a few participants in the online listserv discussion would go beyond this endeavor to write serious psychohistorical studies. Such studies require detailed research, thoughtful analysis, and hard work.

The listserv demonstrated itself to be a Wilfred Bion-type work group (*Experiences in Groups*, 1980), which showed signs of getting into a fight mode as with the several incidents mentioned in the introduction, and then the most prolific, as well as a long term and valued member of this psychohistorical listserv, questioning the efficacy of doing psychobiography and psychohistory; in our opinion, confusing psychobiography with psychoanalysis. Clearly, psychoanalysis requires living subjects, sitting or reclining in a room with the analyst, while psychohistory is based primarily on psychoanalytic mindset, requires only that there be data on the subject and an analyst who is willing to utilize that data as well as the feelings that are induced by it (the countertransference).

The different length and quality of the submissions by colleagues on the listserv are well worth noting. Merle Molofsky was and is a very strong presence, as she seems to almost bubble over with associations, insights, interpretations and even poems relevant to our subject. Howard Stein, another poet, provides assessments that are of great value in our understanding. The convener/director of the Psychohistory Forum, which sponsors the listserv and its associated website (cliopsyche.org), is not typically an active partici-

pant. Molly Castelloe, as usual, fulfilled a valuable role in furthering discussion and welcoming people to our site, as well as providing important questions on gender, child-men, and grandiose fantasies. Joel Markowitz and Alice Maher are two psychiatrists/psychoanalysts who brought their special knowledge and concerns to the table. Joel's profound interest in the evolution of our species and our consciousness was reflected in many of his posts, while Alice's concern for de-stigmatizing mental illness runs against the tide prompted by psychological problems of the recent shooters. This resonates with this author's focus on the ways in which even the mentally disturbed reflect unconscious motions and impulses within our society. Her frustration with the "Goldwater rule" of the American Psychiatric Association barring psychiatrists from the public discourse regarding living people without their expressed written permission is quite understandable.

James Anderson and Neil Wilson are two psychoanalytic psychologists who brought unique insights to the discussion. Jim's view of the deleterious impact of guns was heightened by the statistics he cited, including the fact of the role of bullets in making male suicide attempts a reality. Neil reminded the group of basics, including that this is a psychohistorical group, so people should be doing in-depth psychohistorical explorations. Florian Galler, a Swiss economist and creator of a psychoeconomic newsletter, brought his unique perspective to the discussion. Henry Lawton, despite his serious medical problems, brought some of his knowledge of family history from decades of social work experience to our exchange. Lew Schwartz brought a lot of energy to our discussion. At so many points, other colleagues such as Hans Bakker (Canada), Don Carveth (Canada), Brian D'Agostino, John Farion, Ken Fuchsman, David Lotto, Helénè Lewis (South Africa), Geraldine Merrill, and others made valuable contributions to our discussion.

Personally, we are strong advocates of tight gun controls, a national system of gun registration, and prohibitions on any weapon that can begin to fire at a rapid rate, such as the machine guns that were outlawed in America in 1934 in the wake of the rampage by Bonnie and Clyde. Yet guns have such great emotional appeal in our society, and our national politics have been so dysfunctional as

of late, that there is very little likelihood that strong actions (such as conservative Prime Minister Howard of Australia took in 1996 when he strictly banned civilian ownership of assault weapons and mandated gun licenses and firearm registrations) will be implemented. The love affair that America has with the gun has gotten stronger, precisely at a time when fewer and fewer of our citizens are hunters. Why is this? Clearly men—who in our lifetimes have had to relinquish much of their sense of superiority over women, whose jobs have been lost or are in danger of being lost to foreign competition, and whose sense of America as a white, Christian society is diminished by our growing ethnic, racial, and religious diversity—talk of restricting weaponry, to say nothing of introducing legislation to that effect, results in guns literally being sold out of stock in some stores. The demography of gun owners does not appear to have changed very much. The large minority of Americans who own weapons are simply buying more and more of them and desire those with the greatest firepower. Our dislike of guns, despite Paul Elovitz having been qualified as a marksman during basic training as a draftee in the U.S. Army, is based on the death and destruction they spread in our society on an everyday basis. The 32,163 gun deaths in America in 2011 included 15,953 homicides. In 2010 there were 11,832 suicides with guns (<http://www.gunpolicy.org/firearms/region/united-states>). While gun deaths are declining slightly in the U.S.A., public tolerance for them is also declining. It may be true, as conservative intellectuals have sometimes pointed out, that robberies are diminished when the citizenry is armed, but this is an exception, not the rule. Guns are mostly for killing, and the more guns there are distributed in American society, the more people are killed in homicides, suicides, and accidents.

Yes, the 32,163 killed by guns in our violent society's horrid dance of death takes precedence even in the face of the Newtown elementary school massacre horror. On the same day as the murders in the Sandy Hook Elementary School in Connecticut, a 36-year-old Chinese man stabbed 22 school children, but none died. The Chinese, who have an incredibly bloody history, do not have a gun culture. The reality is that in America other massacres are being planned as we grieve this one.

Lately, Paul Elovitz has been focused on how to organize much of his teaching around the growth of empathy and the general decline of violence in Western Civilization—taking the long view which is hard in the face of the Connecticut massacre (see Jeremy Rifkin, *The Empathetic Civilization* [2009] and Steven Pinker, *The Better Angels of Our Nature: The Decline of Violence* [2011]). America's love affair with the gun needs to be confronted and rejected in our complex, interrelated world. This is something that needs to be done despite our severely dysfunctional national politics. □

How a Dream Helps a Psychohistorian Learn About the School Shootings and His Unconscious

Paul Elovitz—Ramapo College of New Jersey

As a psychoanalytically trained psychohistorian, I'm quite aware of the value of dreams in probing deeply into the unconscious. Consequently, I recorded the following dream, which I had in my last dream cycle on the morning of January 4, 2013, which I knew to be about the violence manifested in the Connecticut school massacre and my own unconscious. I'll start with the facts, move on to my associations, the possible meaning of this dream, and conclude with its relationship to the Newtown shootings.

The Dream

I was standing to the side observing the back of a suburban house, which had a small patio and a sliding door with a screen on it. A dark-haired woman who appeared to be in her late 30s or early 40s walked out of the house (it may have been her home) and shot her brother, who was on the small patio. There was a small amount of red directly around the hole where the bullet entered his chest. I did not see him fall. She walked back into the house and to the right where she shot her sister, who was not in my view. I knew that both brother and sister were killed immediately with a single shot to the chest.

I said, "We must get out of here," to the tall, thin woman

with long hair, who was my companion and I believe my wife. (When I glanced at her face, she did not look like my wife or anyone I know, although her character, height, and my intense identification with her made me think that she was a younger version of my wife, Geri.) We were running as fast as possible down a very green lawn with a wall at the bottom, the shooter running after us from a stately old house at the top of the hill that appeared quite different from the one in which the shooting took place.

The scene changed, and now we two chased the shooter, who was climbing what appeared to be a white wall of a house, apparently to get to a higher level. She seemed to be getting away, with my companion's fingertips just barely touching her clothes. In fear and hesitancy, I held back perhaps six to 10 feet behind my almost fearless companion. Then suddenly, she pulled down the shooter and before she even hit the floor (or ground, there's some uncertainty as to whether it was inside or outside), I rapidly stepped forward and searched through her clothes for her weapon, finding a black Glock pistol in her pocket. I was amazed at how black and comparatively small and heavy it was (it was metal, unlike the real Glocks which are made of high quality plastic) as I took it away with a sigh of relief. I remember thinking, "We need to take her to the police," and yet I had some hesitation about immediately turning her over to the law. That's when I awakened.

My Dream Associations

In our dreams, our conscience is free to probe not only what we were thinking as we went to sleep and during the day (what, in psychoanalysis, is called the "day residue"), but also how the dream relates to important issues in the dreamer's life. A basic principle of dreams is that everything within them is coming out of the consciousness of the dreamer, even if the dreamer would rather disclaim particular thoughts, images, actions, or impulses. The associations always begin with what was on the dreamer's mind in "falling into the arms of Morpheus" and the residue of earlier events of the days preceding.

When I think of the brother and sister being killed by the shooter in the dream, I associate to my brother and sister, who both died very young, of cancer and in an accident, and who I've missed more and more in recent years. This longing does not negate the

reality of my sometimes having had envious feelings toward my siblings and that as a young boy, murderous impulses toward my brother, who was so much bigger, stronger, and freer from parental controls than I was. The association to the deaths of my siblings was a symbolic connection to the deaths of the children in Newtown.

Earlier in the day, I was torn about writing to the Clio's Psyche listserv about the validity of and need to do psycho-biographical work on mass murderers like Adam Lanza, but I just didn't have the time to get involved in a discussion of this with colleagues, one of whom appeared to be somewhat dubious of the process. My standing to the side relates to my role on the Clio's Psyche listserv, which I gradually disengaged from active participation in, although I was sorely tempted to jump back in on many occasions, but I did not.

What is striking is that the black-haired woman shooter in the dream with her black revolver portrayed no emotion whatsoever during her murderous rampage and capture. Our discussion online had to do with how to get at the motivation of suicidal mass murderers who do not leave diaries or other very direct psychological evidence and are no longer available for consultation.

A discomfort with hurting other people and my own murderous impulses is a longstanding part of my makeup and is apparent in my dream. Upon falling asleep, I was reading a Robert Parker crime novel in which the lead character is about to facilitate his friend's killing of gang members who had grievously wounded the friend. I was struck by the mixture of extremely normal, civilized behavior of the lead character, his Harvard PhD psychologist girlfriend, and the black friend. I found the dialogue to be amusing, but I was troubled by how in the past year I found it relaxing to read detective stories right before I fall asleep. How can this violence be relaxing? Is it that violence in a detective story, TV program or movie, is presented but then safely contained? Does this approach to violence really differ psychologically from that of my serious students who sit in my course, Hitler, the Holocaust, and Genocide? Doesn't the detective story and video presentation offer a safe outlet for that which we fear most, including our own very

violence impulses? What about my lingering guilt over the pleasure involved in enjoying this contained violence rather than devoting the time to something more serious?

Running fearfully over the green of nature in my dream is sharply contrasted with the poor children being crowded into classrooms where Adam Lanza could get at them. The very green lawn leading to a wall are reminiscent of the greenery and walls in "All Creatures Great and Small," a British television program set in Yorkshire involving veterinary care, where the beauty of nature and the emotions are more direct and out-front than in my everyday world.

An even more direct connection to the shootings is that the day prior to the dream, I had been editing some articles on the Newtown shootings, including one in which the author wanted the reader to identify with the psychic struggle that she imagined the shooter went through in denying his own neediness, and a struggle to assert his masculinity as he killed the 20 children, their caretakers, and his mother.

Because of my anger at his terrible act, I did not want to know about Lanza, but in my dream I am reminded that violence is a family affair and that we are part of the same family.

The Continued Relationship of the Dream to the Shootings

The shooter not revealing any emotions reminds me that my strong early response to Adam Lanza was to not want to know about his emotions and motivations because of my frustration at the endless cycle of shooters who gained their "15 minutes of fame"—although I prefer to say, 15 minutes of infamy.

I suspect that the shooter in my dream being a woman is a response to the focus of the article by a woman I had struggled to edit and help the author develop for several days. Violence is very much a family affair, and it is something that women are quite capable of doing. Some colleagues on and off the listserv were wondering to what extent Adam Lanza was acting out the violent fantasies of his mother, who liked to target shoot and who had purchased the guns used to kill her and his 26 other victims. That no motivation is given for the shooter in my dream is in direct contrast to my conscious daytime thought that we always need to probe the moti-

vation of murderers even though it is very hard, and in so many ways repulsive, work. The image of my companion only holding on to the murderess by her fingertips seems to me a metaphor for how tenuous our control of and understanding of the violence actually is. Yet, then she is pulled down into our hands and I disarm her, just as I would like to disarm violence in our society. My hesitancy about turning her over to the police seems to be both an acceptance of her humanity once she is no longer a threat and a desire to know more before safely locking her away. Perhaps this means that I am now ready to research and attempt to understand more about Lanza's motivation.

As someone trained in psychoanalysis and dream interpretation, I realize that all parts of the dream represent some aspect of me since it is my unconscious creation. In it are my fears, hopes, wishes, and much else. It reveals both aspects of me and my thoughts and feelings about the horrible events of December 14. □

Concluding Thoughts of a European Historian

Peter Petschauer—Appalachian State University

In our listserv we moved from the emotional reaction to the murders in Newtown all the way to a discussion that drifted away from the topic at hand, namely Lanza's murder of children and teachers. Spontaneous discussions have advantages and disadvantages: spontaneity allows for experts to express what they know to be true in their fields; deep down so to speak, along the lines of Malcom Gladwell's *Blink* (2007). But spontaneity often lacks the discipline of a carefully argued essay. Also, spontaneity gives some who are better at immediate expression greater voice than those who need time to reflect before they speak.

These two realities allowed for several points to be omitted, and they could have found greater emphasis.

One, we spoke little about the underlying violence of American society. Yes, we spoke of guns and gunism, but I would have liked an even deeper discourse. Our first European immi-

grants arrived here because they could not fit in, or they did not want to fit in, their home societies. Once here, they conquered the territory of the others, heathens they thought, who lived here. Thus we must see settlement of the west as a euphemism for conquest; in this process, our forebears engaged in terrible acts—ask the Cherokees about this process. We established a new nation with a war, which is now called a revolution. Although the outcome was an excellent constitutional document, what preceded it was a war against a legitimate power. The Civil War, which was mentioned several times in our discourse, left another legacy of violence, not just in the sense of murderous battles, but also in that of men killing other men individually, followed by the horrific destruction in the South. Then there was, and remnants remain, the horrid treatment of slaves and their descendants. Violence continues in so many other ways today, unfortunately externally in war and internally in a bloodbath that kills more individuals per annum than the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan combined.

Two, as a society we glorify violence and look for violent solutions. When a Senator or Congressman wants “to blow away” someone, he is reflecting accepted violent speech. When an attendee at the President’s State of the Union address calls him a “piece of ...” who should “suck on my machine gun,” we hear violent talk and are faced with the reality that members of our legislature agree with him and thus accept and promote violent speech. Of course, that is the tip of the iceberg. Underneath is the divisive and foul language that characterizes so much public interaction. One just needs to look at the facial and bodily expressions of players after games or the distortions of musicians to remind that they would not succeed if they did not express themselves as if tortured. Along with this near obnoxiousness goes the idea that we solve problems not by discussion and compromise, but rather by attacks and, yes, pulling a gun.

Three, watching violence on TV and in games is not conducive to embracing moderate solutions. Although I agree with some of our colleagues, including Paul Elovitz, that we have become less violent in some ways, say toward women whom we don’t burn at the stake and children whom we do not beat routinely. Nevertheless, we accept persons being killed and maimed by the hundreds if

not thousands on our screens every single day. To argue that this sort of mayhem does not influence young minds is somehow not paying attention to the glee with which they "kill" in games.

Four, one should remind that our major religions do not advocate violence. Christianity does not say, for example, "Thou shalt kill," but "Thou shalt not kill." When I asked one of my friends, who supports guns, why he attends church every Sunday, he replied that there is no contradiction between his love of guns and Jesus' teaching. No contradiction? Guns of the variety we embrace the most these days have no other purpose than to kill. None of these religions advocate this sort of violence; we conveniently forgot the Sermon on the Mount.

Five, we spoke little of the very existence of so many weapons, especially in proportion to such ownership in all other industrialized nations; Paul does so in the conclusions. The U.S. is indeed armed to the teeth. History teaches us that nations armed this way tend to employ their weapons; that is the reason for having them! An oversupply of weapons, as we had before World War I and again before World War II, usually means war. But it has also meant (and means) vicious internal explosions of violence.

Six, in the U.S. there is an overemphasized focus on individuals and their need to express themselves! There is the "me-me" culture that pervades the country today, say in the form of "don't inhibit my self-realization," even if it means harm to the rest of the society. It may be seen in the loner, the drifter and constant mover, spoken of by Howard Stein, and the cowboy heading into the sunset. "Don't get in my way, I am on the path to self-actualization!"

Seven, there is male insecurity that was addressed in several posts; it is most frightening. For example, male insecurity in the Weimar Republic is often associated with the loss of WWI and the lack of work after it, and the amazing currency devaluation and Depression. Most historians associate this loss of male centrality with the ascension of Herr Hitler. What will it lead to in the U.S.?

Finally, we spoke less about Adam Lanza than around him. Why not speak about him? Are we afraid that he was truly the symbol of our violent heritage and violent present? Are we afraid that if we discover that he acted as the expression of the violence of

our society, there will be many more such catastrophes? Then there is the most frightening of questions, namely, will the violence explode into full-scale civil war? □

Speculations on the Whole Boy in Newtown

Elizabeth Berkshire—University of Missouri-Kansas City

It is not by accident that a boy was made into a “shooter,” a “gun-man.” What if I told you that the Newtown shootings were proof of our disdain for men who need too much? Would I lose you? I hope not, since I mean to develop, using empathy, a deeper understanding of the whole boy in Newtown without the least intention of condoning his deadly acts or the profound disdain for neediness that still lingers in the margins and underbelly of what has happened.

When I heard the news of the loss of 20 children and six adults in Newtown, Connecticut, I felt heartbroken, lost and outraged. After a while I began to experience a distinct and troubling identification with what I initially imagined to be only the children's profound sense of helplessness. But then I began to wonder if the boy we have been calling the “shooter” or “gun-man” was unconsciously motivated to bring about precisely this emotional experience in someone other than himself. Following Lacan's request that we feel our way to understanding, I began to imagine the boy, long before he took up the initiative of the gun, already relating both sympathetically and disdainfully to the children's neediness and, by extension, to those charged with administering to it. Then, as if on cue, we received an e-mail from our sons' principal reassuring us that the school intended to better provide for the safety of the children.

It is not insignificant that we have come to expect schools to look after the “wants” of young children—almost, at times, more than we expect parents to. What I mean to say is that a gun, the elementary school setting, and the generally tolerated neediness of the young subjects waiting there already held symbolic meaning that could be evoked so that a human being, who was not quite a

boy and not quite a man, could speak completely and truthfully about his existence. After all, we all compulsively use other minds to convey vital aspects of our existence of which we cannot speak and we all, more than we might want to admit, “rage” to be understood.

Elsewhere I have written more extensively about masculinity, care, and violence. Here I am asking you to accept that there comes a time in every boy's life when his neediness becomes a problem—even something to rage against. This is not a developmental crisis we talk about. We prefer to pretend that masculinity just is. Still, there are exceptions. As a male colleague shared with me, men are to disavow “wanting the care we all so desperately need as human beings (and men need even more desperately because they/we are supposed not to need it).” We might note my adult colleague's need to use a parenthetical to qualify his talk of his need, as well. I know something about this sort of qualification. However, it is not a desire for care, but initiative, that I must qualify or suppress if I am to remain intelligible as a woman and thus “fit” for human company. As James Gilligan writes, “Restrictions on their freedom to engage in sexual as well as aggressive behavior is the price women pay for their relative freedom from the risk of lethal and life-threatening violence to which men and boys are much more frequently exposed (a dubious bribe, at best, and one which shortchanges women, as more and more women realize)” (*Violence: Reflections on a National Epidemic*, 1996, 227).

What if Gilligan has this story backwards—or not quite right? What if the aggression and violence instigated by boys and men are not signs of freedom (or exposure), but of unnatural obligation? What if this violence is the result of a dubious bribe? Exactly what choice do the subjects of masculine lives have, as Wittgenstein might have argued on behalf of my male colleague, not to be what we already know them to be? This is not superfluous; the fact that we are all burdened by certain gender obligations is a central part of the story of what happened in Newtown. It is also a central part of what is happening to us all.

I am a parent of two boys, ages eight and eleven. There is a different, and yet related, line of thinking I have developed around how my experience of the whole boy in Newtown has changed my

experience of them. I am now more conscious of my recent struggles to continue to relate to them with care. Ironically, the older they get it seems that my care for them is viewed increasingly as “feminine” and thus contaminating. So much so that even I have to fight thinking that it is undesirable. In fact, this is so significant that I have felt the kitchen floor rumble from the violence in the video games being played below and I have felt resigned to do nothing about it. When I do intervene I am rebuffed for being too sensitive (feminine), and this works to reinforce the fear of contamination I bring about when looking after, not just my sons, but my husband as well. In fact, writing this piece I have shared drafts with my husband for reasons that go beyond the need for a thoughtful reader. His struggle to continue to look after our boys has taken on a different timbre—one that is actually missing the hugs, kisses, and concern for their inner life that he easily provided when they were younger. I watch him now and I understand that their developing “masculinity” is closely tied to his own. I understand why he reacted badly (anxiously) when our youngest son received a sewing machine for Christmas. I understand that he joked about it until our son not only rejected the machine but had to disavow the happy and recent memory of using mine to sew a stuffed animal. I have watched my son grieve the loss as he now carries around objects that are noticeably more masculine. This is why, in a desperate and loving move, I pulled my husband in to listen to drafts of this paper.

Richard Novia, the school district's head of security until 2008, and former advisor (for the tech club Adam Lanza joined), has reported that when approached in the hallways, Adam would clutch tight to the black briefcase he was never without. “The behavior would be more like an 8-year-old who refuses to give up his teddy bear,” Novia said (AP SOUTHBURY, Conn.). What if this particular young man, Adam Lanza—the “shooter,” we have been calling him—was desperate to be found as precious as a child? What if he envied the right to be needy of the first grade children he killed? What if we all envy it? What if our own defense against the neediness of men—our endless talk of the effectiveness of guns—has been mimicking a reality in which a growing boy was obliged to take up initiative and use it against an innocent dependency that he could no longer call his friend? Following

Binswanger's idea that people are not things but integral wholes, perhaps we should be careful not to divide Adam up into classifications such as "shooter," "gun-man," or any number of other categorical terms that not only create a buffer between his heart and ours, but do little to garner care for the subject assigned. Without condoning his acts, it is possible to note and mourn the remarkable absence of loving regard for Adam (and his family) in what are otherwise heartfelt prayer requests. This one I received on our first day back after Winter break:

Let us take a moment today in prayer for those Sandy Hook Elementary students who will be returning to classes today for the first time since the tragedy nearly a month ago. May they find comfort in their teachers, friends and surroundings...May they feel the love and prayers that have been sent from all ends of the earth...May they continue to heal along with their parents...Our hearts go out to those children who will not be returning today because their lives were tragically cut short...And, for all the residents of Newtown—that they form a special trusting bond as they move forward together in the aftermath of this tragedy (Director of Campus Ministries at Rockhurst University).

What now? We could pretend that we know nothing of the whole boy—who was not quite a man—and the claustrophobic hell he found himself in. Or we could take our acquaintance with him and do something about the tragic fact that our nostalgia for gender is actually deadly under certain—even cheered on—circumstances. Perhaps then we will be free to lament that we no longer need to imagine what the untimely and inappropriate loss of a growing boy's right to be needy feels like. We have felt it. But have we understood it well enough?

**The Online Forum
Invites You to Participate**

Join the lively psychohistory conversation of the
online leg of the Psychohistory Forum.

To do so contact Molly Castelloe
at msc214@nyu.edu.

Elizabeth Anne Berkshire, PhD, is a member of the Gender Studies Faculty at the University of Missouri-Kansas City. She may be reached at berkshiree@umkc.edu. □

Featured Young Scholar and Clinician Interview

Denis O'Keefe: Social Worker and Psychohistorian

Paul H. Elovitz—Clio's Psyche



Denis O'Keefe, LCSW, is president of the International Psychohistorical Association (IPA), clinical director of the Family Resource Center, a licensed clinical social worker, and an active scholar. He was born on July 27, 1976 in Yonkers, New York to a primarily Irish American family as the third of six children and second of four sons. After graduating from Dominican College, he earned his masters of social work from New York University in 2001 and has since been in private practice as a psychotherapist. Currently, he is completing his PhD dissertation in social work at New York University (NYU). O'Keefe has made over 20 professional presentations at international conferences and published articles previously in this journal on "The Paradox of Violence in the Contemporary World" and "Accountability and Liability or Child Welfare." He teaches social work to graduate and post-graduate students at NYU's Silver School of Social Work and psychohistory at the State University of New York's Rockland Community College. The father of a son and daughter, he resides in Highland Mills, New York with his wife Christine, who is also a mental health professional. In January 2013, O'Keefe was interviewed via e-mail and he may be contacted at djo212@nyu.edu.

Paul H. Elovitz (PHE): What brought you to psychohistory?

Denis J. O'Keefe (DJO): I was very fortunate to have been introduced to the field through courses with David Beisel. At the time I lacked direction and reluctantly decided to work toward a business degree and become an accountant. Needing a history credit, I ended up choosing to sit in on Psychohistory I and II. My wife and I were dating at the time, and we attended the courses together. The topic struck an immediate chord in us both. It served as an introduction to basic psychoanalytic constructs, including Bion and group process theories as well as group fantasy analysis, psychological defense, among other things. It was probably the first course I had ever taken where I felt excitement about attending class. I was inspired to read well beyond the required course content into all aspects of psychoanalytic and applied psychoanalytic writings.

PHE: What was so special about David Beisel's teaching?

DJO: He is a master of the craft and a real expert on the material. The content was like nothing I had experienced before. I've joked with him that he stripped us of our defenses, individual and social, forcing us to view the atrocities surrounding us. Regarding our natural resistances that were roused, I remember him saying something like, "You don't have to believe the theory, but you do have to learn it." I couldn't read a newspaper or watch television or movies the same way again after his course; I was now always looking for the unconscious message or motivation or group fantasy behind media images. I'm not sure if this was his intent, but he certainly changed my life's trajectory toward a career in a helping profession with an emphasis on social justice.

PHE: What do you remember about that International Psychohistorical Association conference that I met you at in 1997? What new vistas did it open up for you?

DJO: Initially I was somewhat awestruck to meet many of the psychohistorians I had idealized and was surprised to find you all so accessible. I remained quiet but observant for many years at IPA. I always found myself inspired by the talks. I presented my first paper at IPA before finishing my master's degree and have presented a paper every year but one since.

PHE: You and your wife Christine have a boy and a girl, ages 15 and 2. How did what you learned about child rearing from psychohistory influence how you have raised them?

DJO: Psychohistory definitely provided a model for what optimal childrearing may look like, particularly Alice Miller and Lloyd deMause's writings on the subject. They certainly documented what not to do. I like to think we were "good enough" with our son without becoming over-indulging. We decided to send him to a Waldorf school during his formative elementary years. We found it to be the most developmentally friendly educational approach. I don't think we ever would have considered this without the influence of psychohistory. He is a remarkable lad at 15 years of age. He wrote his first paper on Freud and the impact of his concept of repression last year in the eighth grade.

PHE: Do you find that there is a great difference between clinical and psychohistorical theories of childrearing and the actualities of parenting?

DJO: I don't think any theory can fully prepare you for the actualities of being a parent. That said, there certainly is a place for theory in parenting, especially when a parent's early attachment with their own caregiver was far from optimal. I do like many of the parent-infant psychotherapy programs gaining popularity that primarily help parents increase their capacity for mentalization or reflective function to facilitate healthy attachments.

PHE: Why did you choose to do your graduate work in social work, rather than in clinical psychology?

DJO: I completed my undergraduate training in psychology, but wasn't impressed with the overemphasis—at least in my program—on experimental, behaviorally oriented research at the expense of humanistic psychodynamic models. My interest in psychohistory brought me to the field of psychology, but I didn't see room for applying psychohistory. Classes with David Beisel had opened my eyes to the social justice issues surrounding us, especially in the field of child welfare. I started taking electives in social work in my senior year and found my research interests much better aligned with basic social work values. Social work allows one to be an activist, social policy analyst, a researcher and a practitioner simulta-

neously with the overarching value being the pursuit of social justice. I realized that the social work program at New York University was clinical and largely psychodynamic. It turned out to be a very nice fit.

PHE: What is your primary professional identification: professor, psychoanalytic researcher, psychohistorian, psychotherapist, or social worker?

DJO: Primarily I identify as a clinical social worker, which allows me to wear the other hats without conflict.

PHE: Although a young professional, you already have considerable experience in dealing with different types of therapy and institutional settings. I was struck that your resume lists you being a "mental health consultant," "intake clinician," "psychotherapist," "clinical social worker," and "behavior therapist," to say nothing of your teaching. Tell our readers about some of what you do and how it is influenced by your encounter with psychohistory and psychoanalysis.

DJO: I'm afraid social workers must wear numerous hats simultaneously out of economic necessity. Even when it no longer is about finances, it has become habitual. I am currently in private practice as a psychotherapist and owner of a group practice. I also provide forensic mental health evaluation for the family court in Orange County, New York and teach at NYU in the MSW program and also in a post-graduate psychotherapy program. I teach on clinical practice models with children and families primarily from a dynamic and relational perspective, child development and social policy history and analysis. I just recently started teaching at SUNY Rockland psychohistory courses in the footsteps of David Beisel.

PHE: Do you find that you have a different perspective than other social workers and social work graduate students who may not be exposed to the same materials on childhood and psychobiography?

DJO: In some ways yes. I was much better versed in developmental and psychoanalytic theory than most other students. What made a bigger impact on me was a foundation in both small and large group process theory and group fantasy. Systems theories that dominate macro social work practice I think are somewhat limited

in their ability to observe the recursive nature of micro-macro realities; the way ideological beliefs not only impact policy development, but also serve as defense concurrently informing how we understand ourselves and our world. Micro and macro models remain fragmented in most social work literature and also fall prey to the assumption of human rationality. What is missing is the process. In my social policy analysis teaching, one of the primary objectives is to be sure students can observe both the impacts of policy at the most micro level, the direct impact on the intended recipient and the recipient relationship with the provider of the benefit, as well as the way values, ideological beliefs and other psychological and emotion motives play a role in the development of those very policies, and to view the process within the larger cultural frame and as recursive in nature.

PHE: On what topic are you completing your doctoral dissertation? How is that related to psychohistory?

DJO: I am testing a basic psychohistorical tenet: that world views, often in the form of ideological beliefs, function as psychological defense. This has been empirically demonstrated by terror management theorists in hundreds of studies. I narrow it more to examine the way in which highly charged ideological beliefs inform the development of specific social policy initiatives minimally in the areas of health care, education, and immigration policy and test for which policies provide an effective psychological defense with whom and secondarily the childrearing correlates.

PHE: What mentors, role models, and books have been important, and how, to your development as a therapist in social work?

DJO: Wilfred Bion! Both on groups and theory of mind. I began my clinical work in institutions with severely disturbed individuals. I learned quickly to appreciate the impact of the milieu on client dynamics and vice versa, and the power of the therapeutic relationship. I enjoyed early practitioners like Sullivan and Searles, who also worked in milieu settings and acknowledged this phenomenon and changed our understanding of countertransference. While at a residential treatment facility, I noticed that we went through clear periods of specific forms of resident/patient acting out. I started taking notes at the twice weekly rounds on both the institutional

dynamics using Michael Diamond and Seth Alcorn's model of regressive psychological trends in organizations and the level of acting out (psychotic, borderline, antisocial/narcissistic) in incident reports reviewed in the meeting. It was remarkable that the types of acting out behavior would match so well the dynamics of the administrative and treatment teams; a clearly observable parallel process. Some theorists like Kernberg insisted that it was the client eliciting this in the organization. I tended to see the causal arrow the other way; that the clients became delegates, due to traits particular to them, to identify with and act out the level of anxiety in the group being defended against. After all, we had the power in the relationship. As far as clinical mentors, at NYU I have to mention Theresa Aiello and the late Jeff Seinfeld and at the Jewish Board, Bob Mencher.

Psychohistorically, I was first drawn to Freud's applied analysis in his numerous texts. Fromm's *Escape from Freedom* remains one of my favorite works. Others include Erikson on childhood and society and psychobiography, Lifton on the Nazi Doctors and systemically induced psychic numbing, deMause on childhood history and group fantasy, Howard Stein and his psychoanalytic anthropology of medicine and American organizational life, among other psychohistorians I came in contact with through Clio Psyche, the *Journal of Psychohistory*, and the yearly International Psychohistorical Association convention.

Regarding mentors, I have to mention three individuals who have been so welcoming and supportive in my continued involvement in psychohistory. It goes without saying that David Beisel remains an important mentor and model for what a psychohistorical scholar should be. Henry Lawton provided a lot of support in both my beginnings as a social worker and also encouragement in psychohistory. Lastly you, Paul and your continued encouragement, support, patience, and most importantly, confidence in my writing.

As far as my teaching is concerned, it is unique that I teach across the practice, on human behavior and social policy areas of social work training. My experiences in psychohistory allowed me to integrate these separate disciplines in social work, which in the past has threatened to tear the field apart. Psychohistory came before social work for me, and I have always integrated psychohis-

torical writings throughout my training. Now I do so in my practice as well as in my teaching.

PHE: You teach both graduate and post-graduate students at NYU and community college students. What are the commonalities and differences among both groups?

DJO: NYU graduate students are typically highly motivated, more mature in age and experience and focused. They tend to enjoy an intellectual challenge. Undergraduate students at RCC are mixed in motivation and discipline. I was stunned to find that a good majority of the students at RCC had never written a research paper requiring citations and references. Plagiarism was rampant in our first assignment, due primarily to ignorance, and I had to spend time teaching basic writing and research skills. Then there were students that performed well beyond my expectations and were wholly engaged in class discussions, completing the readings and putting excellent effort to good effect on assignments. Overall, I think I feel more like a guide and mentor to graduate students, but find my role is to inspire RCC undergraduate students.

PHE: Based upon you serving as vice president and now president of the International Psychohistorical Association, I want to comment on a vivid memory I have of you last June walking up and down in front of the IPA registration desk saying, emphatically: "This is hard. This is hard." You reminded me of what I went through for four years in the same positions and just how demanding organizational work can be. What is your biggest challenge as an organizer?

DJO: I'm not sure if that is a direct quote, but it certainly captures how I was feeling. Fortunately I had the help of Helen Lawton and Christine, my wife, at the registration table. I spent roughly 10 to 12 months planning the conference and was anxious to make sure it was a success. I had never run a conference before and wanted to make sure everyone was satisfied.

PHE: As I mentioned, you are a relatively young scholar in psychohistory, and therefore you work with many colleagues who earned their credentials a generation or two earlier. Have you observed generational differences in outlook, approaches, and interests?

DJO: I am fortunate to benefit from the foundational literature and the institutions that previous generations have worked so hard to establish. I also come to psychohistory from psychohistory and not from another academic discipline. I don't practice applied psychoanalysis, but believe as I think Binion did that psychohistory is psychoanalysis matured. I also didn't have to experience the rival psychohistory camps coming out of the 1970s, leaving me willing and able to integrate many of the major thinkers of the varying camps.

PHE: The Psychohistory Forum has hired a recent PhD on a part time basis to do outreach to advanced students in graduate schools and psychoanalytic institutes. What are your plans for recruiting a younger generation of scholars to the IPA?

DJO: We revived the idea of an IPA graduate student panel in 2012 convention with seven or so students presenting their work. All students can attend the IPA conference for free. We have to develop a systemized effort to actively encourage and engage younger scholars. We have a lot of brainstorming to do on this topic.

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

DJO: Psychohistory I and II with David Beisel. Other than this, I have taken the initiative to integrate psychohistory into my training. My undergraduate senior thesis was a psychohistorically inspired experimental study of group cohesion and psychological defense. Every research paper I've written throughout my training included psychohistorical literature.

PHE: How do you see psychohistory developing in the next decade?

DJO: I'm not sure it is wise to make projections. How would I like to see psychohistory change over the next decade? Organizationally, the slow erasure of the rivaling psychohistory camps may provide for the inclusion of all under one organizational body. Groups like IPA, the Institute for Psychohistory (*Journal of Psychohistory*), the Psychohistory Forum, and others that have already dissipated become more entwined with a single organizational umbrella allowing for shared resources and training programs. Or

maybe psychohistory slowly disappears as varying disciplines integrate insights and approaches of psychohistory into other fields without mention. This seems to be happening now in many of the social sciences. I'd also like to see more applied psychohistory, such as Vamik Volkan's work to defuse conflicts, to create a more peaceful society.

PHE: What experiences in your childhood helped lead you to be interested in understanding the psychodynamics of people and go into a helping profession?

DJO: My mother is one of the most selfless individuals I've ever known. She finds herself in doing for others. She loves children, and children seem to be drawn to her. She has done childcare out of the home from when I was very young to the present time. She often took difficult, behavioral/emotionally challenged kids into our home from broken homes. I like to think I've taken after her caregiving nature in my clinical work. Prior to retiring, my father was a systems analyst for IBM. He is a problem solver and analytical style thinker. I hope I've inherited both of these traits from my parents: caregiving from my mother and understanding dynamic structures from my father.

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

DJO: Identifications are tricky, often ambivalent and out of awareness. On the surface, I can think of a number of clinical examples where male and female high achievers were identified with their father and rejected identifications with their mother. If this is a larger trend, I suspect it may adjust due to rapidly changing gender roles currently underway in our culture.

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

DJO: Applied psychohistory is an area rich in possibility. From Vamik Volkan's peace work to understanding sabotaging, unstated motivations in government or organizational policy development and enactment, I believe psychohistory could have a tremendous impact. Raising social consciousness, I think, is the key.

PHE: What are your thoughts on the psychology and psychody-

namics of violence in our world?

DJO: Violence, particularly the victimization of others, has changed significantly in recent history. Steven Pinker demonstrated well the significant decreases in interpersonal forms of violence in his recent book. Simultaneously, though, I believe that we've come to rely on institutional, structural forms of victimization. I do believe a number of factors, including childrearing practices, have impacted epigenetic changes in our basic neurology, increasing our capacity to regulate violent impulses. This has decreased our need to victimize a delegated other; even so, this impulse remains a part of our nature. Structural forms of violence allow us to participate in victimizing delegated groups in disguised forms free of guilt. We see the need to victimize others through education, healthcare, economics, foreign policy, among others.

PHE: How do you define psychohistory?

DJO: I use a working definition of psychohistory as the interdisciplinary approach to understanding motivation in history, culture and society with an appreciation for the inherent subjectivities of a participant observer.

PHE: Thanks for an interesting interview. ▢

Book Review

“Storying”: Black History in Black Culture

Merle Molofsky—Harlem Family Institute

Review of Kevin Young, The Grey Album: On the Blackness of Blackness (Minneapolis: GreyWolf Press, 2012), ISBN 978-1-55597-607-1, 483 pages, paperback, \$25.00.

Kevin Young is a protean polymath, a poet who has published seven books; a cultural, literary, and music critic; and a naturally gifted historian. *The Grey Album* was chosen by GreyWolf Press to receive its 2010 non-fiction prize. The range and depth of Young's knowledge and insight is compendious. In *The Grey Album*, Young views contemporary African-American and general

American life from the perspective of the messages and meanings embedded, exuberantly shared, and cunningly secreted in black culture.

What is “storying,” and how does Young use it? First, he divides the book into four books, “Elsewhere,” “Strange Fruit,” “Heaven is Negro,” and “Cosmic Slop,” initially giving the reader the impression that all these books are somehow discrete and separate, when they are actually part of a braid of being. Second, in his own words: “The thread that binds all these books together is the notion of *lying*—the artful dodge, faking it till you make it—the forging of black lives in all their forms. Of what...we call *storying*” (17). And, further, “To me, then, *storying* is both a tradition and a form; it is what links artfulness as diverse as a solo by Louis Armstrong—which, as any jazzhead will tell you, brilliantly tells a story—with any of the number of stories (or tall tales or ‘lies’ of literature) black folks tell among and about themselves” (17).

How much of a “lie” is a “story”? In the context of this book, the question is meaningless. The “lie” of a “story” tells a truth.

Even the title of this scholarly study is a secret story, unless you already know it. The title, *The Grey Album*, was taken from a 2004 mash-up album by Danger Mouse. Mash-up? Mash-up artists take existing recorded music and mash them up, blending them together to form a new creation. Danger Mouse mashed up an a cappella version of rapper Jay-Z’s *The Black Album* with instrumental music from sources such as the Beatles—particularly *The White Album*—without permission to do so. The album was published on the Internet; a new medium for a new genre. Also, the title addresses the admixture of black and white, which becomes shades of grey.

In borrowing the title, Young signals a mash-up—a synthesis of serious scholarship, deep personal cultural readings of manifestations of deep black cultural forms—and weaves a tale. It may be “storying” in the sense of telling a story that may be too deep to be discerned as either truth or lie, because it just is. It just is, because that is what black culture is: a just-is-ness.

Young’s in-depth knowledge of black culture includes lit-

erature, especially focused on the work of Paul Lawrence Dunbar and Langston Hughes, but also broadly inclusive of other black writers; music, particularly focused on blues and jazz, but broadly inclusive of other black music genres, including rap; and situates much of this cultural manifestation in modernism, edging into post-modernism.

In his broad encompassing of black culture, Young also makes a major contribution to the psychohistorical understanding of blackness in America. He uses the images of shadow, code, and mask. He begins with a quote from Sojourner Truth, "Sell the substance to support the Substance." He questions the use of "dialect" by black writers. (Is dialect another variant of storying?) He offers, "The paradox of Dunbar as black popular poet parallels the paradox of African American Vernacular English, and the broader black experience in America: influential and even indispensable to the language, yet not recognized by it; denied by the very thing he and we helped create" (130).

Is black culture, as Young infers, "selling snowballs in the street" to white America (5)? Can black America call out white America for its storying? Young calls out eminent historian Peter Gay. We know Gay for his scholarly work on the Weimar Republic and Freud, on Freud's atheism as a crucial factor in forming his psychoanalytic concepts, and more. Young challenges Gay's 2008 610-page acclaimed study, *Modernism*, for never once mentioning African Americans. As Young scornfully, parenthetically comments, "That is, except for Baudelaire's 'mulatto mistress'" (137). In Young's study of the Harlem Renaissance, with the flowering of literature and jazz, he sees black culture as interpenetrating and actively shaping modernism and white culture. "In the case of an American modernism interested in an everyday language separate from a foreign, European past, the modern artist often turned to the Negro as both symbol and sustaining force" (139).

The masks and codes of black culture—the hidden codes in spirituals that gave information about the Underground Railroad; the seemingly indecipherable, meaningless codes of scat singing; word-masks—are Young's braid of storying meanings into truths. As Young tells the story of dialect writing: "Form as deformed. Tintypes turned into stereotypes, exaggerated and unmoving. A

mask made of words” (99).

Most impressive, actually, as Young reads American cultural history and American black history, with all its psychological nuances, is his use of his poetic sensibility to hear the hidden messages as manifestations of a people’s psyche; the psyches of white and black America interacting. Young’s epic reading of this psychocultural history culminates in a study of hip-hop—the last frontier for many “mature” white people receptive to black culture, yet baffled by the raucous hip-hop outbreak that young white people embraced, just as they once embraced rhythm and blues under the new name rock and roll in the 1950s. In hip-hop, he finds a fusion and confusion of opposites, neither an “I” nor a “We”; mash-up as borrowing and creating, celebrating and mourning. He addresses the fragmentation of Danger Mouse and “The Grey Album,” the separating of words and music, an art form that Young sees not as “representation nor rehearsal nor reality, but resurrection” (396).

Is Kevin Young’s *The Grey Album* a mash-up? Is it “storying”? Is it a brilliant psychohistorical study of an amazingly rich culture? Is it a poetic vision manifesting as scholarship? I urge you to find out, so that the “I” and the “We” need not be clearly discrete and separate, but, rather, interweaving.

Merle Molofsky, MFA, NCPsyA, LP, is a licensed, certified psychoanalyst who serves on the Advisory Board and as faculty and supervisor at Harlem Family Institute; as faculty and supervisor at the National Psychological Association for Psychoanalysis (NPAP); and on the Board of Directors and Chairs the Ethics and Psychoanalysis Committee of the International Federation for Psychoanalytic Education (IFPE). She has published in various places, including Clio’s Psyche and The Psychoanalytic Review, and may be contacted at mmpsy@mindspring.com. □

***Joseph Kramp is coordinating our
outreach to Young Scholar/
Clinicians Subscription and
Membership Award Programs***

Letters to the Editor

Thoughts on the Burns-Elovitz Exchange on Conservatism

Dear Editor,

Your illuminating interview with Jennifer Burns deals with a topic of persistent interest to both the domestic and foreign press. Yesterday, December 30, I read a piece by Gregor Quack in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine*, which posits that Congressman Ryan's and Ayn Rand's philosophies are fundamentally incompatible. The implication was that Ryan probably lacks the intellectual rigor to realize this. An August 27 editorial column in the Swiss *Tages Anzeiger* made the same point. Over the last few months, domestic commentators have repeated this observation *ad nauseam*. Participants in this discussion on either side of the Atlantic seem to deviate little from the basic narrative; to wit: that the monolithic conservative ideology cannot abide or coexist with a radical libertarian, atheistic *Weltanschauung*. "Is Paul Ryan for or against Ayn Rand? He can't have it both ways," writes Gary Weiss for CNN.

Traditionalists and libertarians have coexisted within the 20th century conservative movement. They share the pages of various journals of opinion, they often share voting patterns, and they occasionally occupy the same body; e.g., Wm. F. Buckley, Jr. Doctrinaire libertarians hurl their most vituperative philippics against Republicans and the latter reciprocate by dismissing the former as feckless anarchists. But often the tension between these poles of the conservative movement have been the source of its vitality. To misunderstand this odd couple symbiosis exposes their considerable lack of knowledge of 20th century conservatism. While objectivists and natural law traditionalists hold a number of mutually exclusive tenets, they share as many. The primacy of the individual, human liberty as a function of reason, a fear and distrust of the leviathan state, and voluntary social relationships all inform the political positions of both groups. As a graduate student at Boston College in the 1970s, my objectivist friends at Harvard Business would invite me to meetings on the opposite end of the tramline in Cambridge. I

witnessed this amalgamation take place on any number of occasions...even from the mouth of Murray Rothbard. To argue that Paul Ryan's Catholicism holds Ayn Rand's irreligious, hyper-rationalism as an irreconcilable anathema is tenable. To insist that the philosophical implications of *Atlas Shrugged* should not have occupied more than a sophomoric phase in the political development of Paul Ryan is to misunderstand the schematic of modern American conservatism.

Finally, I should like to make one closing comment on your last question to Dr. Burns. "I wonder about [the Jewish] contribution to the conservative movements that you study. Is it significant or are Rand and the neo-conservatives an anomaly?" In commenting on the significant role that Jewish conservatives played in the formation of the *National Review*, George Nash wrote in his 1978 history of the conservative movement in America that "without them the magazine might never have gotten off the ground..." As to the neo-cons, is the Jewish Leo Strauss (1899-1973) not considered (though I am not entirely convinced of the accuracy of this appellation) their patriarch?

Sincerely yours,
Jim Allen

James Allen is an independent scholar who has taught Western Studies and World civilizations as an adjunct at Ramapo College of New Jersey for a decade and may be contacted at diodorus2000@yahoo.com.

Dear Editor,

In Peter Petschauer's "Some Thoughts on Ayn Rand," a simple answer to Alisa Rosenbaum's choice of Ayn Rand may be "Rand" as in the German "*Am Rand leben*" (living at the border") and "Ayn" the Yiddish pronunciation of the German "*Ein*" meaning one. The name would thus mean "One who exists at the border (of life)."

Sincerely Yours,
Walter Dull

Walter Dull, JD (Yale, 1953), was born in Vienna in 1931.

He is a retired attorney and real estate broker who has been sporadically attending Psychohistory Forum meetings for close to three decades. He now lives in Palm Beach and may be contacted at albacord@hotmail.com. □

Anderson Discussion Paper

Arnold Richards—New York Psychoanalytic Society

Dear Editor,

Dr. Anderson has offered a convincing argument that Freud's Judaism was central to his creation of psychoanalysis. His perceptions—that the difference between Jewish and Christian attitudes toward pleasure and sexuality, and between Jewish and Christian views about the moral weight of thoughts versus actions, had much to do with the way the young science developed—are especially on the mark. In that spirit, I would like to expand upon another aspect of Freud's Judaism that also influenced his work—that is, his ambivalence about his own Jewishness and about his Galician *shtetl* forbearers (including his parents). Freud was proud of his sense of himself as a cosmopolitan German Jew, but he was uncomfortable with the Jews who had come to Vienna from Galicia to escape the pogroms there and embarrassed by too close an association with them. He wasn't alone in this. Many other Viennese Jews felt the same way, and in fact, the Galician Jews themselves were ashamed of their origins. When a Jew from Galicia was asked where he came from, he would say, "*Fun Wien*," from Vienna. I remember this from my childhood, and certainly in the Enlightenment years during which Freud came to maturity, that old chestnut took on the ring of truth.

Every one of Freud's original followers (there were 18 before the first non-Jew appeared) were Galitzianers, or their parents were. But at the same time, insofar as they could make it possible, they were "from Vienna." Freud himself would have been born in Galicia if his father, years before his birth, had not moved to Freiburg, Moravia for business reasons. If the railroad had not passed by Freiburg when he was a child, his father would not have moved to Vienna because he could no longer make a living as a

wool merchant, and Freud would likely have lived a very different life. But it did pass by Freiburg, and Freud did become the “Viennese” Freud we know so well.

In his own story of his family origins, Freud too distanced himself as much as he could from his Galitzianer roots; he insisted that his family was originally from Cologne, and had traveled from there to Lithuania, only then passing through Galicia in their return to Western Europe.

I have reason to believe that my father’s family was for a long time in Rhineland (later Cologne), that in the 14th or 15th century they fled east from anti-Semitic persecution, and in the course of the 19th century, they retraced their steps from Lithuania through Galicia to German Austria (Freud, 1925, 7-8).

Furthermore, Freud maintained that he had forgotten the Hebrew he had learned as a child; this seems to me unlikely, since Freud’s father gave him a copy of the Phillipson Bible inscribed in Hebrew. Freud’s father must have expected that Freud would understand the Hebrew inscription. It seems even more unlikely in light of his denial that he knew Yiddish. Freud grew up in a Yiddish-speaking home; his mother spoke no German. Yiddish was the only language his parents spoke to each other, and it’s hard not to conclude that it was the language Freud used with her as well, both in childhood and as the man who visited her every Sunday morning until she died in 1930. In 1941, a Dr. M. Grinwald, a Jew from Buczech, Galicia (the birthplace of Freud’s paternal grandfather Schlomo) wrote a piece for Haaretz in 1941 in which he told of visiting Vienna and lecturing to Freud’s group about a controversial popular play. It was called *Yochanan the Prophet*. After the talk, Grinwald and his audience had a friendly luncheon. Freud made several jokes related to religion and pointed out how many Jews resembled Yochanan with his mysterious face, his unkempt hair, and his shaggy coat. He commented that he himself preferred to be the Jewish man in an elegant tuxedo rather than one dressed like a prophet.

Even the Jewish jokes that Freud valued so highly were Germanized. Originally Yiddish jokes, made up by Yiddish speak-

ers and informed by a Yiddish sensibility, they circulated among Austrian Jews like Freud in German. Intent on joining the Viennese intelligentsia, even their traditional humor was translated out of its provincial tongue of origin into the language of non-Jewish European society.

It has always seemed to me that Freud's last work, *Moses and Monotheism*, was written to develop an origination myth for himself and all Jews. Moses was an Egyptian—in fact, a member of an Egyptian royal family. That may account for the appeal of the joke with which Dr. Anderson begins his paper. On the other side of the balance, James Murray Cuddihy contends in *The Ordeal of Civility* (1974), a book about the struggle with Jewish modernity, that Freud's intent in defining a universal unconscious filled with base sexual stuff was part of his effort to achieve equality in polite Viennese society by demonstrating that the minds of the goyim were just as *schmutzig* as the minds of the Jews.

So I would like to add to Dr. Anderson's paper only this brief addendum: that as deeply influenced as Freud was by his Jewishness, it was an ambivalent influence. On one hand, Freud was proud of, and attracted to, some aspects of his Jewish heritage, which was for good or ill very much an inescapable factor in the Vienna of his time. On the other hand, in some ways he experienced his Jewishness as deeply shameful and tried hard to put it aside. Perhaps this conflict is yet another way that his experience of Judaism influenced his great creation.

I want to thank Dr. Anderson for a very interesting paper. The philosopher of science Ludwig Fleck contends that the advancements of scientists are influenced by cultural, historical and personal determinants (*Genesis and Development of Scientific Fact*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1935). The development of Freud's psychoanalysis is a good case in point, and Dr. Anderson has demonstrated that vividly.

Sincerely yours,
Arnold Richards

Arnold Richards, MD, can be reached at adrichards34@gmail.com. □

BULLETIN BOARD

CONFERENCES: Invitations to Psychohistory Forum Work-In-Progress Seminars will be sent by e-mail to members as plans are finalized. Currently we are discussing seminars on empathy, humor, and women with possible presenters. On **March 2, 2013** **Lawrence J. Friedman** (Harvard University) did a comparative presentation of Erik Erikson and Erich Fromm based upon his books on them. Friedman signed copies of his just released by Columbia University Press book, *The Lives of Erich Fromm: Love's Prophet*. Jacques Szaluta moderated the meeting and Denis O'Keefe arranged for it to be held at the Kimmel Center of New York University (NYU). The International Psychohistorical Association's (IPA) will meet on **June 5-7, 2013** at NYU, the International Society for Political Psychology (ISPP) on July 8-11, 2013 at the Lauder School of Government at Herzliya, Israel, the National Association for the Advancement of Psychoanalysis on October 26, 2013 in Manhattan, the International Forum for Psychoanalytic Education in Philadelphia (October 31-November 2), and the Association for the Psychoanalysis of Culture and Society (APCS) on meets at Rutgers on November 1-2, 2013. **NOTES ON MEMBERS:** Congratulations to **Ken Fuchsman** whose lengthy article,

*We Wish to Thank Our
Prompt, Hard-working,
Anonymous Referees and
Diligent Editors*

“Interdisciplines and Interdisciplinarity: Political Psychology and Psychohistory Compared,” was published in the 2012 Issues of *Integrative Studies*. **Irene Javors** is writing a chapter on Erich Fromm for a book and doing a blog with **Sandra Langer**. We have some interesting commentary on contemporary culture and society. **Burton Seitler** is working with **Paul Elovitz** on the establishment of a research group on the psychoanalysis of humor, tentatively titled either, “No Laughing Matter” or “Laughter is the Best Medicine.” We welcome new member **Elizabeth Danze**. **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 Jamshid Marvasti; Patrons Fred Alford, Peter Loewenberg, Alice Maher, and Jacques Szaluta; Sustaining Members Dick Booth, Eva Fogelman, Ken Fuchsman, Allan Mohl, Peter Petschauer, Joyce Rosenberg, and Nancy Unger; Supporting Members Peter Barglow, George Brown, Elizabeth Danze, Paul Elovitz, Judith Gardiner, Susan Gregory, John Hartman, Daniel Rancour-Lafferriere, Joyce Rosenberg, Lee Solomon, and Hanna Turken; and Members Michael Britton and Geraldine Merrill Pauling. Our special thanks for thought-provoking materials to James Allen, Nicole Alliegro, Anonymous, Moe Armstrong, Elizabeth Berkshire, Elizabeth Danze, Walter Dull, Paul H. Elovitz, Ken Fuchsman, Aviva Gitlin, Leslie Rieches Gumbert, Joseph M. Kramp, Rosalie Maloney, Victor Meladze, Merle Molofsky, Dennis J. O'Keefe, Peter Petschauer, David Reiss, Arnold Richards, Howard F. Stein, Nancy C. Unger, and the numerous members of the Clio's Psyche Google listserv who contributed to our discussion of the Newtown School Shootings. Thanks to Paul Salstrom for Guest Co-editing the Psychology of Superstorm Sandy Special Issue materials and to Peter Petschauer for Guest Co-editing the Newtown Connecticut School Massacre Special Feature. To Nicole Alliegro for editing, proofing, and Publisher 2007 software application, Caitlin Adams and Devin McGinley for editing and proofing, and Professor Paul Salstrom and Jessica Minzner for proofing. Our appreciation to Molly Castelloe for maintaining and moderating our Google listserv and to Joseph Kramp for his outreach to young scholar/clinicians. Our special thanks to our editors and to our numerous, overworked referees, who must remain anonymous. ▣

Call for Papers

Empathy: Its Development, Virtues, and Limits The June 2013 Special Issue (Due April 1, 2013)

We seek psychoanalytic/psychological insights of 500-1,500 words on:

- Lowering defenses as a precondition for empathetic connection
- Is empathy biological? Research and clinical findings
- Therapy, empathy, and Self Psychology
- Envy, anger, sympathy, and empathy within the family
- Empathy and politics
- Empathy within the group and its extension to the Other
- Using empathy in writing biography and history
- Real empathy in the age of pseudo-empathy
- The implications of attachment and child abuse for empathy
- Is this the age of empathy as deWaal claims?
- Book reviews on empathy

The Psychological Meaning and Uses of Humor The June 2013 Special Feature (Due April 1, 2013)

We seek psychoanalytic/psychological insights of 500-1,500 words on:

- Laughing rather than crying
- Humor as an instrument of empathy
- Psychological case studies of comedians
- The role of laughter in family dynamics
- The psychology of TV situation comedy
- Humor as a psychotherapeutic technique
- Humor in politics—Lincoln, FDR, JFK, Reagan, etc.
- The healing power of humor in dealing with trauma
- Freud and other psychoanalysts on humor
- Ethnic humor: Why so many Jewish and black comics?

A symposium paper of up to 3,000 words may be accepted. Please send submissions to Paul Elovitz at pelovitz@aol.com.

Clio's Psyche
627 Dakota Trail
Franklin Lakes, NJ 07417

