Clio’s Psyche

Understanding the “Why” of Culture, Current Events, History, and Society

How People and Society Change Symposium

Brexit Special Issue

The Psychology of Extreme Nationalism Special Feature

Featured J. Psychohistory Editor David Lotto

Remembering John Forrester: Cambridge Historian of Psychoanalysis

Elie Wiesel: A Leader for Post-Holocaust Generations

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627 Dakota Trail, Franklin Lakes, NJ 07417
Telephone: (201) 891-7486
E-mail: pelovitz@aol.com
Editor: Paul H. Elovitz
Guest Co-Editor for Brexit: Juliana Dresvina
Editorial Board
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Ideals and Slavery

One of psychohistory’s greatest challenges is how to explain the enormously rapid transformation in attitudes, behavior, and law on a variety of subjects including children, democracy, homosexuality, human and individual rights, slavery, tolerance, and women’s rights. Some of the agents facilitating change that I will probe, in no particular order, include empathy; ideas, some of which become ideals; improved childhood; intergenerational rebelliousness, especially “one-up-mans-ship”; and technology. The struggle to change was and is familial and intrapsychic as well as societal.

How people and their societies change is the essential question. Does an idea of change come first, or rather is it the actual change that leads to the idea? When in my World History course I assign the Reform Edict of 1856, proclaimed by the Ottoman ruler Sultan Abdulmejid I (1823-1861), in which he decrees that all the religions or religious groups will be treated equally under the law, my students are inclined to accept the decree as representing an actual change of behavior, rather than as an ideal or a statement meant to please his European supporters. The language is lifted from the American Bill of Rights and the French Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen. I have to remind my students that at the time, children of Christians were still being kidnapped to be forcibly converted to Islam and to serve either in the military or, after being castrated, trained to be officials of the state. Decrees are not enough. They can, however, introduce or disseminate new possibilities that may eventually be acted upon. Three quarters of a century later, when Kemal Atatürk secularized Turkey after the shock of the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, a few of the ideals of the earlier time became a reality. Vamik Volkan of the University of Virginia and Norman Itzkowitz of Princeton University have written a fine psychohistorical study on him, The Immortal Atatürk: A Psychobiography (1966).
A prime example of the power of ideals is the 1948 *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. At the time, there were few actual democracies in the world in which citizens had individual and group rights. Today, most countries have at least the trimmings of democracy, which include constitutions granting individual and political rights, including the secret ballot. Approximately 15 percent of the world’s population currently live in what we Americans would call a true democracy. Furthermore, in 1948, the leading democracy of the United States still had legal segregation and laws against miscegenation. Traditional slavery would remain legal in Saudi Arabia and Yemen until 1974. I suspect that the decrees abolishing such slavery were immediately about as meaningful as Sultan Abdulmejid’s decrees of 1856.

During the later years of the Enlightenment of the 18th century, the idea of abolishing legal slavery flourished in Western Europe. The idea of treating some humans as property was questioned in the Age of Reason. Large numbers of pamphlets were written denouncing the practice, some by former slaves like Olaudah Equiano (c. 1745-1797). People were beginning to see slaves as human beings, not just property. There was slavery in all of the 13 English colonies that rebelled against Parliament and king, but the idea of it being morally wrong was already making some headway among Quakers and others.

Benjamin Franklin (1706-1790), one of my childhood heroes, owned as many as seven slaves and published advertisements for the sale of slaves and the capture of runaways. He simultaneously published Quaker pamphlets denouncing slavery and was privately questioning the institution. Eventually, he became a critic of the plantation system of slavery and a “cautious abolitionist.” His thinking was influenced by traveling in England, where abolitionism was becoming widespread among the educated classes. Importantly, the rhetoric of freedom involved the renunciation of slavery. Indeed, Thomas Jefferson (1743-1826) wanted to include that the British were enslaving the colonists in the *Declaration of Independence*. Cooler minds such as Benjamin Franklin dissuaded him, since they rebels were in a morally questionable position regarding America’s own “peculiar institution.” By 1770, Franklin attacked the international slave trade and the plantation system of slavery and freed his own slaves. However, during the 1787 Constitutional Convention, he would not publicly debate the divisive question of slavery, and tended to equivocate on the whole issue. Our Found-
The ideal of freedom for all—the renunciation of slavery—ran up against the vested interest of the colonists’ possession of slaves as property. The acceptance of slavery as a necessary condition of forming a single American nation, rather than a southern slavocracy and a separate northern free society was the “original sin” at the birth of the American nation. The Declaration of Independence is the founding document of this extraordinary birth of freedom that would help transform the world. Yet the contradiction between ideals and behavior is found quite dramatically in its author. Thomas Jefferson on the one hand authored one of the greatest statements of freedom from servitude, and on the other hand was utterly dependent on slavery for his economic well-being. His French Revolutionary friend, Gilbert du Motier, the Marquis de Lafayette (1757-1834), during his extended stays in Monticello, would marvel at how Jefferson could speak at length about freedom amidst the toil of slaves.

Jefferson’s revolutionary ideals were up against his economic, emotional, and familial ties to the institution, as well as his personality. His economic dependence on slavery was heightened by his constant debt. Much of it was because he was purchasing costly books, including those about freedom, as well as maintaining the expensive lifestyle expected of a Virginia gentlemen farmer. (Even George Washington [1732-1799] had his servants and other staples of the gentleman lifestyle while leading his starving, frost-bitten soldiers.)

Jefferson’s personality must be taken into consideration in understanding his behavior and the incredible gap between his ideals and realities. Bullying by an older boy who lived with him during his formative adolescence left its mark. Aside from personal conversations, he moved his colleagues by his literary elegance, not by his squeaky voice. This is why as president he sent rather than delivered the “State of the Union Address” to Congress, starting a precedent that would be broken only by President Wilson over a century later. He was a very retentive personality who could not easily let go of his valued possessions. Familial considerations complicated his relationships with some of his slaves. His beloved wife Martha (1748-1782) had brought her half-siblings, ten-year-old fathers would constitutionally renounce indentured servitude, which typically meant seven years of labor in exchange for transport from England, but not enslavement of the “Other” (blacks and Native Americans).
old Sally Hemings (1773-1835) and 18-year-old James Hemings (1765-1801), with her to Monticello. Thomas was extraordinarily devoted to his wife, often refusing to leave home to serve the revolutionary cause when she was ill or expecting a child, much to the frustration of Washington and his colleagues in this dangerous fight.

Sometime in the course of mourning Martha’s death in 1782, he found solace in her half-sister Sally, which resulted in six children. Jefferson was caught between the conflicting demands of his position as an American politician and his private emotional life: torn between his universalist revolutionary ideals, and his public and political persona. When American historians stopped simply idealizing him for his achievements, contributions to the birth and nurturance of this nation, and ideals, they began to acknowledge the man who had lived with and had children by his late wife’s slave half-sister. Fawn Brodie, a UCLA pioneering psychohistorian and author of Thomas Jefferson: An Intimate History (1974), faced enormous criticism from the Jefferson establishment for breaking new ground in probing our third president’s relationship with Sally Hemings. Our New York psychohistorical colleague, Professor J. Lee Shneidman (1929-2008) of Adelphi University, spelled out Jefferson’s secretiveness and duplicity in Leading from Weakness: Jefferson’s Overt and Covert Relations with Spain and the Barbary States: 1801-1807. Regrettably, Lee died before it could be published.

Jefferson’s life was complicated by events in Europe. He was thrilled by the 1789 French Revolution and pleased to be in Paris as Minister to France (1785-1789) and to see the Revolution first hand and as he served his country. The Revolution’s renunciation of slavery was something that fit his ideological beliefs but complicated his emotional and economic life. He took Sally Hemings with him, and her brother as his man-servant, and once they landed they were legally free. Both debated staying in France. Jefferson promised freedom to both after their return to America. For James, it was after he learned how to cook in the French style and then trained someone else to serve in his place. James was freed in 1796, but became an alcoholic who committed suicide. Sally would only be informally freed by his daughter sometime after Jefferson’s death in 1826. According to one of Sally’s children, two of the Jefferson-Hemings children, who were seven-eighths Caucasian, and their mother were listed in an 1833 county census as
George Washington owned slaves his entire life and did not make pronouncements about ending this institution, although he privately regretted its existence. The leader of the war for colonial freedom was quite disturbed when some of his slaves ran away. During the war, Britain promised safety and freedom to any slave who escaped a rebel master and promised a home for them in Sierra Leone. In his will, Washington provided that that his own slaves be freed upon the death of his wife Martha, which they were. Her larger number of slaves were sold after her death. In the early years of the Republic, there were some among the Founding Fathers who hoped that slavery would die out in the new nation. However, the Yankee Eli Whitney’s invention of the cotton gin in 1793 made cotton king in the South and strengthened the slavocracy.

Both the American and French revolutions were outgrowths of the Enlightenment of the 18th century, when the concept of human rights was clearly developed. The idea that there are universal rights is a central concept to modern man. Professor Lynn Hunt of UCLA, a past president of the American Historical Association, and a Clio's Psyche featured scholar has discussed this development in *Inventing Human Rights: A History* (2007). It is one thing to proclaim rights; it is quite another to both make them a reality and explore their implications. The Founding Fathers institutionalized many rights in the American Constitution, while mentioning slavery only in the context of giving less voting power to slave states by counting slaves as three-fifths of a person for electoral purposes. They had proclaimed a republic with individual rights but since in most of their minds white male democracy represented mobocracy, they rejected it.

As those of us who are psychotherapists or have been in therapy know, change is usually a slow, difficult process within a person. Societal change can sometimes even be rapid, as in the French Revolution, but for change to actually take root is a much more daunting process. The abolition of slavery in the Northern states, where the number of enslaved was not great, was a slow process that involved dealing with vested interests. Most of the Founding Fathers knew that they could not push too hard and fast, which is why they did not attempt to deal with the divisive issue of the abolition of slavery.

It took President Andrew Jackson to create a white male
democracy during his presidency (1829-1837). Today, Jackson, a slave owner, is mostly remembered for his ethnic cleansing of Native Americans and his face is now being replaced on the $20 bill with that of a runaway slave who was a heroine of the Underground Railroad. His life is interesting in terms of the transmission of trauma since his passion for violence and indifference to human suffering can be traced to the traumas he suffered during the American Revolutionary War at the hands of the British. By the time Andrew was 14 years old, both of his parents and two of his brothers were dead. He bore a lifelong scar on his face and psyche that was inflicted by a British sword for his refusal to polish an officer’s boots. While Jackson was fighting duels and generally expressing his bile wherever possible, a future president was enlarging his humanity regarding men of a different color and status. Abraham Lincoln in 1856 declared “I used to be a slave” referring to when his uneducated and domineering pioneer father virtually rented him out to neighbors (Sidney Blumenthal, *A Self-Made Man: The Political Life of Abraham Lincoln: 1809-1849*, 2016, 3).

In Europe, it was Napoleon Bonaparte (1769-1821), the “flaming sword of the French Revolution,” who spread the ideas and laws of the Revolution throughout much of Europe. Within France, for over a century there was an often intense struggle over achieving or rejecting these values. Germany, Italy, and other parts of Europe would be transformed by the impact of the French Revolution and the ideas behind it. However, Napoleon restored slavery in Haiti to please his first wife. As with Jefferson, the revolutionary ideals clashed with the personal, and the latter won. Historians argue the ways in which Napoleon both furthered and betrayed the ideals of the French Revolution (see Pieter Geyl, *Napoleon: For and Against* [1946 in Dutch, 1948 in English]).

**Women’s Rights**

The discussion of the rights of individuals and men prompted Abigail Adams to privately write her husband, in the midst of the Revolution, that he should “remember the ladies.” Less than a generation later, the French fighting for rights of men during the French Revolution led people like Mary Wollstonecraft (1759-1797) and Olympe de Gouges (born Marie Gouze; 1748-1793) to consider the rights of women. Wollstonecraft, as an English journalist and revolutionary enthusiast, had vehemently defended Thomas Paine’s *The Rights of Man* (1791), but was disappointed that female rights were not forthcoming. The result was her *A Vin-
The roots of Mary's feminist ideas can be found in her childhood during which she loudly protested gender inequality. Unlike Mary and her sisters, her eldest brother was breast-fed, formally educated, given priority and inheritance rights, and made head of the family despite her greater competence and concern. Olympe de Gouges not only wrote the Declaration of the Rights of Woman and the Female Citizen (1791), but also furthered the cause by serving the French Revolution before being executed for her opposition to the dictatorial tendencies of the government, her political associations, and probably her feminist ideas. Women's rights did not become a prominent issue among reformers until the feminist movement gained traction in the wake of emancipation of the slaves and granting them the right to vote.

It was not until the 20th century that women generally had the right to vote and could begin to be considered for electoral leadership. The struggle for women's rights—and all rights—involves not just changing laws and making proclamations, but internal change within women themselves. Perhaps one of the most important functions of American and French feminists was to raise discussion within families about the relation of the sexes. Initially, the women of the family generally considered feminists' ideas to be outrageous, but they began to consider notions of enlarging female rights. This was a slow, often intergenerational, process.

My own paternal grandparents had an arranged marriage in Poland, with my grandmother disdaining her husband as lower class. Perhaps her greatest resentment was that he had followed his brothers to building a new life in America and she did not want to leave the psychological security and comfort of their old life in Europe. (Had she stayed in Poland she probably would have been murdered in the Holocaust, which was the fate of most of her relatives.) Divorce was not something within her consciousness, and she was not prepared to support herself and certainly would not conceive of herself working outside of the home. On the other hand, she felt emboldened enough to sleep apart from him for the last 35 years of her life. Her daughter felt empowered to divorce her own husband.

Women, individually, had to develop an identity as equal to that of men before significant societal change could happen. When in 1978, Hillary Rodham kept her own name as the First Lady of Arkansas, and her husband spoke about a co-governorship, they
were making a very clear statement about the rights of women. Arkan-
sans’ response to this and other “progressive” steps by the young-
est governor in the nation led Bill Clinton to become the young-
est ex-governor. The Clintons, in regaining the governorship,
learned to at least publicly moderate their progressive stance on
gender.

The attitudes toward marriage and divorce are reflected in
the life of Hillary Clinton’s mother, Dorothy Rodham (1919-2011).
She might be heard to mutter “Mr. Difficult,” “Cheapskate,” and
“S.O.B.,” but certainly did not divorce her difficult, cheap, contrari-
an husband, who refused to even take proper care of their home.
We Americans are in the midst of a campaign in which the woman
who has the best opportunity to become our first female president is
being vilified as crooked, devious, and conniving, as well as criti-
cized for having to use the bathroom during a break in a debate.

Women received the right to vote partly because the idea of
suffrage had been pursued actively, driven home by feminists, and
because of women’s contribution to the war effort in World War I
by doing so many male jobs. However, the vote did not mean that
most of them saw themselves as being leaders in business, industry,
and politics. It took generations and additional movements, such as
the women’s rights movement of the late 1960s and 70s to help
bring the issue to public consciousness. Concomitant with this
movement was the use of women, such as Phyllis Schlafly, to ar-
dently protest the U.S. Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) that had
been introduced in 1923. She left her wifely and motherly func-
tions to travel around the country campaigning actively against
women’s rights, in service of the traditional ideal of stay-at-home
women. She was unwilling to renounce the traditional ideal of
womanhood.

The issue of accepting women as equal participants in poli-
tics is a very complex and difficult question. One reason behind the
resistance in the U.S. to having women as leaders is that in the peri-
od from the end of the Second World War until the election of Pres-
ident Clinton, it was considered virtually essential that an aspirant
to the U.S. presidency have military experience. In fact, one of the
reasons for the incredible hostility towards Bill Clinton was the fact
that he not only didn’t have military experience, but had openly op-
posed the war in Vietnam. Historically, Americans have had the
expectation of a soldierly, physically imposing president as com-
mander-in-chief. However, these qualities are rarely connected to
women. Bill Clinton’s wife, Hillary, is both the beneficiary of his name, and a recipient of and, in part, a cause of the extreme rancor that has been directed against him. Part of that acrimony was based on Bill proclaiming that his would be a co-presidency, openly allowing his wife to influence him.

As Hillary Clinton seeks the presidency for the second time, there are a number of complicating considerations. The first female president is subject to considerable opposition and typically has to prove that she is even tougher than the guys, despite a smaller frame and the assumed physical inferiority of women. David Ben-Gurion called Golda Meir the “best man” in his cabinet and it was joked that she was the only one with gonads. Margaret Thatcher was Britain’s most combative Prime Minister since Churchill during World War II. Like Meir, she too was tested by war. The male politicians of Brazil, who have a reputation for corruption, have just driven out their first woman president, Dilma Rousseff, claiming that she is corrupt and dictatorial. Hillary, if elected to the presidency, will face a considerable period of testing.

Women in business have advanced to the point that Carly Fiorina was able to gain great prominence as CEO of Hewlett-Packard, before being dropped by the firm for poor performance. A main impulse to conservative support for her as president and then as Ted Cruz’s vice presidential designate, despite her ultimate failure in business and as a California senatorial candidate in 2010, was that she could be used as an effective whip against Hillary Clinton. A woman attacking a woman helps shield conservatives from charges of misogyny. The struggle against patriarchy is within the minds of women, as well as within those of many of their brothers, fathers, husbands, lovers, and sons, though to a lesser degree. In present-day America there is a middle-aged male backlash against full equality of the sexes. The backlash is based partly on the fear that when women, illegal immigrants, and people of color gain full equality, there will be less left for these men. The very unequal distribution of the new wealth created in the last 30 years has heightened this reaction.

**Technology and Intergenerational Change**

Change is furthered by an intergenerational dynamic in which a younger generation questions the complacency of an older generation. I am reminded of a conversation I had in the early 1970s with a senior member of the Society of Friends outside her Quaker meeting house. Her response to what was special about
what they did was that they had a racially integrated preschool there. What she was so proud of seemed “old hat” to me. Almost all of my adult life, I have lived next to African-American or Hispanic neighbors. Some of the younger generation declares that their elders, however much they may have marched and fought for civil rights and against the war in Vietnam, are intolerant because they are not enthusiastic about LGBTQIA+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning, intersex, asexual, allies). So much of contemporary change in the part of America I live is focused on gender issues. If the older generation does not keep up with the changing and increasingly elongated acronyms, LGBTQIA+ for example, some students are prone to feel superior to their professors. Some of the change is regional; red vs. blue states isn’t just about politics, it’s about the rural and less ethnically and racially diverse areas of the country having a different focus. They are much slower to accept the changes that emanate from the cities and progressive, diverse college campuses.

The speed of change is an important issue. The rapid communication of our modern world brings about change at a pace that was unthinkable in an earlier period. The screens of smartphones, televisions, computers, and tablets have lessened the control of older, more conservative forces in society. Knowledge need not come from the elders—that is leaders, parents, and teachers of society—as students from an early age become much freer from their controls. Traditional controls are lessened within single parent families, which have become commonplace since the stigmas surrounding divorce and unwed parenthood were lessened. Furthermore, children are less inclined to have grandparents and long-term neighbors very active in their lives as more people have the freedom to move around the country readily.

Now that traditional controls on sources of information are increasingly replaced by screens, media like television and movies have taken on a new role. What people see on television is also a factor in the rate of change. It has become the standard by which people determine what is normal and acceptable. Initially shocking behavior on programs portraying subjects such as homosexuality and interracial sexual relationships has become mainstream. While some celebrate the legitimization and representation of new behaviors and the groups of people represented, others fear this legitimization and call for censorship. Today on so-called “Reality TV,” there is a race to present the most eye-catching, talked-about behav-
ior. This normalizes behavior that was previously thought to be outrageous.

The amazingly rapid speed at which information is communicated is a vital change agent. Young people rely much more on each other for knowledge than on their elders. They quickly assert peer pressure within their group to live up to their high standards of toleration. Millennials also become disillusioned with politics which changes so slowly in comparison to what they are used to seeing on screens.

**Empathy, Inclusion, and Childhood**

Extending empathy to our fellow human beings and improving childhood are concepts that we in the psychoanalytic and psychohistorical communities have done much to pioneer. Empathy and more humane childrearing are critical change agents. As psychohistorians, we have not simply been scholarly students of improved childhood, but strong advocates of it. This is because beaten, fearful children are incredibly less creative and innovative. They are more likely to become child abusers themselves, thus perpetuating the generations of traumatic childhood. For historians, Lloyd deMause’s “The Evolution of Childhood” (1974) was a pathbreaking study that helped awaken us to the horrors of childhood throughout history and the influence of childhood on adult personality. Of course, psychoanalysis played a key role in alerting intellectuals to the influence of childhood and the need for empathy in dealing with children. Today, Western society is incredibly more concerned and empathetic regarding the needs of children than was the case before Freud. Furthermore, Jeremy Rifkin has argued in the *Empathic Civilization: The Race to Global Consciousness in a World in Crisis* (2010) that society is making enormous progress precisely because we have become much more empathetic in dealing with our fellow human beings.

Inclusion of people who used to be the “Other” is an important theme in American society today and empathy for the “Other” is related to the empathy today’s children receive. That is the inclusion of people of color, the inclusion of women in business and politics, and the inclusion of LGBTs. Our electronic devices—computers, iPads, smartphones, and television—bring people into our homes and together across borders. What used to be the exclusive rights of American citizens, many young people and others feel should be universal human rights. This belief is at the center of many contemporary debates, including the existence of Guantana-
mo Bay, illegal immigration, Mexican immigration, and how to handle desperate refugees. Today’s generation is steeped in the ideas and language of tolerance meant to ignore or minimize the difference between us and anybody else. There are countertrends as well. Fear of disease coming from abroad and terrorism pushes people away from inclusion. Politicians are inclined to use these fears to gain or hold onto power. Considerable support for conservatives comes from people who are tired of the political correctness (PC) following from the attempt to humanize the rest of the world. This PC sometimes truly comes at the expense of the real differences and dangers that other people represent.

Conclusion

This paper probes the interplay of ideas, some of which become transformative ideals, and realities in the process of change on the individual and group level within the European world. The first and most elaborated upon example is the abolition of slavery and the extraordinary ambivalence of the Founding Fathers toward America’s “peculiar institution.” In writing the Constitution they failed to even mention it, except to increase the representation of the South based on its slave population. Like all political documents hammered out by representative groups, it was compromise. Ben Franklin’s struggles with and renunciation of slavery are spelled out. Thomas Jefferson’s economic, emotional, familial, and personal needs ran against his high ideals, as elucidated by psychological historians after mainstream historians were not willing to renounce some of their idealization of this extraordinary intellectual. George Washington’s quiet freeing of his slaves in his will is in contrast to Andrew Jackson’s hatreds and genocidal mentality. Napoleon Bonaparte’s invaluable work in spreading the reforms of the French Revolution was contradicted by his attempt to restore slavery in Haiti. The Great Emancipator Abraham Lincoln’s empathy for slaves had its roots in his adolescence.

The American Revolution helped pave the way for a few farsighted women, such as Mary Wollstonecraft and Olympe de Gouges, to proclaim women’s rights during the French Revolution. Women’s active participation in the fight against slavery helped prompt a growing suffragette movement. Gender roles and women’s rights had to be debated within the family and within the minds of women before the right to vote was granted in the wake of World War I. Suffrage was a vital step in the rights revolution, but it takes generations for women to work their way up the ladder of
success in business and politics. In the process of this, some women are used by conservatives to combat the movement for full equality, as in the case of Phyllis Schlafly and her campaign against the ERA. At the moment, the struggle is playing out in the 2016 election.

Improved childrearing has done an enormous amount to further human betterment because terrified children are inclined to grow up to be frightened adults or abusers, neither of whom are likely to improve the human condition. Empathy for children is extended to empathy for the “Other.” Technology in itself can be used for good or evil, but generally it has empowered humans, replacing slave labor and bringing the whole world to the fingertips of our youth. The rapidity of change, seen as too fast for some older people, and too slow for the youth, is undoubtedly increasing due to technology and the ability to instantly disseminate ideas. The rebelliousness of younger generations leads them to extend toleration and freedom farther than even their liberal parents initially would. The generation of Millennials is pushing forward the movement for the equal treatment of the LGBT community. Some of the members of the older generation who oppose this rapid change, some of whom even participated in the civil and women’s rights movements, are today viewed as backwards-thinking homophobes, instead of the progressives they see or saw themselves as. Such is the nature of generational change.

Paul H. Elovitz, PhD, editor of Clio’s Psyche, took his doctoral degree in history before undertaking eight years of psychoanalytic education as part of his psychohistorical training. He is a Founding Member at Ramapo College where his appointment is in history, psychohistory, and interdisciplinary studies. Previously he taught at Temple, Rutgers, and Fairleigh Dickinson universities. Professor Elovitz is a founding member and past president of the International Psychohistorical Association, founder and director/convener of the Psychohistory Forum (1982-), and a presidential psychobiographer. He has over 325 publications on a wide variety of subjects and may be contacted at cliospsycheeditor@gmail.com.

Back issues of Clio’s Psyche are available on cliospsyche.org
Ambivalence Toward Change

Dan Dervin—University of Mary Washington

The vexing questions raised and explored by Paul Elovitz on how people and societies change are very much on the minds of psychohistorians. It is especially germane to us because our approach to problems is both multi-disciplinary in its span and in-depth in its probing. No wonder our studies end up multi-layered.

Dr. Elovitz mentions at the outset several factors bearing on the subject: empathy, ideas that become ideals, improvements in childcare, generational rebellion, and technology. He concentrates mainly on two large-scale movements geared to expanding democratic freedoms: the abolition of slavery and the rise of feminism. These causes had their to-and-fro swings, but I also noticed, along with the splitting-off of opponents, more personal levels of ambivalence among the proponents, and probably reflected in the country at large.

As Elovitz points out, our founding fathers dallied over their own slaves; while in the other cause, besides feminist backlash, women have continued to grapple with having-it-all dilemmas. Lincoln overcame external opposition to abolition by military force on the national level, yet underlying issues festered. We are finding that a century and a half later the rosy prospect of a post-racial society under Obama is proving illusory. We seem almost back to square one, with Black Lives Matter protests against police violence, and with some public schools in the South reverting to segregation without provoking a chorus of outrage. Evidently, much of the post-bellum opposition (witness the KKK, chain gangs, and “Sundown Laws”) as well as the subtler ambivalence were too entrenched to be resolved. Yet progressive change in the South is visible, for example, among various elected officials of color. Change would then be occurring—or not—on several levels.

In this light, a recent major change, the ostensible acceptance of Marriage Equality, looks counterintuitive. All of a sudden, same-sex unions appear to be settled law. Yet under Clinton in the 1990s, a Defense of Marriage Act passed without noticeable uproar. None of the terrible things traditional marriage exponents warned us about have so far been realized, while the real-life threats undermining marriage—adultery, divorce, domestic violence—continue to thrive despite a more inclusive ceremony. Af-
fecting change, Elovitz cites the rapid pace of our technological world, including TV and the media. It seems likely that such appealing and omnipresent figures as Ellen DeGeneres and Oprah Winfrey have achieved much in detoxifying and normalizing difference.

Also favoring change in this area is a major psychocultural shift, actually a regression from high-powered Oedipal conflicts fueled by strong father-images to a less contentious culture of narcissism, i.e. from triadic emotional life and conflict to the self/other issues of the maternal dyad. With nuclear families slipping from their privileged status and being replaced by single-parent households or reconfigured by two working parents, and with adult children rounding back to the family nest, the strength of patriarchal authority has weakened appreciatively. Who owns marriage? No longer the fathers. So why arbitrarily discriminate against the people one works and socializes with? Let them do their thing, if that’s what they want. Post it on Facebook. Whatever. Even the Pope voices the zeitgeist with his “Who am I to judge?” and his “Be welcoming” advice to pastors. There seem to be moments in history timed for change; in this instance the Supreme Court is the unlikely enabler.

Paul Elovitz has opened up a problem of some urgency and initiated a conversation. It’s now up to us to carry it on in our fashion.

Dan Dervin, PhD, a prolific and long-standing psychohistorian, is completing The Evolution of Inwardness, A History of Childhood. Prof. Dervin may be contacted at ddervin@umw.edu.

Against the Cult of Change

Juliana Dresvina—Wolfson College, Oxford

“Change is the only constant in life,” a popular adage ascribed to Heraclitus, goes. Change and progress go hand in hand, and it is evident that as time passes, economic, social, and technological changes become more rapid. Yet change, mandatory for survival, is often understood as something not only inevitable but necessarily positive. We very much inherited this attitude from the Enlightenment—the idea that the further humankind develops, the
more it would change itself and its surroundings for the better. This is not to say that the hard-won plurality of opinions precludes contrary voices, but the overall vector, one has to admit, is squarely in favor of change for the better. In educated circles, resistance to change is often associated with the old, rigid, insular, on-the-way-out world, as it has been in the recent disastrous yet very indicative referendum in the U.K., when a large proportion of the “Leave the EU” voters appeared to be either over 65 and/or those who wanted to “get their country back,” nostalgic for the days of the British Empire (e.g. www.yougov.co.uk). Similar sentiments in many ways now drive the Trump campaign in the U.S. and underlie right-wing movements in other Western countries.

As a medieval historian, part of my fascination with the period came from a poorly articulated teenage feeling that the Middle Ages was the blissful childhood of civilization, ye olden days of knights in shining armor and ladies in pointy hats. The days when even a dragon, before burning you to death, would utter an alliterative soliloquy. That world of *The Lord of the Rings* before the *Game of Thrones* was appealing because it reflected how things supposedly were before the complexity and ambiguity of one’s personal maturity and the modern world kicked in with its globalization, anonymization, and greater freedoms with greater responsibilities. Further and closer acquaintance with medieval history at a university (something I would have had no chance of doing had things not changed for women in the late 19th century) adjusted my early escapist fantasies. Still, the sight of a ruined medieval monastery, backed by some knowledge of its once-glorious history, causes an automatic nostalgic response in me, as well as a certain loathing for change.

Far from being a self-confident advocate of traditional society and its values, rather I stand as a historian cautiously calling for sympathy on behalf of those who resist change. Paul Elovitz’ symposium paper treads the same delicate line, reminding us of how long profound changes usually take. The example that resonated with me most was not the history of changing attitudes towards slavery and women’s rights, but the story of his own family, perhaps partly due to our shared Eastern European ancestry. It made me think of the attitudes towards change in my own family and their historical and psychological basis.

My parents and grandmothers passionately resisted my decision to move to England to study at Oxford and then at Cambridge.
Even now, 14 years and five visits later, my mother still expresses indirect hope that I will return to Russia, where I was born and raised. Apart from losing a safe pair of hands and a human pension investment, since I was the only child of a mature couple, the main driving force of their objection was fear of change. But it took me many years to realize just how badly they reacted to change and how much of a knee-jerk response change caused in them.

My paternal grandmother, who very much brought me up, was born in 1912 in a small town in the Kaluga region of the then Russian Empire. She remembered her grandmother who remembered her own grandmother who, aged 13, participated in the Napoleonic war of 1812-13. Her seemingly idyllic and certainly idealized childhood was rudely interrupted by the 1917 Socialist Revolution. After that, one traumatic change followed another: a rapid and chaotic collectivization resulted in the expropriation of all of her family’s belongings and exile. First there was a move to Moscow to join her elder brother and start everything from scratch, without being able to continue her education. There was an early marriage of convenience as a desperate attempt to escape the poverty of living in a single room of a communal apartment with her parents and her elder brother’s family.

Then there was the arrest and execution of the second brother at the peak of the senseless Stalinist repressions, when millions of innocent people were killed or sentenced to years in the Gulag for completely fictional crimes by the paranoid authorities. In *The Red Holocaust* (2009), Steven Rosefielde suggested that at least 5.5 million lives were lost. Finally, there was the sudden advent of World War II, which saw my grandmother, my five-year-old father, and her disabled sister having a vacation in Eastern Poland. Granddad, a civil engineer working there, was repeatedly reassured by his superiors that there was no risk of war—but then he had no say in where to work, just like the vast majority of people under the Communist regime. He was commissioned by the retreating Soviet army on the first day of the war without any weapons and disappeared, his body not found until 1988 by an amateur war archaeology enthusiast at the Polish/Belarusian border.

More changes were in store, about which I know only fragments as neither my now deceased grandmother nor my father were willing to talk about them. Grandmother, her sister, and my dad walked eastwards ahead of and sometimes parallel with the advancing Nazi army. Their progress was stalled in Minsk, where they
spent three years doing slave labor and rescued children from a nearby Jewish ghetto whose parents they saw die. They were nearly shipped to Germany in a German cattle-car and finally liberated by the Soviet army in the spring of 1944, but my grandmother then spent a year in prison as a Nazi collaborator. My penniless 11-year-old dad hid in the luggage compartment of a train to travel to Moscow to find surviving relatives.

In 1945 my grandmother was finally released from prison, but lived with the life-long stigma of being a Nazi collaborator, making her unemployable for a decade. My father lived with his paternal grandmother and finally managed to start school at the age of 12, by pretending he was an orphan. Later he was able to go to college. At the time, his surviving uncles and aunts on both sides were in the Gulag (the Soviet concentration camp system). My paternal grandmother, almost 12 years old at the beginning of WWII, fared marginally better and spent the war years digging trenches and doing the work of the men who, like her own father, went off to fight. Her father was lost in action during the siege of Moscow in 1942; his body was never found.

No wonder change in their world was inextricably connected with profound trauma. To them, just like to Grug in the recent animated movie about cavemen, *The Croods* (2013), change was bad and change meant death. Their children imbibed this fear with their mothers’ milk—as a trivial example, in my family any extended trip out of the house, a change of place, was always surrounded by days of preparation and huge (unnecessary, I thought as a kid) stress. The same is true, even to a greater extent, of my partner’s parents, who have barely ever left their plot of land in a village near the Hungarian/Slovak border. Their birth coincided with the traumatic invasion of the Soviet army into Hungary in 1956 and the subsequent change of the political regime and overall social climate.

All this and more makes one realize how many changes until recently were revolutionary, not evolutionary. We are the first generation who has lived unaffected by war directly. The eager embrace of the “back to the USSR” realities of modern-day Russia (with its amazing amnesia of the lives of their relatives lost to that totalitarian system), which I observe in my parents and many of my former fellow citizens, is often a comfort-seeking quest for familiarity, for the safe cramped barrack in the country they lost so abruptly in 1991, with no time given to realize what had happened.
The gestalt has not been closed; the mourning has not been done. No wonder they crave a return to the old station to pick up the abandoned luggage, which they dropped as the new train was leaving and without which their further travel where they change trains, times, and countries becomes exceedingly uncomfortable.

I, too, inherited much of this fear of change, well beyond the natural fear of the unknown that is hard-wired within us by evolution, and it takes a life-long journey to become more open to the world. Change, neuroscientists tell us, is often unwelcome by the brain, which likes its habitual, repetitive patterns; it stimulates the prefrontal cortex, which is directly linked with the amygdalae, the parts we share with other complex vertebrates and which control our “fight or flight” response. As the prefrontal cortex gets overwhelmed with both complex and unfamiliar concepts, it activates amygdala and we end up feeling anxious, depressed, fatigued, angered, or threatened.

Neuroplasticity certainly helps adjust the brain circuits to the changes, and so does the profession I practice, my communication (ex-change) with the past. Therefore, we as historians need to remind the new generations demanding volte-faces that too rapid changes, even very desirable ones, can be traumatic and have long-lasting consequences in collective and personal psyche. This is not likely to change.

Juliana (Julie) Dresvina, PhD, is a medieval cultural historian who was educated at Moscow State, Oxford, and Cambridge universities and has published several articles and books on medieval religious culture, most recently a monograph called A Maid with a Dragon (Oxford University Press, 2016). She may be contacted at yd216@cam.ac.uk.

Progress and Its Resistance

Ken Fuchsman—University of Connecticut

Paul Elovitz is re-opening important territory for psychohistory and history. He asks how people and societies change, particularly in a time of continuous transformation. While these subjects are vast, Elovitz is mostly concerned with how humane treatment of others has fared from the Enlightenment forward.

The idea of humanity’s natural rights became manifest in
John Locke’s 1689 *Two Treatises of Government*, with rights to life, liberty, health, and possessions; the inalienable human rights in the Declaration of Independence; and the French Revolution’s Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen. These notions were applied to each and every human, regardless of race. As a result, in the 18th century, Elovitz says, slaves were being considered by many not just as property, but human beings. His focus is on moves to abolish slavery in the United States. He examines the biographies of three American figures: Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, and George Washington. Though Elovitz engages with other subjects besides freeing the enslaved, I will focus on the third U.S. President, abolishing slavery, and its legacy.

Dr. Elovitz is insightful on Jefferson’s personal life, particularly in relation to Jefferson’s beloved wife, Martha, who died at age 34. The widower carried on a long-term relationship with his slave, Sally Hemings, who was also the half-sister of his deceased wife. In maintaining this liaison, Jefferson was also keeping the memory of Martha close at hand.

This personal side of the primary author of the Declaration of Independence should be supplemented by his political responses to slavery. In the early 1780s, Jefferson drafted gradual emancipation of slaves for both the Virginia Constitution and in the Northwest Territories. Neither of them went into effect then. Later, the Northwest Ordinance of 1787, which Jefferson did not write, prohibited slavery in these territories. As President from 1801 to 1809, he both allowed slavery in the Louisiana Purchase and worked to prohibit the international slave trade.

Though Jefferson proclaimed all were created equal, he thought African-Americans were an inferior group. His divided soul came to the fore following the 1820 Missouri Compromise, which kept the balance between slave and free states by admitting both Missouri and Maine and prohibiting slavery north of a designated line in the territories. This federal legislation, Jefferson wrote, was “like a fire bell in the night” that “filled me with terror.” He did not expect the impact to be immediate, but this course of action would end up being “the knell of the Union.” In slavery, Jefferson believed “we have the wolf by the ear, and we can neither hold him, nor safely let him go….justice is in one scale, and self-preservation in the other” (Jefferson to John Holmes, April 22, 1820). To understand how slavery became abolished in the U.S., we need to go beyond the deeply divided founding father, Thomas
Jefferson.

If the question is how societies change, and the sub-question is making slavery illegal in the U.S., then the Civil War generation has to be included. For ultimately, it is the 1865 adoption of the 13th amendment that abolished slavery. Though the next two constitutional amendments made former slaves citizens and gave the men the right to vote, for decades upon decades segregation prevailed in the South, and racism dominated the nation. The other side of the idea of universal natural rights is a belief in racial superiority and inferiority. Though slavery is long gone in the U.S., lingering sentiments impede moving the nation towards fuller equality of opportunity. Elovitz’ questions should be expanded to not only how societies change, but what forces promote and impede progress. What are the ambivalences and self-contradictions amidst those who proclaim universal equality?

The road for American blacks since emancipation has often been rocky. A struggle for civil rights occurred in the 1950s and 1960s, and since then some of African descent have done quite well, while others have languished in the underclass. We have a President whose father was born in Kenya, an African-American network news anchor, and others, such as Oprah Winfrey, who have excelled and are admired. Yet blacks are at the bottom rungs of American society in so many respects. To understand the legacy of discrimination in the U.S. in this age of incarceration, keep this in mind: five times as many whites use drugs as do African-Americans, yet blacks are imprisoned for drugs at ten times the rate of whites (NAACP, “Criminal Justice Fact Sheet”). Racism may make more difficult equal pursuits of life, liberty, and happiness.

This unequal fate of natural rights is not restricted to the United States. Inalienable rights did not prevent European imperial powers from colonizing people of color across the globe. Even today, only two of the top 50 most powerful nations are black African: number 27 South Africa and number 33 Nigeria (U.S. News, “Power Rankings”). When it comes to achievement matching promise, an Age of Enlightenment is still a work in progress.

What does all this mean for Elovitz’ project of understanding how change occurs, particularly in recent centuries? The modern era is filled with innovation and inequity, benevolence and barbarism. Elovitz’ submission continues what he explored in the December 2014 Clio’s Psyche symposium “Are We More or Less
Civilized?” There he grappled with how Enlightenment ideals have fared since the modern era emerged. Amidst extensive destructiveness, humanity has never seen the kind of advances we have recently created. Some of us, like Dr. Elovitz and myself, both descendants of recent immigrants, with some ups and downs, have found career fulfillment and opportunity far beyond what was easily available for our fathers and forefathers, mothers and foremothers. Our children have even more blessings than we do. Yet we live in the shadow of too many genocides. Once again, Paul Elovitz has opened the door to examining these major issues of change in modernity. I hope many explore the psychohistorical dialectic of progress and reaction in world history.

Ken Fuchsman, EdD, is a recently retired professor at the University of Connecticut. He is on the Editorial Boards of Clio’s Psyche and the Journal of Psychohistory, and is president of the International Psychohistorical Association. He has published a number of articles on President Obama’s life and career, and also writes on trauma, the Oedipus complex, and is working on a book on the nature of being human. He can be reached at kfuscman@gmail.com.

Prenatal Influences Restrict Change

Ludwig Janus—German Society for Psychohistory

Part of our biological constitution is that we humans are born 12-15 months too soon in comparison to other animals similar to us, such as elephants, which have a pregnancy of 21 months. Therefore, we have the condition of the so-called “physiological prematurity.” The reason for this is the upright position that requires a stable structure of the pelvis and the big brain. To enable birth under these conditions, evolution shortened pregnancy to nine months (see Stephen Jay Gould, “Human Babies as Embryos,” Ever since Darwin, 1992, 70-78).

The consequence of this is that coming into the world as the first big change in life for humans is a basic adventure, described by Otto Rank as the “Trauma of Birth,” by Carl Jung as a model for the “Journey of the Heroes” (see also Joseph Campbell, The Hero with a Thousand Faces, 1949), and by Lloyd deMause as “Fetal Drama.” The result of this is that every change in life triggers this basic pattern. Therefore every change is a big event managed on
the tribal level as transitional rites that have the structure of a regression to the womb and being reborn in the puberty rites, dying as a child to be reborn as an adult (see Ludwig Janus, *The Enduring Effects of Prenatal Experience: Echoes from the Womb*, 1997, available to download at www.Ludwig-Janus.de).

Because of the “physiological prematurity,” family and society serve as a replacement container for the too early lost primal home of the womb. Changes mean on the emotional level that this replacement home is again lost. In this situation the biological change of generations is the big motor of historic development: under good conditions the *first generation* has a new idea on the cortical level, the midbrain and brain stem react with anxiety and slow down so as not to lose the replacement home that they got from their parents; the *second generation* can analyze the contradiction between the ideas of the parents and their habits and find in their transitional process of puberty a new solution of a better balance; and the *third and fourth generation* are able to transform the habits of the earlier generation and can really change the society.

Learning processes are of special importance in these transgenerational processes. In the field of psychotherapy the problems of change have a similar form: the patient has an intellectual insight into his problem (cortex), then he has to work it through on the emotional level of transference (midbrain), and then he can integrate both levels by using his abilities of reflection and learning.

In relation to the examples put forth in Paul Elovitz’ “Reflections on How People and Society Change” symposium article: Jefferson had the idea of freedom of all humans, but on the midbrain-governed level of habits and emotions he was used to having slaves; the next generation and the generation after that saw the contradiction and reflected on how to bring a better balance to the reality of life. In terms of women’s rights, Olympe de Gouges had seen the contradiction in the ideas of the French revolution which only focused on the rights of men, and she demanded rights for women. Because of habits rooted in the midbrain of the patriarchal culture, several processes of intergenerational reflecting and learning were needed to realize the change to equal rights for men and women.

Ludwig Janus, *MED*, studied psychology and medicine in Munich, Essen, and Göttingen. He is a lecturer and psychoanalysis instructor at the Psychoanalytic Training Institute in Heidelberg.
The Problem of Regression

David Lotto—The Journal of Psychohistory

Although Paul Elovitz asks us to focus on how things get better, the prior question, which seems to me to be of the utmost importance, is whether or not things do get better. In what direction do these changes in society or culture move? Are they progressive or not? When Elovitz speaks of the abolition of slavery, the progress in women’s and LGBT rights, and technical change—and the use of deMause’s theory of child rearing stages as an explanation of why this might be the case—he is expressing the view that these phenomena move in a progressive arc. Not necessarily in a linear progression, perhaps in fits and starts with occasional backsliding, but in the overall direction of improvement. Like Steven Pinker’s The Better Angels of Our Nature: Why Violence Has Declined (2011), the contention is that violence has been declining as time progresses, following the Whig theory of history that things are getting better all the time.

But what I worry about is regression. It seems that too often things don’t get better, they get worse. Climate change; American politics—the regression from the ideals and policies of the New Deal to the current neo-liberal world of everyone for themselves with no responsibility toward others; the replacement of progressive regimes in several South American countries by the same elites that the progressives had previously vanquished; and advances in technology leading to more destructive weapons and better ways to do surveillance, to name just a few of many things that are going the wrong way. I am more inclined to see the direction of change as fully cyclical; it is equally capable of and likely to be as progressive as it is to be regressive. Things can get better
and things can get worse.

In this I am with Freud, who saw the two eternal and equal forces of Eros and the Death Instinct in mortal combat. In *Civilization and Its Discontents* (1930), he ends the book by saying it is not clear which side will emerge victorious; I think it is just as unclear today.

**David Lotto, PhD, is a veteran psychologist, psychoanalyst, and psychohistorian who is a longtime member of the Psychohistory Forum. He practices psychotherapy in Western Massachusetts, edits the *Journal of Psychohistory*, and may be reached at dlotto@nycap.rr.com.**

### Free Associations on Change in People and Society

**Jamshid A. Marvasti—Psychiatric Practice**

The ancient Greek philosopher Heraclitus is reported to have said that “there is nothing permanent except change”; he also had a famous quote: “One man cannot step into the same river twice, for it's not the same river and he's not the same man.”

Some say that improvements in science and technology caused progress and change in society. However, the meaning of progress is in the eyes of the beholder. To my eyes it does not mean change in human beings’ ideology and behavior toward each other. Now we can kill our enemies with much deadlier weapons and our bombs/chemical gas are much more lethal thanks to science and technology. But the concept of war and killing, the need for enemies, has not been “progressed”—it was not eradicated. Now advanced technology helps some corporations to create better torture machines/instruments. As an ex-political prisoner indicated, he had been tortured with a high-tech “smart” and “interactive” machine. Apparently, whenever he screamed, it would be amplified in his ear and the pain would somehow increase. He had to learn to suppress his screams to decrease the pain inflicted by a machine on his body.

### Individual Change

The basic assumption in psychotherapy is: the human mind
is changeable. In counseling a woman in an abusive relationship with a tyrannical husband, I asked her why she did not wish to get a divorce, and she answered that she does not “want to have another failure that would be my third divorce.” I utilized cognitive therapy, explaining “let’s re-define and re-frame the word ‘failure.’ In my opinion, failure is staying in an abusive relationship; leaving the abusive environment is a success.” She was shocked with this simple statement. She repeated it multiple times and left my office; not long after she was divorced for the third time and considered it a “success.”

Metaphors in psychotherapy have the capacity to create change. In response to another woman, who told me that if her boyfriend did one thing she would remain in the relationship and if he did another thing she would not remain, I explained in metaphor that she sounds like a fallen leaf at mercy of the wind. “Why do you not want to be a tree, rather than a leaf? A tree diverts the wind, while a leaf is under the authority of the wind.” Years later, she told me the metaphor was the most important element that influenced her to change, saying “I repeated it a hundred times.”

Carl Jung said, “Until you make the unconscious conscious, it will direct your life and you will call it fate.” In India, the issue of fate and destiny is a critical element of not changing within certain populations. A man may be born on a street, later lives there, marries there, raises his family there, and dies there. On that street may be a maharajah’s million-dollar palace, but neither man is eager to ask why such inequality exists, with both believing it is their “destiny.” In E. M. Forster’s A Passage to India (1924), when an Indian man is wrongly accused of raping an English girl, his family seeks to find a “character witness” to support his defense in court. They approach his friend, a professor of philosophy, who declines to help because he declares it to be of no consequence if he cares since the outcome is already determined.

Identification with Aggressor: 180 Degree Change

Identification with one’s aggressor is a phenomenon in which the individual undergoes dramatic change; one may undertake actions that one never dreamt of undertaking, as these run in opposition to one’s mentality and morality. On societal and cultural levels, change may be imposed by outside brutal forces or elements. Before the September 11 terrorist attacks, the endorsement of torture without secrecy and shame or guilt by a White House administration would have been incomprehensible. Thus, it is possi-
ble that a terrorist group could “change” the United States—transforming it to be more like them—by participating in torture and atrocities.

The Generation Gap is a change phenomenon that to date no one has succeeded in stopping or slowing. During an adolescent’s development, he or she usually undergoes the process of “separation, individuation,” and eventually achieves adulthood. This phenomenon exemplifies “change,” and thus an adolescent would be expected to participate in a lifestyle, ideology, or mannerism that runs in opposition of the parents, or is different from that of the previous generation. They seek to prove to themselves and to the world that they are no longer an extension of their parents, instead they are “different, changed.” Evidence of this change can be found in an adolescent’s mannerism, clothes, attitude, hair, as well as their ideology and school of thought in behavior and attraction to objects.

Our Judgment Changes

President Woodrow Wilson succeeded in changing Americans’ popular opinion through war propaganda. As Noam Chomsky noted in Media Control (2002), in 1916 Europe was embroiled in WWI, and the U.S. population was not inclined to join this European war. However the Wilson administration became committed to joining the fight overseas. As The Wall Street Journal reported at the time, it would be good for the U.S. economy and the stock market to join the war. In order to change public opinion, the Wilson administration established the Committee on Public Information, also known as the Creel Committee, which over 26 months produced propaganda to grow support for the war. It transformed the once-reluctant and pacifist American populace into a people prepared to destroy everything German. The U.S. was not alone in fabricating horrific acts to incite its citizens to pursue war; false stories of atrocities committed by the Huns, such as Belgian babies having their arms torn off, were invented by the British propaganda ministry.

To change public opinion from peace to war (during the first Gulf War), the U.S. government also produced false propaganda, this time in the form of a video recording featuring a sobbing female Kuwaiti nurse who reported that Iraqi soldiers had stormed a hospital in Kuwait. They reportedly threw babies out of their incubators onto the floor in order to steal the machines and send them to Iraq. After several months, human rights organizations learned
that the woman had been an actress, and the video was allegedly the product of a Washington D.C. public relations firm (John R. MacArthur, “Remember Nayirah, Witness for Kuwait?” *The New York Times*, January 6, 2011).

**Conclusion**

Change is an inevitable part of both individuals and society, although change is accompanied by resistance. The quality of change may be as important as change itself, as some are “regressive changes” while others may be progressive ones, so the word “change” should not be accepted as an “improvement.” We indicated that the basic principle of psychotherapy is that human beings can change and an example is how clients have been changed positively by the use of metaphor/cognitive therapy and conversely in a negative way by identifying with the aggressor. The judgment of a person/nation is connected to the information that they receive. This article explained how governments, through propaganda, false information, and demonization of “perceived enemies” can change a peaceful society to a warmonger/combative one. The influence of terrorism can also change us, for example, before the 9/11 tragedy, no White House official would openly endorse torture of prisoners, but as we know, they did! Then they justified it for the sake of security of the nation. Perhaps we should remind them of Benjamin Franklin’s statement, “Those who sacrifice liberty for security deserve neither.”

**Jamshid A. Marvasti, MD**, is a child and adult psychiatrist and assistant clinical professor at the University of New England College of Osteopathic Medicine. He has published articles and edited books, including *War Trauma In Veterans and Their Families* (2012) and *Psycho-Political Aspects of Suicide Warriors, Terrorism, and Martyrdom* (2008). He may be contacted at jmarvasti@aol.com.

**Reflections on Elovitz on Change**

**Eva D. Papiasvili**—Psychoanalyst in Private Practice

This thought-provoking paper contains the premise that, indeed, people and societies do change: the question being not if, but how. Among the agents that the author sees as facilitating such changes in individuals and societies are empathy, improved child-
hood, and ideas, some of which become ideals, intergenerational rebelliousness, and technology. Because of the limitations of space, my reflections will be extremely condensed, but I will touch on many agents of change.

As a psychoanalyst, I find particularly noteworthy the author’s observation that many of the individuals who promulgated progressive ideas have not, in fact, lived up to them in their private lives, pointing to inner conflict and post-traumatic dissociation. I will attempt to address this point from a psychoanalytic point of view, with the help of short vignettes.

As a broader philosophical issue, change has been part of an ongoing inquiry since the pre-Socratic philosophy illustrated by Heraclitus’ aphorism “One cannot step into the same river twice.” The idea of change presages the notion of progress in the cultural/societal context. The ideas of society changing for the better are rooted, too, in classical Greek philosophy. Ahead of his time, Plato not only depicted humanity’s progress from a state of nature to higher levels of culture, economy, and polity, but he also considered women and men intellectual equals, not only in theory, but also in practice, admitting them to his Academia on merit.

Original theoretical connections between the childhood education and loving parental attitudes and the progress of the culture and society were made with the advent of educational advocacy and reforms in the 17th century by Jan Amos Comenius, author of the first textbook adapted to children’s ability to learn, who professed that children should be showered with love and encouraged, rather than suppressed and punished. Here, the seeds were planted to consider childhood a significant period of life on its own merit. Part of his proto-enlightenment philosophy was that the children who are loved and encouraged to learn would grow into wise adults who appreciate nature and other human beings. In Comenius’ thinking, the individual’s appreciation of nature and other human beings leads to advanced societies that will prefer to live in peace with each other and respect each other’s differences.

Amidst the 18th century Enlightenment’s passion for reason and empirical science, social and individual change through knowledge (enlightenment), the rudimentary explorations of the impact of family relationships on a child’s development, rehabilitation of juvenile delinquents, and attempts at scientific assessment and treatment of the mentally ill emerged. Further scientific pro-
gress within mental health fields, throughout the ensuing 19th century until today, is predicated on a basic belief in the ability of human beings to change.

At the turn of the 20th century Sigmund Freud, the founder of psychoanalysis, initiated an extensive study of man as a dynamic organism, driven by both progressive and regressive forces. Freud emphasized the unconscious conflicted motivation and consequential early childhood development. In his Structural theory, unconscious conflicts are between the irrational, drive-based id; adaptation-oriented ego; and ideal and morality-based superego. Any psychic outcome—be it mental health or illness, adaptive thought, creative behavior, or maladaptive attitude—is a manifest compromise of an underlying (unconscious) conflict. From this point of view, the changes mean a re-alignment of the forces and agencies in conflict.

In 1926, in his paper “Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety,” Freud wrote that in “early infancy the individual’s... most important interest really is that the people he is dependent on should not withdraw their loving care of him” (146). In 1960, Hans Loewald observed that Freud put out two definitions of drives: until 1920 drives were discharge/pleasure seeking; after 1920, they were more “connection seeking.” Loewald himself understood drives as psychic motivational forces, which became organized through interaction within the psychic field consisting originally of the mother–child psychic unit. This accords with the contemporary trend of developmental psychoanalytic theory as well as developmental neuroscience, emphasizing the importance of an attuned empathic bond between the infant and the caretaker. The key message from recent studies of brain development is that human connections shape the neural connections. Longitudinal studies have consistently found that compromised attachment histories of abused, maltreated, and/or neglected infants will later in life bring about a spectrum of serious impediments to emotional, cognitive, and social functioning.

Neuroplasticity, fortunately, cuts both ways, as learning takes place throughout the life cycle. As supported by the modern neuroscientific findings on trauma and memory, repression, dissociation, anxiety, and depression, analytic therapy can often reverse the damage, with therapy functioning as “micro-plumbing,” altering the brain chemistry, rebuilding functional circuitry and ultimately structure.
Today, most analysts consider two mechanisms instrumental in the analysand’s transformation: One, insight into previously unknown parts of the repressed or traumatically dissociated self; and two, reliving/re-experiencing/reenacting of developmentally early frustrations and conflicts within the patient-therapist dyad through transference-countertransference exchanges, which need to be subsequently interpreted and historicized. Attention to the individually meaningful symbolism of dreams, prosody (musical dimension) of language, and data from all experiential domains can help reconstruct even the earliest pre-symbolic preverbal experiences and their influence on later attitudes and behaviors throughout life.

In my own practice, I have worked with several clinical cases of the intergenerational transmission of maternal trauma and depression at the root of “counter-dependent” hypertrophic self-sufficiency as a defense against an underlying panphobic attitude towards close contact with people, in otherwise highly creative personalities. Pursuant to re-constructive interpretive work (first with enactments and then dreams, pertaining to never-remembered events of earliest infancy), the patients were able to make developmentally transformative leaps, restoring the capacity for intimacy, hope, trust, and pleasure.

The life-altering transformative changes brought about by psychoanalytic therapy do not proceed in a linear way; the regressive and progressive forces are activated and the traumas can be re-lived, even if not specifically remembered. Many patients are able to use painful and frightening regression in service of growth and progress. Regressive enactments may range from subtle ones, like a transient reflexive shiver in response to the memory of a scent of a “dead mommy,” activated by “sensing something in the air of your office,” to more dramatic ones, like transient inability to walk.

Interpretation of “the baby would be frightened that she, too, is to die, if mommy is dead, that there would be no one to warm her up...” led to the patient’s dream about “Little Red Riding Hood looking for her grandmother,” and reconstruction of the image of her grandmother, who she did not remember. She subsequently found out that, shortly after her birth, while her mother suffered from postpartum depression, her paternal grandmother visited for several months and took care of her.

In the case of the patient unable to walk, the interpretation
had to do with his “fear…your walking means you are abandoning
the person who stays behind and I/she cannot bear it and will retaliate and abandon you,” which was the message from his traumatized
and abusive mother. The movement was ultimately towards empathy for those “who cannot move…” once it was established that he
does not have to be held back by them.

As it regards technology, this “non-walking” patient subsequently brought up a series of dreams in which he was first a crew member and then a captain of a space ship. While a dream symbol may change with technological “advances” from a horse or a ship to an interplanetary spacecraft, the sexual thrust and mastery for which the symbol stands remains common to them all.

In conclusion, I agree with Elovitz that historically as well as today, perhaps more often than not, societal and cultural progress has been promulgated by flawed, conflicted, and in some cases traumatized individuals who, in spite of their inner struggle between progressive and regressive forces within their own personality, were able to make such contributions. I was fortunate to work with several such contributors who have experienced heart-wrenching conflicts in their personal life. They have earned my high esteem for their determination to face their internal divides.

Eva D. Papiasvili, PhD, ABPP, is the Co-Chair for North America of the International Psychoanalytical Association’s Encyclopedic Dictionary, Faculty of the Clinical Psychology PhD program at Columbia University, and on the Training Faculty of the Object Relations Institute. She may be contacted at Eva.papiasvili@gmail.com.  

Transformational Change to Repair the World

Merle Molofsky—Harlem Family Institute

Psychoanalysis offers the potential for transformational change, that a person’s psyche can undergo restructuring, resulting in a personal transformation. Whatever the theoretical psychoanalytic orientation—classical drive theory, ego psychology, neo-Freudianism, object relations, self-psychology, intersubjectivity, relational psychology—the assumption is that the internal balance of aspects of the psyche will change.
These theoretical assumptions could be that conflict and undue inhibition can be dissolved, defenses that no longer are useful can be significantly lessened, social and cultural influences can be identified, self and object representations can alter, modes of conceptualizing relationships of self and others in the world can evolve because the unconscious has been made conscious, and the relationship between analyst and analysand itself has a therapeutic effect. As the unconscious becomes conscious, the old assumptions and narratives no longer continue to control the person’s mind, and new life-enhancing narratives can be co-created in the analytic dyad. The analysand gains freedom and can make choices unencumbered by the unproductive, limiting narratives that were revealed and analyzed.

Certainly, the evolving emphasis on culture and society in mid-century American psychoanalysis provides an intersection for psychohistory and psychoanalysis. In addition, the recognition of personality formation of individuals during early childhood that psychohistory offers gives insight into the currents in adulthood. These may then contribute to the creation of major historical events.

Between 200 CE and 500 CE, the Talmud, a major form of instruction in Judaism codifying an oral rabbinic tradition, was developed. One well-known precept from the Talmud is the concept of *tikkun olam* “to repair the world”—which has been interpreted in many ways, often as a way to preserve the best features of society and culture. Another related precept, appearing as early as the Yerushalmi (Jerusalem) Talmud, and later, in the Babylonian Talmud, is “to destroy a life, destroys a world. To save a life is to save a world.”

Thus, the work of psychoanalysis could be considered to have Talmudic roots, as the focus in the analytic dyad is on one life, the life of an analysand, who then finds a wholeness and a freedom. The emphasis is on the individual, though it may have a ripple effect on other people, society, culture, perhaps even the world. This also might be understood as personal redemption, a refining of character. The concept of redemption, of course, can be found in many religious traditions, but it also has secular resonance.

The greatest change psychoanalysis offers is freedom. With freedom, the individual has a much broader range of options and can make informed choices. The individual is no longer a prisoner
of the past, a prisoner of unconscious forces. The individual is empowered.

Where might this lead? Here, Paul Elovitz’ essay has a particular resonance. Elovitz examines historical change reflecting the psyches of key historical figures, such as Andrew Jackson and Abraham Lincoln. His statement that “Abraham Lincoln in 1856 declared ‘I used to be a slave’ referring to when his uneducated and domineering pioneer father virtually rented him out to neighbors” (Elovitz cites Sidney Blumenthal, *A Self-Made Man: The Political Life of Abraham Lincoln: 1809-1849*, 2016, 3, as the source) is particularly poignant. Of course we see in this statement Lincoln’s boyhood, and emancipation from the dictates of his father, as essential to his ethical foundation opposing slavery, resulting in the Emancipation Proclamation.

So many historical events are freedom movements, some basically philosophical, activist, actively rebellious, or revolutionary. There seems to be a great drive for people to emancipate themselves from the rigors and hardships of everyday life, oppression, imposed limits, and authoritarianism. Some of that drive toward emancipation may be primarily based on social/economic circumstances. Some may also be derived from personal intrapsychic events.

The drive toward emancipation based on personal intrapsychic events may be based on internalizations of particular interactions with early figures in an infant and child’s life. Those interactions result in a wide range of self-representations and psychic representations (objects in psychoanalytic terminology). The psychoanalytic use of the term “self” is fairly consistent with everyday language. The term “object” is derived from Freud’s concept that an id impulse, an instinctual drive and aim, is toward an object. The object of the aim is usually the primary caretaker in an infant’s life, usually the mother. Object relations theory inherited the term. Thus the object representation is an aspect of that caretaker. Here are examples of self and object representations: “Mommy is mad at me. Mommy is a screaming witch. I am a bad baby.” “Daddy laughs at me when I cry for my bankie. I need my bankie. Daddy is mean. I am stupid. I am foolish.” “Mommy smiles at me, her eyes are dancing. Mommy is wonderful. I am a wonderful baby.” “Mommy is always tired. She never wants to play. I am not important to her. I am a dull, boring baby.”
In the analytic process, the analyst examines with the analysand behaviors that turn out to be recapitulations of those earlier moments of baby and caretaker relating, those earlier self and object representations that are unconsciously re-enacted in adulthood. The analysand learns from recognizing those recapitulations, often in transferential fantasies about how the analyst will respond to whatever the analysand feels, thinks, or does. The haunting and limiting unconscious narrative is modified by the analysand, as he or she learns to create new narratives and possibilities.

A life has been changed. Therefore, the world may be changed as a result. We each are a world within ourselves, and we each have an impact on the greater world in various ways. Those ways may be limited in time, space, and range and, in some instances, those ways may extend vastly.

In 1968, the Beatles released a record, a single, with “Hey Jude” as the A side, and “Revolution” as the B side, and an album, “The White Album,” with a longer version of “Revolution,” written by John Lennon. The lyrics begin, “You say you want a revolution,/ Well, you know/ We all want to change the world,” and end with, “Don’t you know it’s gonna be all right, all right, all right….” The 1960’s were a time of social ferment, of great social movements. Was it “gonna be all right”? Have the great social movements resulted in lasting change?

In 1964, P. F. Sloan wrote a song, “Eve of Destruction,” which eventually was recorded by several rock groups. The chorus is, “And you tell me/ Over and over and over again, my friend/ Ah, you don’t believe/ We’re on the eve of destruction.”

Historical transformation may have a lasting impact, but does it really last? In the United States, we saw great social movements, with great social change: the Civil Rights Movement, for racial equality and justice; the Women’s Liberation Movement, using consciousness-raising groups as a tool; the anti-Vietnam War movement. There were terrible losses and meaningful victories. The Civil Rights Act was passed in 1964. Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated in 1968. Roe v. Wade was decided in 1973. The Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) was defeated after a long series of states withdrew their original support. Change happened.

In 2008, the United States elected the first biracial president, and reelected him again in 2012. In 2016, the Democratic Party has
a female nominee for president. Change happened. Yet the United States also has Donald Trump as the Republican nominee for president. Manifestations of racism, misogyny, xenophobia, and anti-Semitism are rampant. The Color of Change has sponsored and publicized #BlackLivesMatter to protest police shootings and killings of African-American men, women, and children. Sexual assaults of women on college campuses have been trivialized. The Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement has manifested with anti-Semitic commentary on college campuses.

Change happened. Transformation happened. Will the positive aspects of that transformation last, or will a so-called “correction” distort the ongoing potential of that significant transformation? Is tikkun olam possible? Can the world be repaired? Who defines the nature of that repair?

Merle Molofsky, MFA, is a psychoanalyst in private practice. She serves on the faculty of the National Psychological Association for Psychoanalysis, the Advisory Board and faculty of Harlem Family Institute, and on the Editorial Boards of The Psychoanalytic Review and The Journal of Psychohistory. She may be contacted at mmpsy@ mindspring.com.

When the Pain Is Greater Than the Gain, Change Takes Place

Burton Norman Seitler—Psychoanalytic Priv. Practice

Harry Stack Sullivan once observed that there can be no doubt that the first tool of prehistoric man was the abstract idea. An idea, once formulated, enters the world virginal and uncovered in its aboriginal ingénue state. As it moves along an incline it may pick up parasitic vegetation, which cling to and affect the naïve host. It is in this sense that ideas can be subtly influenced by external as well as internal factors; and it is in this manner that they are rendered susceptible to the vagaries of intrapsychic and interpersonal forces affecting potential change.

As haphazard as this may seem, ideas do not exist in a vacuum. They are impacted by interactions with the environment. Paradoxically, they may also stand alone amidst a dynamic context. While some ideas are evanescent, others, if denied their voice, occasionally dig in and take hold. The reasons for this are as varied
as they are numerous: the zeitgeist is finally right; the idea has ripened into a form that is now edible, digestible, and can be assimilated into the body politic; or, the converse, in which the idea is seen as dangerous to the status quo, the people in power, church dogma, governmental control, current customs, long-standing traditions, or previously accepted views. One would think that wrong-headed ideas would be relegated to the junk-heap of time, but while that is sometimes true, it is not always the case. Inane ideas along with profound ones have existed for ages and continue to do so. In fact, one of the cornerstones of prejudice is based upon pre-judgments; that is, unreasonable ideas without truth or merit, which seem to persist despite evidence to the contrary.

But ideas and attitudes, while potentially powerful in and of themselves, do not achieve their potency unless coupled with action. And it is under these circumstances that ideas can take root and either grow into nutrients for the advancement of civilization or produce toxins that poison the underbelly of humanity.

An idea remains an abstraction, a distant and remote notion until acted upon, wherein it moves from potential to kinetic. But the idea is not the same as the action. Marxism is not equivalent to an actual revolution, even if the idea subsequently stimulated one. I may hate my boss and wish he were dead, but his actual demise is unrelated to my wish—unless, of course, I murder him.

In the psychoanalytic orbit, a failure to make the crucial distinction between thinking/feeling vs. doing often results in obsessional guilt. In the latter instance, the individual frequently feels guilty for merely thinking certain thoughts or experiencing certain feelings. Analytic canon used to hold that such thoughts or feelings were typically erotic and/or aggressive in nature.

For change to occur, the analyst must join in and connect with the patient’s “system” in order to help the patient eventually understand that there are no abnormal or negative thoughts or feelings. They are just that—thoughts and feelings, not actions or deeds. To be sent to jail, it is insufficient to merely think of robbing a bank or to consider some other kind of dastardly deed. One must actively commit the crime; otherwise we would have to lock up the likes of Wes Craven, Stephen King, Edgar Allan Poe, Hieronymus Bosch, and a whole flock of fiendish fomenters of phantasmagoria simply because they thought, wrote about, or otherwise depicted themes that radically and dramatically departed from so-
cially accepted motifs.

Yet, numerous individuals suffer from so-called “guilty consciences,” despite never having performed the illicit act of which they stand accused in their own minds. They equivocate racy ideas with doing the damning deeds. Were this scenario to persist, it can become debilitating merely because the thought is experienced as tantamount to the action.

Because of this erroneous equivalence in meaning, I have overheard parents say to their children “don’t think that way,” or “how could you feel that way?” No differentiation is made between the idea, its verbal expression, and the child’s ensuing activity. The strict caveat is to never think/feel that way! It follows, therefore, that this statement may become an agent of inhibition, so much so that merely having certain normal-occurring thoughts becomes impermissible.

If I can’t think them, what am I supposed to do with my thoughts? Moreover, if this is the case, how then can creativity flourish, much less arise spontaneously (as it often does as a matter of course)? Of greater importance, how does one work with individuals who are ridden by archaic prohibitions that berate, reproach, and condemn them for their unacceptable ideas?

Cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) approaches attempt to ameliorate these issues by essentially teaching the patient to block the “bad thoughts” from coming up via a process called thought-stopping. I am told that in some instances this is successful. Pragmatically speaking, I am fine with that, if it truly works and is long-lasting. However, several patients of mine who previously received CBT felt that it did not get to the cause of the offending thoughts/feelings.

What is more, biopsychiatry has heralded the specious conviction that there are so-called negative thoughts or affects and that they are the result of chemical imbalances. They have sponsored the notion that they should and can be ameliorated via chemical solutions, namely prescribed drugs masquerading as “treatment.”

Rather, uncovering the reasons why we think or feel a certain way allows one to obtain a deeper understanding of the meaning and purpose underlying those thoughts and feelings. In fact, according to the latest research by Jonathan Shedler, psychodynamic approaches consistently result in long-standing, rather than mere
symptomatic, relief (“The Efficacy of Psychodynamic Psychotherapy,” *American Psychologist*, 2010). This is because symptom manifestations are overdetermined; that is, they have multiple layers of meaning. So, even though one symptom may be directly opposed by behavioral treatments, other symptoms are often substituted in their stead, which we can expect to continue until the full meaning of the symptom is explored and worked through.

This calls for a more intensive uncovering psychotherapeutic treatment, such as what is seen in a psychodynamic approach. The latter method recognizes that each symptom serves a purpose and the patient will not easily “give up the ghost.” To compound the situation, even though symptoms cause considerable discomfort and suffering, the mind resists their ablation. It is only when the symptom becomes inconvenient, sufficiently uncomfortable, or too painful that the patient is alerted to its downside. Until that point, the symptom has adaptive value to the person, even if outsiders may judge it otherwise.

Also, it is only when the pain is greater than the gain that the individual is motivated to make some changes. This is seen most clearly in individuals who are cautioned to change their lifestyle in order to avoid serious illness, but initially ignore such warnings. However, when they suffer a heart attack, for example, they may finally be ready to hear and respond to the alarm that was sounded earlier.

In order for some individuals to change their ways, they must hit the proverbial rock-bottom, a phrase that is frequently associated with the turning point in alcoholism or other addictions. The problem is that what constitutes “rock-bottom” is different for each individual. Each human being has a different ability to deny, disavow, defend against, or otherwise dissociate the experience of personal pain. It becomes the complex task of the psychotherapist to discern how to differentially dose the subjective experience of each subject’s pain in accordance with a kind of phenomenological “Goldilocks Principle.” Do not expose the patient to too much or too little distress. This is no mean achievement.

It is an interesting paradox that therapists who may have gotten into this profession in order to alleviate pain may find themselves utilizing pain on behalf of the patient. This is not meant to imply that therapists willfully or sadistically create pain for the patient, but rather the recognition that allying with the patient’s pain
may be motivational and might actually increase the patient’s genuine desire to get rid of it, despite how well it may have served the patient in the past. As a close friend of mine once quipped, the nice thing about banging your head against the wall is that it feels so good when you finally stop.

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

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**Gradual Change in 18th & 19th Century Germany**

**Peter Petschauer—Appalachian State University**

Paul Elovitz’ insightful essay on how people change is based on the American and English experiences. However, as a historian born in Central Europe who has researched and taught European history in America for nearly half a century, I am aware that political processes (and therefore some of the elements of change) are different in my areas of specialization and throughout the world.

The English tradition from the Magna Carta to the bloody revolution of the 17th century restricted the authority of monarchs’ decision-making and taxation. This approach was transferred from England to the “new world.” It is the broader background of why the American colonists felt entitled to resist their European overlords at the end of the 18th century. They freed themselves and expected their executive to face removal after four or a maximum of eight years. This enshrines the long-standing tradition of hampering excesses of the executive without revolution or outright murder.

This approach is core to the American political system. Americans like to start anew rather than tinker with improvements. Interestingly enough, because the initial revolution started over the unwillingness to pay seemingly unfair taxes, they continue to be a major focus of discussion in our society. There is also the odd fan-
tasy that resolving issues associated with taxes will resolve many other problems.

In the Central European setting, changes that restricted executives were brought about gradually inside the courts of monarchs and princes and the tradition of tinkering and improving is still highly valued. Changes concentrated mainly on procedures and processes that restrained the hundreds of small kingdoms and principalities in the many German states of the 18th century, and then the few larger courts of the 19th century. The princes and monarchs were gradually restrained not so much by revolution, the threat of revolution, or the example of revolution, but rather by bureaucracies and their rule-bound processes.

Thus, while the US designed an approach that could potentially unhinge practically everything that a previous administration has accomplished, the Central European approach grew out of administrative reforms, called the ministerial system by the middle of the 18th century, which stressed continuity and responsibility. It has meant gradual, if not glacial, change and in the 19th century led to the modern parliamentary systems.

One example emerged in my earliest research and goes back to the small state of Württemberg in the late 17th and early 18th centuries. A woman who killed her baby there by overlaying (smothering with her body in bed) at night was almost automatically given the death penalty. But with time, the professors at the University of Tübingen, who were usually called upon to assist with determining guilt or innocence, and the bureaucrats who had begun to exert increasing influence, began to argue that mitigating circumstances might allow them to propose to the king that a woman should be spared the ultimate punishment; on occasion, they even considered the woman to have been innocent.

The important point about this development is that every case was taken up individually and carefully recorded (the files are still available in Stuttgart), and all future cases were argued, and passed forward to the king, based on these earlier and new or additional arguments. In other words, the king’s authority to arbitrarily decide the guilt or innocence of a woman who had overlaid her child was circumscribed.

Why this change in this state? One reason may be traced to public education. By the 18th century, the German states in general had the most widespread elementary educational system anywhere,
with Württemberg having passed its first comprehensive school ordinance in 1550. Every little town and village had its own school and the literacy rate had reached such an amazing level that by the outset of the 19th century, when Napoleon recruited there, only three out of some 2,500 recruits could not read. All elementary schools included girls, just as Martin Luther had recommended in 1517. Practically, that meant that boys and girls sat in classes together, in separate rows, and that they could all read. While a debate still raged in the literature about the humanness (Menschlichkeit) of women, at that time they were already being included in one of the most important expressions of society: the written word. Additionally, later in the century, it meant that some women of the area became major literary figures that enjoyed a significant female and male readership. Psychologically, these gains meant, in turn, that ordinary women began to think of themselves as human beings (Menschen), with direct access to the divine and rights that encompassed both sexes.

Significant improvements in childrearing, one of the pillars of psychohistorical understanding, helped advance society generally. These improvements may be observed both in advice literature and in memoirs. As much as we have read in psychohistorical scholarship about the abuses of previous centuries, including in the 18th, a counter-trend was already under way. It may be traced to gradual improvements in bureaucratic processes and schools, but it is also connected to a better understanding of children as children. Thus, the upper and middle levels of society had reached what Lloyd deMause called the intrusive mode of childrearing in “The Evolution of Childhood.” The leading members of society had already begun to view children as part of the early stages of adults who needed to be persuaded, rather than beaten, to become fully functioning members of their communities.

Let me now shift from 18th century Württemberg to 19th century Prussia. The best known example of massive change here is Prince Otto von Bismarck’s healthcare, accident, disability, and old age insurance programs of the 1880s; these reforms came about in response to the Socialist party’s pressure to enact them. Because of educational and bureaucratic reforms of the 18th and early 19th centuries, a consensus had emerged that allowed these changes, which continue to the present. They were not necessarily the wish of the monarch or his chief minister Bismarck and they were constrained by these changes, in part because they understood this real-
ity and because they felt forced to respond to popular will. Neither Hitler’s murderous interruption nor East Germany’s communist dictatorship were able to interrupt the consensus that encouraged later leadership to tinker and improve rather than to start all over again with new programs, as opponents of Obamacare call for today.

One might well ask: how did this consensus emerge? How did a majority of the population continue to agree that this gradual approach was and is useful? The answers may be surprising. In spite of these changes being introduced in different parts of Germany, by different regimes, bureaucracies, and even philosophies of government, the new systems worked. For example, basic education for everyone and disability/regular pension payments became so deeply ingrained in the population that they are seen as a right, a human right. In the case of education, the consensus is that public education may not be perfect, but it works for the most part and will be improved. In regard to pensions, everyone seems to accept that older persons have a right to enjoy a dignified life after retirement.

The other important point about both education, the pension program, and the associated restraints on a king (or today on a prime minister and a parliament) is that bureaucracies had emerged both in Württemberg and Prussia that restrained executive activities. I am convinced that with time a group consensus has emerged that says, in essence, that one can trust the state. While that trust was totally misplaced during the National Socialist (Nazi) and Deutsche Demokratische Republik (East German communist) periods, it remains one of the main differences between the US and Germany.

In Germany, every step in the direction of accepting all members of the community’s right to participate in it came less through revolution and dramatic externally imposed change, but rather through gradual improvements to what earlier bureaucrats and lawmakers had designed. Thus emerged the idea of a Rechtsstaat, a state of laws, and with it the consensus that it can be trusted to act lawfully. Even after this trust was horrendously abused in the 1930s and ‘40s, and again in the second half of the 20th century in Eastern Germany, most members of the society once more believe that the state follows established laws for the benefit of its citizens and can therefore be trusted.
Peter Petschauer, PhD, is Professor Emeritus of History at Appalachian State University, as well as a Research Associate of the Psychohistory Forum and a member of its Editorial Board. In addition to holding a named professorship, he chaired the Faculty Senate at Appalachian and headed the Faculty Assembly for the University of North Carolina system. Petschauer’s most recent books are about his father’s disillusioning experience as an officer in the SS, four women in his family, and a novel about an 18th-century German woman artist. He may be contacted at petschauer-pw@appstate.edu.

Varieties of Individual and Societal Change
Paul H. Elovitz

The complexities of change are illustrated by the struggle of an 84-year-old widowed physician friend who is confronted with a series of physical problems that he thinks may be of psychogenic origin. As someone who has read Freud and had a successful analysis much earlier in his life, he is keenly aware of the mind-body connection. For the last two years he is tired much of the time and suffers from episodic attacks of intense stomach pain, followed by many hours of total exhaustion. Exhaustive tests at major medical centers have revealed neither a cure nor a meaningful diagnosis. He wonders if his body is telling him that it is time to retire. He has reduced his work-load to three days a week, each followed by a day off, and the attacks are virtually always on his days off.

However, if he retires, his indigent patients in an inadequately staffed low cost clinic will not get the health care he provides. This possibility greatly disturbs this very conscientious man who founded the clinic and fears that it will not long survive his withdrawal. He also fears that he may die shortly after retirement because he thinks he will lose his reason for living without his work; he has been a workaholic his entire life and finds his work quite fulfilling. This physician keeps a diary as part of his self-analysis, but is reluctant to go back into analysis, saying he is simply “too old” for this slow process. He fears that if his symptoms increase in frequency or severity he may be forced into retirement, and therefore the likelihood of death. Indeed, when I suggest that without the human contact and satisfaction his work provide, that
he may indeed unconsciously prefer to die—that his fear is indeed a wish—he agrees that this is a real possibility. Change is often experienced as a threat.

I am honored that so many of my colleagues have chosen to respond to some of my thoughts on the nature of personal and societal change and its impact on history and society. As is typically the case, there are a large variety of approaches to the subject, some of which I had never considered. For example, my German colleague Ludwig Janus, in “Prenatal Influences Restrict Change,” focuses on the long period of human gestation. I had never thought about the impact of what he considers to be premature birth, since humans give birth after nine months of gestation, while elephants wait 21 months. While Janus has not convinced me of the accuracy of his argument, I have long been intrigued by the impact of the long period of human dependency and the strong counter-dependent impulses among males. Peter Petschauer makes a strong case for Germany having a gradual tradition of change, as compared to America.

Burton Seitler described the difficulties of change in “When the Pain is Greater Than the Gain.” Clinicians know, as I learned in my analytic practice and from my own personal struggles, just how difficult it is to break existing habits of mind and behavior. In the same vein, in “Change in Psychoanalysis,” Joyce Rosenberg is somewhat less optimistic than Seitler about the prospects for change. Eva Papiasvili’s “Reflections on Elovitz’ Paper on Change” combines both theory and case studies in delving into the unconscious reasons for change. Jamshid Marvasti, in “Free Associations on Change in People and Society,” is greatly concerned about the purpose and quality of the change, since not only technological, but also psychological knowledge, can be used for the purposes of torture and war propaganda. Merle Molofsky, author of “Transformational Change to Repair the World,” is an analyst and creative writer who draws on the Talmudic tradition to highlight the need for repair and to save the world one person at a time.

David Lotto rightfully points out the great dangers of regression that exist in human society. As a scholar of genocide and other forms of inhumanity in the name of bettering society by Hitler, Stalin, and Mao, I am well aware of the dangers of regression. Germany had a thriving democracy in the Weimar Republic before it was devastated by the impact of the Great Depression, combined with the refusal of the communists and Nazis to cooper-
ate with more moderate forces to preserve the political structure. Had the German communists not accepted Moscow’s orders to ally at crucial moments with the right to further the downfall of “fascist capitalist society,” and had the conservatives not gambled on being able to control Hitler, then the Weimar Republic probably would have survived those very difficult times.

Lotto accuses me of having a Whig interpretation of history and he is not altogether wrong. Although Whig historians were more optimistic than I am about improvements in society, they were in fact correct about the long-term historical developments in the 18th, 19th, and 20th centuries, prior to the “Great War” (WWI). Of course, we live in the short run, rather than the long run, and we are wise to be aware of the dangers involved in our society, especially because our new technologies upset the political balances of power, as we are seeing today in the regressive forces represented by Donald Trump in the 2016 presidential election.

In my article, I tried to keep the focus on a limited number of issues, most especially, the abolition of slavery, pointing out the conflict between Enlightenment ideals and economic and political realities. One point that I did not have time to develop was the extent to which the heirs of Jefferson, prior to the Civil War, created a powerful ideology justifying the horrendous “peculiar institution” of slavery that their economy relied upon. At the International Psychohistorical Association (IPA) Convention where I first delivered this paper, it was well received. Floyd Rumin, who teaches in Norway, made an excellent point about slavery in Eastern Europe, which I will elaborate upon. While Western Europe had nearly eliminated both serfdom and slavery after the Middle Ages, in the East, the Byzantine custom of buying or capturing Slavic peoples, whose very name is derived from their being brought to a center of civilization slaves, was maintained by the Turks who succeeded them and would be extremely strong in Ottoman Europe and Asia. In the form of serfdom, slavery was not technically eliminated until 1861, when Czar Alexander II decreed that 20 million serfs would be freed and an equal number of state peasants would have their situation improved. Unlike American freedmen, the Russians had freedom with land and without a bloody civil war causing over 600,000 deaths to free the 3.5 million U.S. slaves.

In “A Moment in History Timed for Change,” Dan Dervin points out what we in contemporary America know well from cur-
rent events: that simply changing the legal status of people does not end discrimination against them. He points out that today the Black Lives Matter movement aims to get society to focus on how changing the societal status of a group is extraordinarily difficult. Class and economic conditions can hold people in bondage long after they have been constitutionally freed. Ken Fuchsman, a long-time colleague in discussing progress and regression in modern civilization, rightfully points out that the modern era is filled with “innovation and inequality, benevolence and barbarism” in “Progress and Its Resistance.”

Progress usually results in a backlash. In 2008 the United States took the extraordinary step of electing a biracial president with his party having a majority in both houses of Congress. The country and indeed many people around the world were so jubilant that he was granted a Nobel Peace Prize before he really had time to pass significant legislation. A backlash followed his election because of the totally unrealistic expectations of the electorate, the dismal state of the economy after the great recession of 2007-2008, the determined and skillful obstructionism of Congressional Republicans, and political mistakes of the Obama administration. Before long it became apparent that a white backlash was also at work. Part of the pattern of American politics is that the electorate often looks for a very different replacement for a president. Thus the anti-intellectual George W. Bush is replaced by the intellectual Obama, whose legacy in turn is challenged by the anti-intellectual Trump.

Juliana Dresvina, a medieval historian researching and teaching at Cambridge University and author of “Against the Cult of Change,” is quite insightful in connecting her resistance to change with her family history, which involves the horrors of people born in the Soviet Union. She focuses not so much on the five million (which I think is far too low a figure) in the “Red Holocaust,” but on what it meant to her family, caught between Hitler and Stalin. However, her personal sources were too traumatized to tell her very much about what they suffered through. It is clear that change meant some new threat to their lives and well-being. She points out the irony that some of her own relatives, like millions of other Russians, hankered for the “good old days” under Stalin. Her current distress over change is focused on Brexit, which we worked on together to create a special issue. It is interesting that as a younger scholar she was born into the world of the Euro-
pean Union. Dr. Dresvina insightfully sees her relationship with her own childhood fascination and nostalgia for a safe time when she played Medieval games. Such insight is important for a psychological historian.

I would like to thank my talented colleagues for contributing their insights and critiques.

Paul H. Elovitz, PhD, as editor of this journal welcomes symposium submissions and may be contacted at cliospsycheeditor@gmail.com. ☐

Brexit Special Issue

An Introduction to the Brexit Special Issue: Why Did It Happen?

Joyce M. Rosenberg—Private Practice

According to a legend that goes back hundreds of years, England will fall if the ravens who inhabit the Tower of London leave. The wings of those birds are clipped, to hopefully ensure that as the popular World War II song went, “There’ll Always Be an England.”

As we have learned this year, a majority of voters in the British Isles are not primarily concerned about preserving the United Kingdom that also includes Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland. Their concerns are individual: their jobs, their pocketbooks, their homes, their quality of life, their national identity. The majority in England and Wales apparently believed what the proponents of withdrawing from the EU told them: that Britain’s membership in the EU, and the role the UK it has played in the world, including being a destination and haven for immigrants, are responsible for the predicament many Britons feel they and their country are in.

While the outcome of the referendum came as a shock to many inside of Britain and around the world, psychohistorians, sociologists, political analysts, historians, and others believe the roots of the Brexit vote go back over generations and beyond. The English remain ambivalent about a close relationship with Europe, especially without the threat of the Nazis or Soviets. Within Britain there are also important class distinctions. As Nick Duffel writes in his paper in this issue, “Educating for Division: A View from Post-
Brexit Britain,” the emotional brutality of the British educational system created distant and un-empathic leaders out of touch with the middle and lower classes.

The disaffection of many Britons left them vulnerable to the arguments of proponents of leaving the EU—“Leave” as the movement has come to be known, versus “Remain,” the campaign to stay within the European community. Peter Lange writes in his paper, “Regressive Modernism, Fear, and Fromm’s Escape from Freedom,” that leaders like Vladimir Putin and Donald Trump get their power from dire nationalist warnings, alarms sounded against particular groups of people, cultures, or countries. So, it appears, have Leave leaders.

For Paul Salstrom, the Brexit vote might have been inevitable because the UK, and beyond that, Europe, have long been divided by what he calls tribalism—the sharp divisions among countries and cultures. In “Democracy, Tribalism, and Political Visions,” he also draws parallels between the political climate in the United States and countries in Europe.

In the end, no matter what the reasons for the outcome were on a macro level, each voter had to cast a ballot with a heart, a mind or both. It was a struggle for many. Several contributors to this issue, including Juliana Dresvina, Alice Jorgenson, and Alex Woolf, have written poignantly but also analytically about the choices they and the people they know have made.

What now? What is the future of Britain and the countries that it comprises in an increasingly unsettled continent and world? This issue explores those questions as well.

Joyce M. Rosenberg, J.D., is a licensed psychoanalyst, member of the National Psychological Association for Psychoanalysis (NPAP), and Research Associate of the Psychohistory Forum. She has a private practice in Manhattan working with adults and couples. She has taught classes on working with masochistic patients and written papers on the connection between the psyche and creativity, on empathy in culture and psychoanalysis, and on the Holocaust. In addition, she is a small business reporter at The Associated Press and may be contacted at psyjourn313@gmail.com.

Brexit and the Rejection of Political
Correctness and Immigration

Juliana Dresvina—Cambridge University

Talking about Brexit from inside it, with the vote still fresh in everyone’s mind and the situation still developing, is hard because it prevents one from acquiring, in Iain McGilchrist’s words, the necessary distance required for a more holistic view. But talk we must. It is no secret that the issue of immigration played the key role in the Brexit campaign, with some polls suggesting that over three-quarters of Brits believe that immigration levels should be reduced, and with many researchers stressing (on www.migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk, www.vox.com, and elsewhere) that, effectively, the referendum became a proxy plebiscite on immigration.

In metropolitan areas of Britain with a high degree of multiculturalism, it is hard to find members of the general public who, myself included, have not personally experienced xenophobia and racism first hand, coming from people of white, Asian, and black backgrounds alike. It is certainly tempting to label it horrible and unacceptable, but despite our natural inclination for a dualistic approach, I would call for the situation to be seen as more nuanced and calling for an empathic point of view.

My own liberal and Eurocentric perspective on Brexit in post-Brexit Britain has shifted somewhat through two circumstances. First, I could see the often self-righteous and patronising rhetoric of the “Remainers,” which sometimes sounded reductionist and imbalanced even to me, who was already a supporter. Here is one: “Of course immigration is good! Multiculturalism, our population is aging, immigrants bring new taxes and tasty food.” Another one, this time trying to be subtler and supporting the argument with a reference to research: “The anti-immigrant sentiment is itself somewhat irrational. The London School of Economics and Political Science points out ‘EU immigrants pay more in taxes than they take out in welfare and the use of public services’” (http://www.vox.com/2016/6/25/12023768/brexit-psychology-fear). As if the goodness of an entity can be solely dictated by its fiscal contribution, and the only rationale behind immigration is having more people paying taxes.

The other circumstance was reading psychologist Jonathan
Haidt’s seminal book *The Righteous Mind: Why People are Divided by Politics and Religion* (2012). Haidt, a liberal professor like myself, spent years examining the moral matrices of American conservatives, liberals, and libertarians. What he discovered was, in short, that liberals tend to base their moral matrix on the sole foundation of care/harm (prioritizing the weak, the poor, and the outsiders), with a little extra of liberty/oppression. Conservatives, meanwhile, add to this moral palette such values as loyalty, authority, and sanctity. Both groups manifestly care about fairness, but they understand it differently, with the debate over proportionality and conservatives’ tougher take on free riders not contributing enough to the society. Moreover, as Haidt puts it, “morality binds and blinds,” and, having evolved to be very group oriented, we tend to become extremely biased as we “sign up” for a particular movement, team, or theory. This explains the current lack of dialogue and the degree of personal intolerance that manifests in American and British politics.

Reading these texts helped me understand the early reaction some of my (equally liberal) friends had when they discovered that I am still talking to a friend who is a United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP) supporter and a “Leave” voter. Even though they knew that I supported the opposite side they still could not help but extend their disgust to me, as if I was irredeemably tainted by entering a meaningful and amicable dialogue with “the Other”—not with the aim to convert them, but to understand them. So in the spirit of trying not to be blinded by my group, allow me to offer my own contribution and a slightly different perspective on the issue of why so many people in the UK voted to leave the EU and on the certain upsurge in racist/xenophobic events in post-Brexit Britain.

The period of the New Labour government in general and the 10-year reign (1997-2007) of Tony Blair in particular was the time—particularly before 9/11 and the subsequent London bombings of 2005—when political correctness was introduced to (some think forced on) British society. New Labour’s emphasis on social justice rather than equality and the ubiquitous demand to “celebrate diversity” (which became a buzzword of London local councils of the early 2000s) went very much against the Conservative understanding of proportionality and loyalty. Ironically, but perhaps understandably, it is not only the upper classes that back Conservative politics; the current working class often votes Conservative against Labour, the party meant to represent the interests of that very work-
ing class. This is very much because the liberals tend to ignore such moral foundations as loyalty, authority, and sanctity (still important for the majority of the working class), and the parties’ different understandings of fairness.

In terms of racial equality, the important step was to pass the Human Rights Act in 1998, which incorporated into UK law the rights contained in the European Convention on Human Rights, largely penned by liberal politicians and lawyers (hence Conservative Prime Ministers Cameron’s and May’s strong dislike of it). This, in turn, called into being the Race Relations Amendment Act of 2000, which extended the workings of the legislation against racial discriminations of the 1960s and ‘70s, further refined in Equality Act 2010.

All these changes, particularly in the late 1990s and early 2000s, were quite rapid and accompanied by massive immigration. As long as the economic boom continued, this was explained as necessary for the country’s prosperity. However, as the Great Recession began, the tide started to turn. It is common knowledge that hatred of the “other,” racism, and scapegoating intensifies in times of economic and social instability—a textbook example is Nero’s blaming the great fire of Rome on Christians in 64 C.E., which led to the large-scale persecution of the converts to the new religion, in turn temporarily diverting the public eye from the deepening crisis of the Roman state.

Finally, in 2016, Brexit gave a mandate to many of the people who have been living under the closed lid of political correctness to let the steam out, and often it was not pretty. The Brexit debate legitimised many unpleasant things, such as aggressive and scare-mongering publications in the media, divisive slogans, abusive T-shirts and bags (saying, for example, “we voted leave, why are you still here?”), and, finally, actual verbal and physical attacks. It did allow people to talk louder and freer about the issues that worry them; it is particularly true for certain classes, because the permanently welfare-dependent as well as the upper classes can generally get away with anything, but in the case of pretty much everyone else it is not permitted. This eruption is most probably a good sign, however mean that may sound, because the fear of the other is no longer locked up and left to brew but is being let out.

So maybe there is a hope for healing once the pendulum swings slightly (and probably temporarily) back. I am not at this
stage afraid that there will be a downhill movement to a Nazi-type state. We are too comfortable and have too much to lose to attempt such drastic moves. Admittedly, the gradual changes in the same direction might take us to unwanted places, so it is our responsibility to build bridges and hear each other, however much our gut feeling is to reject the opposite opinion as nonsense.

*Juliana (Julie) Dresvina*’s biography can be found on page 121.

**Brexit: A View from Scotland and Ireland**  
*Alex Woolf—University of St Andrews*

I was doubly shielded from the world of the Brexiteers. I work in a town dominated on the one hand by a university with a high international profile that recruits students and staff from across the world, and on the other by one of the world’s premier golfing centres. One cannot imagine a more cosmopolitan place, and beyond that, it is located in Scotland, where European Union (EU) membership proved far more popular than in any other region of the UK outside of London. From the perspective of St Andrews, leaving the EU makes no sense at all. Here, immigrants and travellers are our lifeblood. This said, it has to be recognized that academics and golf professionals make up a tiny proportion of the UK population and, therefore, our sectional interests cannot be allowed to hold democracy hostage.

One might legitimately ask why Scotland voted so overwhelmingly in favour of remaining part of the EU. To understand this, one has to go back two years to the referendum on Scottish Independence, in which about 45% of the votes cast were in favour of Independence from the UK. Much of the case for Scottish Independence hung upon the fact that common membership of the European Union would mean that most of the advantages gained from the Union of England and Scotland could be retained. This included freedom of movement for people and capital, even if an Independent Scotland could disassociate itself from Westminster’s global role as Washington’s wingman in the spread of global terror and from the archaic constitutional structures of the UK parliament.

As an Englishman by birth and upbringing, I found myself supporting Scottish Independence because I wanted to be governed
by a parliament elected proportionately and to see the end of non-elected members in the legislature. I was not concerned with “Scottishness” and “Britishness,” but simply the issues of fairness and democracy. I would gladly support reform of the Westminster Parliament, but we have never been given an opportunity to vote for that. For people like me, shared membership of the EU meant that the location of the border was largely irrelevant; nothing would inhibit my ability to visit friends and relatives in England or transfer funds back and forth across the border. As an academic, attending conferences and negotiating in joint projects would not be inhibited. Employment law on both sides of the border would be closely harmonised and there would be no problem for my graduate students applying for work in the remnant UK or for us recruiting new colleagues and students from there.

The situation has changed radically now. Were Scotland to become Independent before Brexit, there would be a closed border with its largest economic and social partner, England. It is possible that Scotland and the remnant of the UK might form a common economic area, as Ireland and the UK did before 1973, but that would surely be dependent upon Scotland remaining outside the EU. The dream of a Europe of the Regions, in which small polities were viable as Independent entities strengthened by association, has been seriously damaged.

One issue that has not been discussed widely in the media in the UK is the impact Brexit will have on Ireland. The UK and the Republic of Ireland joined the European Union simultaneously in 1973. Prior to this, as noted above, the two countries had established a curious partnership following on from the break-up of the former United Kingdom (of Great Britain and Ireland), which occurred between 1922 and 1949.

When Ireland declared itself a Republic in 1949, cutting its final constitutional ties with Britain, the UK government declared that for legal purposes, Ireland and Irish people would not be regarded as foreign. The motivation for this rather curious state of affairs was to protect individuals and their interests, which had ended up on the wrong side of the border under the new arrangement. It has to be remembered that before the transitional period of 1922-49, Ireland had not been a colony but a fully integrated part of the United Kingdom since 1801. Again, at this point in time, Ireland was also the birthplace of by far the largest immigrant community living in Britain, and the status of Northern Ireland and its popula-
tion was still debatable, with both the new countries claiming sovereignty over them. There were many thousands of people, like my grandfather Edward Tozer, who was born in Dublin to Irish and English parents in 1893 but was living in England during the transitional period. Making such people choose their citizenship instantaneously, or imposing a decision on them, was not a viable option.

Now however, since the UK is committed to leave the European Union, the British and Irish Common Travel Area and the rights of citizens of Britain and Ireland to avail themselves of public services, vote in each other’s countries, and serve in each other’s public services cannot be maintained. The boundaries the EU and Britain will set against each other—imagined by most Brexiteers to simply be a refortification of Dover—would also close the back door on Ireland. Perhaps some of these reciprocal rights are merely historical remnants—my grandfather’s generation are nearly all dead now—which no longer have any justification. But our nations, divorcees who still have each other’s door keys, are very closely bound together.

Many high-achievers in British society are Irish by birth and access to British universities and corporations have always allowed Irish citizens to broaden their experiences, even if they eventually resettle on John Bull’s other island. In economic terms, Britain is Ireland’s largest trading partner by far, and much of Ireland’s other European and global trade comes, physically, via Britain. Just as Brexit makes an Independent Scotland less viable economically and socially, so too does it make an independent Ireland less viable. This is the fear that dare not speak its name across the narrow sea, but it is a truth nonetheless.

What of the Northern Ireland peace process? I was six when the troubles in Belfast began; the backdrop to my childhood and youth was the threat of terror and the news from Northern Ireland. We live in a paranoid age with regard to Islamist terrorism now, but the number of atrocities in Western nations has been tiny compared to the regular bombing of British cities in the 1970s and ‘80s. At the same time, British and Irish civilians and policemen were being gunned down in the streets on an almost weekly basis and the security forces in both the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland were drawn into some very dark ethical places. That was an age of terror, far more so than our experience since 9/11.

That all came to an end in the 1990s, partly due to the in-
creasing liberalizing of social attitudes and governmental policies on both sides of the border, which meant that the stakes, the difference between being ruled from Dublin or London, became smaller, but partly also because of the EU. Brussels could fulfill the role of disinterested broker and also provided vast amounts of cash to rebuild the Northern Irish infrastructure and to provide employment and educational opportunities. The border became a complete irrelevance and in 1998 the terrorists came in from the cold: now Martin McGuinness, a former commander of the Provisional Irish Republican Army (IRA), is a minister in the devolved administration. If the United Kingdom leaves the EU, the border will come back and it will be more relevant and more imposing than it has been since it was first established in the 1920s. Mrs. May, the current UK Prime Minister, has famously said that “Brexit means Brexit,” but what Brexit really means is the end of peace in Northern Ireland.

There might be ways around this, but I have little faith in leaders in Westminster or Brussels having the vision to implement them. The land border in Ireland might be left open and Northern Ireland maintained, deliberately, as some sort of back door between the UK and the EU that would channel investment into the region. A colleague of mine who is a Brexiteer and an English nationalist has always stated that should Scotland gain independence, it should be made to take Northern Ireland with it. Nowadays that doesn’t look to be such a daft suggestion. Northern Ireland is much closer to Scotland than England and most of the shipping from the UK to Northern Ireland embarks from Scottish ports. Perhaps the ultimate solution to Northern Ireland would be some sort of federation between Dublin, Belfast, and Edinburgh? Now we are getting into the realms of fantasy; the reality, since the UK has gone ahead with Brexit, will be economic disaster across Britain and Ireland and a return to blood on the streets of Belfast.

Alex Woolf, PhD, is a medieval historian who teaches at St Andrews in Scotland and who may be contacted at aw40@st-and.ac.uk.

Voting with the Heart

Alice Jorgensen—Trinity College (Dublin)

Keywords: emotion, entrainment, attunement, self-conception, so-
Social networks, social media, personal identity, social ties, Brexit, emotion talk

In the week before the referendum on UK membership in the European Union (EU), my friend Emma Barnard wrote and tweeted an open letter laying out her reasons for voting Leave. She explained her position in terms of her identity and relationships: a working-class “market town girl,” living in a place with few jobs, strained public services, and a high immigrant population; the mother of a daughter with special needs; and the daughter of a father recently made redundant. In naming immigration as the key issue, her concern was not with big business or scientific research, but the daily life of communities like her own, with little voice or influence. She expressed her anger at the “scaremongering” of the campaigners on both sides, their petty concern with political gain, and their failure to provide sober, clear cases for and against, set out in layman’s terms. She wrote:

> With the lack of bare, honest truths, I have to go with my own experiences. I won’t vote next week with my head as I haven’t got the information I need to make such an informed decision. Instead, I shall have to vote with my heart. An uneducated guess rather than an informed sensible decision (http://roosterf1775.wix.com/euref).

What does it mean to “vote with the heart”? There was a great deal of emotional talk around the referendum. The Leave campaign accused the Remain campaign of “the politics of fear” and used the slogan “Take back control!” Meanwhile, many Remainers circulated a montage of tabloid headlines screaming about the dangers of immigration: this expressed a view that the Leave side was stoking people’s fears. Fear, in popular perception, is a bad, weak position, and appealing to fear is underhanded and manipulative. One Facebook friend commented that people were choosing sides from emotion, not reason—she was frustrated at what she saw as a failure to think through facts and arguments. Then again, one pro-Remain article circulating on social media had the title “Project fear is a fitting name, you should be fucking terrified” (William Peet, https://medium.com/@williamgadsbypeet, June 6, 2006). It argued fear was entirely rational given the prospect of a lurch to the right in UK politics.

Popular discourse around emotion is complex. On the one
hand, we think of emotion as irrational: wise and strong people
overcome it. On the other, sometimes emotion is the right response
to reality, a measure of an issue’s magnitude. Returning to Emma,
she positioned her emotional decision as in some ways inadequate,
the best she could do in the light of how she’d been failed by those
responsible for informing her. At the same time, her appeal to the
heart signalled her sincerity, honesty, and how this vote impacted
on what was truly important in her life.

Voting with the heart in fact doesn’t mean voting irrationally,
or abandoning all factually based argument. Rather, emotions
relate the facts and arguments that come our way to a deep, experi-
entially based sense of what matters to us, what threatens or nour-
ishes us. They help us to select and prioritize; they are important to
decision-making and choice (Anthony Damasio, Descartes’ Error,
1994). They are also social, shaped by our affective ties, our sense
of identity, and the evolving social environment in which they arise
and develop. When we talk about our emotions, we make claims
about the sort of people we are and seek affirmation from others.
Am I the sort of person who votes out of fear, or am I frightened
precisely because I’m rational? Can you challenge the decision I’m
making, given it’s based on my love for my children, my parents,
and my friends?

For my own part, my relationships and my sense of identity
directed my heart towards a Remain vote. As a British-born aca-
demic working in an EU country, Ireland, my affective ties cross
national borders. I have British parents, Irish children, and a hus-
band from New Zealand. Although freedom of movement between
Ireland and the UK rests on an agreement older than the UK’s EU
membership, I feel part of an academic community that benefits
from opportunities to travel and work freely within Europe, and I
know and admire many EU-born academics working in the UK. As
a humanities scholar, I conceive the ethical underpinning of my
work in terms of increasing empathy, fostering human understand-
ing across barriers of difference, and enriching minds with what is
not already familiar. Values of intellectual exchange, outwardness,
and openness are important to my sense of myself. Insofar as the
Leave campaign seemed infused with suspicion of the Other, I was
viscerally repelled by it. (Of course I experience no immediate
competition with immigrants for social services or jobs—I am an
immigrant myself.)

At the same time, my sense of connection to Britain is in-
creasingly uncertain. After a decade in Ireland, I follow Irish politics more closely than British politics; when I’m back in Britain I fumble with the money. I love my British family, but many developments in the UK—especially the changes in Higher Education and the running down of the Welfare State—have made me feel sad and alienated. Nor, given its colonial history, is Ireland a place where you can feel especially proud to be British.

In fact, at first I wasn’t deeply interested or concerned by the approaching referendum. It was a political pageant in a country I no longer lived in, arising from internal dissension in a party (the Conservative Party) that I loathed in any case. But it was borne on me increasingly that it did matter to me. This came about, for the most part, through conversation on social media, which are my main connection in daily life to my British friends now that I no longer live there, though talks with my husband, colleagues, and friends in Ireland were also a factor. I was alerted to the negative consequences a Leave victory would probably have for the university sector, Northern Ireland, and environmental protection, as well as the danger of empowering parties such as the UK Independence Party (UKIP) and inflicting economic damage.

As my Twitter and Facebook feeds filled up with posts related to Brexit, it captured a larger and larger part of my attention. When I started to comment on people’s posts the effect was magnified, since Facebook shows you more content from people you’ve recently interacted with. Not only was I increasingly convinced that the referendum involved issues that were important to me, I had an increasingly strong sense of being an active part of a community for whom those issues were important. The thousand little incentives and reinforcements of social media—the kick of being pulled into conversations, paid attention, drawn into the rich interactional texture of this serious, urgent debate—joined together with the emotive character of the issues and the growing sense of a shared anxiety.

What I’m trying to get at here is how “voting with the heart” is, in the event, the product of a very detailed set of practices and interactions. Every like, every click, every comment, and every share contributes, as do “real life” conversations and encounters. Others have written on how getting so much of our information online means we are fed content that confirms our pre-existing biases. Certainly the information that came to me—and, unlike Emma, I felt there was a lot of it, much of it apparently robust—was
strongly influenced by my ties and views: my friends are mostly left-wing and university educated, like me, and they shared analysis from *The Guardian* and from bloggers critiquing the claims of the Leave campaign. My network wasn’t totally closed to pro-Leave views (including arguments for a left-wing pro-Leave case), but it was predominantly Remain. This network collaboratively produced the emotional mood around the vote as well as conditioning the information I had about it. My political commitment was bolstered by emotional “contagion,” “attunement,” or “entrainment.”

My awareness of emotional entrainment was most acute in the wake of the result. I switched on my laptop on the morning of June 24th and saw the news Leave had won with a sense of sinking resignation. It wasn’t a very strong feeling; there was a kind of dull, depressed inevitability about it. I logged on to Facebook and posted “My stupid bloody country. OK, time to get Irish citizenship. Should have done it before.” Soon I had a huge stream of comments on my own post and a welter of other, often much more strongly phrased posts in my feed. Not everybody used obviously emotional language, but many did: “The result is horrific,” “Appalling news,” “I am personally hurt and very sad,” “This is a dark day, folks.” Illustrating how people echo each other’s tone, I received more emotionally phrased comments on my second post where I quoted, with permission, the words of a friend-of-a-friend:

OK as a foreigner who is living in the UK, never ever tell anyone ‘so what’ when you’ve just woken up to hear your adopted country hates you and blames you for the austerity policies that the Tories - the government they voted in - put in place. The Leave campaign has absolutely no plan for what to do now, our economy is about to collapse, and every minority in the country is terrified. This is awful and you should watch what you say.

I felt my own anger and fear rise, but also a kind of dreadful enjoyment, the intoxication of being part of the maelstrom of analysis, reaction, feeling, and interaction on that day. Again illustrating how we adjust to each other’s emotional cues and how relationship maintenance affects emotional processes, a significant break on my rising anger was Emma’s intervention. She commented to say how “disappointed” she was at being implicitly labelled a racist, and again set out her position. After that, several of us moderated our language and turned our focus to how it might be possible to move forward.
In the days following, I discussed with my friends our sense of dislocation. Clearly we—the we who talked to each other in this particular network, the we of educated urban people like us—were out of touch with the majority mood of the country. I’m struck that many of us are also literally dislocated, as I am, living far away from the places—and in some cases, the countries—we grew up in. Academia, like some other middle-class careers, requires a high degree of mobility and gives one many loose social ties but little deep sense of belonging. In discussing our approach to the referendum and then performing our emotional response to it, my friends and I were reasserting a kind of belonging with each other, in a community of value where we met agreement, liking, and approval. Strangely, the referendum has left me far more conscious than I have been for years of being, however conflictedly, British. I can only hope that the mutual entrainments of social networks like mine are not too firmly closed off from a wider national conversation. I’m grateful that I have at least a few friends like Emma.

Alice Jorgensen is Assistant Professor of English Literature to 1500 at Trinity College, Dublin. Her current research concerns the history of emotions and she was the lead editor of Anglo-Saxon Emotions: Reading the Heart in Old English Language, Literature and Culture, eds., Alice Jorgensen, Frances McCormack, and Jonathan Wilcox (2015). She can be contacted at jorgena@tcd.ie.

Brexit Shock: A Case Study

Samuel Cohn—University of Glasgow

I heard the news at 5 AM on June 24th in Brussels while working on a scientific panel for the European Union (EU). It came as a slug in the stomach, in part because of confidence expressed just hours earlier, not just from pollsters, but more authoritatively from the bookies, that “Remain” would squeak through, 52% to 48%. Instead, in the wee hours the percentages flipped. During the previous three months or so, I had digested what a “Leave” vote might mean. My calculations largely concerned economics. Yes, against the ranting of then Mayor of London Boris Johnson and then Secretary of Justice Michael Gove, I believed the experts and economists with Nobel prizes: Britain would undergo a self-inflicted recession accompanied by more foreboding long-term consequences. I also had reflected on how
my own parish—university academics—that the big European grants, talented Erasmus EU exchange students, and new lecturers from across Europe would soon disappear.

Faced with the morning after Brexit, my sinking feelings were different. I worried if I could any longer believe in democracy. Sharp shards of the past weeks’ campaigns now resurfaced in a different mode. How could the electorate have been persuaded by the pronouncements of Gove, gesticulating that “People in this country have had enough of experts,” and that the ten Nobel prize-winners in economics who had signed an anti-Brexit letter were the same as scientists who had supported Hitler? (Ironically, Gove had been our previous Secretary of Education.) How could the electorate not have laughed off or scorned the Leavers’ chant of the £350 million Britain supposedly paid weekly to the EU that was blazoned on billboards and their campaign buses, even after neutral fact-finders had repeatedly disproven the claims (and which immediately following the vote the Leavers’ big-wigs also shrugged off as, of course, exaggerated)?

After their victory, the principal donor to the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP) and the Leave campaign, Arron Banks, went further, reporting to The Guardian, that “his side knew all along that facts would not win the day” (Katharine Viner, “How technology disrupted the truth,” The Guardian, July 2016, 25-7). His campaign had taken “an American-style media approach… Facts don’t work… You have got to connect with the people emotionally. It’s the Trump success” (Viner, p. 26). Indeed, when the Remain campaign trumpeted their facts (not all of which were precise, to be sure), they were rarely met with counter-arguments or better scrutiny of the facts but instead by a chant, “Project Fear,” and all this preached against the Leave’s threats that Turks were soon to be admitted into the EU to over-run our schools and health service, and with UKIP’s last-minute campaign poster, portraying a river of refugees marching somewhere as though they were impoverished Europeans ready to cross British borders.

Certainly, untruthful campaigning is nothing new. What is new, at least in contemporary British history, is the great proportions who now accept as perfectly reasonable that “facts” and “expert opinion” are of no importance. These voters are not necessarily reactionaries or racists but include many on the left as well as with traditional bastions of Labour in cities such as Hull, which
voted overwhelmingly to leave. Katharine Viner, who is the new editor-in-chief of *The Guardian*, has recently argued that the Leave’s victory depended in part on a change in journalism that has accelerated over the past several years. “The walled garden of Facebook” and other social networks, with their algorithmic models and electronic echo chambers instantly reverberating news, have orchestrated a switch from “public-interest journalism” to “junk-food news.” In this world, where the number of clicks determines newsworthiness and the value of news producers’ financial returns, sensationalism and rumour prosper at the expense of veracity. Truth has even become a liability.

Psychologically, this new world is doubly troubling to the historian, first as a citizen, then as a teacher and researcher, for whom, often unstated, a central ideal is to get the record straight. So at 5 AM, on June 24th, in my Brussels hotel room, these emotions swam through my veins as I prepared for work in the EU’s new skyscraper called “Covent Garden.” Three weeks on, I have progressed to worry over Brexit’s tangible effects—the fall of the pound, a possible recession, the consequences to my pension, the future for my children, the cultural deprivation of living on a small island ruled by “Little” England, and the disillusionment of others, especially the young, with democracy.

**Samuel Cohn, Jr. PhD**, is Professor of Medieval History at the University of Glasgow, an Honorary Fellow of the Institute for Advanced Studies in Humanities of the University of Edinburgh, and a Fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh. Over the past 17 years he has focused on the history of popular unrest in late medieval and early modern Europe and on the history of plague. His latest books include *The Black Death Transformed: Disease and Culture in Early Renaissance Europe* (2002); *Popular Protest in Late Medieval Europe: Italy, France, and Flanders* (2004); *Lust for Liberty: The Politics of Social Revolt in Medieval Europe, 1200-1425* (2006); *Cultures of Plague: Medical Thinking at the End of the Renaissance* (2010); and *Popular Protest in Late Medieval English Towns* (2013). His books are published by Cambridge, Harvard, and Oxford universities’ presses. Presently, he is on a leave funded by a three-year “Major Research Fellowship” on the project, “Epidemics: Hate and Compassion from the Plague of Athens to AIDS.” Professor Cohn may be contacted at Samuel.Cohn@glasgow.ac.uk.
Educating for Division: A View from Post-Brexit Britain

Nick Duffel—Centre for Gender Psychology

On the evening of June 24th—nicknamed “Independence Day” by United Kingdom Independence Party leader Nigel Farage hours before his own inglorious exit—I was assuaging my gloom in a very British way: with a pint of ale and fish and chips. The pub’s customers included a group of young working-class women with too much flesh and too little clothes, now Wittily decorated with EU (European Union) flags and the initials R.I.P. It was one of those areas peculiar to North London, boasting impressive race and even class relations, with social housing and prestigious homes in the same leafy neighbourhood. Next to me, another group comprised of three skinny unshaven men, was nervously discussing what Brexit meant for one with a job in Germany and another with a French girlfriend. These two social groups can co-exist in the same bar but in many ways they are worlds apart.

The EU referendum occurred because David Cameron made a deal with the right wing of his Conservative party. No one expected a “Leave” majority and unprecedented political turmoil resulted. Do the resignations, betrayals, and back-stabbings of the British political summer reveal anything about the validity of the European project? Hardly. But they do show what a thoroughly divided nation Britain is, split along class and education lines in a way outsiders struggle to fathom. Many Europeans I spoke with in the past grim weeks—Dutch, Danish, French, and German—are shocked that we sacrificed our enviable position outside the Euro-zone but in the EU. Some are outraged by the resignations of the main players and the business-as-normal attitude in our public life. But they do not really understand the depth of our class divide because they are not seamlessly educating for it, as we are.

Our European neighbours do not favour a system that privately over-educates the elite while under-prioritising state schools. The peculiarly anachronistic British class system, which colours all our national politics and our dishonest media is there by design, because we are educating for social division rather than cohesion. Raised in social democracies, Europeans are surprised when you point out that the top-down nature of British society means that all strata are unwittingly obliged to imitate the behav-
iour of the top, which is why ex-Justice Minister Michael Gove presents himself as if he went to the same kind of elitist school as Cameron or ex-Mayor of London Boris Johnson, although he did not. They cannot conceive how left out our traditional workforce has felt for decades—even before losing the right to strike, even before austerity. So it makes little sense to modern Europeans that millions of Britons were manipulated by the “red-top” (tabloid) media to ignore the billions of Euros that have brought down-heel post-industrial regions to life, and then vote to leave the EU as a way of finally having some say, like the proverbial turkeys voting for Christmas.

**A Cherished Elite Education System**

Europeans do know we are different—spéciale, as the French say—but they cannot conceive of what in my first book on the psychological problems of boarding school education, *The Making of Them: the British Attitude to Children and the Boarding School System* (2000), I called the “British Attitude to Children.” It is just too foreign to the family-oriented, bottom-up culture that is continental Europe. Nor do they appreciate how strong the links that the old-school-tie syndrome provides are, even as it produces what I later called *Wounded Leaders* (2014) through the privileged abandonment of the elite’s children. It is almost impossible to overstate how strong this syndrome still is and how it trickles down to affect the whole of British society.

For nearly 30 years, I have been describing how children of the wealthy are betrayed into a deal in which a normal family-based childhood is traded for the hothousing of institutionalised life in British boarding schools (prep schools for those sent away from the age of seven or eight and public schools [“private schools” in the US] for those dispatched at 13). The short story on early boarding is that, despite its enormous educational and social privileges, it is bad for children, bad for parents, and bad for the nation.

Not one theory of child development supports educating young children in residential institutions. John Bowlby, the founder of attachment theory, himself an early boarder, remarked that he “wouldn’t send a dog away to boarding school at age seven” (*Separation: Anxiety and Anger*, 1972). But in Britain, this problem is so hidden by habit and privilege that its obvious defects are overlooked. The evidence about damage done by breaking early attachments is now overwhelmingly clear, yet even the psychotherapy profession has been slow to acknowledge the boarding
problem. I know this system from the inside out: as an ex-boarder myself, a former boarding school teacher, and as the psychotherapist who inadvertently ended up pioneering psychotherapy with ex-boarders, a hitherto unrecognised client group that I provocatively named “Boarding School Survivors.” This June, Routledge published my third book on the subject. While several colleagues are adding to the literature, a growing number of ex-boarder clients are now seeking informed psychotherapy, leading to practitioners requiring specialised training for working with this rather difficult client group.

Only the Anglosphere, as Noam Chomsky calls those English-speaking territories that are the legacy of our colonial days, really goes in for boarding. In the past, boarding schools were used to break the cultural solidarity of Native American children in the Midwestern US and Canada. In today’s US, they may be only an affluent East-Coast phenomenon, but in Britain they’re a seamless part of the education system, first choice of both established and aspirant classes, if they can afford £34,000 per year. Our European neighbours think it a remnant of imperial nostalgia, how we bred the Empire’s administrators “with well-developed bodies, fairly developed minds, and underdeveloped hearts,” as E.M. Forster said (Abinger Harvest, 1964).

Private boarding remains the structural problem in Britain, affecting our national life more than any other single factor: far more than the platitude of being an island nation. Although Henry VIII defied pan-European papal power for his own dynastic interests, we were full Europeans in every way until we thought ourselves above it all during Victoria’s reign. Then we invented an industrialised education process to churn out the rational gentlemen needed to run the Empire and colonies as part of the post-Enlightenment drive towards hyper-rationality, as discussed at length in my 2014 thesis on British Elitism and the Entitlement Illusion. Bringing up male children away from the influence of all femininity, softness, and childishness was an essential step in British mastery of what I call the Rational Man Project: a recipe for dissociation on a grand scale, producing an internalised superiority that became the psychological engine of the 19th century, sometimes called “the British Century.”

Though the Victorian brutality that characterised these schools well into the 1960s has been mollified, children are still sent away very young to fend for themselves without parents, sib-
lings, pets, or their own bedrooms for ten years, if the full stretch is done. For boarders, rather than loving parenting and gentle venture into the world beyond the family, bullying and fear becomes the norm. The key to realizing how ex-boarders dominate the cultural life in class-divided Britain and how this influences our politics is to understand the institutional conditions in which they grew up as children and the fear that is engendered in traditional boarding schools.

**The Strategic Survival Personality**

It starts with the breaking of parental attachments, often from the age of seven. Boarding children have to solve a peculiar double-bind connected with being sent away from home while knowing what an enormous social privilege it is: “If they love me, why do they send me away? If I don’t like it, and it is so important to them, it must be because there is must be something wrong with me.” The natural response is not to show distress: the need to maintain a brave face without any emotion, and the inner shame of privilege, makes it most likely that evasive secrecy becomes a way of life at school and extremely hard to shed in later life. Unaware of doing it, the adult ex-boarder frequently imports poison into his intimate relationships and family life.

Living in rule-bound institutions, unable to show their feelings, constantly surrounded by their peers who are scared and on the lookout to scapegoat any signs of vulnerability in others, these young boarders need to survive and develop a strategic way of life. This means becoming Machiavellian at a very early age, trying to stay one step ahead, staying out of trouble, anticipating danger, promoting the false selves they are selling—sometimes self-effacing, sometimes bullying. Boarding produces a specific personality type, or style of “false self” (in the terminology of the famous British expert on childhood D.W. Winnicott), which I named the Strategic Survival Personality: born to rule but also “born to run.”

Raised in the overcharged atmosphere of multiple rules and the consequent hunting down of transgressors means that boarders develop one of two strategic survival obsessions, depending on their individual proclivity: either keeping their heads down, or breaking the rules without getting caught. The strategic personality cannot afford to be wrong; educated at the Scottish version of Eton, Tony Blair insists he was not wrong on Iraq. David Cameron, educated at Heatherdown and then Eton, bullied Opposition spokespe-
son Angela Eagle in the House of Commons when she pointed out the tiniest error he had made. In the strategic way of life, anything—or more pertinently, anyone—may get sacrificed through a variety of face-saving behaviours, including betrayal, bullying, or simply being dropped. The latter is very prevalent in intimate relationship situations and causes enormous hurt, even if unintentionally done. It is extremely difficult both for the victim to identify and the ex-boarder to recognize, let alone lose, the habit, precisely because the self-formed is unused to being in situations of loving mutuality: he has had to look after number one for as long as he can remember.

When I wrote *Wounded Leaders* I had the benefit of the latest neuroscience evidence, which has radically altered trauma studies. Professor Stephen Porges’ research shows that sufferers of developmental trauma lose the ability to make correct assessments of danger, so the world is constantly framed as hostile by default (*The Polyvagal Theory: Neurophysiological Foundations of Emotions, Attachment, Communication, and Self-Regulation*, 2011). Professor Antonio Damasio has shown that humans need good access to their emotions in order to make good judgments (*Descartes’ Error: Emotion, Reason, and the Human Brain*, 1994). Testing senior executives for “head-hunting” recruitment, Corporate Psychologist Olya Khaleelee found that those who suffered separation shocks early in life had a tendency when under pressure later on to lose touch with emotional intelligence (*OPUS: Journal of Organizational & Social Dynamics*, 2016). This left them with an enhanced sensitivity to stress, lowered resilience, and a disability in making accurate judgments.

**Wounded Leaders**

The emerging picture suggests the hyper-rational education offered at traditional boarding schools is a recipe for disastrous leadership, as it is for family life.

Having disavowed vulnerability, how would ex-boarders understand the socially vulnerable? Relying on dissociation, the *Strategic Survival Personality* needs others to carry the disowned vulnerability, which is why foreigners and migrants are convenient scapegoats. How would those who have not had sufficient belonging find it comfortable to engage in communal politics like the EU? Entitlement becomes a compensation for loss, and a false veneer of confidence, enduring long after school, belies an anxious core. Their mutual esprit de corps compensates for loss of family
life but makes them suspicious of foreigners and liberals. Bullying becomes routine in adult life—think of the House of Commons, where members routinely and mercilessly turn on one another—the current example being Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn, who attended Adams’ Grammar School. Separated from love, touch, and everyday affection, with empathy and emotions not on the curriculum, survival, duplicity, betrayal, and self-invention become second nature for the boarders who go on to lead our public life, such as a stockbroker’s son, Farage, who attended Dulwich College, inventing himself as a man of the people.

If British find the duplicity in their leaders to be normal, many foreign observers do not. In the aftermath of Brexit, Wounded Leaders went very briefly viral, as people around the world sought some explanation as to why Britain had steered her ship of state onto the rocks. To my surprise, the US news publication Foreign Policy commissioned me to write an article (whose provocative headline suggested that boarding schools constituted a security threat) wondering whether Donald Trump’s personality was connected with being sent to the New York Military Academy when he was 13. Brutal hazing and excessive competition are endemic in these kinds of schools whose regimes were designed in a patriarchal past, and whenever children or young men are institutionalised, bullying and sexual abuse are inevitable. This may give us some clue into why Trump pushes such aggressive policies. Yet focusing on the dramatic, we may overlook the banal but underlying problems of privileged abandonment at boarding schools, which seem to lead in a straight line to a duplicity that the British have come to take for granted.

Normalised duplicity appears to underlie the Chilcot Inquiry into the Iraq invasion, which, years later, comes up with what we already knew. Blair’s entitlement attitudes meant he could overlook every warning, doing what he “thought was right,” while thousands died. The Middle East descended into the most chaos since the time of the Crusades, when superstition had mobilized the misinformed to action, as in the Brexit vote. A professor of law at Liverpool University, Michael Dougean, has comprehensively and calmly exposed the untruths that drove Brexit. But it seems hardly to matter to those Wounded Leaders so used to acting in their own strategic interests that they don’t recognise any more that they are lying.

Nor apparently does it to large swathes of the country. In
fact, most of these Leave voters seem to be those who have lost their identity under globalisation. Tragically, their fears have not been heard—especially by the Left—so their protest has to go somewhere. Other Leavers seem to have regressed to a feudal fear of foreigners and a belief in a sovereignty that is no longer possible in our interdependent globalized world. Throughout all this, our mainstream media has regularly colluded with the disinformation, just as they did in the 2010 general election, when then Prime Minister Gordon Brown was routinely blamed for the 2008 financial meltdown; not one TV anchor was willing to forbid such demonstrable untruths to be broadcast.

**Education and Psychology in Future Politics**

Psychohistory has much to offer in revising our approach to current affairs. Psychotherapists could assist by leaving the precious sanctuary of the consulting room or academia to educate news anchors and political commentators in identifying the politics of blame, hate, and duplicity by showing the dissociation and projection upon which it is built. It should not be too difficult to do: psychological knowledge is a wonderful and indispensable tool when used well.

Luckily, Britain is no longer just divided into two. We have a third group, of younger people, who don’t get their news from traditional print or big screen sources, who know the future lies in being connected, who feel this European withdrawal is lunacy and our conduct in Iraq unforgivable. At present, the Internet generation is largely apathetic about voting; this may be because the centrist business-friendly parties have seemed to them indistinguishable, which ought to be a warning to the mainstream. However, this generation (and those who follow it) is in flux and ought not to be treated as indifferent. For example, the Scottish Independence Referendum may have had less to do with nationalism and more to do with getting free from the prep/public-school politics of Westminster than we were led to believe. Like Brexit, it had a large turnout. These millennials may become fired up sooner than later if the danger of preventing extremist parties from taking power in post-Brexit Britain were to arise.

One thing is for sure: they will need a new form of politics, more progressive, future-oriented, and related to the global world they live in. They may demand a reform of our political space and want a nice new round parliament building like the Europeans and Scots have. They are the future, and the traditional media may not
survive if they don’t listen up; if television news anchors don’t learn some psychological thinking with which to denounce the politics of blame, they may eventually run out of viewers. Equally, if the red-top media continues to spread hate when they should know better, they may similarly run out of readers.

Hopefully, when British millennials become parents they will also demand the reform of our education system. Recently, in *The Journal of Medical Ethics Blog* (2016), a young lecturer in politics, Matthew Johnson, proposed a common thread linking boarding schools and female genital mutilation: “parents generally love their children and believe that they are acting in their children’s best interests.” He wondered how a future society might create accountability, seeing that currently “there are no calls for the prosecution of parents who handed their children over to public school child molesters or who ignored the suffering of their children at these institutions or who even willfully wished for their children to be transformed into stoic individuals lacking in empathy” (http://blogs.bmj.com/medical-ethics/2016/02/02/controversial-views-on-fgm/).

Besides loving their children and wanting them at home, British millennials are already discovering that parenting is good for both children and parents. They may well insist we stop educating for division; it does not fit with the pluralism they take for granted and it is too overtly a political policy at the expense of the identified psychological dangers. The words of Jean Piaget, “Only education is capable of saving our societies from possible collapse, whether violent, or gradual,” are what Britain should consider heed- ing today (*Directors Report, International Bureau of Education*, 1934).


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**British Voters and Child Abuse**

**Marc-André Cotton**—Int. Psychohistorical Association
Abstract: Child abuse may be a formational force in deciding how voters think in the Brexit vote.

Since a clear majority of British citizens decided to leave the European Union on June 23, heated comments have been voiced. According to *The Financial Times*, their largely Europhile parliament will be forced to drag the country into “unsplendid isolation” as Britain is heading for “a quite probable recession” (Philip Stephens, “Britain is starting to imitate Greece,” *Financial Times*, 06/30/2016). Not surprisingly, *The Spectator*—where former mayor of London and “Vote Leave” campaigner Boris Johnson once worked as a journalist—holds a different view. Waving reassuring news as a falling pound attracts tourists and sucks in investment, in the conservative weekly Johnson characterized Brexit as “the greatest opportunity ever handed to a government by an electorate” (“Business Confidence is Returning To Brexit Britain,” *The Spectator*, 07/29/2016).

Indeed, fantasies and misrepresentations surrounding this controversial issue have polarized opinions to the point that there is no clue as to what lies ahead. On top of that, shortly after the Brexit referendum, prominent supporter of the Leave campaign Nigel Farage stepped back and resigned as leader of the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP), giving the impression that he absolved himself of responsibility for potential damage (Helen Lewis and Stephen Bush, “The Brexit Cowards: We Left Europe, Then They Left Us To It,” *New Statesman*, 07/07/2016). The main rhetoric of the pro-Leave—“Let’s Take Back Control!”—thus triggered a backfire and a sense of betrayal. There is confusion, and Britain appears rudderless. At the base of the country group psychology as a whole are their childrearing practices. The “Leave” and “Remain” groups largely have, within each group, other values in common. These values can often be traced to childhood.

A “Values” Divide

Among those who think European unification has gone too far, support for the death penalty strongly correlates with Brexit voting intention. A similar picture results when Eurosceptics express their views on the importance of disciplining children, whipping sex criminals, or keeping the nation safe. “This speaks to a deeper personality dimension which social psychologists like Bob Altemeyer,” Kaufmann further disputes, “dub Right-Wing Authoritarianism (RWA).” As further shown by Chris Rose of Campaign Strategy, a non-governmental organization (NGO) consulting firm
working with the British Value Survey as a tool, “there was clear evidence from existing values surveys that pro- and anti-EU attitudes strongly divided along values lines” (Chris Rose, “Brexit, Values and Age,” Three Worlds Blog, 06/26/2016). This values-based segmentation of the nation group forms a “psychodemographic” system, Rose argues. In this case, sub-groups motivated by fear of perceived threats, safety, and control, or the need for clear-cut rules swung most strongly to vote “Leave,” whereas people oriented towards success or prioritizing individualism and cultural equality, over-represented in younger age classes, voted “Remain.”

As we know from other research, such as political psychologist Theodor Adorno’s, a harsh upbringing will most probably result in personal values like submission to parental authority, a sense of duty and order, as well as in-group orientation—all the while fostering a strong resentment and feelings of victimization disguised under mechanisms of displacement (Else Frenkel-Brunswik, “Parents and Childhood as Seen Through the Interviews,” in Theodor Adorno et al., The Authoritarian Personality, Studies in Prejudice Series, Vol. 1, Chapter , 1950, 337-389). It is not unreasonable to suggest that the openness (Remain) vs. closure (Leave) divide characteristic of the Brexit vote overlaps childrearing patterns and beliefs, with a likely correlation between maltreatment in childhood and Leave support.

Indeed, the immigration issue induces a loss of cultural benchmarks in the ethnic English majority, triggering a sense of disintegration stemming from infancy. Debates surrounding the National Health Service (NHS) funding reflect a growing fear of dispossession that has little to do with economic reality. Within hours of the Brexit vote for instance, the official Leave campaign’s call to divert UK’s EU contribution to the NHS proved a false claim (Kate McCann and Tom Morgan, “Nigel Farage: £350 million Pledge To Fund the NHS Was ‘a Mistake,’” The Telegraph, 06/24/2016). Such rhetoric is often meant to stir up feelings of victimization—all too common in adults who were abused as children—only leading to further frustration once the game has been played.

**A Nation of “Enthusiastic Smackers”**

The UK bears a painful legacy of child abuse dating back to the Victorian era when “the rod” was commonly used to discipline children. Corporal punishment in British state-run schools was
only banned by parliament in 1987, and as late as 1998 in private schools of England and Wales (Colin Farrell, “United Kingdom School CP,” www.corpun.com). Significantly, traditional English education is commonly linked with childhood violence, pain, and stoicism in the eyes of mainland Europeans, with (in)famous Eton College standing as a hallmark of discipline for the British aristocracy. In a 2006 survey, 80% of respondents still believed in physically disciplining children, while 73% said a ban would result in an increase of juvenile delinquency—reflecting an image of Britain as “a nation of enthusiastic smackers” (Rosemary Bennett, “Majority of parents admit to smacking children,” The Times, 09/20/2006). More recently, a 2012 Angus Reid Public Opinion poll found that 63% opposed a ban on spanking in the UK. Under existing laws, parents in England and Wales are allowed to “reasonably chastise” their children—that is as long as the blows leave no mark—but near half of Britons think even these rules go too far (Mario Canseco, “Britons Opposed to Banning Parents from Smacking Their Children,” Angus Reid Institute, 02/29/2012).

The extent to which British adults had been abused as children recently came as a surprise after the Office for National Statistics (ONS) introduced new questions on this topic in the 2016 Crime Survey for England and Wales. In the first study of its kind, the data show that 9% of respondents aged 16 to 59 report psychological abuse, 7% physical abuse, 7% sexual assault, and 8% witnessing domestic violence or abuse in the home. The proportion of adults reporting ill-treatment tends to increase with age and women are more likely than men to suffer sexual assault by rape or penetration, with an estimated 567,000 adult women having experienced this type of abuse in childhood (“Abuse During Childhood: Findings from the Crime Survey for England and Wales, Year Ending March 2016,” Office for National Statistics, 08/06/2016). These figures give an indication of the powerful forces at play when repressed feelings and emotions associated with such outrage surface and are displaced in a heated political context, particularly within an aging population.

Given this unacknowledged reality, diverting such resentment towards outside targets such as migrant workers and EU regulation proved an easy win for Brexit campaigners. As the saying goes: when you play with fire, you end up getting burned.

Marc-André Cotton, MA, the International Vice President of the International Psychohistorical Association and an Interna-
Democracy, Tribalism, and Political Visions

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

“Democracy is the worst form of government,” Winston Churchill famously told the House of Commons in 1947, “except for all the others.” Now 70 years later, democracy has decreed that Britain must leave the European Union (EU). Why? Even though Britain is outside the EU’s border-free zone (the “Schengen zone” created in 1999), nonetheless “foreign citizens [now] account for over 10 percent of total employment in the UK and foreign-born people for not far short of 20 percent” (Mervyn King, “Which Europe Now?” New York Review of Books, August 18, 2016, 36). This large inflow of foreigners finally provoked a mass protest in June 2016’s Brexit vote.

The Trump phenomenon in the United States is also basically a protest. Here too the leading grievance is large-scale foreign immigration—with racial and sexual equality in contention for second leading grievance.

Wherever populism erupts, it’s an offshoot of democracy. But the populisms of Brexit and Trump do differ. Democracy, especially economic democracy, is older and more deeply rooted in the United States than in Britain. Democracy in Britain has yet to erode most of that country’s traditional social deference, whereas American democracy eroded social deference from the get-go, at least between whites. Jacksonian America of the 1830s saw white manual laborers (even ones straight from Europe) refusing en masse to be called or treated as “servants.” They re-titled themselves “help” and “hands.” “Servants” were slaves. America’s white workers wanted to be asked for help, not ordered to obey.

To be sure, racism is just as strong in Britain as in America. But racism looms far larger in Trump’s appeal than it affected the Brexit vote. Racism in Britain isn’t as “newsworthy” as it is in
America, where racially charged incidents often dominate the news. Currently it’s about “Black Lives Matter” versus “Blue Lives Matter.” Next might come “Black Blue Lives” versus “White Blue Lives.” On and on it rolls, never pausing long enough for public discourse to re-set. Atavistic tribalism conjoined with democracy may be driving us like lemmings toward the edge of some cliff. Back in 1935, Arnold Toynbee wrote:

The spirit of Nationality is a sour ferment of the new wine of Democracy in the old bottles of Tribalism. The ideal of our modern Western Democracy has been to apply in practical politics the Christian intuition of the fraternity of all Mankind; but the practical politics which this new democratic ideal found in operation in the Western World were not oecumenical [sic] and humanitarian but were tribal and militant. The modern Western democratic ideal is thus an attempt to reconcile two spirits and to resolve two forces which are in almost diametrical opposition; the spirit of Nationality may be defined (negatively but not inaccurately) as a spirit which makes people feel and act and think about a part of any given society as though it were the whole of that society. This strange compromise between Democracy and Tribalism has been far more potent in the practical politics of our modern Western World than Democracy itself (A Study of History, Volume One, Second Edition, 9).

How might all of this relate to the future of the European Union? In the years right after World War II, several authors began pondering “the idea of Europe” and investigating when it originated. Writing in 1947, Italian historian Federico Chabod emphasized that concepts always emerge in opposition to some other concept, and that the concept of Europe had acquired its characteristics through confrontation with that which was not Europe. Recall here that Western Christendom’s leading confrontation during the Middle Ages was with Islamic North Africans and Middle Easterners.

However, skipping ahead centuries to the EU’s origins, the present-day threat from North African and Middle Eastern terrorists didn’t yet exist when Robert Schumann and Jean Monnet set to work in the late 1940s to interweave Western Europe. Their success was pushed along by a different outside threat. The Common
Market and then the European Community (EC) began as expedi-
ents that Western Europeans seized upon to escape the threat of
American hegemony, by first, in the Common Market (1958), cre-
ating a free-trade zone able to slow down US economic penetration,
and then, in the EC (1967), achieving their own West European
“bloc” to confront the Soviet bloc without any further need for US
political help.

Robert Schuman, Jean Monnet, and later Helmut Schmidt
and Valery Giscard d’Estaing, were economists but they were sim-
ultaneously “European idea” visionaries. As recently as a 2014 in-
terview with London’s Financial Times, aged former-French presi-
dent d’Estaing repeated his profound disappointment in the 1980s
that British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher wasn’t interested in
Europe as an idea but only as a free trade area.

Then Western Europe’s interweaving faced a new chal-
lenge. Over in its rival Soviet bloc, Mikhail Gorbachev suddenly
 tried to hasten Soviet reforms by drastic measures. But rather than
pursuing Soviet reforms, most Soviet citizens used Gorbachev’s
glasnost to demand their own separate sovereignty. The Soviet Un-
ion dissolved, along with its control over Eastern Europe. This
threatened to unravel the European Community in a free-for-all of
separate bi-lateral trade agreements pairing off individual Western
and Eastern countries—separate deals such as West and East Ger-
many did in fact immediately negotiate with each other so they
could reunite. To prevent more separate deals, the West Europeans
hastily erected higher standards than they already had: higher
wage, environmental, healthcare, and welfare standards. Most of
them also further lowered their border controls vis-à-vis each other,
started planning a unified currency, and touted more ardently “the
idea of Europe.” This was all decided in the early 1990s, finalized
in the 1992 Maastricht Treaty, and then iconized with great fanfare
in 1993 by rebranding the European Community as the European
Union.

Has it worked? Economically, yes, for the EU’s largest and
most developed countries. But culturally it hasn’t sold very well to
most Europeans, even in those economically successful coun-
tries. Until not so long ago historically (about 1,300 years), most of
Europe was still militantly tribal, even where proto-states existed.
Its German-Slave rivalry and other ethnic rivalries go far back in
the mists of time. Even Western Europe is populated largely by
people whose tribal forebears, if not themselves pushed westward
out of Asia, were pushed out of Eastern Europe by tribes who had been pushed out of Asia. Europe’s many mountain and water barriers helped keep most of those people from homogenizing, particularly those pushed all the way to the British Isles.

The peculiarity of Europe’s past still matters because the origins of ethnic nationalism are specifically European. Europeans did share with the rest of humanity an ability to build empires wherever agriculture had fostered thick populations, but nowhere outside Europe did nationalism take root as well (except in Japan). Today nationalism is worldwide solely due to Europe’s pervasive worldwide influence these past few centuries. Even though tribes have been worldwide for eons, only European (and Japanese) tribes evolved into nations prior to Europeans worldwide influence and imperialism.

The tribal (ethnic) roots of nationalism have made citizenship in a democratic nation very different psychologically than subjection under an empire. Democratic nationalism has been a necessary condition for the mass popularity of the ultra-nationalists Mussolini and Hitler, and more recently the mass popularity of ultra-nationalists Jean-Marie Le Pen and Donald Trump. In France, Le Pen founded the National Front party in 1972 and led it until 2011 when his daughter Marine Le Pen took it over. Le Pen père’s campaigning in 2005 contributed mightily to the referendum defeat in France of a strengthened EU constitution with an EU president. A few days later a Dutch referendum also defeated that stronger EU constitution, and with that “the idea of Europe” had clearly reached its limit. Now, Britain’s Brexit vote is hastening the reverse flow, the ebbing of European unity. Nationalistic and xenophobic politicians in other EU countries, notably Marine Le Pen in France, are plotting how to have “exit” referendums held in their own countries. Wags are coining neologisms like Frexit, Departugal, Italeave, and so on. My English colleague Simon Dodd, who is neither pro- nor anti-Brexit, puts it this way:

Britain went into the Common Market at a time when it was a trade policy. In the ensuing years, it morphed into something wholly different. Suppose that in the 1970s the United States had joined a NAFTA-like trade agreement. Then over the ensuing years, more and more members joined, and in the early 1990s, NAFTA declared itself sovereign over vast swaths of legislation, arrogating to
itself the right to invalidate U.S. legislation, and renamed itself the American Union, all without so much as a by-your-leave from any Americans except a few leaders. One can readily see that many Americans might resent this. It’s not just ‘What shall the rules be?’ but ‘Who shall make the rules?’ (Personal communication).

So one wonders: Is any other political vision “out there” besides the European Union? Also, by extension, is any other political vision possible here in the United States besides (1) Trump’s xenophobic vision and (2) the neoliberal establishment’s vision of ever more international trade agreements to dictate ever more pervasive neoliberal regimentation?

I would like to suggest “small is beautiful” decentralism (although I admit decentralism may be a bit idealistic in this age of empires and multinational corporations). Decentralism need not be xenophobic or even ethnic. It need not even be negative since its adherents think, as Dorothy Day did, of “a new society within the shell of the old, a society in which it will be easier to be good” (Quoted in Tom Cornell, “A Brief Introduction to the Catholic Worker Movement,” at www.catholicworker.org/cornell-history. Accessed August 15, 2016).

One version of decentralism is the bioregional movement in the US. Many versions of decentralism currently circulate in Scotland, where they help strengthen the Scottish movement to leave the UK (also admittedly fed now by many other Scots’ desire to stay in the EU). Decentralism’s leading 21st century prophets were Leopold Kohr, who coined the “human scale” motto and wrote The Breakdown of Nations (1957), and E.F. Schumacher, author of Small Is Beautiful: Economics As If People Mattered (1973) and a pioneer of “appropriate technology.”

Decentralism seems worth consideration even though it can’t come about all at once, being able only to grow incrementally from within society; first economically, no doubt, but then perhaps also politically. Politically, in the US, many New England towns still practice direct democracy as they have for centuries. Thomas Jefferson viewed the direct democracy of New England’s “little republics” as the mother root of the American Revolution and the best hope for the US remaining a republic. Therefore he reproduced New England towns on westward by writing 36-square mile
townships into his Land Ordinance that Congress passed in 1784. Jefferson and that ordinance gave the townships very strong powers—powers that were reduced but by no means eliminated when Congress passed the Northwest Ordinances of 1785 and 1787 that set up the Northwest Territory (now Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, and Wisconsin). Many states farther west also adopted such townships, and as of now townships exist in 20 of the northeastern, Midwestern, and Plains states. And all states, of course, contain municipalities.

Clearly most of us as individuals living in the US, even when we participate in advocacy groups, lack access to national levers of social, economic, and political change. But we do have access to such levers at local levels. We have access to means of incremental change from the bottom up.

Paul Salstrom, PhD, teaches history at St. Mary-of-the-Woods College near Terre Haute, Indiana. He may be contacted at PSalstrom@smwc.edu.

After Brexit and Toward “TrumPutin”: Splitting and Building Bridges Between the EU and Russia

Juhani Ihanus—University of Helsinki

Before the Brexit vote, Prime Minister David Cameron stated during the campaign that Russian President Vladimir Putin would be “happy” if the UK decided to quit the European Union (EU). After the vote, Putin stressed that Britons “want to be more independent” and are not “happy” about their own security, EU migration policies, or the financial support they must give to weaker member states. In his nationalistically hierarchic interpretation, Putin concluded, “Nobody wants to feed and subsidize weaker economies, maintain other states, entire nations.”

There are changes of mentality in the relationship between Russia and the UK (and the EU) as a consequence of the Brexit vote. At the recent North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) summit in Warsaw (July 9, 2016), Cameron recommended “hard-headed dialogue” with Moscow to prevent any “misunderstanding or miscalculation” that could lead to conflict. He told the summit, “We are not seeking confrontation with Russia. We are working to
prevent it so we will continue to pursue a twin-track approach of deterrence and dialogue."

Cameron was mainly sticking with the old Cold War style of relations with Russia, fostering the good old days with the US even while other voices can be heard that threaten the EU unity, not only in the UK but elsewhere too. For example, France is trying to gain a stronger position in the EU, and that means a new attitude toward Russia. At the same NATO summit, before Cameron’s speech, President François Hollande made it clear that France regarded Russia as a partner, not a threat, and that NATO had no decisive role in determining what kind of relations Europe should have with Moscow.

According to polling from July 2016, out of 16 countries surveyed by the respected Ipsos polling organization, Russia was the only one in which a large majority of respondents approved of the British leave vote, with only 5% being sad about it. Just over a third of Britons thought Brexit was the right decision, and 49% were saddened by it. It is noteworthy that France, among the polled EU countries, was least sad (25% of respondents), and of US citizens, only 20% were sad about the Brexit vote.

Actually, Putin may not be so happy about Brexit, but as a clever strategist, he seems to be ready to gain from the split in the EU, focusing on new partners wherever he can find them. One result of Brexit is the intensifying cooperation between Russia and China. The effects of the Brexit reach out globally, also to China, where President Xi Jinping first urged Britain to stay in the EU to avoid harming the global economy. However, Chinese analysts are increasingly beginning to see an asset in Brexit: a weakened Europe. Russia and China have continued and deepened their economic co-operation, both partners agreeing that they do not need any reminders of democratic freedoms.

A surprise result could be that Russia would come even closer to the EU, which might change its relations in the wake of new (also female) leaders. Could Russia become an EU member? Actually, Russia has asked several times to join NATO, a fact that has been forgotten in most history textbooks. The earliest proposal by Vyacheslav Molotov that the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) join NATO dates back to 1954. The proposal was part of Moscow’s extensive campaign for European collective security, and was rejected by the Western powers. Putin asked in 2000 and
2003 to join NATO, but his vision of a united Europe has been brushed off.

Russia, the familiar enemy of the Western mentality, is forcing Western leaders to adjust to a new mindset as the old relations and alliances appear on the verge of change. The EU integration process is far from a success story; the mentality of the elites does not fit with that of the “ordinary” citizens. As irrational as it may look, in the puzzle of Ukraine and the EU sanctions against Russia, there are more chances than before of Russia’s “re-entry” into the EU. Russia is already a member of the World Trade Organization after 18 years of negotiations. A surprise participant, a grey eminence of the EU, European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker, showed up at the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum before the Brexit vote and talked about “building bridges” between the EU and Russia.

Public opinion in Russia about the EU has vacillated. When recently asked if they would want their country to join the EU, 67% of Russians said they were against it, and only 18% were in favor of it occurring anytime in the next 20 years, according to DW-Trend, a survey of Russians for the German media company Deutsche Welle. Back in December 2010, 54% of the Russian public said they were in favor of their country joining the EU within the next 20 years—with a third believing it could happen within the next five years.

The rapprochement between Trump and Putin has added a new psychopolitical dimension, a strange case of mirroring, both sides seeing a psychic, economic, and political gain in fusion—“Trumputin.” Such a fusion is unparalleled in the US relations to Russia, although George W. Bush, in 2011, looked Putin in the eye and found him “very straight-forward and trustworthy.” When earlier analyzing Russian politics, I referred to “twinning,” and “double leadership” (see my “Putin and Medvedev: Double Leadership in Russia,” *Journal of Psychohistory*, 38 [3], 2011, 251–284). Now, a new shift of twinning, male bonding, and tough-leader posing between Trump and Putin is taking place. Already in October 2007, Trump told Larry King on CNN that Putin “is doing a great job in rebuilding the image for Russia and rebuilding Russia.” Later, in his *Time to Get Tough* (2011) book, he praised Putin’s “intelligence” and “no-nonsense way.” In his now famous tweet (from June 2013), Trump wondered, “Will he become my new best friend?” Putin has supported Trump’s campaign, thus giving rise to
the conspiracy theories and allegations of Trump’s having a “Siberian Candidate” role. We have come a long way from the US-UK goodbye hug between Barack Obama and David Cameron, which was like yesterday.

In the aftermath of Brexit, Cameron resigned from the political scene and gave his full support to Britain’s second female prime minister, Theresa May. His exit has become an entrée for new leadership scenarios, not only in the UK but between superpowers. World politics consists of the mirrorings of the selves and the nations. It maintains individual and collective needs for the supportive and nurturing other, the strategically significant ally who promises the venues for the human resources and the arsenals of destruction. Competition over influence and prestige goes on and on, until the final exit.

Juhani Ihanus, PhD, is Adjunct Professor of Cultural Psychology at the University of Helsinki, Adjunct Professor of the History of Science and Ideas at the University of Oulu, and Senior Lecturer and Member of the Board of Directors at the Open University of the University of Helsinki. He is also an international member of the Psychohistory Forum who has published books and articles on psychohistory, cultural and clinical psychology, and the history of psychology. Dr. Ihanus may be reached at juhani.ihanus@helsinki.fi.

The Psychology of Extreme Nationalism Special Feature

Regressive Modernism, Fear, and Fromm’s Escape from Freedom

Peter Lange—German Public Radio

The Western world faces a great danger from the regressive movement that a top international human rights official recently spoke strongly against. Said Raad al-Hussein is a diplomat from the Hashemite Jordanian royal house and, since last year, the United Nations (UN) High Commissioner for Human Rights. Surely, he has not expressed himself as undiplomatically in his entire professional life as he did in his speech at the security conference of Den Haag in early September 2016. He spoke of the Dutch politi-
cian Geert Wilders, saying that,

all of those like him…the populists, demagogues and political fantasists….  All seek in varying degrees to recover a past, halcyon and so pure in form, where sunlit fields are settled by peoples united by ethnicity or religion…living peacefully in isolation, pilots of their fate, free of crime, foreign influence and war. A past that most certainly, in reality, did not exist anywhere, ever (See the full speech at: https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/sep/06/un-human-rights-high-commisioner-zeid-raad-al-husseinsHim-speech-reject-populist-bigots-in-full).

In order to leave no doubt, Al-Hussein provided the names of those he meant: Donald Trump, the Hungarian Prime Minister Victor Orban, the Czech president Milos Zeman, the Austrian politician Norbert Hofer, the Slovakian Prime Minister Robert Fico, French politician Madame Le Pen, the Brexit leader Nigel Farage, and also the terror militia Da’esh, or ISIS. In his excitement, he must have forgotten Vladimir Putin, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, and Poland’s Jaroslaw Kaczynski. He, Al-Hussein, the diplomat continued, lived through the Balkan wars as a member of the UN peacekeeping force, in which he saw “wars so cruel, so devastating, which flowed from this same factory of deceit, bigotry and ethnic nationalism.”

It was surely not only anger, but also powerlessness and perplexity that drove the UN Human Rights Commissioner to this unusually undiplomatic statement. What is happening in this world? Why do so many people everywhere react so completely irrationally and follow such leaders? Why are so many ordinary individuals willing to throw the values of the enlightenment and humanity overboard? What can one do to understand and oppose this trend?

The social psychologist Erich Fromm in 1941 published his breakthrough *Escape from Freedom*, as a refugee from Nazi Germany. It appeared in German in Switzerland during 1945 with the title *Fear of Freedom* (note that this and all other German titles and terms have been translated into English). Presumably the American title, *Escape from Freedom*, better captures the content of the book today. At the end of the 1920s, Fromm had investigated the mentality and opinions of industrial and white-collar workers in
Germany through interviews, and in exile—after the National Socialists came to power—formulated his concept of the authoritarian social character: authoritarianism, destructiveness, retreat, and adjustment. These were the main elements of Germany’s societal development that paved Hitler’s way to power (Erich Fromm and Wolfgang Bonß, *Workers and White Color Workers on the Eve of the Third Reich: A Social Psychological Study*, 1980).

Today we know about the devastating psychological effects of the Great Depression during the 1930s, that were all the more serious in Germany because of the currency inflation just a few years earlier. At least as important were the basic changes that began much earlier with the industrialization and the literal “transformation of the world” in the 19th century (See Jürgen Osterhammel, *The Transformation of the World*, 2014, an English edition). The steam engine, and later much more powerfully the harnessing of electricity, brought about transformations in economics and society that forced changes on many people, brought about totally different models for living and, because of their rapidity, asked too much in the way of adaptation of too many people. Industrial modernity and the unleashing of the markets induced fear, even if it was cushioned then by government social policy. These changes led to resistance because they threatened traditional values and the organization of society. Consequently, long before Hitler became prominent, there was a “young conservative” movement whose members believed in a “conservative revolution.” The movement wanted to overcome the contradictions and conflicts of modern society and the supposedly inept parliamentary democracies through an authoritarian system and folk nationalistic concepts.

History does not repeat itself, but if one compares today’s situation with that of the past, one finds all the elements that lead to fear of freedom.

The economic consequences and psychological effects of the subprime crisis of 2008 have not been overcome. The bursting of the housing bubble in the United States and in Spain threw millions of people into misery and brought the worldwide banking system to the brink of ruin. The resulting Euro and governmental debt crises are still with us. Central banks’ reduction of interest rates to almost zero and even below has curtailed people’s ability to save money, contradicting generations of values and norms of life in Western societies. It destroys planning for the future precisely when private savings are necessary for the later years in life. All
this disturbs people profoundly and feeds fear.

In the meantime, there are two important currents: digitalization and globalization; they are equivalent in their dynamics to the First (steam engine) and Second (electricity) Industrial Revolutions. We know, or at least suspect, that they will overturn the industrial world as we know it. There is literally no economic activity that will not be affected by them. Even some highly qualified and well-paid jobs will disappear and the consequences will reach all the way into the upper middle class. This too creates fear. Those who have something to lose are afraid. Only fury remains for those who have already fallen off the proverbial cliff and lost everything. Trump and Farage fish in a cloudy lake of anxiety and raw emotion.

Next, there is hypercommunication. Because every human being can at any time and within seconds communicate with the entire world, the mass of information that everyone must sort out every day and determine what is important, relevant, and true or false is a singularly crippling demand. As a self-defense, proven knowledge is replaced by faith and ideology. Information is only accepted if it supports what the individual wants to believe. Social media thus primarily acts as agents of self-assurance. Information that could undermine this self-assurance will not even be acknowledged.

Hypermobility, in the harmless “democratic” version, means that travel to almost every point on earth is affordable for almost everybody. In the “fear inducing” version, it means human beings of the poor South can more easily reach the rich states of the North (that is, Western Europe and North America). What hypermobility and hypercommunication mean in combination has been shown in the past year during the so-called refugee crisis (in Europe); it would not have been so dramatic without these two factors.

Much of the fear of these latest refugees can be linked to their Islamic religion and identity. International terrorism has become the provenance of Islam. The images of 9/11 are still in all of our heads, just as we cannot ignore, in spite of our best efforts to repress it, the media-induced blood trail that Islamic terrorism has left in the last 15 years. Al Qaeda, ISIS, and company have provoked a populist reaction around the world. So now, archaic, violent Islam is wrongly seen as the “real” Islam. This approach is treasonous to the hundreds of millions of peaceful Muslims for
whom religion is just as much a private affair as it is for most Christians in the world. But populists need an enemy image and, because of political correctness, as Jews are not permitted to be so again, they choose Muslims and other ethnic and religious groups.

If the enemy is not Islamic terrorism, then it is the fear of too much foreign cultural infiltration. This, too, should not be underestimated, even in societies in which people are increasingly less aware of their own historical, religious, and cultural roots. For example, in the Czech Parliament a delegate recently suggested the creation of a non-partisan working group that would work against the mixing of Czech and other cultures. He might as well have called for a sieve in which to gather water. This is the current situation.

With this point, we reach the most important concepts that Fromm described as the authoritarian social character.

Under authoritarianism, the attractiveness of supposedly strong men like Trump, Putin, and Orbán, is that they reaffirm people’s belief that liberal, constitutional democracies either do not reflect their national character (Orban and Putin) or are an expression of a rotten political establishment (Trump). Then there is destructiveness and aggression. Trump confronts uninhibited and destructive capitalism with an extreme aggressiveness; oddly enough, he is the very person who profited from this capitalism. Even more oddly, his aggressiveness does not direct itself against structures, but against marginal groups. This, too, is a common thread for extreme nationalists. It may be the Roma (gypsies) or the refugees who need to be fought against, or like in Britain, European Union (EU) foreigners who are using EU laws and Britain’s generosity.

Finally, there is retreat; here we are with Brexit and those societies that would like to follow its approach. The temptation is to pull back into a national, national-socialistic, or even folkish world, a supposedly unspoiled world, but one that never existed. After they stoke fear, populists hype these false images. Europe and the US have always had cultures meet each other in conflict and cooperation, not always peacefully and often with energy-filled frictions, but mostly productively.

In 2011, the German sociologist Oliver Nachtwey used the concept of “regressive modernism” for the first time (Sheets for German and International Policy, 2011). This year he used the
concept again in an analysis of the economic and social situation in Germany; he is referring in particular to the developments in West Germany before and after the collapse of communism and the East German government (The Descent Society. On Rebellion in the Regressive Modern Age, 2016). For me, this is a useful concept in order to understand the worldwide movement of populist currents. In psychology, regression means a defense mechanism, that is, a “reappearance of earlier evolutionarily behavioral forms after severe failures and frustrations” (Brockhaus-Lexikon, Edition 20, Vol. 18, 183).

In essence, this is what I discussed so far: Brexit and the populist tendencies in the US and Europe are primarily an expression of a psychological disturbance that follows frustration and fear. The question now is: How can one confront this phenomenon? Most likely with the instruments of social therapists and psychologists; that is, to take these fears seriously, talk about them, and try to accommodate them productively.

Easily said! Politicians are definitely not psychologists, but they ought to be responsible for reducing fear through an approach that controls unleashed finance capitalism, reconstructs social modernism, and acknowledges that a solid societal framework must be guaranteed for an autonomous life that is relatively free of fear. They must prevent the free-fall into the societal abyss and give a new and realistic chance to those who have been pushed out of a comfortable lifestyle. The free market is not going to do this.

All this takes time. In France, Greece, Spain, and Italy this needed time is running out. In countries like Germany, the window of opportunity is greater than in Britain, where this window is closed for the time being. The United States stands (before the election in November) at the brink. It will take trust in politicians who have the strength to conceptually think beyond today and who are willing to act. It requires trust in the democratic system that is hopefully able to deliver appropriate decisions at the required tempo.

In the end we have no choice. We do, however, have the solace of Albert Camus’ observation that we must see Sisyphus as a happy human being.

Peter Lange, PhD, is a journalist who lives in Berlin and Prague. He studied journalism, history, and political science and now works with Deutschlandradio (the national public radio in
Germany). From 2007 until the summer of 2016, he was the editor-in-chief of Deutschlandradio Kultur (Germany Radio Culture). Since August 2016, he is a correspondent for Deutschlandradio and ARD (a consortium of public broadcasters in Germany) in Prague. Dr. Lange is the author of An American European. The Two Lives of Conductor Hans Schwieger, 2015. He may be reached at pslange2000@aol.com.

Glorious Nation/s

Peter W. Petschauer—Appalachian State University

The best.
The very best.
Better than the very best.
The greatest.
The very greatest.
Far greater than the greatest.
The most successful.
The most successful ever.
The most significant.
The most significant of all times.
Beyond imagination,
brilliant, powerful, privileged.
Never before such men and women,
and places.
All meant to endure forever.
All destroyed from within.
Remember them?
Shang’s China;
Ashoka’s India;
Rameses’ Egypt;
Augustus’ Rome;
Kublai Khan’s Mongolia;
Montezuma’s Aztek Empire;
Peter I’s Russia;
Hitler’s Third Reich;
Stalin’s Soviet Union.
Add the USA today?
Emperors, kings, and pharaohs;
presidents, prime ministers, and leaders.
Arrogant and self-absorbed;
power-hungry and mad for success.
Political hacks and maneuverers –
yes-men and sycophants –
present in every palace.
Family greed and corporate malfeasance –
noble privilege in different editions.
Warlords, knights, and generals –
brilliants and killers by different names.
Human and natural resources
wasted for a privileged few –
slavery and poverty;
no more than collateral damage.
Religious supporters and crusaders –
the long-standing tradition never to be ignored.
Education attempted and abandoned –
access to privilege only for the few.
Nothing taught –
nothing learned.
None ever ready for the end.

*Peter Petschauer’s biography may be found on page 145.*

**Nationalist Leadership: Hitler, Mussolini, Berlusconi, Putin, and Trump**

*Peter Petschauer*—Appalachian State University

Enthusiasm and fear guide most of the more extreme nationalisms in the Western world; enthusiasm for country, flag, racial purity, violence, and a leader—along with fear of the unknown, loss of status and income, exclusion, the outsider, and the other—make a powerful mix.

On the enthusiasm side, we have such slogans as “Deutschland über alles,” that is, “Germany above all others.” Germans felt that their country had been great before “the war” (World War I) and it must rise again. That slogan that is nicely matched by Donald Trump’s “Make America Great Again.” In other words, America was great, but it has lost its luster and it must be restored. This particular enthusiasm expresses itself rather specifically, as in, our country stands or must stand above all others; it is the most important and special nation in the world.
This appeal, along with others, say by Vladimir Putin, is often directed at the principal or leading ethnic group of a nation and, within it, its men. In Germany before Adolf Hitler, in Italy before Benito Mussolini and Silvio Berlusconi, and in Russia before Vladimir Putin, men were particularly affected by the effects of the loss of WWI in the case of Germany, international labor conditions in the case of Italy, and an ongoing international embargo in the case of Russia. Men in the leading groups felt or feel their status in their societies, families, and households had eroded. In this vein, nationalist politicians tend to blame this situation on decisions of previous leaders, especially if they were from a minority, like in Germany, where they blamed the post-WWI government they viewed as Jewish, or in the US, where they blame a specific African American, Barack Obama. These leaders tend as well to blame outsiders, like the European Community (EC) in the case of Berlusconi and the US in the case of Russia.

Fear is the other factor exploited by nationalistic leaders; for example, fear of the other who can be strangers, foreigners, other ethnic groups, women, gays, lesbians and transgendered people, and terrorists (or partisans in the older expression). These others, these outsiders, have repeatedly become groups to scorn and are showered with enmity. In 1930s Germany, these outsiders were not only Jews and Gypsies, but also outsiders to internal “normalcy,” that is, gays and lesbians. In Russia, it is Africans and, once more, gays and lesbians. In Italy as well, it is gays and lesbians. In November 2010, Berlusconi offered the following: “It’s better to like beautiful girls than to be gay” (BBC, August 2, 2013). Not to be undone, Trump said that, “You know, it really doesn’t matter what the media write as long as you’ve got a young, and beautiful, piece of ass” (ThingsTrumpSaid.com). He has made it clear in addition that the outsiders are Mexicans and Muslims. He has been very specific:

When Mexico sends its people, they’re not sending the best. They’re not sending you, they’re sending people that have lots of problems and they’re bringing those problems with us. They’re bringing drugs. They bring crime. They’re rapists... And some, I assume, are good people (http://www.marieclaire.co.uk/blogs/550112/donald-trump quotes.html#fCHyd6fUrCZps71.99).

Part of the appeal to the “native” population was and re-
mains that outsiders are said to undermine the wellbeing and progress of insiders. The outsiders’ single purpose is perceived to be none other than to rattle the insiders and undermine their contentment. In some cases, the attacks were argued very specifically; to quote Joseph Goebbels:

   Every Jew is our enemy in this historic struggle, regardless of whether he vegetates in a Polish ghetto or carries on his parasitic existence in Berlin or Hamburg or blows the trumpets of war in New York or Washington. All Jews by virtue of their birth and their race are part of an international conspiracy against National Socialist Germany (‘Die Juden sind schuld!’) *Das eherne Herz* [Munich: Zentralverlag der NSDAP, 1943], 85-91. The original essay was dated November 16, 1941 and is from the German Propaganda Archive, Calvin College).

   Or as Heinrich Himmler put it in regard to Gypsies on December 8, 1938:

   Experience gained in combating the Gypsy nuisance, and knowledge derived from race-biological research, have shown that the proper method of attacking the Gypsy problem seems to be to treat it as a matter of race” (Holocaust Education & Archive Research Team, www.HolocaustResearchProject.org).

He did not change his mind over time:

   With regard to the destruction of asocial life, Dr. Goebbels is of the opinion that the following groups should be exterminated: Jews and Gypsies unconditionally, Poles who have to serve 3-4 years of penal servitude, and Czechs and Germans who are sentenced to death or penal servitude for life or to security custody for life. The idea of exterminating them by labor is the best (Discussion of Thierack with Dr. Goebbels, Sept. 14, 1942 in Berlin. *Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression*, Volume III [USGPO, Washington, 1946], 496).

   Trump said early on in his quest to attain the US presidency that most Mexicans are criminals and all those who live in the US
illegally need to be deported; after all, they take away jobs from regular Americans and, by the very fact that they are here illegally, they are criminals. Not only that, a wall needs to be built so that Mexico cannot send more criminals, rapists, and drug dealers into the US. That is, like other nationalists before him and today, say in the small country of Hungary, he wants fences against those nasty outsiders, “to make us safe against them.” Some Americans agree with him and feel that they will indeed be safe behind the wall.

The other part of this fear mongering was and is an emphasis on racial purity, meaning pure blood running through veins, blond Germans then and blond Russians now, and of course white men in the US. Not that the leaders who led these explosions of racial and national purity were themselves so. Think of Hitler, who looked like anything but his lauded Aryans. However, those who were perceived to be part of the group felt reassured in their heritage, and of being part of something bigger than themselves, something seemingly positive and generous.

The men who lead enhancements of national sovereignty and attacks on outsiders give the impression of being superbly confident in their correct assessment of their nation’s situation. It is a confidence that reassures men (and women) who feel threatened by external and internal challenges and enemies. As Berlusconi put it, “(I am) the best political leader in Europe and in the world.” Or, “Out of love for Italy, I felt I had to save it from the left” (www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-15642201). Roger Cohen had him pegged well when he wrote:

> Widely ridiculed, endlessly written about, long unscathed by his evident misogyny and diverse legal travails, Berlusconi proved a Teflon politician. Nothing stuck. He had the gift of the gab. He had a tone. He connected. He owned a soccer club, for heaven’s sake. Many Italians thought they saw in him one of their own. He served three terms…nine years [in total] as prime minister before an ignominious downfall (“The Trump-Berlusconi Syndrome,” *The New York Times*, March 14, 2016).

Italians felt attracted to his bravado and his personal and family success. Some men felt reassured that he could attract young women to be (in bed) with him; a leader needs to be strong in many different ways. Trump is not making as much of his sexu-
al prowess, but all the same seems to have sat at the famous Italian’s feet, saying, “I don’t need to go into office for the power. I have houses all over the world, stupendous boats...beautiful airplanes, a beautiful wife, a beautiful family...I am making a sacrifice” (http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-15642201). As Trump sees it: “The beauty of me is that I’m very rich.” (http://www.marieclaire.co.uk/blogs/550112/donald-trump-quotes.html#SkPlt3hjM6stfJc0.99). Putin has made much of his physical prowess, be it with bow and arrow, bare-chested on horseback, in black attire with motorcycle gangs, and away from his wife.

Certainly a particular group of men (and women) are drawn to this show, otherwise why engage in it? Maybe some see themselves as successful as Berlusconi, as audacious as Putin, and as uninhibited as Trump. Indeed, here is the impression of strength and, if a particular point or idea does not seem readily evident to followers, these leaders simply lie. Hitler wrote in Mein Kampf, “In the big lie, there is always a certain force of credibility.”

With the lure of enthusiasm and the inspiration of it come the appeal and use of violence and war. Past nationalists were not alone with threatening or using these techniques. Many years ago Goebbels made this dramatic appeal for war in the Berliner Sportpalast on February 18, 1943: “Do you believe in the final and total victory of Germany’s troops?” (Helmut Heiber, ed., Goebbels Reden 1932-1945 [Bindlach: Gondrom Verlag, 1991, 203-05]. Originally in the Frankfurter Zeitung, February 20, 1943, 7). More recently, Trump said to roaring applause that he would “nuke” ISIS into oblivion. Then and today, the applause makes one shiver and wonder, not only because of the content of the words, but also because of the response to them. The images of Syrian cities in ruins have as little impact today on some Americans as the loss at Stalingrad on some Germans at the outset of 1943.

However, Trump and Putin are not alone; Putin uses war, or the threat of war, constantly and successfully, be it in the Caucasus, Ukraine, or Syria. He tells Russians that the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) is about to attack and so he must attack first. The Russian military has not been so verbally and financially supported since Stalin’s time. With this stance, he is able to create an intense nationalism and support for himself. The people, as are others in other countries with authoritarian figures at the helm, are caught up in the idea that war will lead to victory and end the trou-
bles that beset them every day.

Brutality is part of this scene. Whether it is the brutality of murdering one’s enemies, as Putin is wont to do, or torturing to death Socialists and Communists in 1930s Germany. Our own violent media culture and private weapons arsenals satisfy the needs of some for personal protection but bode poorly for those who will be exposed to their brutality, given a chance. Already we are willing to tolerate 43 murders per day in America!

Let me conclude with this: few of Germany’s thinkers thought in 1932/33 that Hitler would initiate any of the steps he articulated clearly before he was elected. He did and ruined Germany! None of Italy’s leading minds thought that Berlusconi would actually engage in some of the things he promised. He did and left Italy broke! Few Russians thought that Putin would turn out to be the dictator he has become. He did! This should not have been a surprise, given his KGB past. They even look back at the “good old days” under Joseph Stalin. Where will this story end? Those who hope that Trump will do some of the things he promises will not be surprised when he does; the others might want to keep in mind how other full-blown or aspiring dictators acted once they ascended to power.

Peter Petschauer’s biography may be found on page 145.

David Lotto—Featured Journal of Psychohistory Editor

Paul H. Elovitz—Clio’s Psyche

David Lotto was born as the elder of two sons on December 18, 1946 in Manhattan to first generation Jewish-American parents whose parents came from Eastern Europe. His father worked several jobs, including as an x-ray technician, as well as a salesman of home products, cemetery plots, and mutual funds before working for the New York City Housing Authority. His mother, meanwhile, worked as a homemaker and secretary and later as an elementary school teacher in New York City public schools. The family moved to the Bronx when he was five, and he graduated from the Bronx High School of Science at age 16. In 1967 David graduated from Brandeis University with a double major in physics and psychology.
as well as a minor in the philosophy of science. He then entered
the clinical psychology graduate program at the University of Chi-
cago in 1967, where he connected with David Bakan who was in-
terviewed by Clio's Psyche as a featured scholar in our September
1998 issue. After President Richard Nixon ended graduate school
deferrals for the Vietnam War, he and Bakan went to York Uni-
versity in Toronto, where he received his master's degree in 1969
and doctoral degree in psychology in 1974.

For two years he served as the chief psychologist at Corn-
wall General Hospital before starting his own private practice in
Pittsfield, Massachusetts, which is still active today. He underwent
a seven-year analysis with Paul Lippmann and completed the four-
year psychoanalytic training program at the Westchester Institute
for Psychoanalysis and Psychotherapy.

Dr. Lotto is the editor of the Journal of Psychohistory where
he has reintroduced refereeing. He has authored over 25 journal
articles in the Journal of Psychohistory, the Journal of the Ameri-
can Psychoanalytic Association, the Journal of the American Acad-
emy of Psychoanalysis, and Clio’s Psyche about many topics in-
cluding Freud, sacrifice, the Manhattan Project, politics, the Tea
Party, advertising, psychoanalytic history, war, violence, terrorism,
and cults. In addition, he has also written many book reviews. He
resides in Pittsfield, Massachusetts, where he practices psychoanal-
ysis and psychotherapy, and lives with his wife Norah Walsh. They
have three daughters and three grandchildren. Lotto (DL) was in-
terviewed online by the editor (PHE) who has known him for about
three decades.

PHE: When did you first get interested in psychology and psychoa-
nalysis?

DL: In my sophomore year at Brandeis where I was a physics ma-
ajor, I took my first psychology course, Psychology 18b: Motivation,
with Richard Jones. We read some Freud, Erikson, Maslow (who
taught at Brandeis), and Richard’s favorite, Andras Angyal. I liked
Freud, particularly Civilization and Its Discontents (1930). It was a
whole new interesting and exciting world.

PHE: What personal factors influenced your openness to psycholo-
gy and psychoanalysis?

DL: Curiosity about trying to understand how things work, first in
physics about things inanimate and then in psychology about peo-
ple, which included me, although there was a great deal of interest in understanding what was up with the various behavioral strange-
ess, which I saw around me. Also, I probably was motivated to understand more about the one-year-long severe depressive episode my father had undergone in my freshman year.

**PHE:** What brought you to psychohistory?

**DL:** What always interested me about psychoanalysis was how it could be a powerful way of understanding a whole lot of things that humans, individually but especially in large groups, were about, far more than psychoanalysis as a therapeutic method. Psychoanalysis can and has been “applied” in many areas, such as literature, art, and biography; but for me, understanding current events of importance was the most interesting and valuable area to which psychoanalytic insights could be applied. This implies examining context, and most importantly, the history; how things got to be the way they are, in order to best understand what is going on now. This led to psychohistory, which recognizes psychological motivation as important in understanding both the present and the past.

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

**DL:** Broadly. Anything that explores the psychological motivations that are involved in driving human-caused events past, present, and future.

**PHE:** How did you come to edit the Journal of Psychohistory?

**DL:** I was asked to help out by a number of people when Lloyd deMause was no longer able to continue as editor. I have been regularly attending the IPA conventions since the 1980s and had published a number of articles in the Journal. I got to know both Lloyd and his wife Susan Hein over the years and feel that the journal has, and hopefully will continue, to publish manuscripts that make valuable contributions to our field.

**PHE:** What is your approach to editing the Journal of Psychohistory?

**DL:** To publish original high-quality scholarly articles that explore the motivations of groups and individuals that lead to increasing our understanding of why things are the way they are, and, possibly, how they might be changed.

**PHE:** What are you working on now? What is its importance and when do you expect to have it published?
DL: Nothing at the moment other than adding additional material to my recent paper on terrorism.

PHE: What is your primary affiliation? Is it psychology, psychoanalysis, psychohistory?

DL: I have affiliations to all three, as well as being a clinician. I also have interests and connections in many other areas. I don’t feel the need to identify one as primary; I am comfortable having multiple identities and doing different professional as well as non-professional activities at different times and in different contexts.

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

DL: A broad liberal arts education, with a good bit of history included, graduate school in clinical psychology (particularly learning about research methods in the social sciences to be able to critically evaluate empirical research), and formal psychoanalytic training, particularly learning about the different psychoanalytic models for understanding human behavior.

PHE: What training should a person entering psychohistory today pursue?

DL: Psychoanalytic theory, psychology, political theory, economics, and history. These are the areas that I think are most important for obtaining the fullest understanding of current events.

PHE: I am very appreciative of your ability to bridge the divide between different psychohistorians. You have been a member of the oldest psychohistory society, Lifton’s Wellfleet Psychohistory Group, and organizations like the Psychohistory Forum and the International Psychohistorical Association, which have few crossover members or contributors. Please tell me about this ability and how you have done it.

DL: It has to do with taking on a persona, role, or perhaps even an identity. For me it is somewhat similar to what I do when I am sitting with patients. Freud and classical analysts describe it as a form of detachment; self-psychologists call it taking an empathic stance. In essence, treating and relating to whomever you are interacting with respectfully and focusing on understanding what they are saying, or the position they are taking, while letting your judgment about the merits of what you are hearing and whether you agree, disagree, like, or don’t like it, remain in the background. This does
not mean that you can’t express your views or reactions, including strong and even passionate disagreement or opposition to the other—but there are specific times, places, and venues in which to do this; and they need to be contained within a respectful framework.

**PHE:** What was it like giving a paper on the psychology of revenge at your first Wellfleet Group meeting about 10 years ago, sitting across from Jane Fonda and next to Norman Mailer?

**DL:** Awesome. Last October was the 50th and alas final meeting of the Wellfleet Psychohistory Group. About 10 years ago, I brazenly sent Robert Lifton a copy of my just written paper titled “The Psychohistory of Vengeance” (2006), as there were several references to his work in it, and told him that my wife Norah and I would be vacationing in Wellfleet for two weeks in June. He and his wife Betty Jean graciously invited us over for drinks on the veranda overlooking the ocean and he invited me to present the paper at the next Wellfleet meeting. The meetings were held in a small one-room structure connected to the main house by an old beam. The room was about 30’ x 15’, with a large conference table with seats around and additional seats lining the walls, and could squeeze in about 40 people. The meetings started on Friday after lunch and went through lunch on Sunday. (Meetings in New York City were occasional luncheons at a restaurant near Lifton’s apartment with a speaker and short discussion.)

So it’s Friday afternoon and I’m first up. I am seated at the table, near the head where Lifton sits. There’s an old guy on my right, who turns and introduces himself as Norman Mailer. Jane Fonda and her lapdog are on the other side of the table. Fonda and Lifton knew each other, as they were both heavily involved in the anti-war movement in the early 1970s.

**PHE:** I have always been struck by your strong concern for economic and political justice. Tell me about your identification with the underdog and how it developed.

**DL:** I just heard this interview with a research psychologist on National Public Radio, describing a set of research studies on this very matter. Their findings are that most people, in some studies as high as 90%, will root for, prefer, and be more sympathetic toward the underdog. True in multiple areas, from rooting for one side or the other in a contest to animated circles rolling or being pushed up hills, the underdog is preferred. So, if most people most of the time are really for the underdog, we have to explain why in the “real
world” underdogs not only don’t do very well, but seem often to be disdained; they’re losers, as Trump would say. The vital question should be how is it that most people’s natural inclination to root for the underdog, which is kind of synonymous with supporting economic and political justice, gets suppressed, and how this situation developed.

PHE: Tell me why you are critical of some fellow psychohistorians, such as Anna Geifman, Nancy Kobrin, and Jerrold Post. If I am correct in remembering that for a while you were critical of Vamik Volkan, please explain that as well.

DL: I wrote a paper about this titled “On the Pot Calling the Kettle Black: the Perils of Psychohistorical Partisanship,” which I think was published in the Journal of Psychohistory about six or seven years ago. The first three authors you mention are all Americans who are writing about the psychopathology of our terrorist enemies, which is part of a sub-genre of psychohistorical and psychological analyses of the bad behavior of our terrorist enemies that has grown up enormously since 9/11. Their descriptions of the pathological motives and actions of the terrorists have a great deal of overlap with the motives and actions of this country. None of the three authors makes the slightest reference to any similar actions committed by the United States. I think this is a problem and certainly affects their credibility in my eyes, as they are showing they have a huge blind spot and one suspects the presence of projective identification—putting one’s bad and unacceptable parts onto the enemy other while maintaining that you and your people are not like that.

My criticism of Volkan is slightly different; he writes of the psychopathology of Greeks, Serbs, and Armenians engendered by the trauma they have experienced, all who are to some extent enemies of the Turks, but says nothing of any similar psychopathology on the part of the Turks, although he is well aware that the Turks have experienced a good deal of their own trauma.

PHE: Recently, at one of our meetings you suggested that I am a Whig historian. Why is this, and how does it reflect our different approaches to improving society?

DL: Any historical analysis that describes a process in which things are getting better as time goes on is doing Whig history, by definition. The tone of disparagement concerning Whig history is that it is obviously a comforting notion. It sure would be nice if basically things were getting better all the time. Then we could feel optimis-
tic and hopeful about the future, which we are passing on to our children and grandchildren, because we have convinced ourselves that things are bound to get better. Such an obvious and blatant wish fulfillment makes such accounts suspect. There’s no difference that I can see in terms of what to do to try to make things better. This is of course a highly desirable and worthwhile thing—it’s just that there’s no guarantee that our endeavors will be successful.

**PHE:** As a teacher of the Holocaust, Stalin’s Gulag, genocide generally, and especially the murder of about a third of my fellow Jews in my own lifetime, I have to take exception to the implication that I may believe things are getting better all the time. They are not. However, I made the case for societal improvement in the Clio’s *Psyche* December 2014 issue in the “Are We More or Less Civilized Symposium.”

**DL:** Indeed, acknowledging that sometimes things do get worse for a while is not inconsistent with Whig history—but “when I take the long historical view, things are generally getting better” is the essence of Whig history.

**PHE:** What do we, as psychohistorians, need to do to strengthen our work?

**DL:** As above, look within more and realize that you and your people are governed by the same or similar motives as those you are attributing to others; and when you write or speak it is important to acknowledge this in some way. Also, I would like to see more scholarly writing—where opinions or analyses are supported by some references.

**PHE:** As an editor and scholar I couldn’t agree more. However, opinion pieces—however valuable—are much easier than doing in-depth research.

**DL:** Yes, they are. But I would argue that they have no place in a scholarly journal—there are many other outlets for opinion editorials—newspapers, newsletters, magazines, and the entire blogosphere.

**PHE:** What is the importance of childhood to psychohistory?

**DL:** A very complicated and controversial issue, essentially the same as the question in developmental psychology of the importance of events of childhood in determining adult behavior. The answers are by no means clear.
**PHE:** How do you explain the growth and psychology of fundamentalism?

**DL:** Long term I would argue there’s far less fundamentalism now than in the past few centuries. There are major problems with defining and categorizing “fundamentalism.” Is it religious only? What about political ideologues? The John Birch Society, the Klan? Were dedicated Nazis fundamentalists? What about Orthodox Jews, flag waving super-patriots, etc.?

**PHE:** What are your thoughts on the psychology and psychodynamics of violence in our world?

**DL:** I have written many words on this subject. Two important factors are the response to narcissistic injury and ways of dealing with accumulated guilt.

**PHE:** How do you understand the psychology of terrorism?

**DL:** Basically as a response to narcissistic injury currently inflicted mostly by the government of the United States and other governments which we support. Narcissistic injuries to Muslims at the hands of Christians goes back to the Crusades, continues through centuries of warfare between Christian Europe and the Ottoman empire, followed by the atrocities and oppression on the part of the colonial powers, chiefly Britain and France, from the collapse of the Ottoman empire at the end of WWI until the end of colonial rule in the early 1960s.

Also, starting in the late 1970s with the “Carter Doctrine,” which declared that assuring an uninterrupted supply of oil from the Persian Gulf was a vital national interest, the United States, with the help of local allied governments, has used military violence against Muslims on numerous occasions and in many locations throughout the predominantly Muslim areas of the world. In addition to protecting our access to oil, there was fighting the Cold War by aiding anyone who would claim to be anti-communist and attacking those we saw as too close with our arch enemy the USSR (as in our support of the Mujahideen in Afghanistan), and most recently, pursuing the Global War on Terrorism have been used as justifications for our use of violence in the Muslim world. The combination of the effects of the intergenerational transmission of trauma and the ongoing drone attacks, bombings, and ground combat engagement in Afghanistan and Iraq, particularly when these acts result in harming innocent civilians, is what fuels the burning
desire for revenge that provides the fuel that feeds anti-Western Muslim terrorism.

**PHE:** While I agree with most of your points, you typically provide only a part of the picture. I am struck by your choosing to make an example of the comparatively liberal Carter, who brokered the Camp David Peace Accords with Begin and the man he called “my brother” Sadat, pushed through the Panama Canal Treaty, and refused to go to war with Islamic states during the oil and the Iran Hostage crises, rather than the Bushes, who actually went to war against Islamic states, and Reagan. Carter’s actions were all done at great political cost, which had much to do with his being a one-term president. Like many political radicals, you appear to me to direct your criticism much more at liberals who are sympathetic to many of your views than to conservatives who totally oppose them.

**DL:** I just looked at the Wikipedia entry for the 1980 Democratic Convention in which Edward Kennedy, who was characterized as the more liberal, was battling the centrist Carter. You cite some of Carter’s more positive actions, but he had an extremely militarily aggressive foreign policy led by arch Cold Warrior Brzezinski (Afghanistan and the “Carter Doctrine”).

**PHE:** In keeping with your call for psychohistorians to question their own motivations, there are two powerful elements to mine. As a young teenager I was repulsed by some very articulate and smart communist relatives who were always harshly critical of the US no matter what our country did. This in the Stalinist period! Consequently, I have a negative gut response to one-sided approaches from the right or left. I dislike the tendency to almost automatically sacrifice that which is better for that which is perfect. My historical perspective also leads me to question this approach—we humans do better, not perfect.

**DL:** Relatives with political blind spots is not a reason to ignore or minimize the many bad things that our country has done.

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

**DL:** Don’t be afraid to speak truth to power. We do this mostly by writing and publishing in our journals on topics that are of genuine human concern. Well-argued analyses of important current events is what we do best. I think this is where our energies should go. Also, as above, strive to be aware of and take into account our own
biases, and work toward minimizing their influence.

**PHE:** How can we recruit new people to the field?

**DL:** Don’t recruit; let people find us.

**PHE:** On a personal note, what was it like and how did it impact your view of life when you and your new wife moved to an island in Newfoundland, living without electricity and running water for a year and a half? Did learning how to build things with your own hands have much impact on your self-image and respect for ordinary workers?

**DL:** Nothing ordinary about building things. It’s something to learn about and has the reward of actually being able to do some useful things, which I think is very good for self-esteem. Living without electricity and running water has been done by many. I think it is a strength to learn how to adapt to conditions as they are where you are.

**PHE:** What books were important to your development?

**DL:** In the realm of non-fiction, not necessarily in order—Freud’s *Civilization and its Discontents*, Erik Erikson’s *Childhood and Society* (1950), Norwood Russell Hanson’s *Patterns of Discovery* (1958), Russell Jacoby’s *The Repression of Psychoanalysis* (1983), and Douglas Kirsner’s *Unfree Associations: Inside Psychoanalytic Institutes* (2000). In fiction I was influenced by John Steinbeck, Kurt Vonnegut, and Thomas Pynchon.

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

**DL:** I liked *Childhood and Society*, but mostly he is a grandfather figure who was important to people I have had contact with.

**PHE:** Are there any mentors who come to mind?

**DL:** Richard Jones, Stephen Toulmin, Ricardo Morant, David Bakan, Anna Ornstein, Robert Lifton, and Paul Lippmann.

**PHE:** What is your psychoanalytic/psychotherapeutic experience and what is its influence on you as a psychohistorian? How has it changed your vision of the world?

**DL:** I see the same motives and ways of looking at the world that I am looking at psychohistorically.

**PHE:** Please list the five people who you think have made the
greatest contribution to psychohistory in order of their contribution.  
**DL:** Erikson, Lifton, deMause, Binion, and you.

**PHE:** Thanks for a most informative and interesting exchange.

## Book Reviews

### Lincoln’s Forever Friendship

**Peter Barglow**—University of California (Davis)


Professor Charles Strozier has published more than a dozen books about history and contemporary events viewed from a psychological perspective. I believe that now the magnitude of his fundamental contributions to psychohistory are approaching those of the pioneer founders of our modern discipline—Erik Erikson, Peter Gay, and Robert Jay Lifton who mentored Strozier as he had been mentored by Erikson. Strozier has written about the New York City Twin Towers terrorist attack, religious cults, political leadership (with Dan Offer), and the psychoanalytic “psychology of the self,” as well as Kohut’s psychobiography. Here he returns to his first scholarly love, Abraham Lincoln.

The seedling for the current volume can be found in a chapter of Strozier’s 1982 book, *Lincoln’s Quest for Union: Public and Private Meanings*, which portrays the President’s intense emotional ties with Kentucky merchant businessman and political activist Joshua Speed (1812-1882), starting in 1837 and ending with Lincoln’s assassination in 1865. I applaud *Your Friend Forever*’s rapid dismissal of the alleged importance of the two men sharing a bed for four years, immediately thereby desexualizing their intense intimacy. Instead, Strozier painstakingly scrutinizes every available bit of hard evidence from letters, newspapers, views from their wives and sundry women, as well as reports from legal/business colleagues and other friends to investigate their durable and paradigmatic male friendship.
For Lincoln, this tie offered moral, spiritual, and emotional protection, “a healing balm” for his core self-issues. These included recurrent severe depression with suicidal thoughts, heterosexual insecurity, and self-esteem vulnerability leftover from the traumatic after-effects of the death of his early love, Ann Rutledge, when she was 22 and Lincoln was 26. This agonizing loss may have reawakened the pain of the demise of his mother, Nancy Hanks, when he was only nine years old. Lincoln, in turn, helped Speed surmount his daunting fear of marital intimacy. The two friends’ prolonged courtship rituals are presented so thoroughly and vividly, they represent a type of educational cognitive model. Insights gained may serve the young even in their initiation of lasting emotional ties through an optimal use of today’s dating sites. Perhaps an in-depth grasp of the Speed-Lincoln attachment may today help us comprehend why politicians as dissimilar from each other as Carson, Gingrich, and Christie remain with the current candidate Donald Trump of Lincoln’s Republican Party, while many others have abandoned him.

Lincoln and Speed’s intense mutuality creates a foundation for conceptualizing the vast potential for growth promotion of non-sexual mutuality. Strozier in this latest contribution is informed by Kohut’s formulation of the “idealizing” and “grandiose self,” of “mirroring” and “twin-ship” transferences, rather than by Freud’s prioritizing of infantile sexuality with formulations of Oedipal and pre-Oedipal libidinal attachments. But his book remains miraculously free of psychological jargon, and scrupulously avoids “grand theory,” while remaining close to everyday life and direct observation. Respect for both facts and evidence reveal our author to be the quintessential historian.

The investigation of prolonged, mutually enhancing friendship relations of men and women has largely been neglected outside of romantic fiction, opera, and poetry. Their genesis (which can’t be accidental) and psychodynamics are certainly unlike those of siblings, the distortions of whose parental transferences can never be extinguished. Shared suffering of childhood experiences that have been integrated and surmounted may be more pivotal than even shared common values. Lincoln’s 1863 Emancipation Proclamation of slaves in the Confederacy, while politically daring, represented also a modest step toward the human equality of Negroes (as African-Americans were called during the 19th century) and white men. Joshua Speed (in contrast to his older brother James, Lin-
coln’s Attorney General, who supported black male voting) was a bigoted slave owner until 1865.

Lincoln and Joshua Speed shared common anguish about a possible breakup of a fledgling United States. Speed was highly influential, perhaps crucial, in the decision made by Kentucky, one out of four slave states, never to secede from the Union. But their psychologically strange union seems to have been cemented by a different set of abiding personality traits. What were they? Since it is too late to place the two men on the couch, we have to be satisfied with educated speculations. Lincoln once wrote to Speed, “I now have no doubt that it is the peculiar misfortune of both you and me, to dream dreams of Elysium far exceeding all that anything earthly can realize” (186). Those who dream together stay together, my own mother used to say.

It is estimated that there are over 11,000 books about Abraham Lincoln. Of these, Charles Strozier has given us the two finest examples, combining historical detail with profound psychological understanding. I urge you to buy this volume and read it, if you are not already this book’s lucky beneficiary.

Peter Barglow, MD, is a retired doctor and former professor of psychiatry at both Northwestern University School of Medicine and the University of California at Davis Medical School. His recent publications about emotional trauma were published in the American Journal of Psychiatry. He is a Research Associate of the Psychohistory Forum who may be contacted at peter@barglow.com.

Sudhir Kakar’s Contributions

Alan Roland—Psychoanalyst in Private Practice


To an extraordinary extent, Sudhir Kakar embodies the two sides of Indian men’s reactions to British colonial denigration. On the one hand, he joins a long line of Indian intellectuals and reformers reaffirming the value and uniqueness of Indian identity and culture vis-à-vis the pervasive British denigration. He brings two
strengths to this endeavor. The first is a psychoanalytic model that takes into account sociocultural, sociohistorical, and religious factors through his discipleship with and use of Erik Erikson’s broad theory. He applies this to Indian culture in a meticulous, scholarly way in a variety of areas that has resulted in important contributions. The second strength is being a truly gifted writer, one of the very best if not the best of contemporary psychoanalysts, as evidenced by his being awarded the Goethe Prize for Literature, the only psychoanalyst since Freud to receive it.

On the other hand, in his application of psychoanalytic theory to Indian psychological makeup and spiritual practices and experiences, Indians emerge as either inferior or psychopathological. He asserts they have an underdeveloped ego with poor secondary process thinking, a superego that is not internalized, and vague ego boundaries. Taking Western psychoanalytic norms as superior and universal, he also manifests an identification with colonial ideology, not that unusual in Indian men of his generation.

Nowhere do these two sides of Kakar manifest so strongly as in his work on mysticism, to which nearly half of this book is devoted. Kakar is one of the very first after Erich Fromm and Daisetz T. Suzuki’s book *Psychoanalysis and Zen Buddhism* in 1960 to challenge the pervasive Freudian denigration of spiritual practices and experiences. However, when he applies psychoanalysis to Swami Vivekananda, Mahatma Gandhi, and Ramakrishna Paramahamsa, their experiences emerge as psychopathological. Moreover, he wholeheartedly agrees with the psychoanalytic reductive dictum that mysticism is regressive even though he gives a positive spin to it.

Needless to say, in a Festschrift honoring Kakar, the first side is overwhelmingly supported, while the second, with but one exception, is totally ignored. Or are there other reasons that this is so? Kakar is very popular in the West for his contributions, while major Indian psychoanalytic therapists and psychologists are highly critical of his work. Perhaps many Western scholars and his Indian disciples are not aware of this other side of Kakar, his partial identification with British colonial denigration.

The chapters all relate to Kakar’s multifaceted writings. The six chapters on mysticism are well written by accomplished specialists in their field, such as Wendy Doniger, Jeffrey Kripal, June McDaniel, Harold Coward, Manasi Kumar, and the editor,
Dinesh Sharma. Other important chapters reflect Kakar’s writings on the psychocultural and the psychohistorical, his work on organizational psychology, and his book on social violence in India.

Of particular note in the first category is Robert LeVine’s opening chapter that compares Kakar’s oeuvre with those of Takeo Doi and Takie Lebra from Japan, and Gananath Obeyesekere from Sri Lanka, each of whom, with the exception of Lebra, uses psychoanalysis to explore the psychocultural. LeVine’s point is that the indigenous psychoanalyst or anthropologist is much more able to come up with telling analyses of the psychocultural in their own culture than the Western investigator. From a totally different perspective, John Munder Ross writes as a psychoanalyst in a literary style a striking chapter on the effects of the psychocultural and psychohistorical on his own life from the hugely diverse cultural backgrounds of his parents and grandparents.

There are also other excellent chapters, more stemming from the author’s own work but still related to Kakar’s. Manfred F.R. Kers de Vries, a psychoanalyst involved in organizational relationships, relates a telling story of his psychological work with corporate leaders who are having major emotional problems that interfere with their organizational leadership. Another is by Usha Menon, an anthropologist, in an excellent analysis of an incident of social violence in Orissa, enhanced by Kakar’s work on social violence.

Despite the above-mentioned caveats, the book is well worth reading, as most of the chapters profit from longstanding work of a variety of scholars and psychoanalysts.

Al Alan Roland, PhD, is a practicing psychoanalyst in New York City, who is a Training Analyst and Faculty Member of the National Psychological Association for Psychoanalysis. He has done extensive psychoanalytic clinical research in India and has worked with over 25 Indian patients in India and New York City. He has authored three books on this subject: In Search of Self in India and Japan: Toward a Cross-Cultural Psychology (Princeton University Press, 1988); Cultural Pluralism and Psychoanalysis: The Asian and North American Experience (Routledge, 1996), and Journeys to Foreign Selves: Asians and Asian Americans in a Global Era (Oxford University Press, 2011). Dr. Roland may be contacted at Alanroland@aol.com.
Presidents as Fathers
Paul H. Elovitz—Ramapo College


I eagerly awaited Joshua Kendall’s study for its insights into the personal lives and parenting styles of our presidents, and I find much of value within his pages. This historian and journalist was influenced by Andrew Brink and other psychohistorical scholars. He divides the presidential fathers he concentrates on into six categories: The Preoccupied, Playful Pals, Double-Dealing Dads, Tiger Dads, The Grief-Stricken, and The Nurturers. This approach is not surprising coming from a biographer of Noah Webster, the great lexicographer who so enjoyed categorizing words. Although my inclinations are to be far less of a categorizer, I am struck by the breadth of Kendall’s scholarship and distressed by the parenting of so many of our presidents.

Frankly, as a presidential psychobiographer, I was somewhat disappointed that there was so little on the Bushes, Lincoln, and even less on Reagan. Of course, one cannot fit everything into 352 pages of text. What he does fit in is of great value and is a reminder that our standards of parenting have improved enormously, as we accept that our children have their own personalities and ultimately need to find their own way.

This is in contrast to the behavior of almost all of our 43 presidents. John Adams, for example, took his ten-year-old son, the future President John Quincy Adams on a dangerous winter cross-Atlantic voyage during wartime when the enemy British dominated the seas. This “tiger dad” also wrote to his four-year-old son, “I believe I must make a physician of you” (211). Franklin Delano Roosevelt relied on his sons literally to hold him up, since it was important to his political success that it looked like he could really walk on his own in a public situation. The preoccupied FDR could never be elected in our era when a cellphone catches Hillary Clinton stumble as she gets into a car and she could no longer hide her pneumonia. Roosevelt, like so many of his presidential peers, was too absorbed in his own career to treat his sons as individuals rather than as his camouflaged living crutches. Like most presidential sons and the sons of so many highly successful people, they subse-
quently did not thrive on their own. Kendall insists that the preoccupied Jimmy Carter’s success in winning the Democratic nomination was made possible by the intense labor of his sons, their spouses, and his wife. At the time, there was no question in his mind that they would do exactly what he wanted, just as he had been trained himself. Fortunately, Carter came to grips with the familial cost of his political ambition, just as he had confronted the racism of his youth. When his eldest son, Chip, complained that his father had “almost ruined my life,” (67) the former president showed an unusual capability for emotional growth as he and his wife faced the consequences of their earlier behavior.

Teddy Roosevelt couldn’t get enough of his children, and indeed was viewed by those close to him as the biggest of the Roosevelt kids because of his childish hypomanic behavior. Indeed, the best man at his second wedding declared, “you must remember that the President is about six” (75). Predictably, Roosevelt is listed as a “playful pal.” Having your father as a buddy seems preferable to being ignored, as was so often the case. In contrast to those mentioned previously, Hayes, Truman, and Obama are seen as “nurturers,” although a political career resulted in extended absences, especially for Truman.

John Tyler, as a parent, was in many ways the most despicable of our presidents, beyond his enormous betrayal in politics. Not surprisingly, he is categorized as a “double-dealer.” On Kendall’s pages, he appears to sexualize a number of his relationships as reflected in his letters. The widowed John Tyler doesn’t bother telling six of his seven children that he was marrying a woman three years younger than his eldest daughter, who had served as his presidential hostess. He would have another seven children with his second wife.

What motivates a scholar to do the enormous work of writing a book is always an important question. Consequently, I was delighted to watch an hour-long interview of Joshua Kendall on CSPAN’s Booknotes, in which he discussed his own fathering. His Romanian-born, now deceased, father enjoyed singing German songs in the shower, including the Nazi party anthem. To avoid the Holocaust, his father had not only converted to Catholicism, but also served in Hitler’s army. His father’s resolution of his Jewishness was to marry the WASPish-looking daughter of a rabbi, celebrate Christmas rather than Hanukah, and disclaim any Jewishness while working for a Jewish company. Joshua Kendall struggles
with the part of his father that identified with Nazi aggression. I applaud his confronting and sharing this part of his life with others instead of simply suppressing and repressing it as so many people do with embarrassing parental realities.

I recommend that you buy Joshua Kendall’s book, or at least borrow it from the library, to learn more about our presidents as parents.

Paul H. Elovitz, PhD, is a presidential psychobiographer who teaches the history of childhood and other psychohistorical courses and may be contacted at cliospsycheeditor@gmail.com.

Memorials

Remembering John Forrester: Cambridge Historian of Psychoanalysis

David Cifelli and Paul Elovitz—Psychohistory Forum

John Forrester (1949-2015) will be remembered and honored in the psychoanalytic and psychohistorical communities for his work on the history of psychoanalysis and Sigmund Freud. Sadly, he died unexpectedly on the 24th of November, 2015, of an internal infection after undergoing stem-cell treatment therapy for Hodgkin’s lymphoma. His work lives on in the form of the extensive contributions to psychoanalysis and its history as well as to Cambridge University.

Professor Forrester authored six books, Truth Games: Lies, Money, and Psychoanalysis (1997), Dispatches from the Freud Wars: Psychoanalysis and Its Passions (1997), Freud’s Women (with Lisa Appignanesi, 1992), The Seductions of Psychoanalysis: Freud, Lacan, and Derrida (1990), Language and the Origins of Psychoanalysis (1980), and Freud at Cambridge, which is yet to be published. In his September 2006 Featured Scholar Interview in Clio’s Psyche, he spoke of writing The Freudian Century, which he apparently did not complete. In addition to his books, he published over fifty papers. He held visiting chairs and fellowships in Brazil, France, Germany, Switzerland, and the United States. Among many other accolades, Forrester was the recipient of the National Association for the Advancement of Psychoanalysis’ 1999 Gradiva Award for the Best General Book in the field of psychoanalysis. His ideas and legacy also carry on in the minds of his numerous students. As a professor at Cambridge University, he was known as a stimulating lecturer and inspired discussion leader who expanded the thinking of thousands of undergraduates, many of whom went on to become professors themselves.
John was the son of working-class parents in London, England, who through education rose into the professional class. His education began at the prestigious Haberdashers’ Aske’s Boys’ School, before he became an undergraduate at the University of Cambridge. Graduating in 1970 with honors and a B.A. focusing on the history and philosophy of science, he moved on to pursue his graduate studies on a Fulbright scholarship at Princeton University. In 1979, Forrester received his doctorate from Cambridge, and his thesis, *Language and the Origins of Psychoanalysis* (1980), showcased his talent for understanding psychoanalysis. Forrester was promptly appointed Senior Research Fellow at King’s College, a position he held until 1984 when he received a lectureship at the University of Cambridge.

Forrester was influenced by many seminal minds, including Michael Foucault, whose lectures he heard while studying in Paris and Vienna, but with whom he had only one conversation. However, as he noted in the May 2006 interview published in *Clio’s Psyche*, the most influential people in his life and career were Bob Young, one of his professors at Cambridge, and Thomas Kuhn. Kuhn, the great physicist, historian, and philosopher of science authored *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1962), which induced Forrester to become a philosopher of science when he was Kuhn’s student at Princeton University. Prior, especially in secondary school, he was very interested in the physical sciences, partly due to a close relationship with his chemistry teacher, Johnny Carlton. Kuhn’s work, the impetus for Forrester’s career in philosophy and history, taught Forrester to become “a particular kind of historian of science, a close reader of scientific texts,” and to develop the ability, “to get inside the head of past scientists so that you could yourself do their work.” Later, after reading Freud’s work and arming himself with the tools of psychoanalysis, he was able to do just that: see inside the minds of the scientists he studied.

John Forrester became a scholar of the psychoanalytic movement. He eventually devoted himself to the study of Sigmund Freud. He was the co-founder of the Cambridge Group for the History of Psychiatry, Psychoanalysis and Allied Sciences, as well as the Psychoanalytic Forum. Forrester served on the editorial board of several publications, including *History of Psychiatry and Psychoanalytic Studies*. He edited *Psychoanalysis and History* from 2004-2014.

It is difficult to fully capture John Forrester “the man.” He was an enthusiastic individual who was at home in America and France (and with the French language). He was passionate in so many ways, including about books, fine wines, food, music, meeting new people, psychoanalysis, and the roses in his garden. His enormous curiosity and retentive memory led his wife Lisa to call him “my own Wikipedia.” This professor embraced the messiness of life, enthusiastically working to make
sense out of the patterns he could identify. He had little toleration for bureaucracies that did not serve people, though he could work effectively within them, as when he served as chair of the Department of History and the Philosophy of Science at Cambridge. One of his greatest dreams was to merge the genius of Freud and Foucault. He was also an unapologetic smoker.

At Forrester’s deathbed were his wife, Lisa Appignanesi, his step-son Josh Appignanesi (and wife Devorah), his adored and doted on grandson Manny, and his daughter Katrina (along with her partner Jamie Martin). The John Forrester Memorial Award commemorates his life and carries on his work.

David Cifelli is a Psychography Forum member and an undergraduate student at Ramapo College where Paul H. Elovitz is a founding professor whose appointment is in history, psychography, and interdisciplinary studies. They may be contacted at dcifelli@ramapo.edu and pelovitz@ramapo.edu.

**Elie Wiesel: A Leader for Post-Holocaust Generations**

Eva Fogelman—Private Practice

When the Israelites were enslaved in Egypt, God chose Moses to plead with Pharaoh. “Let my people go!” was the clarion call. When the Israelites were liberated, Moses led them through their difficult sojourn in the desert. Slaves do not have an identity; it was Moses’ job to enable the Israelites to transition from slavery to freedom, to give them an identity and a sense of community. When the Jews of Europe were destined for annihilation during World War II, a precious few leaders emerged and called for resistance to the Nazi beast. Amongst the best known was the Vilna Ghetto’s Abba Kovner. Kovner cried out: “Jews! Defend yourself with arms. The Germans and Estonians hangmen have come to murder us... We will not stretch our necks for the slaughter. Better to fall in battle than to be led like sheep to the slaughter” (Rich Cohen, *The Avengers*, 2000, 89).

After American slaves were freed their condition was yet one of misery; in most parts of the country Negro civil rights were non-existent. A century after the Civil War a new black leadership emerged, spearheaded by Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, who called upon his community to engage in non-violent protests to achieve their goals. Again, the leader enabled his community to develop a sense of community and a sense of worth.

When the Jews were liberated from concentration camps at the
end of World War II, the world was in shock; they then transitioned into a long period of denial. If Holocaust survivors began, reluctantly, to talk about the humiliation, torture, and starvation they endured, and about the multiple losses they suffered, they were told, “Let bygones be bygones, you are in a free country now. You are in America.”

It took almost two generations for this silence to be broken. Eliezer Wiesel was a major force in the process of breaking the silence. On September 30, 1928 Wiesel was born into a Hasidic family in Sighet Transylvania in Romania. His father owned a grocery store and was an active community leader, while his more pious mother raised four children. From the age of 10 or 11 Wiesel knew that he wanted to be a writer, commentator, and teacher. He was taken with Talmud studies. At that age he even wrote a book of commentaries on the Bible. His early years were influenced by his Hasidic grandfather on his mother’s side and also by a caretaker in the synagogue, who told him about the Messiah and other mysteries in Judaism. The young Elie was attracted to the study of Jewish mysticism. Wiesel’s mother wanted him to study Jewish sacred texts; his father encouraged him to learn modern Jewish literature.

At age 15 all of Elie’s dreams and deep faith in God came to a halt when he spent his first night in the Auschwitz/Birkenau death camp. Questioning God’s role and existence in this nightmarish hell was a daily struggle. Wiesel moved from Auschwitz to a death march, to Buchenwald, finally to liberation, then to France, and ultimately to the United States and to international fame. He died on July 2, 2016.

After liberation Wiesel, hospitalized for intestinal problems, used

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the time to write an outline for a book about his experiences during the Holocaust. Hence a “writer self” emerged. He decided not to write the details for another ten years. After learning French he went to the Sorbonne and studied literature, philosophy, and psychology. Wiesel used his language skills to do translations, including for the Irgun Tzva’I Le’umi—Etel—the activist liberation group in pre-state Palestine. In 1949 Wiesel travelled to Israel as a correspondent for the French paper L’Arche. While he was in Israel, the newspaper Yediot Hachromot recruited him as their Paris correspondent. This job gave him an opportunity to travel around the world, and to be involved with the controversy regarding whether or not Israel should accept reparations from the German government.

Most importantly, in 1954, Wiesel interviewed a Nobel Prize winner in literature, a 70-year-old French devout Catholic, Francois Mauriac. This interview became a “transforming encounter” for Wiesel, who was then a 27-year-old stateless Jewish journalist, as well as for Mauriac, who spoke about his admiration for the Jewish people and about the suffering of Jesus Christ. During the German occupation of France, Mauriac went into hiding because his criticism of Nazism had endangered his life. Mauriac went on to tell Wiesel of an indelible image of the trainloads of Jewish children standing at the Austerlitz station. Wiesel replied, “I am one of them.” Wiesel, who was usually very soft spoken, got angry and said: “Sir, you speak of Christ. Christians love to speak of Him. The passion of Christ, the agony of Christ, the death of Christ. In your religion, that is all you speak of. Well, I want you to know that ten years ago, not very far from here, I knew Jewish children every one of whom suffered a thousand times more, six million times more, than Christ on the cross. And we don’t speak about them. Can you understand that Sir? We don’t speak about them.” Wiesel walked out and was followed by Mauriac who said, “I think that you are wrong not to speak… listen to the old man that I am: one must speak out— one must speak out.” Mauriac gave Wiesel a new way to think about his shattered faith in God. He explained to Wiesel that suffering is the foundation of faith, not an obstacle to trusting God.

The “writer self” and the “survivor self” got validation from a vital sector of the external world. Wiesel took a year to write his experiences in Yiddish, publishing And the World Was Silent (1956) in Argentina. Wiesel went on to cover the United Nations in New York, and decided to settle there in 1955. Shortly after, in July 1956 while crossing the street, Wiesel was hit by a taxi, and had a ten-hour operation. For Wiesel another “transforming encounter” was with the surgeon who operated on him. Wiesel had asked the surgeon if he believed in God. The surgeon said that he did except when he was in the operating room. He continued, “There I only count on myself.” The surgeon asked Wiesel, “Why don’t you care about the living?”
While confined to a wheelchair, Wiesel wrote for four hours a day about his experiences during the Holocaust and continued writing many articles for the Forverts (Forward) Yiddish newspaper. The French edition of La Nuit (Night) was published in 1958 with an introduction by Mauriac and the English edition came out in 1960 after being rejected by many publishers, who said no one would be interested in reading about these experiences. Wiesel’s childhood dream led to more than 50 books, including a cantata, plays, fiction, non-fiction books, and a memoir. His books sparked the fire of Holocaust literature. Wiesel’s writing began to become a voice of conscience for the living with the publication of The Jews of Silence (1966), inspiring the Soviet Jewry movement.

Wiesel’s voice of moral conscience was not limited to the Jews. To mention but a few, he spoke out for justice for the Cambodians, against apartheid in South Africa and ethnic cleansing in Bosnia, and in support of oppressed people in Biafra, Vietnam, Rwanda, and Darfur. He was not afraid to speak truthfully to power. In 1985, when President Reagan bestowed on him the Congressional Gold Medal, Wiesel used the opportunity to dissuade Reagan from going to the Bitburg cemetery to honor German war dead, including the Waffen SS. He said, “Your place is with the victims of the SS.” During the opening of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, April 22, 1993, Wiesel told President Clinton that the US must do something about ethnic cleansing in Bosnia. On another occasion when Wiesel spoke at the White House about “The Perils of Indifference,” he did not hesitate to ask President Clinton why the US was not involved in Rwanda. He said: “I know one thing. We could have prevented a massacre, why didn’t we?”

In 1986, Wiesel’s voice was recognized by the Nobel Prize committee as “a messenger to mankind, a human being dedicated to humanity” and for his “practical work for the cause of peace.” Wiesel accepted the Peace Prize award on behalf of all Holocaust survivors.

Aside from writing, Wiesel’s other dream was to be a teacher of Talmud. He continued to be a student of Talmud his whole life, but he

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was a trailblazer in teaching about the Holocaust, first at City College (New York), then at Boston University. Students who were children of Holocaust survivors learned about their parents’ silence. The hundreds of lectures he gave worldwide enabled this polymath to be a teacher to thousands.

Wiesel’s message of how to invent hope in a world that offers none, how to gain faith after a generation that “has seen it shamed and humiliated,” and how to build on ruins, struck a deep chord with the survivor generation that needed a leader to tell them to remember the past, but not to despair in the present, and instead rebuild on top of the ashes. Not to forget meant not only all those who were murdered, but to incorporate into one’s life the rich Jewish religion, culture, texts, music and languages that were destroyed. Wiesel taught that it is not enough to remember the pain and suffering; one must transform those feelings into a search for meaning. Hence, Elie Wiesel, as a leader for the post-Holocaust generations, serves not only as a spiritual guide to a generation ambivalent about God, but also as a role model for transforming survivor guilt into a constructive and meaningful existence.

It is too soon to know what the legacy of Elie Wiesel will be, except to note that he has a continuing impact on Holocaust and genocide courses taught on college campuses and in high-schools. *Night* is on many, perhaps most, of these curricula. The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum will continue to be visited and to transform people. Holocaust commemorations will continue for the foreseeable future. As is the case with Martin Luther King, Nelson Mandela, and Vaclav Havel, Elie Wiesel will be a role model leader of people who are the victims of racism and genocide.

But most importantly, Elie Wiesel has had an everlasting impact on the survivor generation and the post-Holocaust generations. A group that has been victimized needs validation for their suffering. Wiesel’s writings and speaking to fellow survivors, Jewish communities, churches, mosques, and heads of state worldwide all incrementally led to the exploration of the racism that led to the genocide of Jews in World War II. Additionally, Wiesel’s writing and voice ultimately transformed the Holocaust survivors from a group that was initially shunned by the Jewish people to a group that is valued.

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community to a community who are sought after to speak and teach for films and oral histories.

For many, Wiesel’s death is a stark reminder that the Holocaust survivor generation is dying out. His death is a wake-up call for the second-generation to tell the story and not let the story die with them.

Eva Fogelman, PhD, is a psychoanalytic psychotherapist and psychologist in private practice in New York City, a pioneer scholar of the intergenerational impact of the Holocaust, a filmmaker, and author of Conscience and Courage: Rescuers of Jews during the Holocaust (1994). She is a research associate of the Psychohistory Forum and may be contacted at evafogelmanphd@gmail.com.

BULLETIN BOARD

CONFERENCES: Our first 2017 Psychohistory Forum Work-In-Progress Seminar starts on January 28, 2017 when Irene Javors (Yeshiva University and private practice) will present on Contemporary Issues in Psychoanalysis and Psychohistory. Our November 5, 2016 presidential election seminar was held at the Lincoln Center Campus of Fordham University with presenters Herbert Barry (University of Pittsburgh), Ken Fuchsmann (University of Connecticut), and Paul Elovitz (Ramapo College). Harold Takoosian was our Fordham host. Additional seminars will be announced as details are finalized after papers are submitted and accepted. As usual, Jacques Szaluta (Merchant Marine Academy) will serve as moderator. Proposals are welcome and will be vetted by a committee once a presentation paper is submitted. Announcements and papers are sent out electronically to Psychohistory Forum members. Some of our members who presented at Association for the Psychoanalysis of Culture and Society (APCS) at Rutgers University on October 13-15, 2016 included C. Fred Alford, Ruth Lijtmaer, Billie Pivnick, and Burton Norman Seitzler. Upcoming meetings of various organizations including the National Association for the Advancement of Psychoanalysis (NAAP) on November 12, 2016 at the NYU Law School in Manhattan and on December 11, 2017 from 10:00 am to 1:30 pm the International Psychohistorical Association (IPA) will present in Manhattan a free showing and discussion of the film “In Utero.” (For more information contact kfuchsman@gmail.com.) The IPA conference is on May 31-June 2, 2017 at New York University; the International Society for Political Psychology’s (ISPP) conference is on June 29-July 2, 2017 in Edinburgh, Scotland; and the Interdisciplinary Conference of the Forum for Psychoanalytic Education (IFPE) meets November 9-11, 2017 in Lago Mar in Fort Lauderdale. NOTES ON MEMBERS: At the end of the summer, Hans Bakker spent a month in Bali studying the poorest of the poor. CONGRATULATIONS: To Molly Castelloe and Trevor Pederson for being nominated for Gravida Awards by the NAAP. We wel-
come new members Merrill Hawkins, Susan Hein, and Candace Orcutt. ERRATA: In the fall 2016 issue, book review author Susan Kassouf's degree should have been listed as a PhD, not an MA. OUR THANKS: To our members and subscribers for the support that makes Clio’s Psyche possible. To Benefactors Bill Argus, Herbert Barry, David Beisel, Tom Ferraro, Peter Loewenberg, Jamshid Marvasti, and Mary Peace Sullivan; Patrons Peter Barglow, Eva Fogelman, Ken Fuchsman, David Lotto, Alice Lombardo Maher, Peter Petschauer, Burton Norman Seitler, and Jacques Szaluta; Sustaining Members Irene Javors, and Ruth Ljimtmaer; Supporting Members Paul H. Elovitz, Larry Friedman, Judy Gardiner, Jay Gonen, John J. Hartman, Bob Lentz, Joel Moskowitz, and Inna Rozenstvivit; and Members Susan Charney, David Cifelli, Ted Goertzel, Michael Isaacs, Margie Quackenbush, and Vivian Rosenberg. Our special thanks for thought-provoking materials to Peter Barglow, David Cifelli, Samuel Cohn, Marc-André Cotton, Dan Dervin, Nick Duffel, Juliana Dresvina, Paul H. Elovitz, Ken Fuchsman, Juhani Ihanus, Ludwig Janus, Alice Jorgensen, Peter Lange, David Lotto, Jamshid A. Marvasti, Merle Molofsky, Candace Orcutt, Eva D. Papiasvilli, Peter Petschauer, Alan Roland, Joyce Rosenberg, Paul Salstrom, Burton Norman Seitler, and Alex Woolf. To Nicole D’Andria for editing, proofing, and Publisher 2013 software application, Caitlin Gaynor and Joyce Rosenberg for editing and proofing, and David Cifelli and Professor Paul Salstrom for proofing. Our special thanks to our authors, editors, and numerous overworked referees who must remain anonymous. ☛

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

- Articles and Commentary on Freud's Death Instinct, Suicide, and Suicidal Terrorism Symposium (the editor will send you the symposium papers when you e-mail him)
- The Impact of Celebrity Culture on America
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- Dependency and Independency in the Family, Politics, and Society
- TV as Object Relations: Our Emotional Connection to Fantasy
- Entrepreneurship, Innovation, and Business Success
- Images and Psychology of Enemies and Hatred through the Ages
- The Intrapsychic and Societal Processes of the American Acceptance of Homosexuality
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- The Contemporary American Fascination with Animals
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