Clio's Psyche

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

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Its Development, Virtues, and Limits**

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of Humor**

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Book Review

Empathy: Its Development, Virtues, and Limits

Varieties of Empathy

Paul H. Elovitz—Ramapo College

Introductory Overview

Empathy has become all the rage in some circles. For example, three books in 2009 declared this to be the age of empathy, as pointed out by Ken Fuchsman in "Competing Views of Human Motivation and Psychology," on page 41. Are we creating an *Empathetic Civilization*, the title of Jeremy Riftkin's volume, or has empathy simply become like a "magic balm" for social ills, as stated by Jessica Van Denend in "Empathy and the Benevolent Colonizer," on page 51? How authors define empathy is quite variable, and when closely examined, it often appears undistinguishable from altruism, caring, compassion, helping, mirroring, or sympathy. Some academics and scientists distinguish between emotional and cognitive empathy; in my opinion, imagination and subjectivity are such important parts of being empathic that I doubt we can now, or even in the future, come up with clear measurements. (Empathic and empathetic are used interchangeably in this essay.) An academic psychologist colleague suggests that there are also psychometrics that attempt to quantify and differentiate empathy. In our society, focused on quantification, people are working, using magnetic resonance imaging (MRI), to gain physical data on what goes on in the brain when the subject is empathic. These neurological studies may be interesting, but I have serious doubts that they could ever accurately measure the experience of empathy as I understand it.

My view of empathy is longstanding and not based on the recent academic and business interest in the subject. Empathy is about imagining and feeling the experience of another to fully understand his or her situation as much as possible without actually having, in the Indian expression, "walked in the moccasins of another." Tom Gibbs captures empathy in this sense in his poem

"The Empath," on page 68, and "The Harrowing Wisdom," his essay on page 62 about his time connecting with his Alzheimer's stricken father-in-law in the final stage of life. The concept is easy to grasp intellectually, but it is very hard to actually be empathetic, and perhaps impossible, if one does not have a clear sense of self based upon an excellent, non-abusive childhood and/or a very significant psychotherapeutic experience. Neither narcissists nor those with autism have the capacity to really be empathetic, and people usually cannot consistently maintain empathy for others over long periods of time. This view is based upon my own long analysis, over a quarter century practicing psychoanalytic psychotherapy psychohistorical research, and life experience.

When in 1997 the Psychohistory Forum formed the "Empathy and Biography Research Group," an intellectual historian and two literature academics, all women, exchanged ideas and valuable presentations before it dissolved in 1999 for lack of leadership. Since then, there has been an explosion of interest in studying empathy, although definitions and applications of the term vary enormously. For example, primatologists such as Frans de Waal label some animal behavior as empathic.

Empathy means very different things to psychoanalysts than it does to educators who seek to help children be caring enough to stop bullying others. Academics who make a sharp distinction between emotional and cognitive empathy are represented by Herbert Barry, "Caring about the Self and Others," on page 22. Business educators want to teach their version of empathy within the corporation to help make it run smoother and make buyers feel understood and more inclined to purchase its products. Some politicians, when they are not stressing a macho image, will "feel the pain" of their constituents, most especially if the potential voters are women. Confidence men want to understand their "marks" and feel trusted so that they can improve their opportunities for thievery. Thus, the term has evolved from its original usage to encompass a wide variety of human behavior and social situations.

From Its Greek Roots to Freud

"Empatheia" is the Greek root of the modern word empathy. Its original meaning was partiality, passion, and physical affection. In the 19th century, Rudolf Hermann Lotze (1817-1881) and Robert

Vischer (1847-1933) created the German word *Einfühlung* ("feeling into"), which Edward B. Titchener (1867-1927) translated into the English term "empathy" in the early 20th century. In her article, "The Many Masks of Empathy," on page 13 in this issue, Merle Molofsky presents a fuller discussion of some of the origins of the term.

According to the *Concordance to the Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud* (Samuel A. Guttman, et al, eds., Vol. 2, Boston, G.K. Hall & Co., 1980), the founder of psychoanalysis used the term "empathy" on only 12 occasions, half of them in his book *Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious* (1905). Although Freud is inclined to use the term in passing while discussing issues of identification, in his first usage he provides something of a definition. After establishing that the teller of a smutty joke is "naïve," "we take the producing person's psychical state into consideration, put ourselves into it, and try to understand it by comparing it with our own. It is these processes of empathy and comparison that result in the economy in expenditure which we discharge by laughing" (*The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, 1955, Vol. XIII, 186).

Freud uses the language of cathected energy, as when he writes, "cathectic expenditures...are either brought about in us through empathy into someone else or, without any such relation, are discovered in our own mental processes" (196).

In writing about Jensen's *Gradiva*, Freud notes that the author "wishes to bring the hero closer to us so as to make 'empathy' easier" (Vol. IX, 1907, 45). In discussing identification in group psychology, Freud writes that "another suspicion may tell us that we are far from exhausting the problem of identification, and that we are faced by the process which psychology calls 'empathy [*Einfuhlung*]' and which plays the largest part in our understanding of what is inherently foreign to our ego in other people." He goes on to declare: "But we shall here limit ourselves to the immediate emotional effects of identification, and shall leave on one side its significance for our intellectual life" (108).

In footnote two on page 110, he concludes his references to empathy with, "a path leads from identification by way of imitation

to empathy, that is, to the comprehension of the mechanism by means of which we are unable to take up any attitude at all towards another mental life."

Although by contemporary standards, the use of empathy by the founder of psychoanalysis is not very developed or sophisticated, it did open the door for a concept that has become basic to the therapeutic process. In the safety of the therapeutic treatment room, the analyst sits, listens, and picks up on the feelings of the patient and uses an empathic approach to help effect self-knowledge and the potential for a better life of his patient. Judith Logue, in "Thank You for Crying," also raises issues of pseudo-empathy and its limits on page 37.

Empathy as a Therapeutic Tool

In literature classes as an undergraduate student, I was introduced to the idea of empathy as the ability to put oneself in the position of another. Humans have a special ability to create language, which can serve as a wonderful means of communication and also to cover up true feelings we do not want to reveal to others, or often to ourselves. This has much to do with how we want the world to see us, what thoughts and feelings are deemed "politically correct," and how our socialization, emotional states and reaction formations impinge upon our knowing and expressing our actual feelings. That academic psychology now refers to "negative feelings" represents a reason for further inhibitions based upon political correctness.

The reality is that human beings transmit feelings by our body language, vocal intonation, and even by our very presence. The fine psychoanalyst Harold Searles (1918-) sat with catatonic patients in the Chestnut Lodge in Rockville, Maryland for months on end, saying next to nothing beyond occasionally what feeling he experienced as present in the room. A well-trained clinician will pick up on the feelings the patient is out of touch with or thinks it inappropriate to express, just as very close siblings, lovers or spouses may know what the other is feeling more than that person is consciously aware. Of course, well-trained psychoanalysts—people with enough depth analysis that they have a good sense of their separate self and can readily differentiate their feelings from that of others—have unique tools available.

Psychoanalytic training represents a unique opportunity to learn about empathy and its limits. Case presentations were my favorite part of this unique education. One of the six members of our class would present a case and we would each share our thoughts on it. Several patterns became apparent through this exercise. The ideas of whatever analytic theorist a psychoanalytic candidate was reading would show up in their interpretation, as would aspects of their personality. The instructor was nonjudgmental as the candidates came to understand their own projective fields, or how they inclined to see the world. Individual supervision greatly furthered this process. A fifth year seminar on induced countertransference was extremely valuable in helping us learn whether feelings coming forth in the treatment room were ones we brought in ourselves based on what was going on in our own lives, or were induced by our client. We learned to do a better job of being empathic with our clients without merging with them. Our clients came to trust us more as we could help them own disclaimed and often frightening feelings.

A very large and robust 41-year-old man with paranoid thoughts was referred to me at the low cost psychoanalytic clinic because the female intake social worker, who was frightened of the delusions he spoke of, assumed that I would have an easier time with him, as a six-foot tall man rather than a female analyst-in-training. The interesting thing is that he never induced fear in me. I experienced him as an immature, good-natured, frightened child who slipped into violent, paranoid delusions, upon which he did not act, but rather acknowledged an unconscious fear of being homosexual. As he came to see me as a trustworthy health professional who understood him, his need for the paranoid delusions diminished. Feeling empathized with helped lessen, but did not eliminate, his symptoms. At the time, Heinz Kohut (1913-81), who is sometimes credited with introducing the emphasis on empathy in psychoanalysis—as expressed by Lou Agosta, "Folk Wisdom and Kohut: Empathy is Being Human," on page 24—was widely read, but did not have a specific influence on my approach to therapy. Kohut's work has been built on extensively. For example, Frank Summers, currently president of the American Psychological Association's large psychoanalytic division, argues in "The New Psy-

choanalytic Ethic," that because of his emphasis on empathy in the development of the self, we can now build psychoanalytic ethics based on empathy. See page 33.

An accomplished friend, who once won an award for her fine work on the intellectual origins on the concept of empathy, sometimes wonders if she has "too much empathy" or "hyper empathy." She is a first-born twin who has always been "the good girl" looking after her twin sister. She accepted this childhood role throughout her life, joking that it began in utero. She credits good therapists for helping her build a separate identity. Now, rather than feeling compelled to care first for others, she tells me she is learning to recognize her own needs and say "no" when necessary—to her sister, her friends, and even the editor of this journal. He had hoped she would write on empathy, a subject she is most knowledgeable about.

Is the development of a separate identity a precondition for having real empathy? When I think about how often parents are only able to accept their children as separate human beings after they have had considerable therapy of their own, I'm inclined to think that this is the case. Certainly, we have to know where we stop and the other human being begins if we are to truly feel for them without being symbiotically attached.

Empathy as an Invaluable Tool for the Psychobiographer
During doctoral training, history seemed to be all about economics, politics, social forces, and treaties. The graduate students were most interested in and energized by discussion of individuals such as Alexander the Great, Darwin, Freud, Hitler, Jefferson, Marx, Napoleon, Newton, and Leonardo da Vinci. Yet the graduate school professors were inclined to dismiss biography as somehow beneath the concern of a professional historian, so some students cloaked their focus on biography in the language of larger causes while remaining fascinated by the individuals behind them. Psychoanalysis and psychoanalytic training enabled some historians to empathize with our subjects in ways that made us much better historians, because we could have feeling for our subjects and do better work. As Barbara Tuchman, the Pulitzer Prize winning author of *The Guns of August* wrote, "Every thoughtful historian is a psychohistorian."

In analytic training, I learned that to be an effective therapist, I had to confront elements of the client within myself. So if the client was fearful, I had to examine my own fear; if narcissistic, my own narcissism; if grandiose, my own grandiosity, and so forth. The result was that I became a much better biographer, especially since I was freed from idealizing my subjects as if they were statues in a park to be worshipped, or knocked off their pedestals, rather than understood as fellow human beings.

I use this idea in teaching undergraduate or graduate students. I stress that whatever subject they write about, they must relate to, understand, and show the real human being they are researching and presenting. While this is much more work for them, and for me in teaching them how, it makes their forays into history far more meaningful. Similarly, in teaching literature to freshman and sophomore students in a Readings in the Humanities course, I find that it is invaluable to teach the students to relate to and hopefully empathize with what they're reading. So, while reading the story of Cain and Abel in the *Old Testament*, they would also write a short thought paper on sibling rivalry in their own lives and among their friends. They go from the personal to the historical. Before reading *Medea*, we discuss infanticide—what they've heard about in the news, on the Internet, or through the rumor mill of someone who killed their newborn baby rather than accepting responsibility for it. Wherever possible, my goal is to help students see themselves in the shoes of the individuals they're examining while also teaching them about cultural context.

Dreams have the power to reveal the human unconscious with great clarity. However, psychoanalytic dream interpretation was much less fruitful than I had hoped, mostly because clients looked too much to the analyst for the meaning of their dreams and not enough to themselves. Montague Ullman's group dream work avoided this problem by having small groups empathetically work with the dreamer, offering their own projections and insights. Feeling safe and empathized with, dreamers delved more into their associations and unconscious. Feeling empathized with and safe with a trusted professional is quite therapeutic.

Empathy in Parenting and Education

Psychoanalytic treatment is primarily reparative work, help-

ing analysands get past the traumas of their childhood and move on to more satisfying lives. These days there is a movement developing to teach parents and teachers to nurture empathy in children as a step toward their development as caring and sensitive individuals. Boundaries must be established by both parents and educators so that children feel safe. Within those boundaries, the young need to feel cared for, understood, and loved, even while hearing the word "no." There is a growing movement in educational circles to teach empathy as a means of combating bullying. In the situation of bullying, which is often role-played in this education, the emphasis is much more on caring, helping and feeling sympathetic than in the way I have traditionally used empathy. However, anything that sensitizes people to the feeling and needs of others is certainly for the better of society (see http://www.pbs.org/newshour/extra/daily_videos/babies-bring-lessons-of-empathy-to-classrooms/). Heiderose Brandt Butscher brings home this point in "Approaches to a Collaborative and Reciprocal Process" on page 18.

Psychohistorian and psychoanalyst Eva Fogelman found, in researching the comparatively small group of individuals who took the incredible step of risking their own lives and families to help Jews under Nazism, that an important characteristic of rescuers was having nurturing childhoods based upon empathetic parenting (*Conscience and Courage: Rescuers of Jews During the Holocaust*, 1994, pp. 253-267). Peter Petschauer, in "Identifying with the Victim in Nazi Dominated Europe," on page 55 provides three examples of rescuers. Although Americans have at times been tempted to focus on evil in Stalin's Russia and Nazi Germany, it has certainly come to the United States in the form of terrorism, as reflected on by Howard Stein's "Double Vision: Thoughts on the Boston and Oklahoma City Bombings," on page 64.

Teachers at all levels need to care about their students, even though there is a strong tendency to become jaded and look down on those still learning, as instructors feel they have a thorough mastery of their subject and lose some of the early enthusiasm that comes with the profession. By empathizing with their students and getting lots of feedback from them, they can fight this tendency, which has been diminishing in higher education, especially in comparison to what Charles Darwin experienced. I am reminded of the

great biologist's complaint that some of his Edinburgh University professors, during his abortive medical training in 1825-27, were "intolerably dull" (*The Autobiography of Charles Darwin*, 1969 [1887], 47).

When the professor chooses to metaphorically step into the shoes of students, there is less inclination to see them as lazy incompetents who don't want to bother mastering the material, and more willingness to accept the complexities of the learning process. A technique I have used to combat the "burned out" professor syndrome is to teach a variety of different courses, including ones that are new to me, so that I realize just how time-consuming it is to learn and master new material. This fall, I will be offering a first-year seminar focused on the impact of the electronic world on the consciousness and lives of students. My goal is to gather students who are much more proficient in electronic communication than I am and have them teach me certain things as a way to both help them feel in control and help me recognize how much time and one-on-one instruction is required to master what is simple for others. Aside from structuring the course and its readings on the social and psychological impact of our electronic universe, my job will be to help the students think about the profound issues. From long experience, I know I will be better able to empathize with the often slow pace of student learning as I face this challenge.

Teaching students to put themselves in the shoes of historical figures is greatly facilitated by utilizing historical re-enactments. For about 20 years, I put enormous energy into teaching students how to empathize with historical subjects, learn everything they could about these individuals through diligent research, and then do historical re-enactments of them. In preparing to re-enact their lives, the students realized just how little they knew about their subjects, which spurred them on to further research. At one point, a group of my students came to the International Psychohistorical Association's annual meeting to re-enact events from the childhood of Adolf Hitler. Eventually, I discontinued the student re-enactments because they took so much class time and my own energy needed to be used elsewhere.

The ability to feel empathy for mass murderers and sadists is a question that came up on the cliospsyche listserv discussion

group after the Newtown shooting. An accomplished colleague declared that he could empathize with the victims of Hitler, Mao, and Stalin, but not with these individuals, and others agreed. I understand his response, since I find it far easier to empathize with and re-enact elements from the lives of Viktor Frankl, Flora Hogman, Sam Pisar, and other victims of the Holocaust than to step into the shoes of Josef Mengele, since I did not like the feeling of my own sadistic impulses as I role-played him to my classes. However, empathy is a tool that should not be reserved for only those who suffer, if we are to understand the nature of evil.

At our college, a psychologist colleague, who runs the Faculty Resource Center that sponsors our writing group, expresses great concern over the impact of online communications on our students. Do they have real relationships with others, making empathy possible? The younger generation is constantly connecting with each other and with their parents through blogging, Facebook and Twitter, instant messaging, Skype, and texting. Utilizing these media, they can project almost any image they want to, especially if they have no direct face-to-face contact with each other. Unless they use Skype or another webcam service that provides video, they can even present themselves as being a totally different person, bringing others into their fantasy. The person at the other end of the communication may be none the wiser. When a student in one of my classes declared, rather gratuitously, that she would have no friends without the Internet, I immediately wondered if she really has friends at all. The situation was clarified for me when she declared, "I have Asperger's Syndrome, and I only have friends on the Internet." The literature on the subject describes alexithymia as a deficiency of empathy, since if you don't know your own feelings, how can you know other people's feelings?

Does this mean that empathy cannot be transmitted by electronic communication? Of course not. Though most of my exchanges on the Internet are rather businesslike, I also have very heartfelt and touching communications, generally with people who I have known and met in person. But one can never be sure that apparent electronic empathy is something real, rather than a stance.

Con Men, Politicians, and Political Correctness
Con men, politicians, psychopaths, and seducers use the

mask of empathy to further their own objectives. People who feel understood by others are much more likely to have their money seduced away by confidence men. Lonely old retirees, who feel the world may have passed them by, are more prone to this maneuver, as they're manipulated into providing their credit card number or signing on the dotted line of a contract where the print is too small for them to even read. Mirroring techniques—reflecting a person's words, concerns, and feelings back to them—are used not only by psychotherapists to help their clients come to trust them as a step toward cure, but also by psychopaths. Sexual seducers tap into the narcissism of targets who may well wake up the next day feeling used, abused, and perhaps even pregnant.

Psychologically inclined political scientists have been writing for decades about the sexualization of the political process, by which a handsome candidate seduces the voter by promising them what they want, which was much easier in eras before national communications, in the hope of becoming "their man." Politicians want people to think they understand and care about them, that they have empathy for them. In the 2012 presidential election, there was talk of Barack Obama's "empathy edge" over Mitt Romney, since the Republican presidential aspirant was less able than the President to project a sense of understanding the common voter. However, Obama was accused of lacking empathy for Israel. As a presidential psychobiographer, I know that the perception of a politician "feeling for" the ordinary voters is enormously important in the electoral process. Yet, how much can a politician really feel for a multitude of voters? When I hear the word empathy and politician in the same breath, the question that comes to mind is, "Is there some real caring for others or is it a mask of empathy?"

If a president is elected who genuinely wants to do the right thing for voters by listening carefully to their needs, he is very likely to be severely criticized. When Barack Obama was elected president, there was considerable evidence that he genuinely wanted to hear the feelings and needs of his American constituents, including his opponents. In my opinion, empathy is not quite the right word to describe this. However, the voters mostly want to see their president as being strong and decisive. Obama's attempt at "leading from behind," as it was called by many of his critics,

played a crucial role in the crisis of his presidency that followed from the 2010 election of a hostile Republican House of Representatives. The desire for a strong, protective leader takes precedence over the wish for a caring one.

The enormous contempt for President Bill Clinton and Vice President Al Gore expressed in the 1990s by right wing talk show hosts was often centered upon their expressions of empathy. Clinton would say, "I feel your pain," and a right wing talk show host would then declare that he wanted Clinton to feel "his pain," meaning the pain he and his followers wanted to inflict. Throughout his life, Clinton has had many generous impulses. In a town hall meeting one could sense that he really believed what he was saying regarding his concern for ordinary and hurting people, but then I remember the Arkansas union leader who dealt with him for many years and said that Governor Clinton would put his arm around him in warm support while "pissing down his leg"—metaphorically of course. As an author of several articles on our 42nd president, I would argue that he believed what he was saying to people when he said he felt their pain, even if it often did not translate into policies geared toward actually lessening it.

There is a movement to teach empathy in the business world that many academics and therapists relate to ambivalently. Consider new books such as *The Empathy Factor: Your Competitive Advantage for Personal, Team, and Business Success* (2011) by Marie Miyashiro and *Wired to Care: How Companies Prosper When They Create Widespread Empathy* (2009). Joyce Rosenberg writes negatively about this approach, as well as its detrimental impact on analysands, on page 29. Certainly, people listening to each other and fostering a climate of caring within institutions is for the better. But how real can empathy be in a corporate environment that is often cutthroat? On the face of it, a focus on empathy in this environment may be no more than another form of political correctness.

Conclusion

There are certainly many varieties of empathy, though some approaches, such as distinguishing cognitive empathy from emotional empathy, clearly do not resonate with me. A clearer definition of the term is sought in academia, even as we use it as clini-

cians, readers, and researchers to gain deeper insights into the inner worlds of our subjects. Its greater appearances in popular culture and academia in recent years pose the key problem of whether empathic understanding is always a tool to genuinely and helpfully relate to the feelings of others, or a method of gaining advantage in, for example, business and politics. I look forward to learning much from the work on empathy that is being carried out these days by people in such a variety of fields. This special issue on the psychology of empathy should induce readers to think of empathy from perspectives that they may not have previously considered.

Paul H. Elovitz, PhD, is editor of this journal who may be contacted at pelovitz@aol.com.

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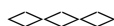
The Many Masks of Empathy

Merle Molofsky—Private Psychoanalytic Practice

What is empathy? I don't know. I used to think I knew because I know the dictionary definition: the capacity to recognize what others feel or the ability to identify with others' feelings. I also know the dictionary distinctions between empathy, sympathy, and compassion. Sympathy is the feeling one gets from contemplating someone else's feelings—feeling with that person. Compassion is feeling for someone else's distress, with a desire to address the distress, a desire to help. Or maybe we have other definitions, as we find ones that are more attractive, more useful, or more "in our wheelhouse." I imagine a host of people responding to the question, "What is empathy?" by saying, "I don't know if I can explain it, but I know what it feels like."

As is well known in the psychoanalytic community, Heinz Kohut contributed to a shift in psychoanalytic discussion, away from conflict and guilt and toward an emphasis on narcissism and self, with his theory of self psychology in *The Analysis of the Self: A Systematic Approach to The Psychoanalytic Treatment of Narcissistic Disorders* (1971). Further, he emphasized empathy both as a requisite from caretakers in infancy and as a psychoanalytic technique. In this sense, empathy entails the ability to feel and to mir-

ror what the other feels. With this innovation, and with Kohut's use of the term, this meaning became what psychoanalytic practitioners understood empathy to be.

In the spring of 1992, when Bill Clinton was running for president of the United States, he famously made a campaign speech in which he said, "I feel your pain." It seems that his listeners understood exactly what he meant—that he understood the privations and anxieties of the average American, and he cared about their experiences. In essence, he empathized with the electorate and the electorate rewarded his statement of empathy with votes. The meaning of empathy seems clear enough, but this is only one understanding. There is also a dark side to the use of empathy, when the unscrupulous take advantage of others.

Empathy as a Confidence Game Mask

The well known term "con man," meaning someone who cheats or defrauds a trusting person, is short for "confidence man," someone who by trickery and deceit wins the confidence of someone, only to bilk that person of money and other property. Running a confidence game involves empathy, but it certainly does not involve caring, compassion, concern, or sympathy. To successfully run a confidence game, the perpetrator has to be able to understand, and even anticipate, the feelings of the person being scammed—the mark. The confidence man (or woman) studies the hopes, wishes, dreams, desires, and fantasies of the mark and tries to anticipate the mark's needs. Then the confidence man/woman begins to offer exactly what the mark seems to need, wins the mark's confidence, and often also the mark's respect, admiration, and love.

The difference between a parent/caretaker empathically mirroring an infant, or a psychoanalyst empathically mirroring an analysand, and a confidence worker scamming the mark is intent. The skill is the same; the intent is not.

The Deceitful Incubus/Succubus Seducer/Seductress

The ancient mythic image of the incubus, the male demon whose name indicates that he literally "lays upon" a woman and has sexual intercourse with her, and the succubus, the female demon who insinuates her way under the body of a man and has sexual intercourse with him, is a compelling symbol. These demons are said

to appear either in dreams or in hallucinatory visions. In many legends, the succubus or incubus is welcomed, as it is enticing, attractive, or desirable. For instance, there are Kabbalistic accounts of four succubi mating with one of the four archangels. How irresistible they must have been to seduce an archangel! On the other hand, there is a strongly negative connotation to the term, in that both incubi and succubi are demons, and demons are not generally considered well-intentioned.

It would seem that a concrete, in-the-material-world equivalent image would be of the merely human seducer/seductress. Is seduction a negative event? Or is it only a description of charismatic charm? Seduction connotes someone being led down the primrose path, drawn into a behavior that the person might otherwise eschew. Seducers of note include Don Juan and Casanova, men who conquer and abandon women who were innocently willing to be seduced, but who could not anticipate the consequences, including pregnancy and loss of reputation. When seductive Eve persuaded Adam to eat the apple, the fruit from the Tree of Knowledge, she lured him into disobedience and the consequence was the Fall—the loss of Paradise.

Seduction is a form of empathy. The persuasive seducer/seductress knows and plays upon the wishes, desires, and appetites of the person being seduced, despite the consequences. There is a well-established psychoanalytic ethics literature that addresses the behavior of therapists who use their empathic understanding of the unconscious wishes and narcissistic frailty of people in treatment with them to initiate sexual behavior with them, which of course is extremely detrimental.

Creative Enticement and Empathy

Confidence workers operate outside of the law. They are conniving thieves. Seductive people play upon sexual desire. Others exist who wear the masks of empathic enticement, who empathize with the complexities of desire to which we mortals are heir. Among such empathic enticers are the noted "Mad Men"—advertising executives, copy editors, graphic designers, who create a sense of "gotta get that" in their target audiences. Purveyors of excitement—including carnies, circus operators, ski lodge owners, bungee-jumping entrepreneurs, and assorted others—offer thrill

seekers enticing opportunities.

Artists—film makers, television producers, novelists, composers, musicians, visual artists—all those who create works that evoke intense emotions are experts at manipulating human feelings through empathy. The noted rapper Busta Rhymes wrote the song "I Know What You Want," released in 2002, that could be the theme song of all "empathic" artists who create what "we want." "I know what you need, I got everything you need."

There is a significant difference between motives of the "empathic" confidence worker, and those who "wear" the masks of creative enticement and empathy. The confidence worker uses "empathic understanding" to harm others, for selfish financial gain. Creative artists of course may have "selfish" motivations in offering art to others for contemplation, including motives of narcissistic gratification and financial gain. But in exchange they offer something of value—the beauty of the artistic creation. Their empathy lies in the resonance of their own feelings with those of the people who enjoy the work of art. They mirror the feelings of others in their own works of art, and express their own feelings as well. Creative artists use their empathic attunement in ways that result in the benefit of others.

Empathy Redux?

If empathy means being able to tune into what another person is feeling, and if what I have described are just a few examples, then what more do we really need to know about empathy? I continue to hope that there is much more to know. The more we know about feelings, affects, emotions, passions—whatever terms we use to describe this very human phenomenon—the more we will be able to formulate techniques and behavior facilitating the use of empathy in constructive, meaningful ways.

The term "empathy" in English holds the root form "path," the same root in the word "sympathy," derived from the ancient Greek term "pathos," meaning passion, as in the Passion of Christ, meaning suffering. The English word was a 1909 translation by Edward B. Titchener of a German word, *Einfühlungsvermögen*, "feeling into," coined by Robert Vischer in 1873, meant to be a translation of the Greek word "pathos" and used in a philosophy of

aesthetics. Titchener was a British psychologist. Unlike Freud, who created a theory of the structure of the mind that identified unconscious processes, Titchener was interested in conscious structures. Empathy therefore was thought to be a conscious component of the mind and that was activated by aesthetic experience. Interestingly, Freud's theories remain compelling, while Titchener's theories seem to have fallen by the wayside, relegated to the backwaters of history. Ironically, his coined word now is associated with psychoanalytic work with unconscious processes.

Our journey through empathy leads me to the same sense of mystery; that "feeling-in" can be used in a myriad of ways, in the service of the other or to the detriment of the other, to enhance the pleasure of the other or to enhance one's own pleasure, possibly at the expense of the other. Psychoanalysis seems to have lost its sense of the history of the term itself, and the roots of the term in consciousness and aesthetic experience. Perhaps the challenge for psychoanalysts, then, is to rediscover the ancient Greek "passion" of empathy. Kohut strove to replace Freud's "guilty man" with "tragic man." Ancient Greek tragedy embraces guilt as part of tragedy. What if empathy embraces guilt, shame, tragedy, and the full range of human motivation? What if our human history has the potential to lead us to a future in which empathy will be an ongoing natural response for the well-being of all?

Merle Molofsky, MFA, NCPsyA, LP, *is a licensed, certified psychoanalyst who serves as faculty and supervisor at the National Psychological Association for Psychoanalysis (NPAP); and on the Board of Directors and chairs the Ethics and Psychoanalysis Committee of the International Federation for Psychoanalytic Education (IFPE). She has published in various places, including* Clio's Psyche *and* The Psychoanalytic Review*. In addition, Molofsky is an active member of the* Clio's Psyche *listserv and a poet. She may be contacted at mmpsya@mindspring.com.*

Approaches to a Collaborative and Reciprocal Process

Heiderose Brandt Butscher—York University

This paper discusses aspects of empathy as a societal modality for collaborative inter-personal relations while attempting to contrast empathy, mindfulness, and sympathy. The quality of empathy has become popularly known as mindfulness. Yet there is a subtle difference between the two concepts, as empathy seems to make a deeper psychological impact, as in the power of projecting one's personality into another's personality in order to fully comprehend her/him. On the other hand, mindfulness appears akin to sympathy in that it engages a person with affinity for the other. Empathy requires involvement and engagement to the point of intellectual identification of oneself with another; sympathy assumes mutual liking or understanding arising from sameness of feeling. Empathy invokes the participant to get involved reciprocally, as he or she identifies with the one that has experienced pain/trauma or joy/happiness. The key here is experience or *Erlebnis*, something that is mutually felt and reciprocated.

Some education programs include the teaching of mindfulness—often in the context of social justice—in the sense of showing consideration for the other with the aim of sensitizing students to differences (racial, religious, cultural, physical, and so forth). Mindfulness anticipates consideration, whereas empathy invites identification with the marginalized one's experience. For example, in the case of bullying, the objective is to develop students' understanding of what the other endures, requiring deep understanding in the sense of *Verstehen* as postulated by sociologist Max Weber (1864-1920).

There are nuanced conceptions of mindful—some synonyms may connote being heedful, alert, careful, attentive, thoughtful, or conscious. Mindful applied in yoga means being aware of your interior and exterior body. Further, mindfulness-based cognitive therapy in Toronto, Canada, helps with depression, anxiety, stress, anger, and addiction. Conscious capitalism extends mindfulness into a total awareness and caring with everything we do.

There is a need for teaching and fostering empathy worldwide, illustrated by two examples: the program Roots of Empathy professes to build caring, peaceful, and civil societies through the development of empathy in children and adults. The program was invented in Canada, tried in New Zealand and parts of Europe, and subsequently adopted by three U.S. states. Roots of Empathy, featured on PBS's *News Hour* on March 28, 2013, is an evidence-based classroom program that has shown significant effect in reducing levels of aggression, such as bullying, among school children while raising social/emotional competence and increasing empathy. One U.S. school is trying the program with five-year-olds in a classroom setting. A baby is brought into the classroom, together with her/his parents, once a month, for about 90 minutes. The children observe the interaction between caregiver and baby and learn the stages of development and requirements for nurturing.

Furthermore, in India, *Namaste* is a Sanskrit word used as a common greeting. There are varieties of meaning: *Namaste* translates roughly as "not me, but you." This captures the selfless acts in teaching through deep listening when work is dedicated to helping children flourish to the best of their potential. In another definition, *Namaste* connects in a spiritual sense by conveying that the spirit in me honors the spirit in you. This approach can focus on unique gifts each child brings to the learning community (A. Brandt Baker, M.Ed. candidate, University of Alberta, Canada, March 2013).

Empathy Development through the Concept of *Verstehen*

The sociologist Max Weber termed perceptive understanding of others in socialization the quality of *Verstehen*. The concept of *Verstehen* in primary socialization is exemplified by the mother who demonstrates a high degree of empathy for the child's developmental needs. British object-relations theorists deemed this type of positive connection an attuned mother/child relationship. A child's toy is a transitional object that allows her/him to identify with a missed loved one (D.W. Winnicott, *Maturational Processes and the Facilitating Environment: Studies in the Theory of Emotional Development*, 1965). We teach small children who are hurting physically or spiritually to imagine their stuffed toys similarly affected to divert attention from their own pain. The transitional

object is a substitute object that may stand for another; for example, a doll for a mother or a created object for a loved one. This is the awakening of a sense of empathy. The contemporary touch-screen generation's use of smart phones, tablets, and apps for kids shows children apparently "engaged because it is an interactive process" (PBS *News Hour*, March 28, 2013). However, we need to research whether children are actually using these devices as transitional objects or whether the apps are alienating them from the reality of human relations and interactions. It seems to me doubtful whether a child can develop the roots of empathy while interacting with a device.

Empathy, Sympathy, and the Reverence for the Other

Sympathy can display mutual liking or understanding arising from sameness of feeling whereas empathy involves projection of one's own personality that marshals a mutually felt emotional response. A perfect example of this difference happened recently: as I drove out of a busy strip mall, my car wheels became lodged in a snow bank upon turning into the main thoroughfare. I began to panic, as the traffic was heavy and my emergency flasher might not have been visible on that snowy afternoon. The next car pulled onto the thoroughfare, the driver barely glancing at my dilemma. The second driver behind me stopped and offered his help, reassuring me: "We'll get you out one way or another." He examined the spin of the wheel and pushed the car with bare hands while I turned the wheel as he indicated. With these maneuvers my car was freed, and I gratefully exclaimed, "I don't know how to thank you." He smiled and hugged me spontaneously. The first driver, avoiding my imploring glance, may or may not have been sympathetic to my dilemma, but did not or could not render assistance. The second driver took time, effort, and expertise to extricate me from the snow bank. His care and action demonstrated real empathy for my experience as he identified with my situation. The philosopher Baruch Spinoza (1632-1677) expressed the experiential aspect this way: "Understanding is not understanding until you live it."

Without empathy, the self is self-focused and inward-oriented, or in a word: narcissistic. Empathy can dissipate the self's narcissistic tendency to focus within. The psychoanalyst and feminist rights advocate Lou Andreas Salomé (1861-1937) called the

empathic attitude "reverence for other." Salomé's uniqueness may be linked to her deep respect for life and her spiritual, empathic reverence for unity with the other. She theorized a reciprocal reflex (*Rückwirkung*) established within a unified relationship (*Looking Back – Memoirs*, 1990; *Lebensrückblick*, 1951). Spiritual reverence implies an intuitive, empathic understanding of the other's intrinsic life force. By unity, Salomé meant a close relational bond, encompassing shared, reciprocated experience. She conceived of *Erlebnis* or life experience as the opportunity for creative empathy. I conceptualize the nature of Salome's spiritual reverence as the "prismatic effect," namely, an empathic attitude in the intuitive perception and interaction with other.

Empathy and Remorse

There is an intrinsic connection between empathy and remorse. A recent radio broadcast reported that young delinquents who languish in conventional penal institutions upon release show a high rate of recidivism (approximately 90% are re-offenders). Unconventional methods of reform were applied: inmates were subjected to psychological counseling about the causes of violence and the long-term effects experienced by innocent victims, and dramatizations of criminal events were re-enacted through role-playing. The young offenders thus were provided an opportunity to empathize with a victim's worldview. The therapist described the personality change of an offender as the development of empathy/remorse as well as conscience. He concluded that a person must go through the pain of experience to fully comprehend its impact in order to develop empathy/remorse to enable societal reintegration. In this sense, R. D. Laing in *The Divided Self* (1969) confirms the healing process is gained through empathy and understanding the experiential aspect of a patient's experience or *Erlebnis*. A strategy for developing empathy through role-play implies an intrinsic complementarity—with reverence for another—as self-understanding occurs when actors work collaboratively in role. Role-play extends into role-creating, such as social role, self-role, or character role.

In the above example, we pivot from empathy to remorse and by implication to the concept of understanding/*Verstehen*. I postulate three extended levels of *Verstehen*—first, the surface core—the physical body and environment; second, the physical

core—the core wellbeing/not wellbeing, the physical pleasure/pain; third, the psychological core—emotional joy/emotional pain (isolation/abandonment). To contextualize a deeper understanding, or *Verstehen*, we should include the context of socio-economic situation, culture, politics and history in addition to these three levels of *Verstehen*.

The development of empathy in children, youth or adults, offers us the opportunity to build caring, peaceful and civil societies based on reciprocal compassion, humanity, intelligence, wisdom, and love.

Heiderose Brandt Butscher, PhD, is Lecturer in the Humanities Division, Faculty of Arts, York University, Toronto, Ontario, Canada, where she teaches History of Science. She is also an Affiliated Member of the Canadian Centre for German and European Studies at York University. Dr. Brandt Butscher can be contacted at butscher@yorku.ca.

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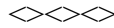
Caring about the Self and Others

Herbert Barry III—University of Pittsburgh

The word "empathy" is often printed and spoken. Most people probably believe that empathy pertains to social relationships, that it is desirable and virtuous, and that many people lack empathy. These beliefs are misguided. Empathy is usually applied to a specific person at a specific time, not to people in general. Empathy, though probably a universal human emotion beginning in early childhood, is not always virtuous or desirable.

Human beings are social animals. Empathy can be defined as imaginatively projecting oneself into the thoughts or feelings of another person, and there are two types. They are described in "Cognitive Empathy and Emotional Empathy in Human Behavior and Evolution," an article by Adam Smith in the *Psychological Record* (2006, Vol. 56, 2-21). Cognitive empathy is a mental perspective that understands but does not participate in the other person's thoughts or feelings. Emotional empathy is the vicarious sharing of emotion.

Cognitive empathy can be exploitative. For example, bankers in the United States used cognitive empathy when approving mortgage loans beyond borrowers' ability to repay. The bankers also used cognitive empathy to make available bundles of risky mortgages for purchase by investors who believed that they were safe investments. The understanding of the emotional state of borrowers and investors was used for the benefit of the bankers without regard for the others. The cognitive empathy of these bankers contributed to the financial collapse and foreclosed mortgages that began in 2008.

People often choose between empathy and self-focus when responding to another person in a specific situation. Empathy guides responses to the other person. The choice is influenced by inhibitions against both empathy and self-focus. Emotional empathy is inhibited and cognitive empathy is often misguided if the other person belongs to a different social or ethnic group or differs in gender, age, or another attribute. Emotional empathy is inhibited if the other person is sad or afflicted; people do not like to share somebody else's misery. Emotional empathy is also inhibited by competing emotions: rivalry if the other person is an opponent or enemy, envy if the other person is superior in any way.

Self-focus, the need to preserve and improve oneself, is inhibited by personal and social disapproval of behavior that appears to be selfish. The need for empathy in social situations also inhibits self-focus. Yet, everybody needs selective self-focus to enable self-preservation and self-improvement. Some people, especially narcissists, prevalently try to boost their self-esteem. An example of pathologically inhibited self-focus was a patient in a mental hospital who liked cats but showed no interest in preserving or improving himself. Psychologists who were advocates of B. F. Skinner's operant behavior achieved therapeutic effects for other patients at the same hospital by training them to press a lever to obtain desired rewards, such as candy or privileges. The patient with inhibitions against self-focus was not interested in these rewards. The psychologists achieved therapeutic effects by training him to press a lever to obtain delivery of milk to a cat that was visible nearby. We should choose empathy if needed in the social situation. We should choose self-focus if needed for self-preservation or self-

improvement. For example, General George S. Patton, in a speech to his troops, said that their purpose was not to die for their country but to make some other poor dumb bastard die for his.

A better recommendation is always to be aware of our need for both empathy and self-focus. Freud described the id as a container of many contradictory and incompatible desires. Sometimes we can select both contrasting actions in the same situation. For example, in a contest we can choose self-focus to try to win and afterward choose emotional empathy to console or congratulate our former opponent.

Herbert Barry III, PhD, is a psychologist who became a faculty member at the University of Pittsburgh in 1963, Professor in 1970, and Professor Emeritus in 2001. He is a Psychohistory Forum Research Associate and a former president of the International Psychohistorical Association (1991-92) who has been a prolific author and strong supporter of the Psychohistory Forum. He may be contacted at barryh@pitt.edu.

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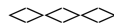
Folk Wisdom and Kohut: Empathy Is Being Human

Lou Agosta—Argosy University

Empathy is a complex subject that has been the target of extensive scientific inquiry, research, and debate, but this is not my focus. Rather, it is in the modest folktale from the collection edited by Jacob (1785-1863) and Wilhelm Grimm (1786-1859), "The Story of the Youth Who Went Forth to Learn What Fear Was" (in *The Complete Grimm's Fairy Tales*, 1814/17, 1972: 29f).

While psychologists, philosophers, neurologists, and psychoanalysts have much to contribute to our understanding of empathy, people "get" what empathy is entirely independently of scientific input precisely because our basic constitution includes empathy. We bring meaning to our experiences through narrative and connect our narrative to our community through empathy. The narrating of empathy creates community. Even if the narrative is fic-

tional, the community is actual and lives in the real world.

A loss of empathy is equivalent to the loss of an individual's humanity. This is documented in the folk wisdom of the ages where empathy is conspicuous by its absence. A wonderful example of empathy and its absence is documented in "The Story of the Youth Who Went Forth to Learn What Fear Was," a tale about someone (the classic simpleton of the folktale) who tries to learn what shuddering is (that is, to literally "shudder" or get "goose bumps," a classic physical expression of fear). The hero-simpleton tries so hard to feel fear that he is effectively defended against all feelings. He has no feelings, not even fear. He is insensitive to others' feelings in the everyday sense.

Thus, he lacks empathy and the corresponding aspects of his humanness. He is also ontologically cut off from the community of fellow travelers who share feelings empathically and on the basis of which lives matter to them. This deficiency occasions a misunderstanding with the sacristan at the local church, and the youth throws him down the stairs, resulting in the youth's disgrace and banishment. As in all classic folktales, the hero goes forth on a journey of exploration of the world and of himself. He is now a traveler on the road of life, which is the beginning of his ontological adventures to recover his feelings and become a complete human being.

The point is that empathy is not some obscure capability that requires elaborate technology to make visible, as when researchers deploy magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) to correlate mirror neurons (though we can learn from this too). Rather, empathy is hidden in plain view. This folktale, this *Märchen*, is in fact a ghost story, to be told on dark, windy autumn nights. The empathy of the audience is aroused by constellating fearful images of the living dead. This makes for a series of humorous encounters with ghouls and haunted castles as the youth sets about trying to learn shuddering—compulsively saying, "I wish I could shudder," while having no idea what it means. The hero accomplishes many brave deeds instead; he is literally not sensible enough to recognize when he should be afraid. The ghost story provides a framework for images of the disintegration and fragmentation of the self, including literal ghoulish images of bowling with detached heads and a corpse that rises from the dead because the youth gets into bed with

it to warm it up—all creepy scenarios against which the youth is firmly defended by his utter and complete lack of feeling. None of these images and events matter to him in the way they would matter to an affectively, emotionally whole person. He is surrounded by ghouls and living corpses, but ontologically speaking, he is the one who is an affective zombie, emotionally dead. Without empathy, the individual is emotionally dead.

The subtext of the story is that the individual cannot recover his humanity on his own. He requires the participation of another—and a relationship with the other—to restore the humanness of his feelings and to teach him how to shudder. Having raised a curse on a haunted castle and won the hand of a fair princess, the hero finally stops trying to shudder. Only then is he overcome by shuddering at the first opportune occasion. On the morning after his wedding night, his new wife teaches him shuddering—no, this is not going where you think. She teaches him shuddering in a pun that cleverly masks the physical and sexual innuendo: she throws a bowl of cold water filled with goldfish on him. He wakes up exclaiming, "Ach, yah, now finally I know shuddering!" Now he is finally a whole, complete human being.

We intuitively know that the empathizer gets his being human from the "empathasand" (the target of empathy). There is nowhere else for one to obtain humanness than from another human being. Yes, it is true that the empathizer must have been treated empathically by his own caretakers in order for him to be able to empathize with others. Absent such empathy, the would-be empathizer would have nothing to give and indeed his own survival as a human being would be at stake. Empathy develops within a personal history, and this development trails behind it. However, even though the evidence of human development is significant to this study, it is philosophically irrelevant at this point. We are not referring to historical development, or (as Heidegger would say) "ontical" considerations. No amount of human development in growing up and building a personality, character, or an identity can add up to a necessary conceptual distinction between the individual and the other.

We want to grasp what about the empathic relationship gives the empathizer his humanness, entirely independently of par-

ticular experiences—as a matter of a necessary and general concep-
tual distinction—in order to get it back experientially as a particular
benefit. If this inquiry can grasp how the individual gets her or his
humanness from the other through empathy, then it will have gone
a long way towards showing how empathy is the foundation of hu-
man community, where "community" means "being with one an-
other in human interrelation."

While our cognitions of other individuals begin with experi-
ence, and without experience one individual would have no knowl-
edge of the other, it does not follow that the foundation and access
to others depends exclusively on experience. In fact, empathy is
not the possession of any one individual, though individuals are
more or less empathic in any given moment and any given relation-
ship. Empathy belongs to the community. Empathy lives in the
relatedness between individuals. Empathy lives as the source of an
optimal responsiveness, demonstrating the empathic understanding
of the listener (therapist) to the patient's struggles and efforts. In-
deed, as a form of data gathering about the experiences of other
persons, empathy samples the experience of the other without
merger or over-identification. In that way, it is actually a healthy
defense against compassion fatigue, burn out, or fragmentation. If
one experiences these later as a result of being empathic, then one
is doing it wrong. As an attitude towards the other, empathy is a
filter—a semi-permeable membrane—that allows a communicabil-
ity of affect, feeling, and emotion while preserving a disinterested
distance between self and other. Empathy provides a trace of the
other's experience, not the overwhelming presence of a tidal wave
of affect, emotion, or (mostly negative) feeling. Yes, you have the
unhappy experience of the other; but as a trace affect, not the whole
bottomless pit of suffering. Yes, you suffer; but, strange as it may
sound, only a little bit.

The argument is that empathy comes into the world of lan-
guage and life as story telling—narrative empathy—and is a speech
act at a higher level in that it creates a community between the sto-
ryteller and the listener, humanizing them in an inter-subjective
community of two. The story does not pretend to create a commu-
nity; it really does so. This occurs even if the story is fictional, as it
definitely is in the case of a folk story. The empathy to which the

story telling gives access is an artifact of language and takes us to the empathic source of community, as vicarious feeling is articulated, implemented, and communicated in the story itself. In this role, narrative empathy forms a bridge in the direction of psychoanalysis.

Heinz Kohut (1913-1981) is the psychoanalyst who more than anyone else put empathy on the map in the 20th century. If there were any doubt about Kohut's commitment to the establishment of a community of fellow travelers on the path of empathy—the unity of observer and observed—then it is clarified in Kohut's account of the first psychoanalytic cure through the application of empathy:

> The mutation that opened the door to the new field of introspective-empathic depth-psychology (psychoanalysis) took place in 1881, in a country house near Vienna, in the encounter between Josef Breuer and Anna O. The step that opened the path to a whole new aspect of reality—a step that established simultaneously both the novel mode of observation and the novel content of a revolutionary science—was made by the patient who insisted that she wanted to go on "chimney-sweeping." Yet it was Breuer's joining his in this venture, her permission for her to go on with it, his ability to take her move seriously (i.e., to observe its results and to commit the observations to paper) that established that unity of observer and observed which forms the basis for an advance of the first magnitude in man's exploration of the world (Kohut, *The Restoration of the Self*, 1977, 301-2).

This documents the paradigm of the establishment of the first psychoanalytic community of self and other in Breuer's deployment of empathy to cure Anna O. The famous "talking cure" was Breuer's gift of empathy, which should not be underestimated given the stereotyped authoritarian approach to medicine characteristic of that time and place. Obviously, this is not the first use of empathy, as every parent, teacher, and human being would know. Rather it is the first disciplined, scientific use of empathy.

Kohut suggests that without empathy the very idea of the psychological and emotional life of the human being is unthinkable. We can't even imagine it. It is logically problematic. Impossible. This is because empathy, as a basic competence in human interrelations, makes this inner life intelligible and meaningful by constituting it as a field of interrelations in the first place. Thus, Kohut writes: "Empathy does indeed in essence define the field of our observations" (1977: 306). Here the phenomena (feelings, emotions, thought, and meaningful behavior) are dependent on that function which makes possible our access to them. Empathy is that function on the basis of which the experiences engaged by depth psychology are opened up and constituted as accessible and knowable. Empathy is that without which the constitution of our psychological life does not make sense. It is the condition of possibility of that life. In that condition, empathy is being human.

Lou Agosta, PhD, teaches the History and Systems of Psychology at the Illinois School of Professional Psychology at Argosy University. He has taught at Loyola, Roosevelt, DePaul and St. Xavier universities as well as at Oakton Community College. His book, Empathy in the Context of Philosophy (2010), was published by Palgrave Macmillan. Further biographical details may be found at www.ARumorOfEmpathy.com. He is a candidate at the Chicago Institute for Psychoanalysis who practices psychotherapy in the Chicago area and he may be contacted at LAgosta@UChicago.edu.

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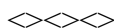
Pseudo-empathy: The Analyst's Help or Hindrance?

Joyce Rosenberg—Psychoanalyst in Private Practice

Pseudo-empathy is one of the more disheartening trends of our time. It is a false claim of caring or understanding, usually by someone trying to get something he or she wants. It is a form of manipulation, a cynical consequence of the increasing narcissism, and also narcissistic pain, in American society.

People are hungry for affirmation and validation. They want

to know someone "gets" them. So a political candidate seeking votes only has to act like she or he cares. Bill Clinton set a standard for pseudo-empathy during the 1992 presidential campaign, not just with his declaration "I feel your pain," but also with his charismatic ability to connect with voters.

Pseudo-empathy is also a ploy, a strategy. Advertising and the media are full of pseudo-empathy. A bank whose aim is profit has an ad campaign that uses words like "relationship" or "understanding." A TV station's nickname is "My9." Talk show and home shopping hosts act like everyone's best friend. The fake touchy-feeliness is aimed at getting people to spend.

Books purportedly about empathy that are now on the market include *The Empathy Factor: Your Competitive Advantage for Personal, Team, and Business Success* and *Men, Women, and the Power of Empathy: You Can Really Connect with Him!*

This phenomenon bears little resemblance to the empathy that is an integral part of analytic work. Ralph R. Greenson (*The Technique and Practice of Psychoanalysis* I, 1967) defined real empathy very simply: "Empathy means to share, to experience the feelings of another human being... Its motive, in psychoanalysis, is to gain understanding; it is not used for vicarious pleasure" (368).

Greenson's theory of where empathy resides in the psyche—in what's known as the preconscious, or the part of the psyche that is just beyond the conscious state—underscores the difference between pseudo-empathy and real empathy. Pseudo-empathy is quite calculated, which puts it into the conscious part of the brain. Real empathy, even though an analyst may examine and question it during or after a session, is not something that can be calculated.

Although it's false, pseudo-empathy resonates with so many people in our society. That raises for me the question of whether the spread of pseudo-empathy will help or hinder analysis and analysts. Most patients crave empathy. But will people who are gratified by pseudo-empathy be able to tolerate the empathy and empathic responses offered by an analyst—responses that may not always be warm and fuzzy?

Sometimes an analyst is angry, yet still empathic. I remember snapping at a long-term patient, "What are you doing?" in response to another self-defeating plan she was about to carry out. At first I wondered about my countertransference and technique, and then reminded myself that this treatment was very much about someone who didn't have enough limits but also wanted those limits. The patient's response, after we talked about her reaction to what I had said, was to stop and think about what she was doing.

Stephen A. Mitchell (*Hope and Dread in Psychoanalysis*, 1993) may have the answer in the patient's need for authenticity: "What the patient requires more than anything else is some sense of his impact on another, some honest expression of what the analyst is really feeling" (145).

To be fair, real empathy, even the sometimes blunt and frank variety, can be found in our society, although many people might not identify it as empathy. People are often grateful, perhaps years later, after a parent, teacher, coach or friend has challenged them or given them tough love. In the novel *The Art of Fielding* (2012), Chad Harbach describes why a teenager who had dropped out of school returned to class after being confronted by a coach:

> The coach hadn't left him alone; hadn't assumed that he knew what he was doing. Instead he bothered to get in Schwartz's face, to tell him exactly what he thought of him, in the most forceful way he knew how. Nobody else—relatives, teachers, friends—had ever done such a thing for Schwartz, before or since (104).

This reminds me of something one of my instructors said during my analytic training: "You will be listening to your patients in a way no one has ever listened to them before." So, I am reassured somewhat by the fact that psychoanalysis or psychoanalytic psychotherapy can be a great help in this increasingly narcissistic society that seems to be thriving on pseudo-empathy.

What still nags at me is the possibility that the expectations that pseudo-empathy might create will lead to shorter and shorter treatments, especially when the inevitable disappointments and ruptures happen. Of course, there have always been highly narcissistic

patients for whom even a good-enough analyst is a disappointment—the analyst has to be perfect. Many patients over the years have measured their analysts against clinicians in movies and on television, including Dr. Berger in "Ordinary People" and Dr. Melfi in "The Sopranos," and asked, "Why aren't you like them?"

But I'm also looking at pseudo-empathy along with phenomena in our society like shrinking attention spans and disembodied ways of communicating, such as texting, that I fear might make pseudo-empathy look that much more inviting. Will fewer patients have the tolerance and commitment for long-term treatment—and I'm thinking of two years, not 10 or 15—when a truly empathic analyst doesn't gratify the need for something that feels good right now? Will the patient, analyst and treatment survive what is probably inevitable in every analysis or therapy—an empathic failure by the analyst?

In the early stages of working with a patient, an analyst lays the foundation that can help a patient feel a true empathic presence. For example, as the work unfolds, the analyst who realizes that a patient needs a self-object or mirroring is in a position to provide empathy that has been missing. For example, the analyst who recognizes that a patient perceives her as a withholding parent, and interprets that dynamic to the patient, is being empathic.

One answer to my title question, I think, is to try to get a sense in the early stages of treatment of what expectations pseudo-empathy might have raised in a patient. The analyst is likely to have an opportunity at some point to explore with a patient what it's like to not be understood or to be disappointed, simply because there's no pseudo-empathy in the room.

Ultimately, the patient might need to hear from her analyst: "Yes, I've disappointed you. That's because I'm real."

Joyce M. Rosenberg *is a member of the National Psychological Association for Psychoanalysis and has a private psychoanalysis practice in Manhattan, working with adults and couples. She has written papers on the connection between the psyche and creativity. She is a financial news writer at The Associated Press and may be contacted at psyjourn@att.net.*

The New
Psychoanalytic Ethic

Frank Summers—Northwestern University

Contemporary psychoanalytic developmental theory is based on the recognition that the self evolves as a function of the attentiveness of the early caretakers to the child's affective states (Daniel Stern, *The Interpersonal World of the Infant*, 1985; Beatrice Beebe & Frank Lachmann, *Infant Research and Adult Treatment*, 2002; Joseph Lichtenberg, *Psychoanalysis and Infant Research*, 1989). The development of the self is contingent on the affective resonance of the child's early caretakers with the child's nascent experience. A critical turning point in this line of thinking was Jessica Benjamin's insight that only if the child sees the responsive mother as a subject—that is, if the child is able to see the mother's recognition as the gaze of a subject—can he win his own subjectivity (*Like Subjects, Love Objects*, 1995). This recognition of the essential importance of mutual subjectivity in self development has numerous theoretical and clinical implications. My focus here is on the inherent role of empathy in this transformation and the implications of the connection between empathy and self for the psychoanalytic understanding of ethics.

Without the mother's empathy, the child's dispositions cannot become a self, and without the child's empathic grasp of the mother as a subject, the mother's ministrations cannot help the child become a subject. Because the self realizes its potential by seeing the subjectivity of the other who sees the child's nascent self states, then empathy in both directions is at the heart of who the self is. With this transformation in the analytic view of development, psychoanalytic theory has made the realization of self potential dependent not only on the caretaker's empathy, but also on the child's own empathic connection to the caretaker. This step cannot be overstated because it means that the realization of the self requires not only receiving empathy, but also the deployment of empathy in the recognition of others as subjects.

Conversely, disturbance in empathic capability interferes with the development of subjectivity. An objectified other cannot

offer the recognition of subjectivity. Such an "other" cannot be related to, but only utilized, controlled, or manipulated, as with any other object in the natural world. The gaze of the objectified other, therefore, lacks the ability to elicit subjectivity and therefore cannot stimulate opportunities or potentialities of the self. It follows that the objectification of the other leads, *ipso facto*, to an arrest in the ability of the self to achieve its potential.

Because aspects of self-potential are dormant without the human gaze that brings them to life, indirect means are sought for the fulfillment of the aborted needs of the self. Rather than evolving in accordance with one's affective life, the derailment of needs results in one or more of a variety of pathological outcomes. So, any damage to the ability to exercise empathy arrests self-development and sows the seeds for a symptomatic result. It is not difficult in contemporary America to yield to the temptation to indulge greed and exploitation, to objectify the other with seeming impunity. But the price paid is no less than the erosion of self (Heinz Kohut, "Introspection, Empathy, and the Semi-circle of Mental Health," *Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 63:395-407 & 1982, *How Does Analysis Cure?* 1984; Frank Summers, *The Psychoanalytic Vision*, 2013). This is one of the most valuable of contemporary psychoanalytic insights.

A major implication of this theory of development is that sensitivity to and understanding of others as subjects with their own experience is not an attitude that needs to be imposed on the individual who has had an intersubjective dialogue with a caretaking figure. Such an empathic attitude inheres in the self who is realizing his or her potential. The devaluation and objectification of others that we see in so much of our daily life and most poignantly in clinical practice is not self-expression, but a symptom of its derailment.

The recognition that self and other are inextricably interwoven by the needs of each for the other undercuts any argument that self-realization could lead to a dangerous licentiousness. Because the exercise of self potential cannot be separated from the empathic recognition of the other, the optimally functioning self is inherently ethical. It is also why we see so few ethical individuals.

One can see, then, that contemporary psychoanalytic theory implies a shift in the analytic view of the foundation of ethical behavior. In the classical model, the superego, derived from the internalization of parental stricture, was the source of ethics. But, with the shift in focus to self development, psychoanalytic theory grounds ethics in empathy, rather than in the superego. While the superego is an ethic of *imposition*, empathy is an ethic of *inclination*. Contemporary psychoanalysis has provided a foundation for a Western ethical code in the nature of self and its development.

From the time of the decline of religious influence at the end of the Middle Ages and accelerating with the Enlightenment, western civilization has sought a secular foundation for ethical behavior. As externally imposed systems of thought, such as religion and Platonism, lost their power to define individual behavior, there has been a turn inward for guidance for how to live. Psychoanalysis, in its contemporary form emphasizing the inherent link between self and mutual recognition of subjectivity, provides such a secular grounding for ethical behavior.

The psychoanalysis of self and other breaks down the modernist distinction between the psychological and the ethical. The most fully functioning person operates with empathy for others, and is therefore ethical in the core of her being (Kohut, 1982, 1984). That is why self-realization is antithetical to the objectification of the other. It is the objectification of others that makes possible object splitting, devaluation, and the mistreatment of others. The key to the contemporary psychoanalytic ethic is that it connects healthy self development with the ability to be empathic. The superego has been replaced by empathy, and empathy is a calling of the self. This is what I have referred to as the "emerging psychoanalytic ethic" (*The Psychoanalytic Vision*).

I realize, of course, it is bold to claim that contemporary psychoanalysis provides an ethical foundation for contemporary culture, but I think it is important to see empathy's importance to the optimally functioning self as the culmination of a long struggle in the West to find a grounding for ethical behavior since the decline of religion as the organizing force of society. The Enlightenment began a period of intense scientific and philosophic inquiry to replace religion with a secular foundation for human life, including

ethics. The notion of an ethic of inclination rather than imposition was prominent in the German Romantic Movement, a body of thought that saw a deep connection between love and *Bildung*, or the realization of potential (Jacques Barzun, *Romanticism and the Modern Ego*, 1943). Freud was a child of the Enlightenment, and he made his own attempt to found a secular ethic with his concept of the superego, a psychic institution originating in the child's fear of the parent. The shift to the self, or one's own experience, for the ultimate guide for one's life—a transformation that Charles Taylor calls "the expressivist turn"—led to the exploration of the psyche in many arenas of life including art and philosophy, but was codified by Freud in the invention of psychoanalysis (*Sources of the Self: The Making of Modern Identity*, 1989).

The current transformation of analytic thought into a theory of self and other has now brought empathy into the analytic dialogue as a central component of self-realization. This theoretical move is the latest step in the western search for an ethical foundation in the rights and values of the individual. The insight that self and empathy inhere in each other means that optimal mental functioning, the healthy psyche, and the ethical are inextricably linked. Empathy is the fulcrum of mental health and human ethics.

Frank Summers, PhD, ABPP, is president of the Division of Psychoanalysis of the American Psychological Association, and Professor of Clinical Psychiatry and the Behavioral Sciences at the Feinberg School of Medicine, Northwestern University. He is a Supervising and Training Analyst at the Chicago Institute for Psychoanalysis and the Chicago Center for Psychoanalysis. His most recent book is <u>The Psychoanalytic Vision: The Experiencing Subject, Transcendence, and the Therapeutic Process</u> *(2013), and he may be contacted at franksumphd@gmail.com.*

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"Thank You for Crying": Sometimes Too Much Empathy is Not Enough!

Judith Logue—Psychoanalyst in Private Practice

They say there is a first for everything. I saw my first patient in the fall of 1964, but until this week (March 2013), I had never cried beyond a tear or two. My 61-year-old analysand, now a sit-up patient after six and a half years, handed me a tissue, noting it was the last one in the box. At the end of the hour, he looked grateful, smiled, and said, "Thank you for crying."

Empathy is simply defined as the ability to understand and share the feelings of others. When I was educated and trained in the mid-1960s, I was taught empathy with neutrality and distance—no self-disclosure, physical contact, or crying.

I've lived and worked through five decades of psychoanalytic theory and practice. In my classical training, drive theory took empathy for granted, demonstrated by approving and neutral silence. Sullivanian influences emphasized that we take into account the interpersonal, and we nodded to Horney's integration of sociocultural factors. Ego psychology highlighted the importance of ego integration, cohesion, and strength along with Hartmann's then-modern idea of the "conflict free sphere of the ego." Kohutian empathy capitalized on the withholding aspect of the neutrality and silence, which had become a staple of *New Yorker* cartoons and media caricature. Relational psychoanalysis has now compensated and brought balance to our notions of narcissism, sex, and aggression by highlighting attachment, intersubjective space, and the "third."

Where does this leave us now? What is going on here with regard to empathy?

I believe that all of these ideas—and many more—are relevant and important to consider. Empathy is and has been a required aspect of all psychoanalytic theory and practice. It is just a matter of how, and the extent to which, it is emphasized by different schools of thought.

Empathy is Essential but Not Enough

Empathy is obviously essential for a relationship. My first analytic teacher wisely taught in The Technique of Psychoanalysis: "You must first make a relationship in order to have a patient and do treatment." It sounds simple, but it is not.

We analysts are humans with feelings. Because we are not robots, we have feelings and countertransferences. Whether they are broad (all feelings toward patients) or narrow (specific feelings and fantasies based on our own histories and transferences), we have to address them to do analysis that heals.

In my case vignette, my countertransference is glaring. I had become the "container" for my patient's sadness, rather than allowing him to feel his own sadness, pain, trauma, anger, and rage at the loss of his sexual life, as well as his own difficulty expressing those emotions in words. He suggests to me an example of a type of "alexithymia"—difficulty expressing certain difficult feelings with words directly to another person (Levant, R. F., Good, G. E., Cook, S., O'Neil, J., Smalley, K. B., Owen, K. A., et al. [2006], "Validation of the Normative Male Alexithymia Scale: Measurement of a gender-linked syndrome," *Psychology of Men and Masculinity, 7*, 212-224.)

My empathy was required, but it was too much. It was also not enough. Despite many years of every interpretation most could think of—plus my patient's dutiful reading of Freud and other psychoanalytic literature in a university course—something remains missing for him to resolve the neurotic stalemate in his love and erotic life. He cannot take the obvious, and for many people, "easy" steps of initiating physical affection and lovemaking with a willing partner, or even extrarelationship attachment with sexual love. I (we) have to find yet another interpretation (after almost too many), a different technique or therapist, or accept what cannot be changed.

This case takes me back to my first few years in private practice. I had a dutiful 20-something analysand on the couch who could intellectually interpret his dreams, and made me look like an experienced analyst for my presentations in my Advanced Dream Seminar. But his feelings were locked in a room. We used to call

this "isolation of affect." It was quite difficult to analyze him, and frequent sessions on the psychoanalytic couch proved to be among the greatest of his resistances to connecting emotions with intellectual insight. I had the necessary emotional distance to understand how others might react to this young man who withheld his feelings from himself, as well as others. It was no surprise that his presenting problem was a failed love relationship.

Forty-two years later I think I have the same challenge. Curiously, and maybe not so unexpectedly, I have a different set of countertransferences. Instead of a "complementary" transference (*cf.* Heinrich Racker, *Transference and Countertransference*, 1968), this time my countertransference was "concordant."

Aging, illness, and years of experience had led to a pile-up of the "necessary losses" that come with maturity. I personally had to survive a near-death experience and radiation and chemotherapy treatment that not only almost killed my sex life, but almost killed me!

Where to Go from Here
When Fritz Perls, MD, founded Gestalt Therapy using psychodrama techniques to expedite the process of connecting feelings to thoughts, he rebelled against psychoanalysis because he believed—perhaps incorrectly—that an emphasis on thinking led to overintellectualization precluding the integration of feelings and bodily sensations with the mind. Analysts called him a quack. I was curious—and young enough—in 1968 to sign up for a week at his professional workshop to find out what was going on.

In the 1960s and 1970s, bodywork, sensitivity training, and encounter groups were employed to combat "mind-fucking" and overintellectualized ways of being and acting. Although it was not permitted (called "acting out") for an analytic candidate to refer a patient to an "adjunct" therapy or wild analytic technique, patients easily found them on their own, and we analyzed them as "grist for the mill." At the same time, patients learned and grew—and were offered opportunities beyond psychoanalysis.

Unexpectedly, the call for papers on empathy, which initiated and triggered important insights, led me to conclude that my patient requires more than I can offer him if, for me, he cannot and

will not work his insights into action. Despite my recommendation for couple's therapy with his wife, consultation with a respected colleague who does cognitive-behavior therapy, a couple's workshop, and/or sex therapy, he has resisted.

I was trained to "use" my countertransference reactions to promote the therapy. There were times when it was considered appropriate to share them in a limited way, and to employ the patient in resolving the impasse. But there was and is no way to do this until and unless one is sufficiently aware of the countertransference, and of its in-depth meaning for the patient's psychodynamics and character patterns—as well as our own.

Based on my new understanding, I plan to share my countertransference with my patient. That resolution is necessary, even if for him, it feels like a "necessary evil" or "necessary loss." That is, he and I will have to face that he has gone as far as he can go with me, and that he must seek out another therapist and/or other ways to resolve his paralysis. Perhaps the confrontation and clarification that he will also "lose" me might get him off the dime. But perhaps not.

The best and famous line in the movie *Touch of Class* says it all. George Segal confesses to his buddy that he is deeply in love with his mistress and loves his wife, too; and he does not know what to do. His friend confesses that he also went through this and spent $18,000 in analysis to figure out what to do. He shares that his analyst said to him about his mistress: "Do you love her enough to let her go?"

It remains to be seen whether my patient can access his feelings in a continued analysis with me. I now see my feeling for the two of us has been too much. It remains to be seen whether the time has come to accept what cannot be changed and insist upon his referral to another therapist or type of therapy.

However, I now understand how important it was for the therapy outcome that I cried with my patient. It was a more dramatic way than I could have imagined to show me that sometimes too much empathy is not enough!

Judith Logue, PhD, *is a psychoanalyst in private practice*

and a founding member at the Institute for Psychoanalysis and Psychotherapy of New Jersey who has been active in psychoanalytic governance.   She may be contacted at judith@judithlogue.com.

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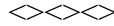
Competing Views of Human Motivation and Psychology

Ken Fuchsman—University of Connecticut

Are humans more selfish than social, more competitive than benevolent? These complicated questions have found advocates on one side or another for centuries, even millennia. Often observers associate the competitive view with Hobbes and the more social perspective with Rousseau. I am going to examine these competing views, but focus more on the strengths and dilemmas within those contemporary academics who see humans as cooperative, collaborative, and empathic.

Beginning with the harsher view, Hobbes thought that in the proverbial state of nature everyone competed with each other and life was nasty and brutish. Herbert Spencer's Social Darwinism championed the survival of the fittest, in ways that modified Hobbes by siding with the victors. More recently there are proponents of selfish gene theory, sociobiology, evolutionary psychology, and rational self-interest. In these views, humans are cognitive actors who help others when it is in their self-interest and/or to benefit their ability to survive and reproduce. Human emotionality, outside of the joys of winning, plays a minor role in these more recent perspectives.

In the last few decades, a counter tradition among academic researchers that stresses our cooperative and empathic nature has been gaining ascendancy. Jean Decety and William Ickes proclaim that "empathy research is suddenly everywhere!" (2009, vii). The year 2009 alone saw the publication of books with titles such as *The Age of Empathy* and *The Empathic Civilization*, among others.

Advocates of humans as empathic use the findings of recent research to counter the perspective that humans are mostly focused

on their own individual wants and needs over those of others. Sarah Blaffer Hrdy says that "discoveries by evolutionary minded psychologists, economists, and neuroscientists are propelling the cooperative side of human nature to center stage," and "are transforming disciplines long grounded in the premise that the world is a competitive place where to be a rational actor means being a selfish one." She concludes that the "ability to identify with others and vicariously experience their suffering is not simply learned: It is part of us" (2009, 4, 7). Hrdy is far from alone in saying that care and concern for others are intrinsic to human nature; so do primatologist Frans de Waal, psychologist Michael Tomasello and environmentalist Jeremy Rifkin, among others. Michael Hoffman says that empathy is "the glue that makes social life possible" (2000, 3). The die is cast; to these writers, being cooperative is at the core of who we are as a species, and those who characterize us as primarily selfish are mistaken.

If our prosocial tendencies are so essential, what exactly are cooperation and empathy? As with many concepts, there is much controversy on the definition of empathy. Michael Tomasello says that cooperation can involve being sharing, helpful or informative, depending on the activity involved (Tomasello, 2009, 5). C. Daniel Batson finds that there are eight different definitions of empathy, but boils them down to accuracy of understanding and concern. It is not only that individuals can know others' internal world, but that they also "respond with sensitive care" and have "enormous importance for our life together" (Batson, 2009, 11). Empathy is distinguished from sympathy. In the *Compact Oxford English Dictionary,* "'Empathy' means 'the ability to understand and share the feelings of another person'...whereas 'sympathy' means 'the feeling of being sorry for someone who is unhappy or in difficulty'" (Soanes and Hawker, 2005, 325). Empathy covers a broader emotional canvas than sympathy does. Some equate mind-reading, the accurate perception of thoughts, with empathy. If the thought-reader does not have a positive emotional feeling toward the other but is indifferent, neutral, or hostile, it is not, in Batson's view, empathy. His notion that empathy includes accurate perception and sensitivity to the other is consistent with the *Oxford English Dictionary*'s usage. Those who equate mind-reading and empathy emphasize the cogni-

tive more than the emotional, yet the question of the relationship of self to other in empathy remains open as does where are the boundaries and where the sharing in being empathic.

Understanding the virtues and dilemmas of cooperation and empathy requires tracing how they develop. Collaborative action does appear fairly early in life. When and why this happens is of central importance in understanding the complex fate of being empathic. Cooperation arises in the second year of life after the child can clearly distinguish him or herself from others (Pfeiffer and Depretto, 2009, 185). It also emerges from the ways the child is nurtured. To Batson, the evolution of empathy is part of a "parental instinct" in many mammals, which is highly developed in homo sapiens (Batson, 2012, 46).

 Empathy develops in stages, beginning with the connection between caregivers and infants. Research shows attachment is derived from biology.   Anthropologist Melvin Konner states, "Attachment... is wired into the infant's brain." It "is an instinct—a complex, highly motivated, unlearned behavior" (Konner, 2010, 233). Every infant who has "the opportunity to form an attachment," does so, Mary Main writes, whether it is "to a battering parent as to a sensitively responsive one" (1999, 847). Van IJzendoorn and Sagi-Schwartz report that research across cultures shows that attachment is universal (2008, 897).

It is in the nature of interconnections between nurturers and infant that lays the groundwork for what is to follow. For instance, no matter how many caregivers a baby may have by six months, the child makes his or her preference known by choosing one primary attachment figure. Then, the youngster depends on being near the individual to whom he or she is bonded. Where there is proximity of mother to child, and if things go well, after a while, periods of attunement between mother and baby can regularly occur. Responsiveness and sensitivity toward each other may well lead to a reciprocal, secure, fulfilling relationship that lays the foundation for the flowering of empathy. But there are challenges, as proximity between mother and infant can be disrupted.

When infants are separated from their attachment figure, they protest intensely (Zeifman and Hagan, 2008, 438). Separated

youngsters may be fearful, angry, and fervent in seeking to restore connection to their mother and if this fails to happen, they often become despondent (Kobak and Madsen, 2008, 23). Jeffry Simpson and Jay Belsky write, "Across all human cultures and most primate species, young and vulnerable infants display a specific sequence of reactions following separation from their stronger, older, and wiser caregivers. Immediately following separation, most infants protest vehemently, typically crying, screaming and throwing temper tantrums as they search for their caregivers" (2008, 131). John Bowlby sees separation and loss as integral to the attachment process. Insecurity is built into the privileged relationship between infant and mother. From birth on there is a spectrum of closeness and distance, belonging and feeling abandoned in human entanglements. If out of the vagaries of attachment there can be a secure setting for the child, prosocial actions can easily emanate from those youngsters who do not have autism spectrum disorders. Still, not all social experience reinforces emotional safety.

As attachment is the first phase, cooperation is the next. Michael Tomasello says that not long after toddlers turn one, "human children are already cooperative...it comes naturally...they do not learn this from adults." He cites a study where infants between a year and two months and a year and a half encounter a new unrelated male adult, and these children help this individual solve a problem such as opening a door when the man has too much in his hands to open it himself or when the child hands an object to him that he cannot reach. Of the two dozen toddlers studied, all but two helped and did so right away. Our close primate relative, the chimpanzee, does not initiate collaboration and cooperation in parallel situations (Tomasello, 2009, 4, 6, 63-4). This evidence shows that cooperation and concern for others are a distinctly human characteristic. Our collaborative responses contrast with the Hobbesian view that in the state of nature it is every one against everyone else.

The willingness to be cooperative may not be only inborn. A study shows German and Israeli five-year-olds being more sympathetic to an emotionally upset adult than are children from Malaysia and Indonesia (Vaish and Warnken, 2012, 141). Carol Dweck recounts a study of one- to three-year-olds in daycare that measured how children responded to another child who was dis-

tressed. About 50 percent of the children were from abusive families and the others were from homes where there was not abuse. Most of the non-abused children were comforting and caring toward the upset child. In contrast, Dweck writes, "not one of the abused infants showed empathic concern; the most common responses were threats, anger, and even physical assault" (Dweck, 2009, 131-2). To paraphrase Winnicott, there is a maturational process that can promote prosocial empathy, as there is an environment that may be facilitating or non-facilitating and that impacts whether there is more care than hostility. The anger of the abused youngsters shows how difficult it can be for children when their caregivers are not supportive, but take actions that do not provide the deep care for which children hunger. Children have love and anxiety within them; both are manifested in early life during the relationships between caregivers and youngsters. The diversity within the attachment process can reinforce kindness or rage; it is the attachment process that then lays the groundwork for how empathic, cooperative, selfish, or cruel a child will likely be.

After the cooperative stage, later on empathy may appear. A related question is to whom empathy is directed. As each of us has distinct preferences and inclinations, we are likely to have more rapport with certain individuals and respond to certain emotions more than to others. Our emotions can be activated by incidents any place on the planet, though, by and large, our knowledge of others and caring is directed towards those who are in proximity to us and with whom we have affinity. Friends are more perceptive at ascertaining each other's feelings than are non-friends (Lewis and Hodges, 2012, 74). In a cross-cultural study comparing perceptions between Japanese and Caucasian Americans, it was found that each group more accurately perceived fear in their own group (Echols and Correll, 2012, 57). "Mind reading," David Berreby writes, "...works best...with someone you know well," and "with people with whom we share many codes" (2005, 124).

It also helps if we like the others. Where competition is intense between individuals, Decety and Lamm report that "observation of the other's joy results in distress, where pain in the competitor leads to positive emotions" (2009, 208). It is not a surprise that humans do not only feel kindly towards each other. All

cultures distinguish between an in-group and an out-group. According to Keith Oatley and colleagues, "The emotional preference for 'us,' and hostility to 'them,' is indeed a candidate for a biologically inherited human universal" (Oatley, et al., 2006, 250). Tomasello says that an in-group/out-group frame of mind is present in infants at a young age. He also notes that "the best way to motivate people to collaborate...is to identify an enemy and charge that 'they' threaten us" (2009, 94, 100). Clearly another side of being human is hostility to those in the out-group or those in our circle towards whom we feel competitive. Empathy and anger are two sides of the same coin. Any theory of how important cooperation and empathy are to being human must also account for the disdain directed at the out-group. It appears that across all cultures, empathy and an us/them sensibility arise together. The root for the emergence of both is in the combination of reciprocal bonding and anger over separation that is integral to the attachment process.

The universality of an us/them sensibility across cultures has implications for both the selfish and social outlooks. For those who view humans as rationally competitive, the emotional bonds and empathic feelings that can extend beyond those with whom we are most closely connected biologically shows there is more to being human than natural and sexual selection. For those who stress our benevolent side, our caring and hostile feelings are not easily separable, favorability to an in-group and rage towards the out-group or those with whom we compete in our own group are part of the same emotional spectrum.

The champions of empathy are aware that cooperation competes with other tendencies, but they are not generally effective at seeing their interconnection. After Tomasello declares how altruistic children are, he adds that "children are also naturally selfish" (2009, 47). Frans De Waal, who proclaims that this is an age of empathy, also asserts that our "chief emotions are egocentric" and only "secondarily is there an actual concern for others, because we long for a livable, harmonious society" (2009, 184). Instead of having humans being empathic out of the goodness of their hearts, here De Waal theorizes that our cooperation with others derives from the practical needs of living together.

While being aware that humans can either collaborate or

compete, be empathic or disdainful, nurturing or abusive, those championing empathy do not seriously try to elucidate the relationship between these different tendencies. Contrasting theories of humans as either primarily selfish or empathic then has its limits, as homo sapiens are clearly both. A reason why the relationship between the empathic self and the other is often left murky is that the advocates of empathy may long for a conception of human motivation that is sympathetic, benevolent, and virtuous. They may wish for an arena where we can judge ourselves as not having mixed motivations, and so they stress the collaborative over the self-centered. We can simultaneously be deeply concerned for the well-being of others and self-interested. This double sidedness is characteristic of humanity; it is what makes us, as Colin Talbot claims, the paradoxical primate (Talbot, 2005).

Though writers on empathy have not thoroughly attempted to clarify the relationship of care and selfishness, their research conclusively shows that the view that humans are primarily calculating and selfish is one-sided, for this latter view does not account for the emotions that draw us towards each other. Feelings of concern and caring emanate from deep inside us. Empathy remains an innate response to our inner circle and certain others.   Those who say we are selfish and competitive want to underplay the emotional bonds between us and others. This inclination is part of that ancient Western tradition that champions the rational over the emotional.

Empathy is a way of knowing and being; it employs cognition and emotion to perceptively feel our way into another's world and to respond to them with heartfelt concern. There are some other ways of knowing empathy that are worth mentioning. Empathy contrasts with rational self-interest where another is looked upon as to how they can advance my own purposes, rather than their being worthy of knowing just for who they are. Objectivity is another method of understanding. Scientific epistemology is concerned with methods of investigation that can produce measurable results that are reliable and valid. Each of these forms of knowledge has its place, but of these three empathy most humanizes and personalizes knowing.

Still, our empathic responses are also part of an internal dialogue. We each have a positive and negative agenda, which often

manifests itself in the us/them dichotomy. Montaigne writes, "We are, I know not how, double within ourselves, with the result that we do not believe what we believe, and we cannot rid ourselves of what we condemn" (Montaigne, 1943 [1578-1580], 570). We have allegiance to that which we oppose and we doubt our own convictions. These inner divisions are often manifest in dividing individuals and groups into us and them. While empathy includes both understanding another's world and being sensitive to another, it also includes the relationship of the empathic one to the other. This relationship would include the transference and the counter-transference, closeness, and boundaries, the ways we are similar and different, the limits in our faith in what we believe, and our allegiance to that which we oppose. Empathy then is both a natural emotional and cognitive process, and an extremely complicated one. As mentioned before, those academics who rely on our being empathic to counter the Hobbesian perspective face a number of challenges.

So where do we go from here? One limit of the discussion of cooperation and empathy here is that is relies on academics rather than on what psychoanalysts and other clinicians think. These need to be included to form a more interdisciplinary dialogue. As well that there is a developmental process from attachment to cooperation to empathy that should be recognized. At each stage, there are positive and negative possibilities. Biology and experience are relevant. Those with autism spectrum disorders have more obstacles to being empathic than those who do not. A child from an abusive home is likely to be more hostile than cooperative; a youngster with a disorganized attachment pattern will also have problems relating to others. Even those with strongly developed empathy are not immune from an us/them outlook. We must recognize the partial nature of our empathic side, even as we try to foster it.

Tomasello says one "of the great debates in Western civilization is whether humans are born cooperative and helpful" or "selfish and unhelpful" (2009, 3). The time has come to move beyond the great debate over whether we are more kind than cruel, more concerned with ourselves than others. Many have already looked at other issues in being human. We are now and have long

been a kind and killing species, perpetually discontented and self-actualizing, embracing deep bonds with loved ones and being brutal and destructive with others. We have been endowed with gifts of cognition, language, and creativeness beyond any other species. We have developed mass societies and technology beyond the imagination of anyone who lived at the time of the Renaissance. With the assistance of technology we can efficiently implement genocide toward those who fall into the "them" category. Any human psychology must account for the extremes of our existence, how unconscious drives and interpersonal longings intersect with culture and experience, and how experience, vulnerability, resilience, and character are so central. How is it that most children who are abused will not be empathic, while others have the character traits that enable them to understand and respond sensitively to others? These are among the paradoxes that need investigation by a psychology that abandons the ancient debate about whether we are more selfish than social and reframes issues within the context of attachment and interpersonal relationships, and how our inner drives intersect with culture and the environment.

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Ken Fuchsman, EdD, *is Assistant Extension Professor and Director of the Bachelor of General Studies program at the University of Connecticut. He is also on the Editorial Board of* Clio's Psyche *and writes on being human, trauma, families, and interdisciplinary studies.   He may be contacted at ken.fuchsman@ uconn.edu.*

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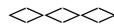
Empathy and the Benevolent Colonizer

Jessica Van Denend—Yale Divinity School

In this day and age, there is a tendency to invoke empathy as the ultimate solution to countless social problems. Empathy is hailed as transformative and effective and applied almost like a magic balm: if our businessmen are more empathic, then our economic systems will become more humane and equitable; if our doctors are more empathetic, then health care will be better; if people are more empathetic, then social conflict will decrease. Cultural historian Carolyn Pedwell notes that narratives about the transformative social power of empathy ranges in uses from Barack Obama's political speeches to feminist and antiracist social theory to international development ("Economies of Empathy: Obama, Neoliberalism, and Social Justice." *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, Vol. 30, No. 2, 280-297). Pedwell observes, "Understood in shorthand as the ability to 'put oneself in the other's shoes', empathy is, according to these narratives, what 'we' want to cultivate in ourselves and others. It is the affective attribute that we want to define 'our' society and which we hope will characterize our interactions with those living outside our borders." She goes on to write: "When empathy is lacking or deficient we need to nurture it. Where there is oppression or violence empathy can heal. Indeed, within the contemporary Western sociopolitical sphere, empathy is framed as 'solution' to a wide range of social ills and as a central component of building cross-cultural and transnational social justice" (209).

Can empathy produce such lofty ends? It is certainly employed out of the best intentions; indeed it is often invoked as a his-

torical corrective to relationships that were directly domineering or hierarchical. Yet, there are ways that the practice of empathy undermines the change it claims to produce. To understand this dynamic, we might turn to a concept elaborated by the Tunisian postcolonial writer Albert Memmi: that of the benevolent colonizer.

In his book *The Colonizer and the Colonized*, Memmi describes two different figures, each a characterization of a different type of colonialism (1965). The first, Memmi writes, is the "real" colonizer who accepts his/her position of power, who works for the legitimization of the system, and perhaps cruelly, always decisively, claims, justifies, and defends his/her usurped place as colonial overlord. Then Memmi describes the more alluring figure, which he calls the "colonizer who refuses." In Memmi's words, the colonizer who refuses has become aware of the "misery of the colonized and the relation of that misery to his comfort" (7) and become uncomfortable with the fact that "the more freely he breathes, the more the colonized are choked" (8). In contrast to the "real" colonizer, the colonizer who refuses (also called the "benevolent" colonizer) is "ill at ease before such obvious organizations of injustice." "To refuse," Memmi tells us, "means either withdrawing physically from those conditions or remaining to fight and change them" (19).

Yet, as Memmi goes on to illustrate, the choice is never that simple. "It is not easy to escape mentally from a concrete situation, to refuse its ideology while continuing to live with its actual relationships" (20). The colonist who refuses, Memmi writes, is still a colonist, and still "participates in and benefits from those privileges which he half-heartedly denounces." Even though he/she may consciously wish to escape, the patterns, influences, and ways of being that originate from the colonial system are present in subtle and unconscious ways.

The political scientist Lawrence Alschuler explores Memmi's ideas from a Jungian perspective in his book *The Psychopolitics of Liberation* (2007, 41-62). Alschuler compares the benevolent colonizer with a particular manifestation of grandiose narcissism. He writes that, "The benevolent colonizers live the light side identified with the role of the 'humanitarian' and deny the privilege they enjoy, repressing it into the shadow" (44). Alschuler makes the suggestion that this act of repression is relevant to "the

shadow side of those in the helping professions: ministers, mission-
aries, social workers, teachers, and psychotherapists" (45).   For
those in such a role, benevolence itself is a blind spot. He writes,
"the benevolent self-image of the colonizers, their paternalism,
leads to their absolution and confirms their grandiose self, thereby
assuaging their self-doubt and guilt as usurpers" (50).

I suggest that many of our uses of empathy fall within the
terrain produced by the application of Memmi's ideas on the level
that Alschuler suggests. Like Memmi's benevolent colonizer, our
practice of empathy begins with recognition of social suffering or
inequities. Revoking the harsher domination of the real colonizer,
we seek absolution through emotional warmth and heightened sen-
sitivity. Like the benevolent colonizer, we seek to "take in" the
story of the other, to incorporate it, and even to become symboli-
cally adopted by the story or cause with which we empathize.

Yet, there are ways in which our uses of empathy continue
to leave unchallenged the entrenched power structures that may be
related to or causing the social distress in the first place. I will offer
a few illustrations of how empathy can continue in its colonial
forms.

Empathy, as a concept created and developed at the turn of
the 19th century, is strongly characterized by an emphasis on the
notion of a Cartesian self. The philosopher Eric Santner describes
this modern worldview as one in which the Other (his capitaliza-
tion) is conceptualized as that which is externally different from the
self. I meet the Other, in this view, at the boundaries of my own
self, which is self-contained and known to me. When I encounter
the Other, I meet and translate the strangeness of the Other into my
vocabulary and understanding. As Santner writes, in this view,
"every stranger is ultimately like me, ultimately familiar; his or her
strangeness is a function of a different vocabulary, a different set of
names that can always be translated" (*On the Psychotheology of
Everyday Life: Reflections on Freud and Rosenzweig*, 2001, 6).

The early conceptions of empathy were rooted in this idea
of an isolated and stable core self, which translates the other into its
own vocabulary. These understandings began with the idea of a
first person perspective, with its own contained inner experiences,

and posed the question of how this self, encapsulated as it was, could acquire other kinds of knowledge. Beginning with the question of how such a self could connect with the natural or artistic object, and expanding into the question of how it could understand another human being, the concept of empathy is employed to solve the problem of how the two can meet. The core picture is of a self-contained and isolated individual encountering and understanding the other as the same.

Used in such a way, Philip Cushman argues that empathy posits a divide it claims to transcend ("Empathy—What One Hand Giveth, the Other Taketh Away: Commentary on Paper by Lynne Layton," *Psychoanalytic Dialogues*, 2009, 19:121-137). Although empathy claims, Cushman argues, to be a tool used to penetrate boundaries and gain objective information about the lives of other individuals, it is hoisted by its own petard: it perpetuates the assumption that we are separate, bounded, isolated, self-contained individuals. To say it differently, before positing a bridge, empathy first posits a gulf. Stolorow, Atwood, and Orange hold that this Cartesian "isolated mind" serves as a protective buffer against vulnerability and dependency (R. D. Stolorow, G. E. Atwood, and & D. M. Orange, *Worlds of Experience: Interweaving Philosophical and Clinical Dimensions in Psychoanalysis*, 2002). "By holding to the notion that each of us is essentially a solitary, self-contained unit, we are specifically protected from an otherwise intolerable feeling of vulnerability to the human surround" (3). Empathy reinforces social isolation and hierarchy.

What does this look like in practical terms? Take, for example, the pedagogical practice of "immersion" education, by which participants/students learn through an in-depth "immersion" into a foreign culture. Often these programs emphasize empathy as central to their endeavors. If they do so in the problematic way I have been discussing, they posit the empathizing subjects (the immersion participants) as isolated and self-contained selves that, through this experience, use empathy to take in the sights, sounds, and other sensory inputs of the other, store and register them in their own consciousnesses. The students/participants are set apart, protected, distant. Whether literally observing the scene through car or bus windows, or by identifying as "travelers" passing

through, to see, take in, and "widen" their perspectives, these experiences cultivate in their participants the protective and boundedness that Stolorow, Atwood, and Orange critique. They do not view the story of the people they meet as connected to their own. Quite to the contrary, their "empathic experience" ironically reinforces separateness from those they encounter.

To say it differently, the pedagogical goals (the change, the transformation, the growth) focus on the immersion students/participants, specifically their internal selves: their personal, emotional, and psychological growth. Because the students are the focus point of expected transformation, agency, and potentiality, because they are the ones doing the "empathizing" i.e. the processing, the taking in of the experience of the other—they continue operating from a position of power. We can imagine what the groups and people being "visited" might say back: thanks but no thanks; we do not want this kind of empathy.

Jessica Van Denend, PhD, received her doctorate in Psychiatry and Religion from Union Theological Seminary, where she studied Jungian theory and social ethics. She currently is a chaplain and an activist around poverty and prison issues. She also teaches at Marymount Manhattan College, Lexington Theological Seminary, and Yale Divinity School and may be contacted at jvandenend@gmail.com.

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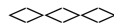
Identifying with the Victim in Nazi Dominated Europe

Peter Petschauer—Appalachian State University

The meaning of the word "empathy" intrigued me as soon as I encountered it as a graduate student at New York University. With time, the German word *Einfühlungsvermögen*, the capacity to feel oneself into the situation of the other, allowed me to separate empathy from altruism, compassion, sympathy, caring, and love. While these feelings can overlap with each other in that they may enhance one's capacity to feel empathy toward fellow human beings, empathy can be present even in the absence of the others.

But how does one gain the capacity to place oneself in the situation of another? It is clear that it is easier to do so in times of peace than of war and upheaval. Thus, it is relatively uncomplicated to advise under ordinary circumstances that one should show empathy toward a child who is being bullied and even urge a child to stand up to the bully. But how is one able to act empathetically during extraordinary circumstances? What should one say or do when the threats to life are real, such as during a dictatorship or in the context of a war?

I wanted to discover why some men and women show empathy when everything seemed to indicate that they ought not; that is, when the act required unusual courage and integrity, to the point of risking prison, torture, and death. One possibility is that a person can develop a superego that is so strong that she or he can overcome the desire to survive. Here I will concentrate on three situations that take us into National Socialist-dominated Europe in the early 1940s.

The first case pertains to the policeman and mayor of a small town in Germany, who in 1944 were unwilling to turn over a Jewish woman and her two children to the Gestapo, despite the pressure of an SS officer in their midst. The second case pertains to a young woman in 1943-44 WWII Poland who realized that the Jews with whom she was working would be transported to a camp and killed if she did not act on their behalf. The third instance is of a German diplomat in Bulgaria who realized in early 1944 that he would have to place a number of Jews into the hands of other German authorities who would send them to their deaths unless he could outwit them. The first case is known primarily in Germany, the second is well known in the United States, and the last is an unpublished account shared only with the diplomat's family.

Sibylle Krause-Burger explained the first case beautifully in her *Mr. Wolle Greets You One Last Time: The History of My German-Jewish Family* (2009). When the troubles became intolerable as bombs rained down on Berlin in 1943, her Catholic father Walter Burger and her Jewish mother Edith Wolle decided to send their daughter Sibylle to Nussdorf, his ancestral home on the Enz River in Württemberg. When Sibylle's family joined her in 1944, Burger's brother-in-law, a lieutenant in the SS, began to agitate against

them. He first protested to the constable, then to the mayor, and finally to Sibylle's grandfather. The constable's response to this threat remains a classic: "First you win the war, Mr. H., then we will see what we can do." Sibylle's grandfather, when confronted by his son-in-law in his favorite restaurant with the observation that Hitler disapproved of Jews living in a German household, said to the amusement of other farmers sitting around: "I swore my oath to the king (of Württemberg)."

Although at first sight this looks like the typical power struggle in a small town, it was carried out in the national context that supported the SS officer. Empathy can take many forms: here are some ideas about this one. While the town's citizens did not particularly love or care for Sibylle and her family, they had reason to assist. After all, Berger grew up in the town and, even though he had moved to Berlin and married a Jew, he had not forgotten it or its complicated dialect. Also, upon their arrival, both Sibylle and her mother fit in immediately. By contrast, the SS officer was an outsider, refused to speak the dialect, and behaved like his wife, an arrogant local with an excessive loyalty of the NS cause. Additionally, the town's inhabitants were Catholics and may have believed in the humanistic teachings of that faith. In other words, traditional values and attitudes made official and unofficial town leaders consider the situation and show empathy for the German-Jewish family at considerable risk to themselves.

The second case is well known from Irene Gut Opdyke's *In My Hands: Memories of a Holocaust Rescuer* (2001). Not even 20 years old, Gut confronted the stark reality that the 12 Jews with whom she worked as a waitress in a German officers' club in Poland would be eliminated if she did not act. While doing nothing would have been acceptable according to the new norms, she decided, instead, to act differently. After several failed attempts, she was able to find a space in the cellar of the local commander's house in which to hide them. Perhaps she acted out of youthful idealism, or deep religiosity, but given her traditional values, she had no choice; but without a doubt, she risked her own life to save the lives of a dozen strangers.

The final example of Roland Gottlieb is instructive because he saved Jews as a German diplomat. In an unpublished account,

and used here with permission, of his diplomatic service first for Austria and then Germany, he tells of his work in Sweden, Berlin, and Sofia. In Sofia, his superiors ordered him to have all German Jews in the area appear in his office so that they could be handed over and returned to the Reich. Each of the individuals and families coming before Gottlieb told a unique story, convincing him that there were no good reasons to return any of them to Germany. He further determined that since strictly speaking, they were not even German, they faced a certain and undesirable fate on German soil.

The individuals involved did not speak of empathy as such—maybe the word was not part of their vocabulary—but each was in a situation in which he or she felt called upon to act empathetically. In the case of Sibylla Krause-Bauer and her mother, empathy came with the approval of leaders and family members in town, but at risk from the wider German society. In Gut and Gottlieb's cases, too, empathy stemmed from the recognition that they were all part of the same humanity, even if they only knew each other in this specific context. Gut may have been too young to articulate her actions. But Gottlieb put it rather bluntly: "One does not do such things…to anyone."

In the safety of a reasonably civil society, feeling oneself into the situation of others can be an intellectual exercise or a temporary engagement as part of an office routine. But being empathetic in a crisis period requires different attitudes and behaviors. Principally it asks for the ability to feel for the plight of the other. In each of the examples, rebelliousness was involved as well; each one acted based on values and behaviors that preceded those of the Nazis and that they had attained at some other point in their lives. When these men and the woman decided to save the lives of others at the risk of losing their own, they demonstrated the courage and integrity of empathy.

Peter Petschauer, PhD, is Professor Emeritus of History at Appalachian State University, a Research Associate of the Psychohistory Forum, an Editorial Board Member of this journal, and the author of a number of scholarly books. In addition to holding a named professorship, he chaired the Faculty Senate at Appalachian and headed the Faculty Assembly for the entire University of North Carolina system. Currently he is writing about the women in his

family.   Dr. Petschauer may be contacted at petschauerpw@ appstate.edu.

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Healing the Nightmare

Valerie Rose Brinton—Sharedfield Healing Arts

It makes little difference to the nightmare whether you are tiny and helpless or mature and sophisticated: still its most cunning ruse is to isolate its victim. Even when you wake to a reassuring face, a kind voice, and the blissful reality of your own familiar bedroom, your confused feelings of dread, disgust, or defeat cut you off from the lot of normal human beings (Sandra Shulman, *Nightmare: The World of Terrifying Dreams*, 1979, 143).

As I know from my own experience, nightmares are hard, intrusive, and demand attention. In contrast, the power of empathy is yielding, receptive, and responsive. When these two forces come together, change is inevitable. This is the case whether the nightmare is a personal one that thrusts us from the depths of sleep or a mass horror or a cultural nightmare that throws us collectively into terror and out of our habitual assumptions and expectations for daily life. The nightmare's compelling demand for attention is clearly an attempt to communicate. The most effective response is the deep receptive listening of empathy. Yet the most common reactions are to freeze, flee, or fight. These reactions grip us inside of the nightmare and then often continue to be our habitual responses after waking.

I remember a moment in the early morning of September 12, 2001, waking with an awareness of the horror we had all seen and felt the day before. Swept into the nightmare of so many others who had all suddenly and almost simultaneously lost husbands, wives, children, parents, dear friends, and companions, my hand reaching out slightly ached, as if I were one who could not reach the hand of a lost beloved. I froze. My now husband lay beside me. But in those few moments I was so alone in my bed. This subtle momentary resonance with shock, pain, and loss was enough to temporarily wipe out my awareness of the rich web of human con-

nectedness around me. Even I in California, thousands of miles from the actual event, needed to be brought back into the fold, returned to relatedness. This is the power of empathy. This is empathy in the sense of being with, of voluntary resonance with, the suffering.

The first impact of a nightmare is suffering in the sense of feeling distress, but within an empathic response this becomes suffering in the sense of enduring, tolerating, and allowing. An empathic response to a nightmare is no easy task. It is not merely a kind tone or a friendly intention. It means being a strong and resilient container, able to withstand the various wild elements of the nightmare, so they can be re-experienced in connection, rather than isolation. This can be a challenging proposition whether we are helping another, dealing with our own nightmarish experiences, or attempting to respond helpfully to horrific collective catastrophes. We can, however, find opportunities to develop our ability to utilize empathy in these extreme moments by recognizing the small terrors, petite daily nightmares in a sense, that occur throughout our waking lives and our more peaceful dreams. In dreams these are the troubling, distressing moments that we recall on waking, but that—unlike the full blown nightmare—do not wrench us out of sleep. In our waking life, it is those same troubling, distressing moments within our interactions or within our solitary struggles.

Moving into an empathic response may involve initially finding ourselves in the midst of a creative combination of flight/denial, fight/rejection, and freeze/dissociation. We have all been thoroughly introduced to these reactions. So very often a child's nightmares are pushed aside with the reassurance that "it is only a dream." Nothing, of course, is further from the truth; it was a dream, yes, but "only" a dream, no. Eruptions of horror do not arise from thin air; nor are they products of happenstance. Ironically, whereas elements in other dreams are often dismissed as meaningless because they seem trivial, minor, or unimportant, the nightmare is dismissed for opposite reasons. It is too awful, too horrible, too overwhelming to own. In these attempts we are trying to regain connection with the horror by getting away from or overpowering the nightmare. It is so much more effective and powerful to regain connection with the nightmare in place.

As we forego avoiding or overpowering and instead turn receptively toward the nightmare, we can begin to value its place as a harbinger, not of doom, but of redemption. The doom within the nightmare is the horror of what is already wrong. The power of the nightmare is to call us to the core of the problem. Whether personal, interpersonal, or collective, "The nightmare portrays the essence of what is traumatic about the trauma" (Melvin R. Lansky and Carol R. Bley, *Posttraumatic Nightmares: Psychodynamic Explorations*, 1995, 8). In this way, the nightmare is truly awful in both meanings of the word: extremely bad, dreadful, terrible, and impressive, inspiring awe. It can be an avenue for the healing of otherwise out-of-reach troubles, if we can be with it.

Here, I find it very helpful to include the awareness that the elements of experience evoked by the nightmare, endemic to the nightmare, may be personal or transpersonal and are most likely both. With this understanding, it becomes easier to allow a resonance with these awful feelings without rushing to judgment. It may be my panic or someone else's. It may be our rage, or the rage of those who attacked us. It may be my patient's horror, or many generations of horror that he is heir to but does not entirely own. My experience tells me that it is not essential to know whose nightmare it is. It is only essential that it be recollected and brought back into someone's loving embrace. That is how I experience empathy—an open heart and mind, a loving embrace that enfolds the entirety of what is felt.

***Valerie Rose Brinton** is a psychologist practicing in Fillmore, California, who was born into a radical union organizing family. She utilizes a method of resolving persistent distress through transpersonal resonance. Her research on this can be found in the dissertation Opening Pandora's Box: A Depth Psychological Understanding of Projective Identification available online at http://gradworks.umi.com/33/61/3361019.html. She can be contacted at valerieroseis@hotmail.com.*

The Harrowing Wisdom

Tom Gibbs—Poet

Late last year, the necessity arose to move my father-in-law, age 95, into a care facility as a result of a combination of physical mobility difficulties compounded by the onset of Alzheimer's. This decision, finally, fell to my wife and weighed heavily on her emotionally. Fiercely independent, both my father-in-law and mother-in-law rejected any subtle nudging toward such a decision until circumstances forced their hand and my wife stepped in to rescue both from possible catastrophe. After several months, both my wife and my mother-in-law realized the timeliness and sensibility of the move, despite the initial upheaval and lingering self-recriminations.

Throughout these changes, I watched from a type of aesthetic distance, offering support in any and every way possible. I most noticed that the emotional responses of my wife and her mother, when not overburdened by guilt and an expected degree of fear, tended toward sympathy for my father-in-law. In short, they felt sorry for him, and to a certain degree, themselves, and each other. In the year or so that preceded his move to the care facility, in the time I spent with my father-in-law, I developed less a sympathy for his condition and plight than a sort of evolving empathy that gave me a clarity not only about his condition and situation, but also about him as a man, a person, within that condition and situation. As a result, I gained a new and deeper insight into sympathy and empathy.

Sympathy resonates from the intellect filtered through the "abstract" heart, manifesting in compassion. Sympathy is a reaction toward another that begins essentially as a kneejerk reaction that runs too often to sentimentality. Common responses run along the lines of, "That's a sad woman," "Those are pitiful people," or, "I feel sorry for them." This distances the actual person or persons by making them an object of our sympathy rather than embracing them by way of empathy. We then seek more to act by doing something for the person, to offer compassion, rather than seeking to effect a specific change in his or her circumstances.

Empathy, on the other hand, arises from a direct interrelationship between two people with little or no filtering through or by the intellect but rising spontaneously through an organic response within the psyche or soul. Empathy, then, becomes a shared experience—a sort of harmony of emotion that resonates between two people in an instinctive or intuitive relationship that binds those two people together. Thus empathy resonates with at least some aspect of a person's being.

Empathy allows us to experience, if not the entirety of another person's experience, at least multiple facets of that experience in such a way that we no longer simply feel sympathy for the person; rather we actually feel that person's responses as our own and, with often harrowing clarity, we gain an emotional response that allows us not only to act on the person but to also act on the causality of that person's situation to try to resolve or ameliorate the situation. On a broader, less personal scale and in light of recent tragedies, surely empathy can bring more social and psychological change for the people devastated by these tragedies.

This indicates empathy as an integral tool for problem solving. Sympathy tends to offer only a temporary fix for the person in a difficult situation. Empathy, through a stark awareness of being the person in that difficult situation, shifts focus from the plight of the person to the cause of their plight. Such insight, while not disregarding sympathy altogether, goes beyond sympathy toward a deeper understanding—even wisdom—that becomes a practical response rather than mere transitory pity.

Reflecting on my visits and long talks with my father-in-law in the summer before taking him to the care facility, I recall an afternoon sitting together in front of his house mostly watching and enjoying the day. Suddenly, my father-in-law said to me, "Sometimes, when you think about the world today, you have to wonder if there is a God." This took me aback not because we had never before discussed God or religion but because in that instant, in a kind of Joycean epiphany, I entered my father-in-law's experience and knew the uncertainty and trepidation of growing farther away from the present both mentally and physically, of confronting, not so much death, as the silent receding of life. That shared experience helped me to see more clearly that what I felt toward my

father-in-law was not sympathy but empathy. Free of guilt and with a greater understanding of his situation, it became obvious that placing my father-in-law in the care facility was not done *to* him but *for* him. By allowing his experience to become mine, the acquired knowledge of his situation provided a valuable insight that improved my chances to assist him in his journey and perhaps lessen its impact by my becoming, at least intuitively, an active participant in not only finding but also feeling a way through his difficult transition.

Through empathy, and its harrowing wisdom, I'm able to experience his fear and confusion rather than imposing my own onto him, thus allowing me to understand his responses to the fear and confusion as part of the process. I'm able to continue to see the man, the whole man, not as a man to be pitied but as a man who needs to be, as much as possible, met on his terms and within the context of his situation and condition.

Tom Gibbs, MA, a poet, has taught at Marshall University and Shawnee State University. He lives and writes in rural Kentucky. His book review, "Slowing Down, Paying Attention on the Frontier of Death," appeared in the December 2008 issue of Clio's Psyche. He may be reached at bordersprings@bellsouth.net.

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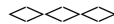
Double Vision: Thoughts on the Boston and Oklahoma City Bombings

Howard F. Stein—University of Oklahoma

Yesterday (Monday, April 15, 2013), two bombs exploded at and near the finishing line of the Patriot's Day Boston Marathon. I watched television coverage continuously for several hours, then intermittently into the following day. I listened to announcements of the dead, the maimed, the physically injured, and the countless others who were emotionally devastated. I imagined the long shadow that would be cast by these acts of terror and by the bombs discovered that mercifully did not explode.

The Boston Marathon is an international event. Runners

and their families come to Boston from all over the world, as well as all over the U.S., to participate and watch. The event is a much-anticipated day of joy and celebration. Offices and schools are closed. Hundreds of thousands of people line the 26.2 miles of the run. But on April 15, 2013, calamity intruded upon joy. There were mass casualties. The sense of place would be dramatically changed long into the future.

I felt great compassion (an empathy that includes both imagination and caring) for the physical and emotional victims, for the many kinds of first responders (medical, police, firefighters), and for the people of the entire city of Boston and beyond. I also felt a keen double vision. I had served as an informal counselor for the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner of the State of Oklahoma, and for additional physicians, police, and counselors, back in 1995 and in the following years. So while I watched the sequence unfold in Boston, I also relived the same sequence that had occurred on April 19, 1995, when a truck bomb blew up the Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City, killing 168 people, injuring hundreds of others, and affecting the sense of place of Oklahoma City for years to come. It not only shook my apartment, but also my sense of wellbeing.

The past both fused with and illuminated the present. Yesterday and today, what I had thought I was emotionally "finished with" and worked-through became uncannily current and alive. I understood once again what "the return of the repressed" meant and felt like. Likewise, I felt I could comprehend "transference," both individual and group, anew. Further, I realized again that the unimaginable is not simply what cannot be imagined, but often that which has already occurred and is too terrible to think.

I thus felt not only what I hope was a humane empathy toward the people of Boston and all the runners and their families, but also a very specific kinship with Bostonians and the runners because I had emotionally lived through a parallel experience 18 years earlier. I experienced, observed, and tried to understand what was happening now both through empathy and identification. I tried to observe my identification and use it to deepen my experience and empathy.

My feelings extended not only to the victims—however broadly they might be defined—but also to the yet unknown perpetrator(s). In the years since 1995, I had learned much about Timothy McVeigh, the man who bombed the Oklahoma City Federal Building. I wondered now about what would make a person, or group, terrorize the people of Boston and create a sense of total vulnerability.

I realized that I had to closely monitor my feelings of empathy and identification, lest my sense of "I know exactly what you are going through" blur the boundary between 2013 and 1995, and contaminate my ability to experience, and perhaps understand, the distinctiveness of the present. We have long known that countertransference can be a proverbial double-edged sword: it can be a source of distortion (as defense) as much as it can be a source of insight. As I was watching TV, my early emotional response was an uncomfortable sense of "having been there before"; then came an ambush of emotions; finally I realized that my double-vision was a remembering, even somewhat of a reliving, of the Oklahoma City terrorism as I was watching the aftermath of the Boston bombing unfold.

Later in the evening of the Boston bombings, I wrote a letter to a policeman who had been a first responder in Oklahoma City, a member of our ad hoc support group afterwards, and who later became a close friend. I thought of him while watching the Boston television coverage and wondered whether his feelings and images were similar to mine. I essentially said to him that I remembered him in particular, as well as the bombing and those designated as the official victims.

I also wrote aloud to him, so to speak, about my misgivings about the completeness of the urban renewal in the downtown Oklahoma City area and beyond, in the aftermath of the bombing. "Despite official pronouncements and the wondrous come-back and renaissance in downtown Oklahoma City that go by the name of Bricktown [an adjacent area of retail stores, a hotel, restaurants, a cinema, a ballpark, and other entertainments, an area that had been filled with warehouses and other buildings to support the downtown], what happened here on that terrible day in 1995 is far from entirely past tense. No matter how bright the sunlight of urban re-

newal, we still live in the shadow of the bombing of the Murrah Federal Building." In a way, the new lustrous sheen is a kind of makeover for a wound that still festers.

The next morning, April 16th, I received an e-mail letter from my friend, in which he wrote that having "the same manner of thoughts came to me when I heard of those events [in Boston]." At the end of his letter, he thanked me "for thinking about me and taking time to remember." I felt understood and as if he had also become a safe vessel for my own memories and feelings. It is important to remember and to be remembered.

This, in turn, made me realize the importance, both in Oklahoma City and Boston, of having people to "contain" (Bion) and serve as a safe "holding environment" (Winnicott) for the torrent of violent images, emotions, and fantasies unleashed by the bombings. Further, it made me realize that the various kinds of responders and medical personnel themselves should also have places of sanctuary and people to talk with to process their experiences and feelings that occur when taking care of people in unimaginable circumstances and of having witnessed things (severed body parts, mutilation, charred limbs) that no one should see.

I understood once again that there are things in life that are utterly impossible to completely contain for oneself because they are too terrible, too uncanny, because they are too traumatic or fulfill forbidden fantasies, or both. Sometimes the most healing thing one can do is to bear witness to what happened to someone—to affirm to that person (or group) that something did in fact happen, to affirm reality by listening to their story.

__Howard F. Stein, PhD,__ a psychoanalytic and applied anthropologist, psychohistorian, and Psychohistory Forum Research Associate, is Professor Emeritus in the Department of Family and Preventive Medicine at the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center and Consultant to the American Indian Diabetes Prevention Center in Oklahoma City. His most recent books are <u>Insight and Imagination</u> and <u>In the Shadow of Asclepius: Poems from American Medicine</u>. He is poet laureate of the High Plains Society for Applied Anthropology. He can be reached at howardstein@ouhsc.edu.

The Empath

Tom Gibbs—Poet

Satellite photos of the river
are only a map of its course
not its deep timeless flow
fluid with life on and below
its surface. The river is the
river with or without science.
Charting makes of the mind
the brain, nothing more and
of the psyche even less. The
dazzling color shifts of magnetic
maps construct images of
conjecture as if theories and
studies are as sufficient as a
knowing glance a trembling
touch a breathing rhythm and
the beating heart. Walk beside
the river.   Know its motion.
Know the quickening step of
your companion or the slowing.
Know radiance or the dimming
of eyes. Know a turn of the head
or even a slight gesture and you
will know your companion as
clearly as yourself. This is not
a mirror but a resonance
as ancient as breath.

Tom Gibbs' bio may be found on page 64. ❏

Harry Keyishian, a longtime member of the Forum, is pleased to announce that Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, in partnership with The Rowman & Littlefield Publishing Group, welcomes single-author manuscripts or edited collections of previously unpublished essays. Professor Keyishian retired from full-time teaching at FDU in 2010 to devote his time completely to his editorship and Shakespearean scholarship. Proposals may be sent to him at fdupress@fdu.edu.

The Psychological Meaning and Uses of Humor

Humor as a Psychohistorical Source

David R. Beisel—SUNY Rockland

Individual historians can be hilarious as private individuals, but when it comes to their publications and public personas they are deadly serious. I wonder if the staid *American Historical Review* has ever published a joke in its 118-year history.

The dour nature of the historical profession—except for those marginalized scholars studying humor as part of popular culture—is reflected in the fact that while a seemingly endless supply of jokes exists for virtually every field of human endeavor, from psychiatry to bartending to plumbing, I've yet to come across more than two jokes from historians about historians. The first is by the editor of this journal who said: "When historians meet they say, 'Hi, what's old?'" The second one I'm about to cite.

Overheard at an American Historical Association convention sometime in the late 1970s, "A group of inebriated scholars return to their hotel room after a night of heavy drinking and encounter a chambermaid going off duty. When they invite her back to their room for a drink she asks, 'What group is this?' 'The American Hish-torical Association' is the slurred reply. 'I'm asking," she says, 'because most convention groups invite me back to their room for sex.'" What this reveals about the psychology of historians I leave for others to decide.

"Jokes" specifically directed against psychohistorians began in earnest in the late 1970s when the first wave of major criticisms from outsiders began systematic efforts to discredit the field. Among them was the familiar, tired, but inevitable, "Psychohistory—the history of psychos," or, "That's the theory in a nutshell, where it belongs," or the uncaptioned *New Yorker* cartoon showing a door labeled, "Psychohistory Ward."

Historians do sometimes include references to humor in their studies, most often to enliven their narratives, though humor can provide considerable insight into a biographer's subject. Sometime back in the early 1980s, I remember reading a psychoanalytic article entitled, "The Favorite Joke as a Diagnostic Tool." What is valuable in clinical practice could also shed light on a historian's biographical subject if used judiciously and in conjunction with a host of other evidence.

But if we can't find our subject's favorite joke in the documents (today's favored joke is tomorrow's stale memory), it is still important to know how our historical subjects think and feel about humor in general, whether they prefer clever witticisms to slapstick, practical jokes to puns, and how they react to humor directed at themselves. Lyndon Johnson had a particularly thin skin when it came to humorous criticisms hurled at his persona and policies, while JFK was able to invite the occasional pundit to the White House for dinner. It is well known that Hitler could laugh at all kinds of jokes—except political jokes and dirty jokes, which may be the most important ones behind understanding what made him tick.

These observations seem like common sense, yet historians often overlook the obvious. Keeping alert for humorous tidbits may profit biographers in delineating parts of the puzzles they confront in their ongoing efforts to build more complete pictures of the historical persons they are working on. This includes the role parents have delegated their children to play in their families of origin.

Family dynamics may reveal much about which child is the favored one, who is the delegated hell-raiser, which one is the diplomat, who is the nerd, who is the jock, who is the quiet one, or who is the comic. My father and his five siblings shared a pool of common humor, yet each specialized in their own comic style: one favored wry comments, another puns, a third dirty jokes, a fourth excelled at visuals, a fifth at Don-Rickels-like put-downs.

Psychohistorians more than historians will want to pay special attention to the humor in puns, malapropos, Freudian slips, and mock Freudian slips. A good example of the latter comes from Bobby Kennedy. When asked if he was going to challenge Lyndon

Johnson for the presidency he said, "I have no designs on the White House, and neither does my wife, Ethel Bird."

It hardly needs mentioning that there exists an endless supply of one-liners ridiculing leaders, natural targets for displaced hostility toward authority. Mort Saul on the presidential election: "Al Haig is throwing his helmet into the ring"; Israeli Premier Golda Meir to Israeli military hero Moshe Dayan: "Don't be so modest. You're not that important"; Winston Churchill on Ernest Bevin, "A sheep in sheep's clothing"; and Dwight Eisenhower on General MacArthur, "I studied theatrics with him for twelve years."

Psychological historians know that denial can sometimes cover hidden affirmations and self-deceptions. In a late-December 1941 visit to the White House, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill, standing stark naked in the privacy of his room, was suddenly taken by surprise as FDR came through the door, prompting Churchill's famous line, "You see, Mr. President, I have nothing to hide," though there may be more here than meets the eye.

Humor can also be used in assessing the psychology of groups. A few mainstream historians have successfully utilized shifts in styles of humor to highlight the preoccupations of a particular social class or capture the tone of a particular age. I am thinking here of the 18th-century Enlightenment, a time of change when philosophes were trying "to change the general way of thinking," effectively using satire and witty aphorisms as instruments of reform. We are only partly wrong in our image of all Parisians waiting expectantly for the latest *bon mot* from Voltaire.

One thinks also of the 1960s, when the use of satire was once more a force for social and political change, from the outrageous Lenny Bruce whose pioneering irreverence set the stage for much that followed, to the African-American and female stand-up comics of the counterculture who broke new ground in the civil rights and feminist movements.

The many psychological functions of humor have, of course, been extensively studied by psychologists and humorists, including Freud, and a good deal is known about them—the role of *Schadenfreude*, the leveling function of bringing down the high and mighty, the pleasure of displacing onto container groups one's own

projected vulnerabilities, and how that feeds our group sense of superiority, promotes cohesion, and reinforces stereotyping.

Nowadays, with Google Search, Twitter trends, and other programs, it may be possible to track the shifting moods, the conscious, semi-conscious, and unconscious attitudes and fantasies of large groups by tracing trends in the type of jokes circulating at any given moment. When plotted over time it may mean something psychologically significant about how a particular age cohort or social class or nation is feeling if we detect a sudden surge in the popularity of dead baby jokes, or of apocalyptic humor, or Helen Keller jokes, or "retard" jokes, or disaster jokes, or leader jokes, or jokes about Chinese efforts to poison the West. Shifts in humor may allow us to trace demographic trends as well, as in the not surprising proliferation of jokes and cartoons about the physical, psychological, and sexual consequences of aging that flood our daily emails, a witness to an ever-enlarging aging population trying to find ways to manage anxieties about illness and death.

For decades, historians have been told that statements about national character should be avoided (though they often place judgments about it into their work anyway, often unawares). Anthropologists are more adept at capturing the total way of life of a people and have done a better job in integrating a culture's sense of humor into their studies. Chief among these is Alan Dundes' *Life Is Like a Chicken Coop Ladder: A Study of German National Character Through Folklore* (1984). A brilliant study, Dundes' psychoanalytic analysis correctly connects the deep and widespread scatological obsession of German humor and its preoccupation with feces to anal fixations brought on by the widespread practice of harsh and too-early toilet training. (See the June 2005 issue [Volume 12. No. 1] of this journal for a memorial to Dundes (1934-2005) by Howard Stein, and for Dundes' posthumous article, "Sacrilegious Folk Humor," prepared by his longtime co-author Carl Pagter.)

Despite what historians assert, there is something to the notion of "group character," especially when it comes to identifying it through humor. We intuitively understand there is a unique, perhaps indefinable quality to Irish humor, to African American humor, to Jewish humor. Bel Kaufman, the 100-year-old granddaughter of Jewish author Sholem Aleichem, begins her course on

Jewish humor at Hunter College (CUNY) with a joke.   "The Frenchman says: 'I am tired and thirsty. I must have wine.' The German says: 'I am tired and thirsty. I must have beer.' The Jew says: 'I am tired and thirsty. I must have diabetes'" (*New York Times*, May 11, 2011).

No need to try to dissect this one. It brilliantly captures the essence of Jewish humor by exposing the self-deprecating, I'll-undermine-myself-before-you-do, ever looking-on the-dark side, underdog position, resisting and reflecting the outcome of 2,000 years of persecution, brilliantly reinforcing the partial-truths of three stereotypes in the bargain.

Sometimes daring, unexpected crossovers may steal from one culture to make a point in another and become a powerful political tool, as in the way the most famous line of stand-up Borsch-Belt comedian Henny Youngman ("Take my wife, please!") has been expropriated by a young stand-up Palestinian-American comic, Dean Obbeidallah, "Take my land, please!" (*New York Times*, March 5, 2013, A20)

While it is important for historians to recognize the importance of the kind of humor predominant in a group, it is also important for them to note when humor is absent. There are no jokes about Pearl Harbor, for example, and only one or two about 9/11, which suggests the deep pain of persistent traumatic memories lasting more than a decade, or even over several generations.

Other than traumatic reasons why humor may be obliterated exist, too. Members of the Einsatzgruppen death squads sent to murder Jews, communists, and intellectuals in Poland might find it hilarious when a comrade's sleeve was splattered with the brains of the child he has just murdered (Goldhagen, *Hitler's Willing Executioners*, 1996), but when it came to self-observation, the Nazis were woefully incapable of laughing at themselves. In the Third Reich, anyone who risked telling a Hitler joke was systematically denounced and imprisoned. The same fate befell cabaret performers who playfully taught their trained monkeys to give the Hitler salute at the end of their act. It was only later in World War II, when the war was being lost, that dark humor came to Germany, used as a way of coping with the war's traumas.

The Allies were the first to make fun of Hitler and the Nazis, doing so long before World War II began. Look, for example, at the superb intuitive and psychologically sophisticated political cartoons produced by David Low in the British press. In 1939, Fritz Kuhn, the Bundesfuehrer of the pro-Nazi German American Bund, was arrested on charges of grand larceny in New York, inspiring newspaper headlines announcing the arrest of "the Hotsy-Totsy Nazi." A famous sequence in Charlie Chaplin's film, *The Great Dictator* (1940), captures the "Führer" dancing with a large balloon of the world. Hitler was enraged.

Things accelerated when war broke out. A 1942 *New Yorker* cartoon finds Hitler addressing the Nazi-filled Reichstag: "I think I can say, without fear of contradiction...."

That same year, Spike Jones and his City Slickers recorded a novelty song, "The Führer's Face," which became a wildly popular hit in 1943. "Ven der Führer says, 'Vee is der Master Race,' vee say, 'Heil!' (*pfut*!), 'Heil!' (*pfut*!), right in der Führer's face. Not to love der Führer is a great disgrace. Vee go, 'Heil!' (*pfut*!), 'Heil!' (*pfut*!), right in der Führer's face."

The song figured prominently in Disney's nine-minute animated Donald Duck cartoon, originally titled "Donald's Nightmare," which won the Academy Award for Best Animated Short Feature in 1944. Warner Brothers' seven-minute animated cartoon joined in the fun, *sans* song, with "Daffy Duck—The Commando."

Such devaluing of Hitler and the Nazis through ridicule was a psychological defense, designed to disarm the intense collective fear generated by Hitler and the Nazis.

World War II's humor came in all forms and was expressed in numerous ways. One issue for the U.S., as for all the belligerents, was how to control sexual energy unleashed by military service, war, and threats of death. There was also the related problem of how to channel sexual energy into the war effort. One clever way was the cute limerick spontaneously created in the U.S. by "Anonymous":

> To back the attack
> Don't sack with a Wac

Or lie on the breast of a Wave.
Just sit in the sand
And do it by hand,
And buy bonds with the money you save.
(*J.P. O'Neil, personal communication*)

World War II's humor also encompassed what is called "Holocaust Humor," a deeply divisive issue for scholars and one that reared its head during the 2013 Academy Awards. It may be unseemly to make jokes about six million Jewish dead, not to mention the other millions of victims of Nazism, but the historian committed to reconstructing the past cannot overlook the extraordinary examples of gallows humor circulating in the Jewish communities of Europe, in the death camps, and among the starving millions in Leningrad before, during, and after the war. It has been suggested that there is some doubt about the phrase "gallows humor" (Galgenhumor) these days since the abolition of hanging in the U.S. has meant it no longer holds much meaning to a younger generation and—dark humor about dark humor—should be replaced by the phrase "lethal-injection humor" (William F. Kluckas, personal communication).

Yet, as historian Joseph Dorinson and others have shown, humor can be used as a coping and healing mechanism, especially for oppressed groups. In that spirit, I close with a decidedly painful joke circulating in Hungary in the days immediately following the end of the war.

To set the historical stage, people returned from the camps to nothing. Their homes and business had been expropriated or destroyed. Strangers were living and working there. For many, not a single member of their family remained on the continent and whole communities had disappeared, along with villages, synagogues, and cemeteries. It was as if an entire people had been obliterated. In this milieu, "A Jew who survived the camps returned to Budapest, where he ran into a Christian friend. 'How are you?' the friend inquired. 'Don't even ask,' the Jew replied. 'I have returned from the camp, and now I have nothing except the clothes you are wearing'" (Quoted by Keith Lowe, *Savage Continent: Europe in the Aftermath of World War II*, 2012).

When historians don't take humor seriously, including humor that reveals painful traumas but seeks by heroic measures to heal from them, they are missing a significant part of what it means to be human. Perhaps psychologically oriented historians can point the way to begin profitably mining this rich untapped resource. In time, it might even happen that we'll become courageous enough to tackle the humor of psychohistory.

David R. Beisel, PhD, is the award-winning teacher of history and psychohistory at SUNY Rockland who has published widely in American and European history and is the author of *The Suicidal Embrace: Hitler, the Allies, and the Origins of the Second World War* (2003). A past president of the International Psychohistorical Association, he edited *The Journal of Psychohistory from 1979-1987* and is on the Editorial Board of Clio's Psyche. He may be contacted at dbeisel@sunyrockland.edu. ❑

Implications and Consequences of Ethnic Humor

Burton Norman Seitler—Forum Research Associate

Anais Nin aptly said, "Those that are able to laugh at themselves shall never cease to be amused." Few visceral experiences compare with a funny joke that brings us to our knees, leaves us in stitches, tickles our funny bone, or makes us laugh so hard we could cry. We feel the sort of pleasure that is neither intellectual nor rational. It is that non-rational side with which this article is concerned.

This essay will concentrate on ethnic humor, which will be treated simply as a type of humor that addresses anyone's ethnicity or distinctive ethnic affiliation. While ethnic humor has been discussed in literature to some extent, to a much lesser degree has there been mention of its dark side, thus necessitating this commentary.

Jokes have generally been regarded as relatively innocuous and non-invasive, a quality permitting them to "fly, like stealth bombers" under the radarscope of the superego. This particularly

privileges proponents of "put-down" humor who stand to gain by promulgating this position. Hence, common dismissive retorts to objections to such "wit" are: *I was only kidding. Can't you take a joke?* Or, *I am Italian, Jewish, Polish* (supply your own interchangeable ethnicity). *Therefore, I am permitted to make fun of my own group.* These positions often go unquestioned—usually to avoid making a seemingly small matter into a big one. Sadly, this obliterates boundaries between what is acceptable from what is offensive or damaging and also simultaneously introduces mechanisms that pretend that what was said/written/acted out was quite inconsequential. This minimization overlooks the actual, although understated, power of humor to tap into, resonate with, or draw from the primary process workings of the unconscious; in doing so, it increases the likelihood that further utterances of that type—coming at the expense of others—will propagate and possibly predominate and produce toxicity that may extend across cultures and from one generation to the next.

Freud observed that the wellspring of humor resides within and emanates from the unconscious, where it is stored and transmitted via primary process thinking. Primary process thinking suffuses our dreams. It is thinking that can be conceived of as highly symbolic, yet not necessarily rational. Initially, it appears to be largely illogical. Hence, it usually does not conform to conventional rules of logic or accepted principles of reality—even in a postmodern environment. Moreover, it is not governed by societal constraints to the same degree that we see in more traditional forms of thinking. It can be abstract, concrete, or syncretistic, and it is almost always idiosyncratic. In the primary process language of the unconscious, opposites lie side by side in equivalence. This means that if something enters the unconscious from the self, it is not subject to the scrutiny of reasoning, cognition, or the reality testing of the ego's secondary process purposive problem-solving thinking.

Ethnic humor is no exception. Despite being capable of conveying cultural richness, flavor, color, sounds, and lore, ethnic humor can also transmit negative stereotypes with far-reaching consequences. Because of their innocent appearance, ethnic jokes portraying negative stereotyped caricatures slip into the unconscious unawares, where they become warehoused in the limbic system, as

well as in other areas of the brain, for future reference. Thus, long after the specific ethnic joke itself is seemingly "forgotten," the residue of the stereotype contained within the "joke" becomes stored in the unconscious—now capable of being transmitted down through the ages.

This explains why decades, even centuries, may pass and beliefs, attitudes, and feelings about a particular group's so-called "characteristics" persist as "truths," open to be opportunistically mined by people with hateful purposes. This is their power, their danger, and what makes them insidious and so pernicious. All one needs to do is start a sentence with the name of a particular group (e.g., African Americans, Germans, Italians, Jews, Poles, etc.) and a stereotype will come to mind with little or no effort. An extreme example of the destructive potential of ethnic jokes comes from the Nazi propaganda machine, which used ethnic humor with great efficiency to dehumanize certain groups. Once the dehumanization process is complete, genocide may readily follow.

Freud granted humor a privileged position, despite ambivalence that he maintained regarding its potential for destructive aims. He divided jokes into several types: verbal, conceptual or abstract, innocent, or contentious. He argued that contentious jokes are either hostile or vulgar and are motivated by feelings of aggression, domination, and destruction. Freud held that contentious humor functions on behalf of the joke-teller's interests and not necessarily on behalf of society's higher ideals. Such humor allows the ego to take pleasure in temporary guilt-free narcissistic indulgences without being beset by reproaches from the superego. He claimed that the manner in which this occurs is when "…a preconscious thought is given over for a moment to unconscious revision and the outcome of this [is] at once grasped by conscious perception" ("Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious," in *Standard Edition*, Vol. VIII, 1905, 159). In other words, the joke is passed through the unconscious during its process (or genesis) and emerges into consciousness fully formed, but unexpected.

Most jokes can be readily converted into ethnic humor, and the characters depicted in a joke are often interchangeable, as seen in the following example. "The definition of Paradise is when the police are British, technicians are German, cooks are French, lovers

are Italian, and everything is organized by the Swiss. In contrast, the definition of Hell is when the police are German, the technicians are French, the cooks are British, the lovers are Swiss, and everything is organized by the Italians." These examples need little explanation, except to say that they are based upon and fuel long-standing stereotypical thinking about the prowess (or lack thereof) of certain nationalities. The following vignette illustrates how preconceptions can distort perceptions of reality:

> A Jewish man and a man from China are sitting at a bar in New York City. The Jewish guy says, "I don't like you!" The Chinese fella asks, "Why?" The Jewish man explains, "You bombed Poyl Harbor!" "No, no," comes the reply. "I am Chinese. Chinese not bomb Pearl Hahbah. That was Japanese, not Chinese!" The Jewish man retorts, "It vouldn't matta. Chinese, Japanese, Vietnamese. They're all alike!" Then after a deafening silence, the Chinese man responds. "I no like Jew!" "Vy is dat, vy don't you like Jews?" The Chinese man says, "Jews sink Titanic." "Vait vun second," says the Jewish guy. "An iceboyg sunk the Titanic." "Iceberg, Steinberg, Goldberg, no mattah. All same."

This play on words is a clear depiction of how preconceptions contribute to prejudicial attitudes and misperceptions and ways in which people justify externalizing their angry feelings at an ethnicity *du jour*.

There is an ample psychological and psychoanalytic body of literature on humor that sadly exceeds our allotted space here. Some of the issues touched upon are humor's ability to function as an outlet for sometimes split off, disavowed, dissociated, or otherwise inexpressible feelings that are too unbearable to be acknowledged, much less verbalized. This is precisely the kind of material that we see in trauma. While trauma often produces the unspeakable—that is, "black holes" or "dead-spots" in the psyche—ethnic humor seems to do something else by giving voice to traumatic material and allowing the processes of splitting, projective identification, scapegoating, and dissociation to be overtly manifested.

Just as many have posited that trauma can be passed down from one generation to the next, stereotypes, or for that matter, all things that are imbedded in particular jokes, can be transmitted over generations and across cultures. In therapy, humor can be constructive or destructive. At its best, humor exemplifies a two-person, inter-subjective emotional and cognitive organization of one's personal experiences, which involve the self in relation to the "other."

Humor in general, or ethnic humor in particular, is not good or bad, not positive or negative. Accordingly, we must provide nuanced contextualization in our descriptive explanations by asking when such jokes are used, for what purpose, with what audience, and what their anticipated and ultimate effects may be.

Ethnic humor can be a valuable communicator of the human experiences, feelings, struggles, and adaptations of cultures, and can do so in a safe and enjoyable manner. It can also convey negative stereotypes with far-reaching effects. Because jokes often provide relief from tension, they are highly valued and rarely questioned, much less subject to intensive critique. Nowhere is this seen more clearly than in the ability of the court jester to say things that nobody else would dare to utter, or in formal satires. Both of these institutionalized outlets continue to survive because they tap into some aspect of their audience's unconscious, which both resonates with and provides relief from them.

Again, it is because of their innocent appearance that ethnic jokes portraying negative stereotyped caricatures are able to slip into the unconscious unawares, where they become warehoused for future reference. Rogers and Hammerstein said as much musically in their play, *South Pacific*, where they made reference to a particular manner in which racial prejudice can be transmitted from one generation to the next in the lyric, "You've got to be carefully taught." Then there is the ubiquitous children's rhyme, "Eeny meeny minee mo, catch a tiger by its toe…" How many children have innocently recited this ditty without fully understanding or consciously appreciating the racist meaning of the message, since "tiger" was a substitution for the original word, "nigger"? The idea that someone can tap into long-held feelings based on ethnic stereotypes and can arouse them and influence those beliefs and attitudes regarding a particular group's so-called "characteristics" has been

demonstrated by a number of studies. So, it is not inconceivable that, if left uncorrected, such attitudes may persist as truths even after decades or centuries have passed.

Freud added, "It is also true that, in bringing about the humorous attitude, the superego is really repudiating reality and serving an illusion" (in "Humour," *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, Vol. 9, 5, 1928). When the superego is nullified, all acts, no matter how reprehensible before, now become permissible, and all stereotypes become shadowy representations of the illusion—as opposed to imparting the illuminating substance—of truth. Therein lies the power and danger of ethnic jokes and is what makes them malicious and so harmful.

We have seen evidence of splitting and projective identification as a prelude to hatred and murder. We bore witness to this dehumanizing process during World War II and no less than 20 years ago in the horrific "ethnic cleansing" strife during the breakup of Yugoslavia, with Serbs and Croats acting out animosities that were held onto for generations. In Rwanda, we saw the same thing: darker-skinned blacks externalizing their individual and collective rage against lighter-skinned ones in their own brand of discrimination, committing atrocities based on long-held attitudes of ethnic/tribal purity. This is why the explication of the complexities and multi-layered processes involved in the dark side of ethnic humor, as well as their implications and consequences, are vitally important to psychohistorians and psychoanalysts, as well as others.

Burton Norman Seitler, PhD, *a clinical psychologist/ psychoanalyst in private practice and Director of Counseling and Psychotherapy Services (CAPSR) in Ridgewood and Oakland, New Jersey, is also the former Director of the Child and Adolescent Psychotherapy Studies Program of the New Jersey Institute for Training in Psychoanalysis in Teaneck. Dr. Seitler serves on the Board of Directors of the International Society for Ethical Psychiatry and Psychology and is on the Editorial Board of the journal, Ethical Human Psychology and Psychiatry. He is also a Research Associate of the Psychohistory Forum and he may be contacted at binsight_fl1@gmail.com.* ❑

My Countertransference to a Patient's Racist Joke

Ruth Lijtmaer—Psychoanalyst in Private Practice

Bob, a white middle-aged patient who I had been seeing for six months, came in one day smiling. I asked him about his smile. He said that he had lunch with a friend who told him two funny jokes, and he was remembering them as I opened the door. He then started to tell me the jokes. Both portrayed Latino immigrants as stupid, dirty, speaking English poorly, taking advantage of the welfare system, and not paying taxes. They were clearly racist jokes. Although I normally have a good sense of humor and can laugh with a patient when it is appropriate, I felt offended and hurt by these jokes; they were not funny to me. Bob knows that I am an immigrant from South America and that I obviously have an accent. Why was he telling me jokes that were offensive? Did he realize that they were? If he did, what was the purpose of his jokes? Or, did he want to seduce me by telling a joke that he thought I would find funny?

Freud (1905) considered jokes at the same time that he found amusing verbal and linguistic twists in dreams, errors, and other phenomena in everyday life. He developed an understanding of jokes as unconsciously devised vehicles to express repressed wishes and, by implication, to indicate psychological conflict. Freud recognized that jokes are a necessary and inevitable part of social life and that, to be told successfully, they require a certain kind of actual or imagined audience. He made a place for psycho-social variables, including seductiveness, differences in social class, and the conventions of male-female relationships. He suggested that humor allows individuals to gratify their repressed and socially sanctioned needs and to rationalize the prejudice or hostility felt toward other ethnic groups. It also reinforces one's superior position and enhances and affirms one's social membership. Freud (1905, 101, 108) acknowledged that the experience of humor derives significantly from the economic discharge of tension and that jokes are a disguised expression of hostile and sexual impulses.

In researching the literature, there are writings about the analyst telling a joke, or responding to a patient with a joke, but very little is written about a patient telling a joke, particularly a racist one. Most of the literature on specifically ethnic jokes deals with Jewish jokes, probably because of the influence of Freud's Jewishness. It is sufficiently documented that jokes and humor constituted a weapon for Jews, a subtle response to repression and humiliation. Humor helped Jewish victims endure anxiety and express rage in the worst times of suffering and persecution. However, these are not specific features of Jewish humor; we find them in every politically and socially repressive regime where they flourished in proportion to the degree of dictatorship and were often the only outlet for rebellious feelings. In terms of ethnic jokes, ethnic minorities and immigrants in most societies tend to become the subject of jokes told by the dominant majority. It is worth remembering that there is a great deal of overlap between the ways in which race, ethnicity, and class are constructed in this culture; some of the specificity of racial constructions concerns the specific attributes projected, often having to do with the psychic resonances of particular physical characteristics such as darkness and lightness, facial features and hair texture, as well as the emphasis on freedom or enslavement deriving from the history of slavery in the United States. Therefore, the use of ethnic stereotypes in jokes reflects a social prejudice about the group being mocked by the joke.

Additionally, jokes can function as a displacement of violence and aggression and can also be a vehicle of a more generalized social anxiety. They can also be an expression of envy and resentment toward the achievements of the ethnic group portrayed in the joke. Even though racist jokes can be treated as a kind of humor, they are not humorous—there is some cruelty in them. What defines if the joke is felt prejudiced and offensive or not is who is telling the joke to whom. The telling of an ethnic joke by members of that ethnic group may not be insulting to the audience. Although the violence of the joke is fantasy, the context of the joke and its telling is marked by actual racist violence, particularly if is told by a member of a powerful majority. Interestingly enough, in situations like this, joke tellers convince themselves that they are "just joking" and that their jokes do not express any real prejudices.

Going back to Bob, I asked him what was so funny about the racist jokes he retold. His response was: "You know, minorities take our jobs, don't speak English, feel entitled." The more he talked to explain himself, the more uncomfortable I felt. After living in this country for over 30 years, I became identified as the non-American other, the rejected "other." How do I respond now? I decided to ask him what made him think that I, a female immigrant, would enjoy the jokes. He was silent at this question and then said, "I do not see you this way. You are white and educated, so you do not portray the people in the joke." The led me to see his racism as worse than I initially thought. Am I a good immigrant because my skin is white? At that point, I had millions of ideas in my mind. Was there some quality of his behavior that was compelling me toward action as opposed to reflection? Was I the devil mother?

Although I think that any number of these dynamics may have been in play, simultaneously perhaps, of particular help to me at this juncture was the link to Winnicott's 1947 paper, "Hate in the Countertransference," which compared the feeling of hate in the mother to that of the analyst. He stated that both mother and analyst must have the capacity to hate and be able to tolerate such hatred without expressing it. I found this description useful to understand my hate and to avoid being defensive at Bob's jokes. Attempting to tolerate my anger was the hard work I faced.

Further along, Bob brought up issues of injustice since to get his promotion he had to compete with a Latino co-worker. Due to affirmative action, he was sure that that "other" was going to get the job, not him. Then, Bob went back to memories of his years in an ethnically integrated elementary school in which he was one of the few "whites," and sometimes the other kids dismissed him and did not play with him. Just then I thought that I was the "other," but he had also felt as the "other." I wondered, "What does Bob want to elicit in me by bringing this up?" and "How did Bob get there in his racist remarks?" Further exploring this, he started to talk about his mother, who was a narcissistic self-centered woman. They were well-off and had household help. The help were minority woman who spoke little English. He was raised mostly by a Spanish-speaking nanny who he was quite attached to, but she suddenly left the household. His mother did not explain to him what

had happened. I wondered then if I was the nanny who he was becoming close to and feared that I, the nanny/therapist, was going to leave him. I also wondered if he had chosen me because I was Latina, like his nanny. Perhaps he tried to seduce me to laugh and make me happy so that I would not leave him? All of these thoughts helped diminish my "hate" and understand the dynamics of the situation better. We understood the jokes as an expression of his aggression towards the "competent other." We also were able to grasp the meaning of his mother abandoning him emotionally and his need for someone (his nanny/me) to fulfill his emotional needs. Bob came to understand that his racism not only was influenced by his family background (his parents were critical of other ethnic groups), but also by this work situation activating feelings and memories that had been dormant for many years.

This example shows how racist jokes have multiple meanings. My own history makes me more sensitive to exchanges like this. I know that this is one of my many blind spots that I have to be aware of; they include issues of injustice, discrimination and devaluation due to my ethnic background and personal history as an immigrant analyst. As an epilogue, I want to tell you that Bob got the job, and he moved to another state.

Ruth M. Lijtmaer, PhD, is a senior supervisor, training analyst, and faculty member at the Center for Psychotherapy and Psychoanalysis of New Jersey and is in private practice in Ridgewood, NJ. She frequently presents lectures and papers at both national and international levels. She is the author of several scholarly publications and book chapters concerning multicultural and religious issues, trauma, transference-countertransference and psychoanalytic psychotherapy. She may be reached at ruth.lijtmaer@ verizon.net. ❏

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Psychohistory Forum Meeting Report

Friedman's Psychobiographical Comparison of Fromm and Erikson

Paul H. Elovitz—The Psychohistory Forum

Erik H. Erikson (1902-1994) and Erich Fromm (1900-1980) were two German-born psychoanalysts who left Nazi Europe for North America and made extraordinary contributions to humanity, psychoanalysis, psychohistory, and society. The Psychohistory Forum meeting on March 2, 2013 at New York University was a rare opportunity to have an outstanding psychobiographer analyze, compare, and contrast the lives and ideas of these individuals and for a knowledgeable group to spend three hours in discussion with him. Lawrence J. "Larry" Friedman, who currently teaches at Harvard University's Mind/Brain/Behavior Interfaculty Initiative and recently authored *The Lives of Erich Fromm: Love's Prophet* (2013), made the extraordinarily insightful and stimulating presentation, "Erikson and Fromm: A Psychobiographer's Perspective," based partly on his *Identity's Architect: A Biography of Erik H. Erikson* (1999).

Our discussion revealed some striking things about both psychoanalysts. Each considered his own analysis to be basically worthless, which is quite understandable given the information we have. Friedman depicted Erich Fromm as quite narcissistic and at times grandiose, but adept at externalizing these traits in a way that helped spread social and intellectual awareness to a broad international population. He was not an especially good judge of people. For example, he accepted Albert Speer's claims to have been naively taken in by Hitler, despite the evidence of Speer having used his time in the Spandau jail to perfect his self-serving justification. In contrast, Erikson was a "decent judge of others," though it is harder to tell since "he was inclined to tentativeness and reserve." (All quotes are Friedman's or the person referenced.) Despite his shortcomings, Fromm made extraordinary contributions to

humanity and wanted to modify Ernest Jones' idealized version of Freud, merging the ideas of the founder of psychoanalysis with the humanistic early Marx.

Fromm and Erikson "absolutely hated each other." Fromm was furious because, Friedman pointed out, "we are all paying attention to *Young Man Luther* (1958)" rather than to Fromm's psychohistorical works, which include what he wrote on Luther in *Escape from Freedom* (1941) and his other early work on characterology (1943). He also disliked Erikson's non-confrontational manner and failure to stand up to McCarthyism.

Both wives sought to protect the privacy of their husbands and the idealized public image of them. Fromm instructed his wife to destroy his letters, and Erikson's spouse came close to doing the same. Joan Erikson put her feeble husband's letters in black trash bags and put them out on the curb for garbage collection. Fortunately, Dorothy Austen, who was living with the couple at the time in Cambridge, saved and took them to the Houghton Library of Harvard University. While he was writing *Identity's Architect* (1999), Friedman was able to use these letters during his interviews with Erikson to help refresh his memory.

The group spent considerable time discussing the struggles of a biographer and archival scholar to get the necessary information to write the best possible psychobiography. There were special problems in the case of Erich Fromm, because Rainer Funk, who idealizes Fromm and heads an archive of his works in Germany, considers himself to be Fromm's literary executer—which Friedman dismisses—and had already driven away three potential Fromm biographers. Larry Friedman worked around this difficulty and travelled to a half dozen countries in search of archives, letters, and interviews of people who knew Fromm and who were still holding relevant documents. The obstructionism and considerable effort extended the period necessary for writing *Love's Prophet*, which would have probably been six years, to nine and a half.

Friedman also involved Anke Schreiber, a graduate student from Germany who was earning her master's degree at the University of Chicago, to help with his less-than-perfect translations of German. I suspect that the process of writing was greatly facili-

tated by having an additional person wedded to the project, with whom he could share different biographical finds and ideas on a day-to-day basis. It should be pointed out that Professor Friedman's acknowledgements include numerous colleagues who have read through his volume and helped him with different aspects of this major contribution, including a few Psychohistory Forum members and subscribers.

Throughout the discussion, Friedman kept comparing and contrasting the two psychoanalysts, with a variety of comments from the audience, during which an enormous amount of fascinating material regarding Erikson was brought forth. For example, Erikson's famous eight-stage life cycle idea was rooted in something he wrote in the late 1930s and early 1940s. Friedman found wood carvings by Erikson that depicted some of his early theories. Erikson was a very visual thinker: his lecture notes were full of circles and squares. All of his clinical cases were visual constructions and configurations. When Friedman was with him, Erikson wanted to see things rather than talk, since his thinking was so visual—I suspect his advanced age and possible senility were also factors.

Fromm's thought was textual rather than visual—he turned to scholarship and books. He was born in 1900, as an only child, in Friedman's words, to the "most unhappy family you can imagine. His mother was depressed and his father quite manic. They wanted their son to mediate between them." Fromm got help in dealing with his family situation by going to Talmudic scholars, and he was unusually resourceful in searching beyond his family of origin for healthier role models. The ability to create a circle of social support around him helped him throughout his life.

Once he found his first mentor through Talmudic study, he was involved in religious scholarship for much of his life. By analyzing text, he was saved from being bound to his parents' neuroticism. Friedman opined that the best thing Fromm ever wrote was *You Shall Be as Gods* (1966). "He treats the Old Testament as music." Fromm, who took his doctoral degree in sociology under a brother of the great sociologist Max Weber, was an ethical humanist who had a strong religious base to his thinking

Neither Erikson nor Fromm fit into psychoanalytic ortho-

doxy, but they dealt with this in very different ways. Erikson cloaked his deviations from Freudian orthodoxy, whereas Fromm's soon became an issue partly because he was more open about them. Although he would have hated the globalization of capitalism, Fromm was very clearly an internationalist who favored world government, which is one reason his papers are archived in many different places, whereas Erikson was not as outspoken in his internationalism. Both despised nationalism. Einstein wrote to both men, saying the U.N. was a good idea, but only a small start toward world government.

Fromm's deviation from orthodox Freudianism centers on the issue of social character. "He believes that our drives are shaped by social circumstances—that without society, we don't exist." This departure has bothered many of Freud's followers, though it should be noted that Freud's later writings were about humans in groups. The two met in Baden-Baden in the late 1920s, and Fromm almost certainly attended Freud's lectures in Berlin where he was training as a psychoanalyst, though we do not know anything about what was said.

Clearly, Fromm's break from Freud came with the *Anatomy of Human Destruction* (1973), which sold five million copies. Fromm was a best-selling author, as well as "an extraordinary thinker, which has a lot to do with why academics don't like him." *The Art of Loving* (1956) has sold 25 million copies globally. It is a complex book, rather than the easy read people imagine when they find it displayed in the booksellers' windows before Valentine's Day. Fromm was in fact a global teacher. According to Friedman, he didn't write a book that sold less than one million copies. This made Fromm an incredible amount of money, which he gave away to various liberal politicians and causes such as Amnesty International. He quietly threw his weight around in these groups when he provided money, wanting McGovern, for example, to be even more explicitly against the Vietnam War.

An example of Fromm's skillful use of his monetary resources involves the great mathematician, philosopher, and peace activist Bertrand Russell (1872-1970). Heinz Brand, Fromm's second cousin, after World War II was trapped in an East German jail under control of the communist leader, Walter Ulbrecht. Fromm

bought a ticket to Moscow for Russell and gave him a letter to Soviet leader Khrushchev aimed at pressuring Ulbrecht to release his cousin, but the pressure didn't work. Undaunted, Fromm solved the problem by suggesting that Ulbrecht let the cousin go to Sweden rather than directly to a "Western capitalist country."

The greatest political influence exercised by Erich Fromm was on John F. Kennedy. In the fall of 1960 in *Daedelus*, he published "The Case for Unilateral Disarmament," which Kennedy read and said, "This is the guy who wrote *Escape from Freedom*." After the Bay of Pigs disaster, Kennedy wanted to have a wide spectrum of opinion presented to him on every issue, which was very much at odds with what National Security Advisor McGeorge Bundy wanted. Erich Fromm was JFK's dove. According to Friedman, during the Cuban Missile Crisis, Fromm's influence may have saved the world from destruction.

In contrast to Fromm, who was seeking to change the politics of the world rather than simply survive it, Erik Erikson signed the University of California loyalty oath, while claiming that he didn't. Fromm never would have signed such an oath. In the course of the Forum discussion, Friedman's own strong internationalist beliefs shone forth, as he declared that nations are bad things. Erich Fromm was an institution builder who went to Mexico to revive a flagging psychoanalytic community, struggling against the lethargy and alcoholism endemic in a country suffering from bad governance. Today, we would call him a public intellectual, though this was not a term he would be comfortable with. Certainly, with his broad interests, he could not readily be hired in academia; neither, for that matter, could Erikson. The hiring committee at Harvard didn't want the author of *Young Man Luther*, but David Riesman got Arts and Sciences dean McGeorge Bundy to override Erikson's rejection. At Harvard from 1960, Erikson's courses were beloved by students who overfilled his classrooms. Erikson and Fromm would let the undergraduates speak and say whatever they wanted; students loved them, academics didn't.

Former Vice President Al Gore, who had been a Harvard student of Erikson, called Friedman about the book. A participant in the seminar asked, "Could such a public intellectual exist today?" Members of the group suggested that they do, offering the

names Noam Chomsky, Chris Hedges, and Robert Jay Lifton as examples. Friedman was pessimistic about public intellectuals today having the influence of Erich Fromm. Margie Quackenbush, executive director of the National Association for the Advancement of Psychoanalysis (NAAP), suggested that Fromm really knew how to name his books, to which our presenter readily agreed. Hanna Turken, who was born and raised in Mexico and had interesting things to say about Mexican psychoanalysis, suggested that as a clinician, Fromm seemed to lack something. Friedman concurred, contrasting Fromm's weak clinical talents with those of Erikson, who excelled in the treatment room and successfully treated all sorts of people, including the legendary baseball player Ted Williams. Part of the issue with Fromm was not only his lack of good training, but the fact that he was too close to his patients. Fromm didn't grow later on; he mostly had "yes" people around him, and by the 1950s, he was self-referential except for his excursions into neurobiology, where he genuinely took in new ideas. By contrast, Erikson was growing all the time.

In the light of his poor analysis and struggle with an internalized manic father and depressed mother, the self-regulation that Fromm developed to remain so productive throughout his life is of great importance. He had a friendship group he would meet with all the time. Today, he would probably be labeled as a manic depressive. He stabilized himself using a very predictable schedule of meetings with colleagues, doing Zen Buddhism, letter writing, seeing patients, and reading the Old Testament. He trusted the Zen master D.T. Suzuki and would miss him upon his death. Friedman said that "Fromm's set schedule, except for when he was involved in politics, kept him whole." Fromm maintained the Talmudic tradition throughout his life. Culturally, he was always quite Jewish; for example, he always had a Jewish joke to tell and read joke books. However, he despised what was going on in Israel and refused to visit the Jewish state.

Despite his best efforts, Fromm would still have depressive periods in his life, as when his second wife committed suicide. Yet six months later he began correspondence with the woman who became his third wife, his best marriage and the inspiration for *The Art of Loving*. He was down in periods when he or things he

greatly valued lost out. So he was down for a good part of the McCarthy period, or when nuclear weapons seemed out of control, but he characteristically bounced back. While Erich Fromm was both up and down, Erik Erikson was not prone to as much change in his moods. Perhaps just traveling to a new country was one way of avoiding depression.

In terms of involvement in politics, Larry Friedman noted that he followed in Fromm's footsteps, running Obama campaigns in separate states in 2008 and 2012. Friedman also noted: "I went into history for the wrong reason. I thought most historians wrote books like *Young Man Luther*. They don't!"

Friedman spoke of the impact of his sources on a biographer. The Erikson family was "so very nice that one could readily be seduced into making their father a god." He had known Erik Erikson for 10 or 12 years and had excellent relations with Sue Erikson Bloland and with Joan Erikson. He suggested we could have a wonderful seminar with Sue and him on Erik, and it was pointed out that we did have her present after her book came out. Larry had hoped that she would be able to comment on his presentation, but unfortunately she had a scheduling conflict. "Kai Erikson, the scholar in the family, was the least helpful" of the three living Erikson children.

Responding to a question regarding his Menninger work, Friedman studied for a semester at the Menninger Clinic as a postdoctoral researcher and for an extended period went back every year for a month or two to research in their extensive archives. "Karl Menninger wanted the history of the family clinic to get out, warts and all. The dysfunctional family had in fact become a dysfunctional organization." Also, "as a psychobiographer writing my book, *Menninger: The Family and the Clinic* (1990), I had to study my own dysfunctional family. Karl liked the book I came out with; Roy, his nephew, subsequently said, 'Your book killed Karl Menninger.' Friedman retorted, 'I didn't know a book could give you cancer.'"

Both Menninger and Erikson had children, but Fromm, who was an only child, had none. His first wife, Freda Fromm Reichmann, really wanted to have a child, but he kept saying no,

although toward the end of his life he felt deep emotional pain at not having had children. The root of his divorce from Freda was her miscarriage.

In contrast to Erik Erikson, who had a stable relationship with his wife, Joan Serson, since his 20s, the author of *The Art of Loving* was married three times and had a large number of affairs, some very long lasting. His second wife, Henny Gurland, was an activist against the Nazis who was injured in the process, suffering such enormous pain that ultimately she would commit suicide as her only escape from it. A participant noted that Carl Binger had diagnosed her as schizophrenic, which Friedman thinks is erroneous. His third wife, Annis Freedman, was a non-Jewish widow, originally from Alabama with no intellectual interest. His *The Art of Loving* was based on two or three love letters he wrote to her. With her, he found the happiness he had not with his prior two wives or with many of the women he had affairs with. As Erving Goffman pointed out, in relationships, the banal may be the most important.

Fromm had many affairs, including a long one with Katherine Dunham, an African American ballerina he fell in love with. In 1941, they were walking in racist New York as an interracial couple blithely indifferent to what the general public thought. She was the founder of African American dance and a major figure of the Civil Rights movement, so Fromm became involved with Civil Rights as well. They each subsequently married another person; she introduced him to anti-depressants, so early on he started learning about psychotropic drugs. Erikson, like Fromm, believed in dialogue, as with Huey Newton, the black nationalist. He dialogued readily until it became very clear that Newton was implicated in a murder, at which point he cut off contact.

Erich Fromm lived for 10 to 12 years with Karen Horney, and he analyzed her daughter—which would hardly be considered proper at the present time. It has been said that Fromm had approximately 19 affairs with patients, although not all are provable. This prompted a discussion of how imperfect the psychoanalysis was of many of these early analysts; Fromm's analyst, Hanns Sachs, had no analysis whatsoever. The great sociologist David Reisman reported that as his analyst Fromm was often more inter-

ested in talking about public affairs than in his patient's issues, leading Reisman to ask, "Aren't we supposed to do analysis here?"

Fromm's socialism bothered many academics, but his focus was on the young Marx who wrote about alienation so brilliantly in 1844. In an exchange with Herbert Marcuse, a philosopher who was not an analyst, Fromm was right about what he said, since Marcuse did not really understand Freud. In the situation of the United States, Fromm always went with the liberals and tried to help liberalism, such as in giving his money to Senator Fulbright of the conservative state of Arkansas. Fromm's negotiator side was very beneficial—he knew how to cut deals, and he didn't like waffling on progressive ideas. He urged Fulbright and other people he sponsored to avoid compromising their ideals.

When psychoanalyst Hanna Turken brought up an issue from page 124 of his *Love's Prophet* volume (2013), questioning the four aspects of personality and whether these represented Fromm's, Friedman described them as negative references to help maintain his own psychic balance.

The subject of the FBI came into our discussion, since Fromm's file has become available and greatly bemused the psychobiographer. The agent reported back to headquarters that Fromm was not a communist, but rather a democratic socialist, that his books were very interesting, and "that my wife wants me to invite him to dinner—is it okay if I have him over?" Our group smiled at the thought of a very smart FBI agent interested in growing and learning. Psychohistorian David Beisel pointed out that he corresponded with Fromm in the last two years of his life and that the psychologist had very nice things to say about the idea of psychohistory. Fromm, however, did not like most psychohistorians, according to Friedman, "because we like Erikson." The rivalry between the two "Erik/Erichs" clearly existed. Erikson, when in Mexico for a year and a half, was invited to a social event at Fromm's home, but upon seeing the Fromm's large Buick and the pink flamingos on the lawn, he said to his wife, "Let's not go in." But Joan insisted that since they were there, they had to go in and not insult their host. Throughout his life Erikson was afraid to speak out, whereas Fromm did not have this inhibition.

Irene Javors, a psychotherapist, asked what Fromm's influence was on C. Wright Mills, to which Friedman said, "Well there're two very poor biographies of Mills which aren't too helpful," but he thinks Mills had to have been influenced by Fromm. Christian Churchill, a sociologist/psychoanalyst who came to the Forum seminar for the first time, suggested that there was a mutual influence. Another participant asked how one becomes a forgotten intellectual, a term sometimes applied to Fromm. Friedman argued that he's not a forgotten intellectual, that there have always been pockets of interest in him. Rainer Funk's hero worshipping of Fromm made it very difficult for researchers and biographers, since he only wanted that sort of biography.

Friedman sees Erikson and Fromm as very different personalities. Fromm taught—and still teaches—the world multiple lessons through his many volumes. His *Escape from Freedom* continues to have influence. He is in fact a "teacher of the world," more so in Europe than in the U.S., and is supportive of throwing off authoritarian regimes. After the Arab Spring, this book was in many bookstore windows in the Arab world.

Christian raised the issue of the "ugly passage" in *The Art of Loving* on homosexuality, in which the traditional Freudian presentation of it as a pathology is maintained. Someone else suggested that perhaps his religious strain fed the homophobic views in his writing. Yet our author/presenter thinks that Fromm would readily have switched with the times.

Returning to our comparison of these two individuals, Erikson was always free floating. In response to Ken Fuchsman's question as to why Erik Erikson didn't like Fromm, Friedman said that understandably, he never liked people who put him down, and Erikson the artist liked gentle figures such as Jesus and Gandhi, while Fromm wrote much more about the violent, including butchers such as Hitler. Fromm criticized Erikson for never owning up to his break with psychoanalytic orthodoxy. In their relationship, Friedman sees considerable repetition of the divisions within Freud's own circle.

This author asked if Fromm spoke of empathy, which Friedman answered in the affirmative, describing it as being spelled

out in *The Art of Loving*, *You Shall Be as Gods*, and *Escape from Freedom*. Fromm hated the ex-Nazi ethologist Konrad Lorenz with his emphasis on aggression.

Both Erikson and Fromm were far more than psychoanalysts. Fromm was interested in presenting a counterpoint to an increasing ruthlessness of capitalism as spelled out in *To Have or To Be* (1976). To him, consumption is not living. He remained a humanistic democratic socialist. Friedman traces Fromm's hatred of commercialization in the world to his mother treating him as a commodity. However, his dislike of his mother did not keep him from rescuing her from Nazi Germany and providing money for her.

Present at the meeting were 20 individuals of quite varied backgrounds and most with multiple identifications. At least 13 had clinical backgrounds and five were historians. There were social workers, psychologists, a nurse, a teacher, a political scientist, as well as two undergraduate students. Six were participants were psychoanalysts including a sociologist, lawyer, and contemporary arts person all in analytic training.

Some of the charm of the presentation was Friedman's stories, such as when Larry visited the Eriksons to research his biography of the psychoanalyst who became a cultural sensation. At a time when Erik could not be left alone because he was slipping in and out of senility, Friedman's visits allowed Joan some time for herself outside of their home. Erikson then wanted to go out and get the junk food he loved, Chunky Monkey ice cream. Part of the thrill of the presentation was that Friedman spoke in the present tense, as if Erikson and Fromm were alive and with us in the room. The meeting was quite stimulating and enjoyable, as was the luncheon that followed at a nearby Thai restaurant.

Paul H. Elovitz, PhD, director/convener of the Psychohistory Forum, editor of this journal, and an interdisciplinary historian at Ramapo College, may be contacted at pelovitz@aol.com. ❏

Psychohistory Forum Work-In-Progress
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The Impact of Natural and Human-Made Disasters in the Caucasus

Anatoly Isaenko—Appalachian State University

"Mommy! Mommy!"—a voice of a child was coming out of the opening—"let me out please, I've always been a good boy…" "Please, go to sleep, dear": what else could this desperate mother have said, mad with fear, while on her knees amidst the ruins of their former house? Her child cried under a heavy concrete slab inside of a miraculously preserved tiny space in the rubble.

One could observe such scenes on December 7, 1988, when one of the most devastating earthquakes pounded Armenia—the South Caucasus republic of the former Soviet Union. The center of this disaster was the village of Nalband; it disappeared entirely. The earthquake affected 40% of Armenia's territory and a million of its inhabitants; 31 cities and 342 villages suffered heavy damage, 18% of the country's dwellings were annihilated. Spitak-City was destroyed completely; Giumri, Stepanavan, Vanadzor suffered partial devastation. Overall, out of 2,966,802 inhabitants living in Armenia, this natural calamity named after Spitak took the lives of 25,000 people and 514,000 were left without a roof over their heads (Kavkazskii Uzel, viewed Oct. 12, 2012, http://www. Kavkazuzel.ru/articles/216891/).

This natural calamity came in the background of another disaster, this one created by the ethnocentric nationalists. The cruelties that occurred in the Caucasus, and in many other places of the world in the last couple of decades, remind us that humankind has the capacity to behave in very destructive ways. (See Peter Petschauer, "Some Underpinnings of American Violence," Clio's Psyche, Vol. 19, 3, 263-7). I closely observed the breakup of the Soviet Union because in the late 1980s, my family and I lived through the many sided societal crisis that had been building up for decades. A psychological model developed by some specialists demonstrates that people in such human-made circumstances naturally feel frustration and anger (see Marta Cullberg Weston, "When Words Lose Their Meaning: From Societal Crisis to Ethnic Cleansing," *Mind and Human Interaction*, 8:1, 1997: 22).

Containing this frustration often proves difficult. In the late 1980s, the formal and informal radical leadership in the Caucasus indulged on a dangerous track of externalizing anxiety and scapegoating others. Soon, human-made societal crisis changed into a deadly conflict between Armenians and Azerbaijanians over the disputed territory of Nagorny Karabakh. As Vamik Volkan aptly noted, "The entire nation may attempt to deal with frustration by utilizing other nationalities or groups as suitable targets of externalization" (Vamik Volkan, *The Need to Have Enemies and Allies*, 1998, 48).

Traveling across the area, I observed how during this crisis, envy and distrust between the Armenians and Azerbaijanians built and ethnocentric nationalism grew to a massive level. Numerous interviews of ordinary residents showed me that both peoples developed group mentality and group belonging, self-assertive and integrative perceptions, mirror-reflected prejudices, brotherhood within/war likeness without restraint, blind obedience to the ethnocentric charismatic leaders, and readiness to resort to unrestricted violence, i.e., to ethnic terrorism. According to Dusan Kekmanovic, such behavioral patterns characterize ethnic nationalism—the most malignant form of this ideology (Dusan Kekmanovic, "The Ethnonationalism-like Behavioral Patterns," *Mind and Human Interaction*, 8:1, 1997: 3). The late and renowned Caucasian historian Mark Bliev called such behavior of distressed masses, especially the ideas of their leaders, "a manifestation of local fascism." From 1986-1994, leaders of both peoples actively played on ethnic antagonisms to further their political agendas, and this policy invariably put those peoples on a collision course.

My own exploration of this ethnic conflict demonstrated that it passed through all the stages of a full cycle, including the bloodiest hot stage in the post-Soviet era. It unleashed predominantly along nationality, commonly shared history, and religious building blocks that were aggravated by acute unresolved chosen traumas. Biological and linguistic building blocks played a subsidiary mobilizing role. Both sides implicated mild and middle ground forms of ethnic cleansing, gradually sliding into their extremes with even elements of genocide (See my *Polygon of Satan: Ethnic Traumas and Conflicts in the Caucasus*, Second Edition, 2011, Ch. 7).

As a result, during the hot stage of the conflict in 1991-1994, 22,000 to 25,000 people perished in both countries, predominately civilians, and more than a million became refugees and forcibly displaced persons (*Europe, Nagorny Karabakh: Risking of War, The Report of International Crisis Group*, No. 187, November 14, 2007). Thus Armenians and Azerbaijanians experienced two devastating calamities: a natural life-shattering earthquake and a human-made brutal ethnic conflict. Both disasters resulted in almost the same number of human losses. However, the psychological impact was drastically different.

Contemporary witnesses and survivors of the Spitak Earthquake of December, 1988, unanimously testified that the shock, deep sorrow, and despair of Armenians were overwhelmingly shared with compassion and empathy by all the peoples of the Soviet Union and beyond. When the immediate shock and disorder had passed, Armenia received humanitarian aid from practically everywhere. Well-trained rescue crews were coming from Georgia, Russia, Ukraine, France, and other countries. In Armenia's Ashtarak, people still remember coal miners from Ukraine's Donetsk working selflessly in the most dangerous conditions, constantly risking their own lives (*Trud*, January 5, 1989). Remarkably enough, among those who were the first to come to the Armenians' rescue were their Azerbaijanian neighbors. Azerbaijan sent thousands of metrical tons of oil, gas, and other necessary supplies. Rescue crews from the republic saved hundreds of lives; sadly, 50 Azerbaijanian rescuers died in a plane crash over the Armenian city Leninakan (*Bakinskii Rabochii*, January 8, 1989). Independent observers who visited Baku, the capital of Azerbaijan, testified that the natural calamity in Armenia temporarily forced people there to forget about their grudges and ethnocentric phobias. Mutual accusations and demands were put aside and mutual suspicion and mistrust began to evaporate (*Bakinskii Rabochii*, August 9, 1989). I also vividly recall my contemporary encounters with the Armenian colleague Professor Djanpaladian. He admitted that anxiety and perturbation among Armenians and Azerbijanians in the months preceding Spitak Earthquake had reached very dangerous levels and both societies stood on the verge of war.

The situation had deteriorated to such a point that crude

forms of ethnic cleansing of Azerbaijanians in Gugark district of Armenia had already forced dozens of thousands of Azerbaijanian residents from this republic. In turn, in February, 1989, the same hatred triggered a brutal massacre of the Armenian population in the Azerbaijanian city of Sumgait.

In a burst of empathy, the Spitak Earthquake calmed both communities. Moderates grabbed the opportunity to reduce the earlier violence and tried to persuade their people not to become re-estranged. They endeavored to persuade them to think not about what was dividing them but to concentrate on what was unifying them. Unfortunately, people of good will of both nations missed this chance: unlike the ethnocentric nationalists, they were not united and proactive. Ethnocentric radicals managed to drown out their calls for dialogue and began to dominate both peoples once more. In addition, the Central Soviet government failed to find any appropriate solution to the Karabakh problem, and, because of his ambivalent and inconsistent policy towards ethno-nationalists, Mikhail Gorbachev lost moral authority in the two nations. Corrupted local communist party bosses and law enforcement authorities, backed by ethic mafias in their lust for power, sided with the ethnocentric radicals.

Provocations resumed all too soon. Horrific acts of violence in the post-quake period completely undermined even the most timid attempts to start an interethnic dialogue. Ethnocentric nationalists promoted the idea of absolute loyalty to their own ethnic groups. Supposedly that loyalty is superior to any other alternative ideas or entities. Gradually, empathy for the victims of the natural disaster gave way to the belief that they are inferior to their co-nationals and supposedly "were righteously punished by God for their evil deeds." Rights of ethnic aliens and their interests were disregarded and the idea that the fate of individuals is determined by, and dependent on, the destiny of one's own ethno-national group was reawakened.

Bedeviled with overpowering ethnocentric emotions, both peoples had their long-standing cultural code of helping others undermined and distorted. The uncontrolled forces of an infuriated nature reminded them about such fundamental human values as compassion, empathy, and wish to help their neighbors in wretched

circumstances, but they quickly forgot them in a firestorm of poisonous verbiage.

Since that time, this dominant ideology has not changed, and the conflict between Armenians and Azerbaijanians remains among the most dangerous ethnic confrontations and threatens to destabilize not only the whole region of the Caucasus, but countries beyond the mountains.

Anatoly Isaenko, PhD, attained his doctoral degree at Moscow State University and was professor and chair of Medieval and Ancient History at North Ossetian State University in Vladikavkaz, Russia, prior to becoming a professor at Appalachian State University. His main interests are ethnic conflicts, terrorism, and the history of the Caucasus. He may be reached at isaenkoa@ appstate.edu. ❏

Freud, Greek Narratives, and Biblical Counter-narratives: A Dialogue

Kalman J. Kaplan—University of Illinois at Chicago
James William Anderson—Northwestern University

KAL KAPLAN:
The Greek myth of creation begins with Sky (the male) marrying Earth (the female) and producing, first, the hundred-handed monsters, and then the Cyclopes (Apollodorus, 1:1-2). Family pathology then immediately commences, as the father takes the children away from the mother and throws them into Tartarus, a dark and gloomy place in Hades. Sky again has children by Earth, the Titans" (Apollodorus, 1:3). Earth retaliates for the loss of her children by persuading the Titans to attack their father and gives Cronus, the leader of the Titans, a steel sickle. The Titans set upon their father, and Cronus cuts off his father's genitals and throws them into the sea. The Furies are born from the spurting blood. Cronus becomes the new ruler (Apollodorus, 1:4).

In this myth, the Oedipal conflict is described as being ingrained through the Furies into the fabric of the natural world. Earth and Sky foretell that Cronus will lose the rule to his own son;

so Cronus devours his offspring as they are born (Apollodorus 1:5). One of the babies, Zeus, is saved through a ruse. When Zeus reaches adulthood he makes war on Cronus and the Titans, fulfilling the prophecy of Earth and Sky (Apollodorus 2:1).

A tragic family pattern emerges from these stories. Husband and wife are estranged from each other. The husband is disengaged and hurtful. The wife is enmeshing and vengeful. Family triangulation occurs, pitting mother and son against father. Generational boundaries are blurred and transgressed. Moreover, the pattern seems a natural consequence of creation and is destined to repeat itself cyclically throughout the generations.

Sigmund Freud was aware of the power of the narratives of Greek mythology. He saw a particular complex as being central to human nature and named it after the Greek mythological figure, Oedipus. In Freud's view, fathers see their sons as a threat, as contained in the warning of the oracle to Laius: that Oedipus "when he reached man's estate" would kill his father Laius and marry his mother Jocasta. In Freud's developmental scheme, the father threatens to castrate the son to prevent this from happening. As a result, the son then gives up the mother as a libidinal object and identifies with the father, the superego being heir to the Oedipus complex. Thus the superego is based on fear.

Freud had no counter-narrative for this story. It is difficult to see how, with this framework for viewing the world, there can be any resolution based on love between father and son. There is an unending conflictual pattern between father and son as foretold by Earth and Sky (Apollodorus, 1.5; 2.1). Yosef Yerushalmi puts it this way: "Like Sisyphus pushing his rock, Oedipus and Laius must contend forever. At one point in the cycle, the father must be slain by the son; at another, the return of the repressed, the father returns; the return is only illusion, for the cycle will begin again (Yerushalmi, *Freud's Moses: Judaism Terminable and Interminable,* 1991, 95).

JIM ANDERSON:
Freud provided a stark and challenging view of human nature, a view that stresses the centrality of the Oedipus complex and the powerful sexual and aggressive forces that are a part of that

complex. I have my criticisms of Freud's view, but here I would like to consider how the material from Greek mythology discussed by Kal would be seen from Freud's perspective.

Kal begins by describing the universe's early history as depicted in Greek mythology. The story is saturated with murderous hatred between fathers and children, particularly sons. Fathers are afraid their sons will kill and displace them. They try to rid themselves of the sons by obliterating them or banishing them. Sons who survive indeed retaliate by killing the fathers. Castration even comes into play; Cronus cuts off the genitals of his father, Sky.

Freud would have seen the Greek myth of creation as supporting his theory of the Oedipus complex. He believed that boys are born with a desire to possess their mothers, indeed, even to have sex with them. The boy sees that his father has what he wants, a privileged relationship with the mother and an exclusive sexual bond with her. He views his father as his rival, and he wants to displace him; in fact, he wants to kill him. Realizing that his father is far more powerful than he, the boy fears his father and thinks in particular that his father will punish him by castrating him. Freud paid little attention to the father's role, but it follows that he would have seen the father also having rivalry with his son and often fearing that his son will displace him.

To Freud, the Oedipal pattern is inborn and inevitable, though few psychoanalysts today would accept that assumption. Freud therefore expected the Oedipus complex to appear everywhere, in every culture and in every historical period. The Greek myth of early history, to Freud, would have been evidence of the existence of Oedipal patterns in the culture of the ancient Greeks. Hence, when the Greeks came to fantasize the beginning of the world, they projected these themes into the myths they made up. They imagined the early divine creatures as living out Oedipal themes: fathers and sons being in conflict, sons wanting to kill fathers, fathers being afraid of sons, and mothers having a role in all this.

Similarly, the story of Oedipus, and Sophocles' telling of the story in his play, *Oedipus Rex*, would have been further evidence to Freud of the omnipresence of the Oedipus complex. Freud

noted that the play had much the same effect on the modern audience as it did on Sophocles' audience more than two thousand years ago (*The Interpretation of Dreams*, 1900, 261). In the play the oracle declares that it is the destiny of Oedipus to marry his mother and to kill his father. The "destiny" of Oedipus "moves us," Freud wrote, "only because it might have been ours—because the oracle laid the same curse upon us before our birth as upon him. It is the fate of all of us, perhaps, to direct our first sexual impulse towards our mother and our first hatred and our first murderous wish against our father."

Kal states that Freud did not provide a counter-narrative, and I agree. Freud believed that there was only one narrative, a universal narrative. He believed that all people are heirs to the Oedipus complex.

While Freud made use of Greek mythology, he fundamentally disagreed with the Greek doctrine of destiny. While the ancient Greeks believed that everyone is fated to live out the lives prescribed by the eternal forces, Freud thought that we have certain inborn tendencies. Such tendencies have an impact similar to that of the force of destiny. But there is a vital difference. The whole purpose of psychoanalysis and of self-knowledge in general is to become aware of these tendencies that reside in the unconscious. Hence people can become in control of their own lives rather than being in the grip of forces of which they are not aware.

KAL KAPLAN:

What is curious to me, Jim, is, although the Hebrew Scriptures in general and the book of Genesis in particular do seem to provide a counter-narrative, Freud, a Jew, albeit a "godless Jew," seems much more partial to Greek than Hebrew narratives. A short time after the publication of *The Interpretation of Dreams*, the Jewish historian and folklorist, Alter Druyanov, wrote to Freud alerting him to the considerable similarity between his ideas and those of the early Hebrews. Freud answered: "'I'm happy to learn of a competent reader of my book from so far a place. As far as I'm concerned however the similarity between my ideas and those of the early Greeks strikes me as much more salient'" (in Eran J. Rolnik, *Freud in Zion: History of Psychoanalysis in Jewish Palestine/Israel 1918-1948*, 34).

The idea that the son is a threat to a father rather than an extension of him into the future is utterly foreign to the Biblical worldview. The father realizes that the son is not motivated to displace him because he knows that he will inherit from him. Indeed, he wants to see his son develop and surpass him, and is commanded to teach him thoroughly (Deuteronomy 6:7, *Kiddushin* 30a, *Babylonian Talmud*). This covenantal relationship is symbolized by circumcision of the male foreskin (*b'rith hamilah*) at the age of eight days (Genesis 17: 9-11). In my view as someone who has studied and written about the psychological meaning of Biblical narratives for more than 20 years (e.g., K. J. Kaplan, M. W. Schwartz, & M. Markus-Kaplan, *The Family: Biblical and Psychological Foundations*, 1984, and K. J. Kaplan, and M. W. Schwartz, *A Psychology of Hope: A Biblical Response to Tragedy and Suicide*, 2008) circumcision is not symbolic castration but the very opposite. It transforms the primordial fear on the part of the son into the assurance that the father's own interests lie in the son's being fit to carry on the covenant. Rather than promoting fear of the future as the Greek Oedipus narrative does, the Biblical narrative embraces the future.

The pivotal narrative that portrays the basic familial pattern is that of the *Akedah*—Abraham's binding of Isaac—wherein God tells Abraham to sacrifice his son Isaac. There are several significant elements to the story. First, God calls upon Abraham to offer his son, Isaac, who, God acknowledges, is Abraham's only son whom he loves, as a sacrifice (Genesis 22:2). Second, Abraham seems prepared to go through with the sacrifice, apparently never fully giving up hope that God will transform his command so that Isaac might be saved. Further, Isaac trusts in his father, despite his questioning with regard to the absence of a burnt offering (Genesis 22:6-8). Finally, God does relent, sending an angel at the last moment to command Abraham not to sacrifice Isaac: "Lay not thine hand upon the lad" (Genesis 22:9-12).

The central question raised by the *Akedah* is: Why does Abraham continue to trust in God, given that God seems to be unrelenting in His call for the sacrifice of Isaac?

Answering this question necessitates a fuller understanding of the relationship between God, Abraham, and Isaac, and the outworking of the covenant among them. Abram's (his original and

pre-covenant name) relationship with God begins with Him telling Abram to leave his father Terah's house and the pagan gods (Genesis 12: 1-3). Abram's relationship with God develops. Sarai is barren and arranges for Abram (now named Abraham) to have a son, Ishmael, with her handmaiden Hagar (Genesis 17:5). Sarai is renamed Sarah and is given the blessing of a son, Isaac, despite her advanced age of 90. God will continue the covenant with Isaac rather than Ishmael, whom He will bless but not give His covenant (Genesis 17:20-21). Abraham reluctantly sends Ishmael away at Sarah's request after Ishmael makes sport at Isaac's weaning (Genesis 21: 8-11).

After all these events, we are confronted with the narrative of the *Akedah*. The above passages begin to make comprehensible the central question of the *Akedah*. Abraham trusts God because he believes that God thus has a vested interest in the survival of Isaac. God must relent in His call for the sacrifice of Isaac. He has an empty covenant should Isaac die.

Underlying this episode is the paradox Abraham finds himself in—the *Akedah paradox*. If Abraham rejects God's command to sacrifice Isaac, he is breaking his covenant with his monotheistic God and will likely lapse back into a paganism that allows, indeed invites, child sacrifice. By accepting God's command, Abraham achieves a Biblical resolution that ends child sacrifice, once and for all.

The question to me, Jim, is why Freud, a Jewish man familiar with his own tradition, would have failed to see in the Hebrew Scriptures the basis for such a counter-narrative?

Max Eitingon, the only real Zionist within Freud's inner circle of supporters, alerted Freud to the writings of Eitingon's friend and *Landsman*, Lev Shestov, the Russian-Jewish philosopher and author of the landmark book, *Athens and Jerusalem* (1930-37). Eitingon went so far as to send Freud one of Shestov's books. Freud's answer gives ample evidence as to his disinterest in understanding Biblical and Hebrew thinking. "You cannot imagine how unaffected I am by these convoluted philosophical discussions" (in Rolnik, *Freud in Zion*, 2007, 56).

JIM ANDERSON:

As one would expect, Freud would have had a sharply different view of these Biblical stories, particularly the story of the *Akedah*. Freud would see the *Akedah* as further evidence of the universality of the Oedipus complex. He would say that the Oedipus complex underlay Hebrew myth, just as it underlay Greek myth, and just as it underlies the psyche of human beings today.

His argument would be simple. A central factor in the Oedipus complex is the conflict between fathers and sons. The son wants to murder the father. The father, aware of his son's intentions, has an inner urge to kill his son and take away the threat. Therefore the early Jews developed a story to try to control the father's murderous desires. The story, directed to fathers, says in effect: "You will have a desire to kill your son. Don't be surprised. This desire feels as if it were implanted in you by God. Even Abraham was in a position of wanting to kill his son, but he was not at fault, he was merely following God's directive. But God has declared that you should not kill your son. He has demanded that you spare him." In other words, the story was necessitated by the need to help fathers resist their murderous desires toward their sons.

Freud saw the custom of circumcision as buttressing his view, rather than, as Kal claims, demonstrating the pact between father and son. Freud speculates that the son has an unconscious "memory-trace from the prehistory of the human family, when the jealous father would actually rob his son of his genitals if the latter interfered with him by his rivalry for a woman." "The primæval custom of circumcision, another symbolic substitute for castration," he goes on, "is only intelligible if it is an expression of subjection to the father's will" (An Outline of Psycho-Analysis, 1938, 190). In Freud's vision, the *Akedah* too illustrates Abraham's subjection to God and the son's subjection to his father.

Within Freud's framework, the story operates through strengthening the superego, that is, the moral code within the individual's mind. The story, portrayed as the word of God, becomes incorporated into the superego. A believing person considers it wrong to murder his son. Freud would consider this solution to be typical of the solutions that were common before modern times. It

is not based on self-understanding. A person does not say, "I have these murderous desires toward my son. I realize that virtually everyone has such impulses at times. But I can make the decision not to act on that desire. I am in rational control of my behavior." Instead, humankind had to rely on a story that had the force of a commandment from God; the meaning of the story is: "Thou shalt not kill nor harm thy son."

Freud would further claim that some fathers at times end up hurting their sons because of their unconscious hostility. In that situation, the father's wish to hurt would bypass his superego injunctions. For example, a father might let his son engage in a dangerous activity, such as playing in a dangerous area when the son is too young to be safe. Freud would say that is why his approach, which is based on awareness, is preferable. People who are aware of unconscious desires and have a mastery over them will be in less danger of unconsciously finding ways of circumventing the conscious mind and accomplishing harmful, unconscious purposes.

Kal asks, "Why does Abraham continue to trust in God, given that God seems to be unrelenting in His call for the sacrifice of Isaac?" I think it requires tortuous reasoning to try to give an answer that sounds nice to such a question. The obvious answer is that the story was created to make a point: people are not to trust their own personal values, they are not to consider what matters most to them; rather, they are to follow the authority of God unquestionably. The story exists in the Bible to instruct people to submit to God, no matter how wrong or harmful it might seem to be to do so. Even if God's command appears to call for the worst action imaginable—sacrificing one's own son—one still must obey. I see the *Akedah* as embodying what might be called the pre-modern approach or even the pre-Freudian approach, an approach that revolves around following authority rather than relying on one's own judgment, values, and ethics.

While it seems to me that Kal brought up the Biblical storiesy to claim that they are sharply different from the Greek myths, I think Freud would be struck more by the similarity. He would see the Biblical stories as further evidence of his view of human nature. Life, to Freud, is saturated with rivalry, envy, and sexuality. The stories of the Bible inevitably reflect human nature. Those who

made up the stories projected the qualities of life onto them. There-fore we have: Abram has sex with his wife, Sara, and with his wife's handmaiden, Hagar; it is the earliest Biblical *ménage a trois*. (Hagar bears Abram's first son, Ishmael, and Sara bears his second son, Isaac.) Ishmael, envious of his favored brother, Isaac, does not join in the celebration of his weaning. Sara, wanting her son to be the special one and jealous of Hagar, demands that Hagar and Ish-mael be driven away. Abram, with the same hostility toward a son that he would later feel toward Isaac, agrees to banish Ishmael.

In summary, Freud would see Biblical stories as illustrating his conception of human nature: people are lustful, selfish, and ag-gressive. Left to their own devices, people would be endlessly de-structive to others and to themselves; there would be unremitting strife. Therefore, the superego has developed, the internal moral code that people carry within themselves. The Bible reinforces the superego in two main ways. First, by providing many of the guide-lines that have become encoded in the superegos of most people, such as the Ten Commandments. Second, by teaching people, in stories such as the *Akedah*, that they should obey God unquestiona-bly. Freud had an implied critique of this second factor, the princi-ple of blind obedience. He favored self-awareness; he preferred to have people know what is in the unconscious and to make decisions based on the greatest familiarity possible with what is inside them.

KAL KAPLAN:

Despite Jim's claim of similarities between the Greek and Biblical narratives, two sharp differences remain. The Greek narra-tive provides no respite from unremitting rivalry between father and son. The Biblical narrative recognizes no such rivalry.

The Biblical family, in contrast to the family of Greek my-thology, has a purpose, the passing down of a covenant. There is an intergenerational bond wherein each generation has a vested in-terest in the well-being of the other. The son does not desire to pos-sess his mother or displace his father. Instead he accepts protection and nurturance from his parents and learns from them. The Biblical message is not one of strife between father and son but rather one of concord and mutual love. It is expressed most directly in the words of the prophet Malachi: "And He shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, And the heart of the children to their fa-

thers..." (Malachi 3: 22-24).

JIM ANDERSON:

Because Kal had the first word, the last word falls to me. But it will not be one of contention; rather, I hope we can reach some accord.

I think by this point Kal has accepted my argument—I really should say Freud's argument—that people by nature have powerful, often unruly forces within them. Even the last, beautiful statement from "Malachi" seems to support that point. Why would God have to encourage fathers and sons to turn their hearts toward each other if they did not have a strong internal tendency toward the opposite?

My impression is that Kal also would agree with me—or again, I should say, with Freud—about the value of self-understanding. Given the powerful forces within us, forces that often push us toward behavior that would harm others or ourselves, we are best off to the extent that we understand and manage those forces. The Greeks emphasized destiny because it seemed to them that uncontrollable forces outside themselves determined their lives. Our view today is that those forces are within us, and, once we are aware of them, we can master them.

Kal's overarching point is one with which I agree. He argues convincingly that the Biblical narrative provides for believers a powerful argument, organized around the meaning of the covenant, as to why fathers and sons should overcome any inner hostility they might have toward each other. A father would want to facilitate his son's growth, and a son would have love and gratitude toward his father. I see too that there is no central dynamic in the Greek stories that provides what Kal calls a counter-narrative to the Oedipal story, with its vicious antagonism between father and son. I would even go farther and expand on Kal's interpretation of the meaning of the covenant. He says in effect that fathers and sons share in the covenant, hence it is in the interest of fathers to nurture their sons, and the sons, in turn, feel grateful to their fathers and pass on their fathers' legacy. One could also see the story of the covenant as providing a positive model of father-son interaction. God the Father cares for the well-being of His sons and provides

for them, and the sons carry on God's life-affirming purposes.

Kalman J. Kaplan, PhD, *is Professor of Clinical Psychology and Director of the Center for Religion, Spirituality and Mental Health in the Department of Psychiatry and the Department of Medical Education at the University of Illinois at Chicago College of Medicine. Books of which he is first author include* <u>The Family: Biblical and Psychological Foundations</u> *and* <u>A Psychology of Hope: A Biblical Response to Tragedy and Suicide</u>. *He may be contacted at kalkap@aol.com.* ***James William Anderson, PhD,*** *is Clinical Professor of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, Northwestern University; a faculty member at the Chicago Institute for Psychoanalysis; Editor of the* <u>Annual of Psychoanalysis</u> *and a member of the Editorial Board of this publication. Dr. Anderson may be contacted at j-anderson3@northwestern.edu.* ❏

Anger vs. Hate: The Politicizing of American Emotional Life

Dan Dervin—University of Mary Washington

The present essay is largely exploratory and inferential, aiming to distinguish which emotions tend to coalesce around and fuel political ideologies. A quirk complicating this task at the outset is that once a left/right scale is spread, positions on various issues—abortion, gun control, the U.N.—necessarily diverge with no ideal mid-point. Instead, one finds a middle-ground to be claimed only after one has taken sides on given issues. But self-serving rhetoric aside, in politics one gains visibility only by moving off the dead center. Also, both extremes of the scale tend to bend around and merge in more disturbed and shared psychopathologies, with reckless rhetoric, violent acting-out, demonizing the other, and no concern for consequences.

However, in the scale's central area, we can identify moderate, functional positions, a willingness to compromise, with reality-checks, pro/con tallying, etc. The one thing all commentators in the aftermath of the 2012 elections could agree on is that the country has become deeply polarized, if not more so than ever. So there is some urgency in making sense of where we find ourselves today.

In the 2010 elections, most moderates were chased off the field, and some of those who survived, like Maine's Republican Senator Olympia Snowe, opted to retire. In fact, the rough parity in the Senate between Conservatives (28) and moderates (27) through 2007 will end in 2013 with only six of the latter returning (Nate Silver, "Moderate Republicans Fall Away in the Senate," *New York Times*, 8 May 2012).

One might attribute this decline to George W. Bush, who some say led the country into two unwinnable wars while presiding over a major recession by the end of his term. But such appears less the case than the 2008 election of the first African-American president and Obama's establishment of national health care as per campaign promise. Its passage served as the political wedge for re-energizing Grover Norquist's anti-taxation pledge and the Tea Party's targeting moderates regardless of party. The point has been made that polarizing rhetoric began emerging in the 1990s with the Newt Gingrich-style politics of personal destruction, culminating in the Clinton impeachment proceedings. But others have claimed that Gingrich mainly exploited existing tendencies. The number of Patriot groups tracked by the Southern Poverty Law Center peaked under Clinton in 1996 in the upper 800s, declined after his impeachment hearings and into the Bush years to 150, only to soar in 2012 to 1,274 (Charles M. Blow, "Revolutionary Language," *New York Times*, 12 January 2013).

As moderate voices continue to be silenced, and despite Obama's hefty victory margins, diehard anti-Obama minorities of 5 to 10% cling to notions that he's a Muslim, a Marxist, or foreign born (Marc Fisher, "Second Inaugural They'd Like to Call Off," *Washington Post,* 15 January 2013, C1). In this context, it's worth asking (and taking up below) whether animosities stretching toward either end of the scale share a similar emotionally rigid structure. This would seem to be the case insofar as polarization presumes a splitting into good-guy/bad-guy constructs that dehumanize opponents. True, on its face the present situation may seem anomalous: liberals have their good-guy in the White House and don't appear exercised over targeting a bad-guy, while conservatives have their bad-guy in the White House but haven't found a good-guy to lead the charge to recoup power. Accordingly, pundits have portrayed

the GOP as traditionally running on negative energy: Reagan's "Empire of Evil," Bush's anti-Clinton White House prior to 9/11, then his "Axis of Evil," Cheney's Islamofascists, and Senator Mitch McConnell's declaration in 2009 that the party's top priority was getting rid of Obama (Jennifer Durham, "The 'False Self' Projected on Obama by Many Republicans," Clio's Psyche, December 2012, Vol. 19, 3, 315-8). Not surprisingly, the post-election GOP has imploded, descending into "toxic internal politics," according to New Jersey Governor Chris Christie. "People are mad as hell," claimed Amy Kremer, chair of the Tea Party Express, "and I'm right there with them" (Steve Peoples, "Republicans Seem Divided as Ever," AP, 6 January 2013). Whether the Party-of-No label is merited, the party of Goldwater and Reagan that made government the problem, not the solution, is hard put, as David Brooks, notes, to "have a positive governing program" ("A Second G.O.P.," *New York Times*, 29 January 2013, A21).

Still, while allowing for both sides of the aisle their share of negative tendencies, I wonder if we can further delineate their respective emotional appeals along political lines. To that end, I will go out on a limb and propose that most leftwing negativity is best discerned as anger and most rightwing negativity as hatred, always allowing for overlaps and exceptions. I define anger as an affective state of arousal over a felt wrong, in which negative affects seek release. In the process, the subject tends to focus on a personal object as the cause; and whether the source is direct or displaced, the release aims, at least in part, at restoring a prior but disrupted relationship. Parents and children, friends and lovers, bosses and employees, will at times likely display anger and usually find a degree of resolution. Anger is then relational, specific, and mostly short term unless prolonged by grievance, resentment, or irreconcilable differences. Then it can shade into hatred, which presumes a more or less permanent mind-set that does not abide resolution or patching-up. Hatred tends to be more impersonal, likely more primitive, entrenched, and in any case, a function of either/or, all-or-nothing ideation. In anger, when temperatures cool, positive aspects of the angry source may emerge and foster alleviation; the hated object, on the other hand, is beyond the pale, unredeemable. The former allows for letting-go, moderating, and, by gestures toward forgiving

and forgetting, clears the way for further development; the latter tends to view forgiving or forgetting as dangerous signs of weakness. At most, if one's hatred can tolerate getting in touch with angry feelings, some alleviation may be possible; anger combining with hatred issues in rage. Taken separately, hatred subsists in a two-dimensional world; anger in a three-dimensional one. In the latter, there may be a fallback position; in the former, less so.

Applying these terms to political protest movements augurs a deeper clarification of their dynamics. For example, Gandhi's and Martin Luther King, Jr.'s human rights movements privileged non-violence, which, by taking the higher moral ground, garnered sympathy from outside groups while exposing the inhumane practices of the powers that be. The massive marches and rallies in the Vietnam period were predominantly nonviolent, even festive as many of us can attest, although the New Left's Weathermen and the Black Panthers added a reckless and violence-prone fringe. I would emphasize that the vast majority of the personally directed "Hey, hey, LBJ, How many kids did you kill today?" and the angry defiance of the "Hell no! We won't go!" adopted a cathartic mode that owned the angry feelings by putting them out-front; not coincidentally, the movement began to fizzle after Nixon ended the draft. Concurrently, his White House was covertly compiling an unforgiving "Enemies List."

Decades later, the street theatre protests against the World Trade Organization and globalization contained violent elements that tangled with the police and destroyed property. The out-front anger here seems aimed at dramatizing perceived injustices as well as provoking authorities to excessive physical responses by staging the oppressive nature of the system. Occupy Wall Street, on the other hand, marked a return to peaceful modes of protest, in part by relying on leaderless spontaneity. With external authority outside the group discredited, recourse to internal leaders was logically ruled out; but egalitarian anarchy offered a short shelf life. The hacker tactics of Anonymous and WikiLeaks also parlayed a decentralized network and eschewed any prescribed agendas, but their indiscriminant actions tended to exceed the range of anger. Still, social media networking proved effective during the Arab Spring, at least short term.

Other more radical leftwing groups, like Earth First, have conducted assaults on property, and here we see what begins as mainly generational anti-authority gravitating toward an unrelenting and ideological-driven, guerrilla war-style hatred of the other. Often a generation older and fueled by nostalgic memories, anti-government protesters from the right react more to felt betrayals of their country's foundations and fear of being led down the primrose path of socialism. So it is that the far left nursing on utopian fantasies and the far right feeding on an idealized past tend to merge as the left/right scale curves around and opposites dissolve into never-neverland. A few distinctions apply. The passions of the left seem driven by an ideal of lost organic wholeness with a lingering agrarian matrix; the right seems driven by an ideal of order within an inherent hierarchy, and in this respect, never the twain shall meet. These longed for absolutes are frustrated by equally formidable opponents who serve to marshal resources in an all-out crusade or revolution over the at-risk ideals and demand ever more drastic action and sacrifice, as love is long since sidelined by hate.

We can see how this sequence played out in the radical Italian group of the 1970s Red Brigades. Their original members emerged from idealistic communist youth movements whose tactics began turning to destabilizing the country by acts of sabotage, robberies, and assassinations. As Marxist-Leninists, their Manifesto targeted the State as an "imperialistic collection of multinational corporations" (cited in Wikipedia). In 1974, they killed two neo-fascist politicians, and four years later raised the stakes by kidnapping former Premier Aldo Moro as a bargaining chip for a prisoner exchange. After 54 days elapsed, his captors loaded him into a car under a blanket and fire eleven shots into his chest, gauged to prolong his suffering. The American counterparts would likely be neonazis and white supremacists whose violent agendas have mostly been intercepted by the FBI (Dave Hall, *Into the Devil's Den*, 2008). Less extreme but with a track record of hate are militant anti-abortionists who place abortion doctors in bulls-eyes on web sites while demonizing them as Adolf Hitler, whose procedures perpetrate a holocaust of the unborn. The Tea Party trades in violent gestures and menacing symbols. Its candidates have roughed up reporters, and supporters made a show of "packing heat" (guns)

to Democratic rallies. Sarah Palin's campaign ads literally targeted Democratic congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords in a weapon's cross hairs (this was before her wounding in a Tucson shootout at a political gathering).

The Tea Party has been deemed an authentic populist movement directed against a demonized Washington. While it may not be possible to separate anger from hatred in their rallies and overheated rhetoric, their pogroms against moderate Republicans reveal all-or-nothing agendas that disparage compromise as weakness or striking bargains with the devil. Similarly, the birthers' demonization of Obama as not a bona-fide-American, the caricatures of him as the blood-sucking Joker derived from the Batman films, as an African monkey, or as a bullet riddled zombie (Anita Kumar, "Va. GOP condemns Obama Email," *Washington Post* 1 November 2011), display a two-dimensional cognitive mode (Durham). This by now familiar strategy has taken peculiar turns since the election, the most striking being the trending among several states, especially Texas, to secede from the Union; the petition, with 125,000 names, has been squelched for now as unconstitutional. This and other gestures, like the diehard flailing about for impeachment grounds, suggest ways to access deeper levels of hatred's tenacity.

Given the overcharged and evidently over determined levels of hatred, what might be their latent content? Since latent levels are by definition repressed, they are less confidently sighted than inferred and supported by interpretation. The following vignette may offer one kind of entry. In the aftermath of the 2012 election, the *Washington Post* ran a story by reporter Anne Hull, who had apparently been embedded with a suburban couple near Tampa, Florida during the election. In their late 50s, the "Rs" are Republican precinct workers and "Tea Party patriots." For the wife, "The battle is lost, the war is not. And it begins today." Explaining that she and her retired electrician spouse were not doomsday "preppers" storing up food and other survival goods, she acknowledged they were planning to stock up on guns and ammo. "We'll probably get a long gun and a short gun," she said. "We've already got our concealed gun permits." But she hesitates getting fingerprinted and registered, because then "they know who you are." She worries that Obama is going to downsize the military, close bases, and build

up his own, consisting of the National Guard and Homeland Security. Her husband can't figure out who Obama is—Buddhist? Christian? Muslim? Suspiciously adopting a black dialect for African-Americans?   "We are steeling ourselves.   It's time to re-group" ("For Some, the Painful Dawn of Four More Years," 8 November 2012, C1). What can be felt seeping into these responses is less overt hatred than deep-seated fears, centering on losing control over their lives due to a hostile takeover. In this context, hatred is a defense against a more dangerous level of fear, an active response to fears over passivity and self-disintegration. Rather than surrendering a beleaguered autonomy, they have declared war against a designated and dangerously powerful but inscrutable enemy.

Similar reactions resound across the country. After the school massacre in Newtown, gun sales soared out of fear that Obama's people would outlaw assault rifles; as NRA reps met with Joe Biden at the White House in mid-January, its membership grew by 100,000. "If I had 1,000 ARs [semi-automatic rifles]," claimed an Iowa gun dealer, I could sell them in a week" (Michael Cooper, 12 January 2013, *New York Times*, A1). A CEO for a Tennessee company that trains people in using firearms tactically has warned that if gun control measures are passed, it will "spark a civil war, and I'll be glad to fire the first shot" (Blow, A17).

If there is a latent content to anger, one could surmise it's touching on anxiety over the damage to an emotional tie, but a different scenario for hatred is required. Clues appear in the nature of hatred as a closed circuit, rarely if ever yielding to either internal or external pressures for change. The enemies that hatred creates stay enemies. Why? I would propose this is the case because the dangerous fear that is being warded off arises out of imagined retaliation from the hated other. When hatred creates an enemy through projection, there is always the danger of that projection boomeranging. This is why the enemy most often must be destroyed, either directly or, more commonly, by groups as designated delegates to locate viable targets and leave matters to an alienated gunman, as in the case of abortion doctors being ambushed and gunned down.

Thus in a sort of twisted psychic-logic, the prospect of an enemy becoming friendly is anathema. Politically, this can be played out in various ways, some more transparent than others. In

the 2012 primaries, Rick Santorum seemed to see "Nazis everywhere: in the Middle East, in doctors' offices and medical labs, in the Democratic Party, and in the White House," writes Dana Milbank. The coming election was like the run-up to World War II when Americans failed to recognize Hitler's threat ("Santorum Cries Nazi," *Washington Post*, 22 February 2012, A15). During the Republican primaries, candidates burnished their tough-guy credentials by portraying Obama as weak for allegedly delivering ill-advised apologies to potential enemies. Implicit in the candidates' posturing was the groupthink that such gestures left the country vulnerable to evil-minded people lying in wait to exploit any sign of weakness. But far from Obama flinging out apologies pell-mell, James Traub shows his willingness to learn from past mistakes while seeking a more perfect union ("I'm Sorry: The Scariest word in Politics," *New York Times*, 4 December 2011, SR5); in fact, actual apologies were never on the table. But strong leaders in this scenario project a world where one's designated enemies are inherently untrustworthy—diplomacy, dialogue, and give-and-take are off the table. It's a recipe for constant warfare geared to validate a conspiratorial mindset wherein hostilities are projected and then warded off as they recoil in spades, should we ever lower our guard. Scary—yes, but not for the reason alleged.

What to do? At the very least, we can become more conscious of what may underlie political forms of polarization, more urgently discourage knee-jerk reactions to all the saber-rattling bluster, and whenever opportunities for dialogues arise, try to tune into the underlying fears, without assuming the path to alleviation will ever be less than arduous.

Dan Dervin, PhD, a prolific and veteran psychohistorian, is an emeritus professor at the University of Mary Washington. A featured scholar interview with Professor Dervin may be found in the September 2000 issue of this journal and he may be contacted at ddervin@umw.edu. ❏

Book Review

A Psychobiography of
Love's Prophet—Erich Fromm

David Lotto—Forum Research Associate

*Review of Lawrence J. Friedman, *The Lives of Erich Fromm: Love's Prophet* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013), IBSN 978-0-231-16528-6, 410 pages, cloth, $29.95.*

Larry Friedman has written an excellent psychological and intellectual biography. It is scholarly, well researched, comprehensive, and thorough. It is also well-written and tells a lively and gripping story. Interesting subjects make for interesting biographies. Erich Fromm was an incredibly productive and prolific individual, full of energy and at times exuberant or perhaps hypomanic, with a richly complex intellectual and personal life. Friedman captures this complexity in his title by referring to the "lives" of Erich Fromm.

Fromm had multiple interests and identities. He was a Marxist and Talmudic scholar, a social and political philosopher, a practicing psychoanalyst, and a major player in American and international psychoanalytic politics. He was one of the cofounders, along with Karen Horney, Harry Stack Sullivan, and Clara Thompson, of the William Alanson White Institute (WAWI)—the leading non-orthodox psychoanalytic training institute in New York City. He was also instrumental in establishing the International Federation of Psychoanalytic Societies (IFPS), a psychoanalytic organization which provided a home for the numerous psychoanalytic institutes and societies that did not fit the rigid requirements for membership set by the International Psychoanalytic Association (IPA). He was the person mainly responsible for starting the low-fee clinic at the WAWI.

He was also a teacher, mentor, lecturer, political activist, major philanthropist, and highly influential public intellectual. He is the author of 31 books in English and German, most of which

have sold more than one million copies. Total worldwide sales of his most popular book, *The Art of Loving*, are in excess of 25 million and counting.

He sought out and maintained personal and professional relationships with a number of the most well-known figures in politics (including Adlai Stevenson, Eugene McCarthy, and William Fulbright), academia, psychoanalysis, as well as many fellow public intellectuals and social critics.

An organizing theme for Friedman's biography is the centrality of the prophetic voice in so much of Fromm's writing and political activities. Like the Old Testament prophets, when there was danger, he named it and roused people to recognize and counteract it. In the 1930s and '40s it was the scourge of fascism and totalitarianism. Later it was the dangerous irrationality of the Cold War, the threat of nuclear war, and the ravages of conformity, consumerism, and capitalist-fueled conspicuous consumption. He spoke about the threat to the ethical traditions of prophetic and rabbinic Judaism posed by the militaristic belligerence and mistreatment of Palestinians in the newly created state of Israel. He was at the forefront of the anti-war movement during the Vietnam era, and was a constant and vociferous critic of the injustices and exploitation generated by the monopoly capitalist system.

Fromm's politics were constant throughout his life. He was always a man of the left. Unlike so many of his fellow Jewish public intellectuals, who executed dramatic left to right shifts during the course of their careers, he remained a Socialist and a Marxist, a member and a major financial supporter of the American Socialist Party. He also dabbled in electoral politics, donating to the political campaigns of progressive candidates like Adlai Stevenson, William Fulbright, and quite substantially to Eugene McCarthy's unsuccessful 1968 Democratic primary campaign. His checks were often accompanied with letters of advice.

He also financially supported and advised human rights and peace organizations—chiefly Amnesty International, the American Friends Service Committee, and the Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy, which he helped found. A good portion of the substantial income he received from his book sales was spent on philanthropy

and political contributions given to a variety of progressive causes and organizations.

Benjamin Spock acknowledged the influence that Fromm's anti-authoritarian stance had on his parenting advice. Pope John Paul II called him "a great teacher to humankind" and invited him to the Vatican to discuss spiritual instruction.

Fromm had a gift for recognizing and anticipating danger. He left Germany in 1934 and consistently urged Jewish relatives and friends to follow. He was active in helping several family members and friends immigrate to the United States, an increasingly difficult feat toward the late 1930s. He was also instrumental in moving the Frankfurt Institute out of Germany and into a new home at Columbia University.

He was also a major pioneer in attempting to integrate psychoanalysis and eastern thought, and did much to popularize Zen Buddhism, co-authoring the book *Zen Buddhism and Psychoanalysis* (1970) with Zen master D. T. Suzuki.

In 1965 Fromm attempted to organize a project called Humanistic Studies to bring together humanist and socialist writers and intellectuals with the goal of convincing the public of the vitality of "humanist socialism." The group never became functional but it did result in the publication that year of the book *Socialist Humanism: an International Symposium*, which had 35 contributors and sold more than one-half million copies.

Fromm was never much taken with the Soviet version of Marxism, seeing it as essentially a highly bureaucratic form of state capitalism. He was consistently critical of Soviet authoritarianism.

Within the professional psychoanalytic world, Fromm, like so many of the innovative analysts of his generation, became embroiled in the loyalty and fidelity issues of psychoanalytic politics—whether to pledge fealty to Freud's instinct theory and the meta-psychology that went with it, or to disagree and risk being labeled a heretic and ostracized or marginalized by mainstream psychoanalysis, which is largely what occurred.

He wrote a great deal about his theories of psychological functioning and character typology, which privileged the impor-

tance of society and culture over innate biological drives. Despite what his critics might say, he saw his work as being within the psychoanalytic framework.

There is a certain irony in this from the perspective of current psychoanalytic thinking, where the instinct theory and metapsychology is regarded as an antiquated artifact that almost no one believes in. Some of the theoretical innovations Fromm suggested—mainly the importance of the mother-infant bond and the influence of culture and society—are now mostly regarded as accepted truths.

Friedman does an excellent job of providing a sophisticated, and I think accurate, account of the most important motivational and character factors in Fromm's life, particularly the way Fromm was able to make use of a variety of support systems to nourish and sustain his high-energy productivity. I would add that, in addition to the support and stabilizing systems that Friedman describes, Fromm made use of two other major props to his self-esteem: the acclaim he received from the public and the media, and the support provided by his intimate relationships with the women in his life. He was married three times and there were almost always one or more women with whom he maintained close and intimate sexual relationships.

In summary, Fromm maintained an unwavering stance regarding his values, moral sensibilities, and political positions. He was an implacable foe of authoritarianism and totalitarianism. He remained committed to human rights, equality, economic justice, peace, and political democracy from his teenage years until the end of his life. He was a prophetic voice for a profoundly humanist vision of what the world could be.

For me, there is a sense of sadness in reading this biography. How far, it seems, we have moved away from that time and place, as recently as 1965 in America, when Fromm and many others could believe, at least somewhat realistically, that the world was moving toward the one envisioned by humanistic socialism.

David Lotto, PhD, *is a veteran psychoanalyst and psychohistorian in private practice in Pittsfield, Massachusetts, as well as*

a Research Associate of the Psychohistory Forum, who may be contacted at dlotto@nycap.rr.com. ❏

BULLETIN BOARD

CONFERENCES: Currently we are discussing Fall seminars on the psychology of humor and women with possible presenters. Announcements and papers will be sent out electronically to Psychohistory Forum members. At the International Psychohistorical Association's (IPA) **June 5-7, 2013** 36th Annual Conference at New York University, the following individuals affiliated with the Forum/Clio's Psyche will be making presentations: **Herbert Barry**, **David Beisel**, **Valerie Brinton**, **Molly Castelloe**, **Dan Dervin**, **Paul Elovitz**, **Ken Fuchsman**, **Florian Galler**, **Irene Javors**, **Henry Lawton**, **David Lotto**, **Victor Meladze**, **Allan Mohl**, **Merle Molofsky**, **Peter Petschauer**, **Denis O'Keefe**, **Howard Stein**, **Christine Silverstein, Jacques Szaluta**, and **Eddie Taylor**. The International Society for Political Psychology's (ISPP) 36th Annual Conference on July 8-11, 2013 will be at the Lauder School of Government at Herzliya, Israel; the National Association for the Advancement of Psychoanalysis of Culture and Society (NAAP) meets on October 26, 2013 in Manhattan; the International Forum for Psychoanalytic Education meets in Philadelphia (October 31-November 2); and the Association for the Psychoanalysis of Culture and Society (APCS) holds its conference at Rutgers University

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

on November 1-2, 2013. We welcome new member **Lawrence J. Friedman**, who is currently teaching at Harvard University. **NOTES ON MEMBERS:** Congratulations to **Frank Summers** on his election as president of the Division of Psychoanalysis of the American Psychological Association and to Paul Elovitz, who has been selected to give the Keynote Address at the IPA. **Burt Seitler**, **Tom Ferraro,** and Paul Elovitz have established *No Laughing Matter: A Psychological Research Group on Humor*, which welcomes paper and presentation proposals. **OUR THANKS:** To our members and subscribers for the support that makes Clio's Psyche possible.   To Benefactors Herbert Barry, David Beisel, David Lotto, and Jamshid Marvasti; Patrons Tom Ferraro, Ken Fuchsman, Peter Loewenberg, and Jacques Szaluta; Sustaining Members Eva Fogelman, Peter Petschauer, and Nancy Unger; Supporting Members Elizabeth Danze, Bob Lentz, Allan Mohl, and Hanna Turken; and Members Hanna Cohen, Larry Friedman, Ted Goertzel, David Hoddeson, and Geraldine Pauling. Our special thanks for thought-provoking materials to Lou Agosta, James William Anderson, Herbert Barry III, David Beisel, Valerie Brinton, Heiderose Brandt Butscher, Dan Dervin, Paul H. Elovitz, Ken Fuchsman, Tom Gibbs, Anatoly Isaenko, Kalman Kaplan, Ruth Lijtmaer, Judith Logue, David Lotto, Merle Molofsky, Peter Petschauer, Joyce Rosenberg, Howard F. Stein, Burton Seitler, Frank Summers, and Jessica Van Denend. To Nicole Alliegro for editing, proofing, and Publisher 2007 software application, Caitlin Adams for editing and proofing, Devin McGinley for editing, and Professor Paul Salstrom, Jessica Minzner, and Hannah Ovadia for proofing. Our special thanks to our editors and to our numerous, overworked referees, who must remain anonymous. ❏

Call for Papers

We welcome psychoanalytic/psychological insights of 500-1,500 words on a large variety of issues. It is our new policy to accept several longer articles—2,000 to 3,500 words—that will be subject to a more rigorous screening process than shorter submissions. Contact Paul Elovitz at pelovitz@aol.com with proposals, abstracts, outlines, and completed papers.

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627 Dakota Trail
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