mother on Long Island. When I did get to America, none of my relatives could accept my excuses for not being there, and so I too have had to live with that guilt.

Sometimes the death notices have been more grotesque. On one of the few times my wife and I could take a few days holiday by the seashore, we returned home to find a series of messages on the telephone answering machine. Each became more insistent that we should call up because an uncle had died, and then the voices reported that his sister had died a day later, and so by the time I could call the family in New York both of my father's siblings were gone, the funerals had taken place, and, aside from one elderly aunt, who was showing acute signs of Alzheimer's, I was the oldest surviving member of the family. More guilt.

With my wife's family and with friends, the end has come before we could prepare, and the funerals arranged and conducted without our being able to afford either the money or the time for the long twenty-seven to thirty-two hour flights. My wife did, however, fly to her mother's funeral four times: three times after she received word that the end was nigh but by the time she got to Arizona there was a recovery, and the fourth time she arrived after her parent passed away and so at least made the funeral.

What does it mean to be cut off and to be burdened with ever-increasing guilt for not being there for the ordeal of dying or of grieving with loved ones and old friends? To a great extent, it makes death a horrible event. Not because I am afraid of my own demise. In fact, I have been to the brink and back several times, with cancer and heart disease. No, the fearful thing is the thought of how others will respond, meaning my wife, my children, my granddaughter and—I don't think there will be others as I discovered when I had a year off from teaching when I had a cancer that was supposed to kill me within nine weeks. Only one colleague sheepishly appeared at the door to deliver some mail when I returned to the university: "they" looked at me in surprise and said, "But you're supposed to be dead!"

That is why the idea of a public show at the deathbed with a fine speech of advice or an ethical will with its sage counsel are so absurd and yet so fascinating. These scenes stand in the place of the great silence, and the emotional pain and financial costs for those who have to go through the ordeal of arranging the care for the body, the funeral, and all the rest that goes with an orderly departure from civil society. You just can not ask someone to get a nice cheap black rubbish sack, put you in it, and toss it on the rubbish heap.

***Norman Simms, PhD**, born in Brooklyn, New York, has been in New Zealand since 1970. Besides editing the journal Mentalities, he has written lots of books and articles on psychohistory, the history of mentalities, literature, and Judaism; the latest title to come out in December 2008 is Marranos on the Moradas (Brighton, MA: Academic Studies Press). Dr. Simms may be contacted at NSIMMS@waikato.ac.nz.*❑

The Importance of Mourning and Burial

Sander Breiner
Michigan State University

Mourning and burial deal with the denial of the loss of self and the powerless sensation that accompanies it. They are parts of the psychohistory of mankind's response to death with an early childhood psychodynamic determinant. Mourning is a very special and reasonable process. Someone who has been loved is someone with whom we have identified. Psychologically they are in some ways a part of us. Mourning is about giving up a part of oneself while still remaining intact. When mourning is completed, then there is return to a full life. Remembrances of the deceased—anniversaries of their death, pictures, mementos, gravesites, and so forth—are a means of making the bereaved feel more intact.

Some of the world's greatest human constructions, such as the pyramids, attest to the importance of burial and the afterlife in all cultures. The collection of valuables to be interred with the properly prepared body, the slaughter of humans and animals to accompany the individual into their afterlife, and the extensive religious activities and liturgy involving so much of the living prove the "vital" importance of this activity.

There are certain common elements related to burial in the history of the world. First, and most important, is the actual burial of the individual. Three elements have been universally part of this first step: one, a burial "deep" in the ground; two, a stone or heavy object placed upon the grave; and three, a notation made of who lies beneath the surface.

Upon their death other living things, such as cattle, horses, and pets, have been eaten or discarded in some waste site. Only in the more recent history of mankind has there been burial of some pets (particularly by the wealthy). Why then would humans be buried? Why then would a stone or heavy object be placed on top of the grave? Why would they have to mark the spot with their name? If we think in terms of early childhood, the concept that death is not forever (in a sense does not exist), then what must be the problem that such extensive effort and resources must be devoted to this burial activity? If the individual is not permanently "gone," they can return. Therefore, if it was only a very positive concept, then the universal response would be to somehow mummify the recently dead and keep that individual in the house with you awaiting that time when they eventually would return and join you. Since that is not the case, what is taking place? Even in those societies where mummification was important, the body was still housed separately in a prison of stone.

Since the preceding is what has been taking place throughout history, we must assume that there is a fear of the dead returning and being angry with us. Therefore, the protection we might provide ourselves would be some of the following: One, to indicate how sorry and pained we are that they have died. Two, how we devote so much of our time after their deaths to saying kind and wonderful things about them. (The adage is to not speak ill of the dead.) Three, that we will devote time, energy, and resources in their name. Fourth, that we will put them in a container that they cannot get out of and, to be sure, to put that container deep in the ground so that it will be too hard for them to get out. Fifth, we will put weights (stone) on top of that site to make it even more difficult for them to return. Finally, number six is that we will mark the site and watch it carefully to make sure that all is serene.

The many stories in every culture of the world of the "undead" returning attest to this universality. Almost invariably in the mythology of the undead returning, they are somehow seeking "vengeance" on the living. But what is the vengeance that the "undead" need to express? What has been done to them, for which they are seeking vengeance?

Since the universality of these qualities and experiences in the history of mankind indicates their early childhood dynamics, the likely answers become more obvious. In fact, we can recognize this in our work with patients in psychoanalysis. Perhaps the most difficult thing for an analysand is to say everything in their mind, just as it comes to their mind; particularly their hostile and destructive fantasies towards their parents. Even though they are sophisticated adults, they respond as if those thoughts and feelings are the same as action and behavior. In early childhood, thoughts and feelings (impulses) are the same as behavior. As children grow and become adults they recognize that thoughts and feelings are not the same as behavior. However, part of them still feels that way. Those conflicted love and hate feelings from early childhood about one's parents remain. In fact, it is very common for individuals to feel guilty about angry thoughts and feelings, and even to try to validate their guilt and need for self-punishment. This subject applies to many other elements in society and throughout history. Here we see its application to the death of a "loved one."

Therefore, mankind has been dealing with two elements: One, the very frightening aspects of loss of self and the powerlessness that goes with it; and two, the fear of retaliation for one's angry thoughts and feelings that have caused or contributed to that other person's death. By various adult activities we "work through" our mixed feelings for those who have died ("left us"). We become closer to the positive loving feelings we have for every human being (especially those we have loved). We feel closer to our friends and family in dealing with the death of a loved one. Our mourning connects our humanity to all others. The fears of the child within have thus become creative. Thus, two major conflicts of childhood can be resolved by sublimation in the burial and mourning rituals.

***Sander J. Breiner, MD**, is Distinguished Life Fellow of the American Psychiatric Association, a professor of psychiatry at two medical schools at Michigan State University, and one medical school at Wayne State University. In addition to being a Research Associate of the Psychohistory Forum, he is a Training and Supervising Psychoanalyst, and author of over 100 scientific articles and books, which include Slaughter of the Innocents: Child Abuse Through the Ages and Today (1990). In our trilogy on retirement, aging, and death and dying he has previously published "Never Retire from a Fulfilling Life" and "A Psychoanalyst/Psychohistorian Looks at Aging." Dr. Breiner may be contacted at sjbreiner@comcast.net.* ❑

Colp Memorial

(Continued from page 105)

Darwin scholar whose greatest achievement was *To Be an Invalid: The Illness of Charles Darwin* (1977), which was revised substantially and expanded to include Darwin's "Diary of Health." The result was *Darwin's Illness,* published at the end of May of this year by Florida University Press, allowing him to see the fruits of his loving scholarship.

Ralph was born on October 12, 1924 to Miriam Mirsky, a homemaker and graduate-educated biologist, who her only son remembered as maintaining a type of intellectual "salon" in her New York apartment. His father was a distinguished surgeon of German-Jewish descent whose name he was given despite the normal Ashkenazi Jewish tradition of not naming a child for a living person. This was one of many ways the family distanced itself from their Jewish roots. Though his parents divorced when he was four, his father was an important, though emotionally distant, part of his life. This distance appears to have been produced by the shy boy's identification with his mother, the awe with which he held his namesake, and his father's critical personality. Throughout his entire life, he insisted upon being Ralph Colp, Jr., which I resisted because he was such a distinguished man in his own right.

In his childhood "Tommy" Colp enjoyed listening to his family speak passionately about left-wing politics, even at the expense of playing with other children. At an early age he identified strongly with Trotsky in opposition to Stalin whom the adults then laid their hopes for a better world upon. Throughout his life he would identify with the underdog, as Trotsky was in the 1930s. While Tommy disagreed with his mother over politics, according to his cousin Jonathan Mirsky, they did not argue.

As indicated above, his parents did not particularly like being Jewish, although most of their friends were also Jewish, as Ralph's would be. They sent their son to the same Ethical Cultural schools they had attended and to which he would send his own two daughters—in fact, four generations of the family have attended them. About eighty to ninety percent of the students in the Ethical Culture schools also grew up in Jewish homes. Columbia University, which did not have the usual quota restricting the number of Jewish students, was where he earned his bachelor's (1945) and medical (1949) degrees prior to two years of military service (1953-55), primarily in Germany as a surgeon. Surgery, a field for which he had no special talents and in which he felt more intensely under the shadow of his awe-inspiring namesake, was soon abandoned for psychiatry where he could listen to people, rather than cut them open. As the most intellectual field of medicine, it was well suited to his inclinations and talents.

Dr. Colp's scholarly accomplishments and service to mental health were considerable. He served Columbia University graduate students as a psychiatrist from 1960-1993 and patients in private practice until the total collapse of his health just over a year before his death. Though a shy and, in some respects, inhibited man, he taught a course on the history of sex and was a Senior Associate Sex Therapist in the program of sex therapy at the New York University Medical Center. He wrote well over a hundred articles and book review essays mostly on Charles Darwin, but also on the surgeon William Halsted, Sacco and Vanzetti, Trotsky, Stalin, medical history, and many other subjects. He authored the "History of Psychiatry" section for the Sadock and Sadock (formerly Kaplan and Sadock) *Comprehensive Textbook of Psychiatry* since 1986,