my hate a response to their hatred in disregarding my needs and the needs of others? Why have we allowed their counterproductive policies to bring this country to economic chaos and a loss of status in the world? Why have they not been forcefully challenged? Why don't all of the large number of Americans who feel exactly as I do have more influence? We seem to have not united in the name of love, hope and positive regard for one another, but instead remained connected to one another and to the present government policies though our hate of their policies. We are the recipients of their internal and external love hate relationships, which in turn elicit our own negative responses and keeps us tied to politics of hostility and hate. This is not always the case, but seems to be so at present.

The leader cannot lead without the group. This interconnection exists between the members of the group in power on the one hand and the electoral group on the other. The tendency of groups is to seek someone to lead for unity and safety. The individual ideal is given up for the group ideal. It is the ego-ideal from which positive injunctions originate, and it is the superego from which the negatives arise. It is a question of positive regard versus fear of punishment. What happens in politics hinges on the healthy narcissism of the elected leaders, for it is this healthy narcissism that allows them not only power but also the ability to achieve what is truly good for the country. If paranoia is the prominent feature of leaders then group paranoia will be dominant. One difference between narcissistic and paranoid tendencies is that the narcissists are afraid of revealing their inadequacies and the paranoids are afraid of people's malevolence, and therefore have a tendency to jump the gun and act out their demons.

Sincerely yours,

Hanna Turken

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A Psychoanalyst Reflects on Selecting a Leader

Dear Editor,

Selecting a leader has a different set of needs to be met than in selecting an employee, a teacher, a lover, or a marital partner. Consciously when selecting a marital partner we intend to find the finest qualities that we will need and depend on for the rest of our life. This is not only personal but also intensely private and filled with many intimate and day-to-day issues. This does not apply to an employee, since we look for different qualities depending upon the job to be done, as well as economic factors. Certainly we use different criteria for choosing a teacher or a lover. All of these selections, as well as others we make in life, we would like to believe are consciously determined based upon significant thought and present facts. However, as psychoanalysts we have learned the fundamental truth that most decisions, especially the most important ones, are unconsciously determined.

In seeking a political leader we often unconsciously seek a parent figure. The quality of such selection will be impacted by the amount and nature of unresolved conflict with our parents. This even applies in dictatorships where the leader is selected by a number of individuals (some only have veto power) to lead them to victory in overthrowing the preceding administration and establishing their own autocracy. The emotional health of the population that embraces such a leader is a determining factor. The mental health of the population will determine how long that leader is supported and maintained in power, despite protestations to the contrary claiming all power resides in the leader himself. Leaders only stay in power when they have followers. Without support, a new leader would be selected to depose a dictator just as the dictator had deposed the previous person in charge.

Democracies attempt to broaden the support for leadership, lessening the distortions, the pathology that is abound in dictatorial regimes. Nevertheless, democratic selection also expresses the emotional health of its own population. The more anxiety in the population the more there are emotional needs coming unconsciously from the child within each individual to select a powerful controlling parent figure. Politicians and their handlers in democracies utilize this in the electoral process. This is why they try to encourage anxiety in the population about its

life circumstances and the opposing candidate's ability to make people feel more secure.

However, the qualities that represent a good and dependable parent are not necessarily the qualities that make a good leader in a complicated social situation. For example the leader of a small combat unit (or even a larger one) may in his private social life be a mean and uncaring marital partner, a weekend drunk, and a belligerent neighbor. Nevertheless, as a combat leader he may be exemplary and justifiably trusted by his devoted soldiers. If we were to elect our military combat leaders based on their emotional health outside of the combat situation, the results might be quite unfortunate.

Let us take an example from a different time and place. Two individuals were vying for leadership of a powerful country. One applicant had a chronic problem with depression and a serious, genetic neurological problem that had no cure or treatment at the time, a frictional relationship with his depressed, seriously emotionally troubled wife, and close family members supporting his opponent's agenda. If these facts and the details connected to them were widely known by the population I do not think they would have selected him to be their leader.

Let us take a more recent example. President Clinton acted in an immature way in his personal sexual life while President George W. Bush's private life is appropriate. Comparing the two presidents based on this issue, it is apparent that sexual morality does not necessarily make for a good president. In examining voters for Bush and his 2000 and 2004 opponents it is apparent to me that much of the population voted on the basis of their own unconscious emotional conflicts, feelings of insecurity, and fantasies of who would be a strong parental leader. Their error is obvious to me.

Those of us in psychoanalysis exploring issues from a psychohistorical reference have a responsibility to probe the unconscious factors that determine a leader's attitudes and current leadership position, yet who will listen to our insights becomes an important question. The public may be no more ready to hear our points than a patient who does not yet understand the working of the unconscious.

In my example above of an individual vying for leadership of a powerful community, if we would have been in a position to do a psychological exploration and somehow that information became disseminated to the public we would have all been much the loser for it. In my medical opinion, Abraham Lincoln had Marfan's syndrome and was profoundly depressed episodically. His wife Mary Todd Lincoln had a serious mood disorder and many of Mrs. Lincoln's relatives were Southern sympathizers. Lincoln believed that the black slaves and non-slaves should be returned to Africa. Yet, as president during the most troubled time of our country's history, he superbly kept our nation together and can be seen as the creator of a truly United States of America. This should serve as a reminder that we must not be arrogant in applying our knowledge to current leaders.

For the reasons elaborated above, the psychohistorical exploration of candidates is important, indeed it is part of the responsibility of psychological professionals. Our studies, reports and psychological conjectures need to be couched in a manner that is scientific and qualified. We do not want to contribute in any way to the societal patient—the American population—hurting themselves.

Sincerely yours,

Sander Breiner

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There is No "Win" in Bush's Iraq War

Dear Editor,

This letter is a follow-up to an earlier article I wrote about the war in Iraq. The term "win," as it concerns Iraq, really has two meanings. The first, as it applies to Iraq, is a military concept and the second is political. Although the weak United States economy, beset by such factors as soaring energy prices, the housing disaster, and a recession (or close to it), has removed Iraq as the most critical issue in the election. Nevertheless, Iraq remains a contentious matter. Indeed, political advertising for John McCain continues to emphasize his military career. The result is that polling favors McCain on the question of